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Taormina, the Ionian Sea, and Mount Etna (this and other photos free of copyright c/o Wikimedia Commons)

"TAORMINA AND THE BEST OF SICILY"

With visits to Mt Etna, Catania, Syracuse, the Greek Temples of Agrigento, and Agira Canadian War Cemetery

11 days, from Thursday, November 14, to Sunday, November 24, 2018

Enjoy la dolce vita in one of the finest resorts in southern Europe, situated on the coast of Sicily, the biggest island in the Mediterranean! Perched spectacularly on a steep hill, Taormina features ancient Greco-Roman, Byzantine and medieval monuments, lush vegetation, and a fabulous view of the coast and of Sicily's huge volcano, Mount Etna. You will stay in a first-class hotel and enjoy excursions to wonderful towns and monuments, including the Greek temples of Agrigento, the historical cities of Catania and Syracuse, the slopes of Mt Etna, and the Canadian War Cemetery at Agira. The tour host is historian Jacques R. Pauwels, PhD, author of 'Beneath the Dust of Time: A History of the Names of Peoples and Places' (London, 2009), who will lecture about the history of Sicily from the time of the prehistoric Siculi people, who gave their name to the island, to Sicily's liberation at the end of WW II by Allied, including Canadian, forces.

Tour cost from Toronto, based on double occupancy: \$3,895 - single occupancy supplement: \$585
'Land only': \$2,865 (from Catania Airport upon arrival of the group flight on November 15, back to Catania Airport in time for the departure of the return group flight on November 24)

ITINERARY:

Day 1 – Thursday, November 14: Evening departure from Toronto to Munich with Air Canada. Dinner and a light breakfast will be served on board.

Day 2 - Friday, November 15: Morning arrival in Munich, and connecting flight to Catania, Sicily. Transfer by private coach to Taormina, where we check into the fine 4-star/first-class Hotel Excelsior Palace, our home for the next nine nights. The hotel is located in a Mediterranean park with superb views of the sea and Mount Etna, and very close to the Porta Catania, entrance to the old town (<https://www.excelsiorpalacetaormina.it>).

We will be staying in *superior* rooms with a lateral view of the sea; please note that single participants will be accommodated in “doubles for single use,” i.e. rooms featuring the same size and sea view as the double and twin rooms. Time to settle in and relax before dinner in our hotel.

The town of Taormina is a natural fortress, historically of great strategic and political importance, but it is also one of the most beautiful resorts in Sicily, Italy, and even all of Europe! It is spectacularly situated in a verdant setting of lush Mediterranean vegetation on a high and steep hill overlooking the blue waters of the Ionian Sea and, in the distance, the mighty hulk of Mount Etna . . . In the 1800s, Taormina, like Capri, became a Mediterranean magnet for members of the European elite doing the “Grand Tour”. The city’s first important foreign tourist was Johann Wolfgang Goethe, and he was followed by Oscar Wilde, Nicholas I of Russia, and Friedrich Nietzsche (who wrote ‘Thus Spoke Zarathustra’ here), Richard Wagner. Otto Geleng, a German landscape painter, settled here and his work made the town and Sicily famous throughout Europe. In the early 20th century, the town became a colony of expatriate artists, writers and intellectuals, including Bertrand Russell, Tennessee Williams, D. H. Lawrence, Truman Capote, and Jean Cocteau. Taormina is featured on UNESCO’s tentative list of World Heritage Sites (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/1164>).

Day 3 - Saturday, November 16: After breakfast, we visit Taormina’s major historical monument, the superb hilltop Greco-Roman theatre, with spectacular views of Mt Etna and the coast. Then we explore the picturesque old town itself, featuring remains of Roman and Byzantine monuments, such as the Naumachia, a Roman cistern, the medieval Duomo (Cathedral), churches, castles, palaces; and let’s not forget the fine shops and lively cafés along Corso Umberto, the vibrant pedestrian main street, a former Roman road, which bisects the centre of the town between the two ancient city gates, Porta Messina and Porta Catania, via the charming Piazza Piazza IX Aprile, the town’s main square, dominated by the Clock Tower or Porta di Mezzo. The afternoon is free to explore beautiful Taormina on your own. Dinner again in the hotel.



Greco-Roman Theatre of Taormina



Mount Etna

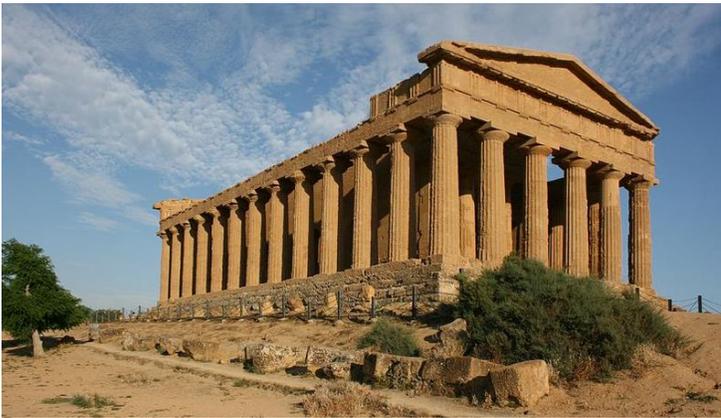
Day 4 - Sunday, November 17: This morning we tour the slopes of Mount Etna, the massive 3,330-meter high volcano – Europe’s highest! – That dominates the entire island of Sicily; the mountain is now classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1427>). This excursion features desolate lunar landscapes of molten lava sprinkled with ruins of homes abandoned during recent eruptions, but also prosperous villages whose inhabitants rely on the rich volcanic soil to produce wonderful products such as wine, honey, cheese, and fruit. We also pause at the Sapienza Research Station, situated at an altitude of almost 2,000 meters, to inspect the Monti Silvestri, cones formed by eruptions during the 1980s. Group lunch of delicious Sicilian specialties in a winery on the slopes of Mt Etna, with great views (weather permitting) of the coast and the Ionian Sea below!

Day 5 - Monday, November 18: Morning excursion along the scenic ‘Coast of the Cyclops,’ associated with the mythological adventures of Ulysses, to the seaport of Catania, the island’s biggest city (after the capital, Palermo); as the birthplace of composer Vincenzo Bellini, it is also considered to be Sicily’s cultural hub. Visits to Cathedral Square with the baroque Fountain of the Elephant, emblem of the city, and the amazing fish market. Also some time to shop along the elegant main street, Via Etnea. Return to Taormina in the afternoon.

If time permits, we may briefly visit the village of Savoca, where some memorable scenes of *The Godfather* were filmed.

Day 6 - Tuesday, November 19: After breakfast, we take a city bus for a short ride to Castel Mola, a picturesque village perched on top of a steep hill even higher than the promontory of Taormina! We explore its narrow alleys and quaint piazzas, and from the ancient town walls we will enjoy fabulous views of Taormina, the coast, and of course Mt Etna! A local specialty is almond wine, to be tasted in one of the local bars. Castel Mola also features many trattorias and ristoranti where you may want to linger for lunch. Afterwards, you can take the bus back down to Taormina, or perhaps walk the scenic distance of just about 3 km.

Day 7 - Wednesday, November 20: Full-day excursion to Agrigento, a town on the south coast of Sicily, featuring a spectacular collection of very well-preserved Greek temples. This amazing site alone justifies coming to Sicily! Time permitting, we may also visit the excellent local archaeological museum. En route back to Taormina, visit to the Canadian War Cemetery at Agira, an opportunity for your tour guide to tell you about the Canadian army's role in the liberation of the island in 1943.



< *One of the fabulous Greek temples of Agrigento*

Day 8 - Thursday, November 21: After breakfast, we visit the Villa Comunale a wonderful park bursting with lush vegetation, including palm trees, cacti and many flowers, and sprinkled with Victorian follies; its focal point is a villa originally owned by Lady Florence Trevelyan, a British noblewoman who was forced by Queen Victoria to leave Britain after an affair with the heir to the throne, Edward VII, settled in Taormina in 1884, married the mayor, and lived happily ever after – or did she? To learn more about her, you may want to walk down to Taormina's scenic coastal and beach district for a visit to, or at least a view of, Isola Bella, a wonderful little offshore island, also owned for some time by Lady Trevelyan, who had a villa constructed there; the island is now a museum and should be open to visitors in spite of the late season. It is recommended to return to Taormina and the hotel via cable car.

Day 9 - Friday, November 22: Full-day excursion to the magnificent historical seaport of Syracuse, founded by the ancient Greeks, who turned it into their metropolis on Sicily, rivalling even Athens. Thorough visit to this UNESCO World Heritage Site (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1200>), starting with the wonderful Archaeological Zone, featuring a Greek theatre, a Roman amphitheatre, and the "Ear of Dionysios," a cave set in a lush garden known as the Latomia of Paradise. Then we explore Ortygia, the original Greek settlement, with as highlights the ruins of the Temple of Apollo, the romantic Fountain of Arethusa, featuring papyrus reeds, and the Cathedral, a fascinating former temple dedicated to the goddess Athena. Return to Taormina in late afternoon.

Sicilian sweets in a shop in Syracuse >



Day 10 - Saturday, November 23: Your last full day in Taormina is entirely at leisure. If there is sufficient interest, an optional excursion may be offered to Reggio de Calabria, a town just across the Strait of Messina, for a visit to the Archaeological Museum, home of the world-famous Riace Bronzes, possibly the finest surviving ancient Greek bronze statues (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Riace_bronzes). This evening, final group dinner in the restaurant of our hotel.

Day 11 - Sunday, November 24: After breakfast, transfer to Catania Airport in time for the departure, around noon, of our return flight to Toronto, via Frankfurt.

Tour cost from Toronto, based on double occupancy: \$3,895

Single occupancy supplement: \$585

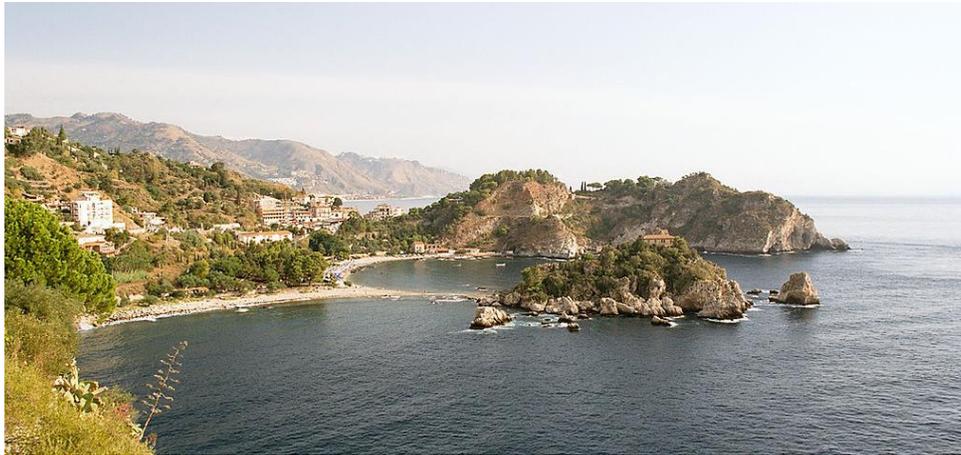
Land only: \$2,865 from Catania Airport upon arrival of the group flight on November 15, back to Catania Airport in time for the departure of the return group flight on November 24.

Included in the tour price:

- Return flight on Air Canada including all airport taxes, security fees and fuel surcharges;
- Accommodation in four-star/first-class hotels, based on double occupancy - the single occupancy supplement is \$585;
- Breakfast daily, three dinners in the hotel, and one full winery lunch;
- Airport transfers, sightseeing, and visits as outlined in the itinerary;
- Services of our tour escort.

Not Included:

Beverages with meals; meals other than those shown above; items of a personal nature; and travel insurance, rates available upon request.



Taormina's Isola Bella

RECOMMENDED BOOKS ABOUT SICILY:

- * Lawrence Durrell, *Sicilian Carousel*
- * Giuseppe Tomasi de Lampedusa, *The Leopard*
- * Sandra Benjamin, *Sicily: Three Thousand Years of Human History*
- * John Keahey, *Seeking Sicily: A Cultural Journey Through Myth and Reality in the Heart of the Mediterranean*
- * John Julius Norwich, *Sicily: An Island at the Crossroads of History*
- * Peter Robb, *Midnight in Sicily: On Art, Food, History, Travel and la Cosa Nostra*

TERMS & CONDITIONS

RESERVATIONS AND DEPOSITS:

Reservations should be made as early as possible to ensure the departure of your choice. A deposit of \$750.00 required at the time of registration. Your reservation is confirmed upon receipt of your deposit and registration form. No reservations will be accepted without a signed application form.

REFUND OF UNUSED ARRANGEMENTS:

Because the rates of Pauwels Travel Bureau Ltd. are based on group participation, no refund can be made for any tour accommodation or tour service or tour feature not taken. If cancellation occurs while the tour is in progress, no refund can be made for the tour portion not taken. We strongly suggest that to allow for any unexpected contingencies, you purchase the all-inclusive insurance.

CANCELLATION POLICY:

Refund of deposit is made if cancellation is received in writing by Pauwels Travel Bureau Ltd. more than 90 days prior of the departure date of the tour less a \$500.00 non-refundable administrative fee per person. For cancellation received in writing 90 days prior or less the following cancellation charges apply:

90 days to 61 days before departure: 25% of tour cost
60 to 31 days before departure: 50% of tour cost
Within 30 days prior to departure: 100% of tour cost

RESPONSIBILITY:

The acceptance of the initial service to be provided under the tour shall be considered an acceptance by the tour member of those conditions. We also reserve the right to decline, to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour. We reserve the right without notice, to withdraw any part or all of the tour. Factors such as airline schedule changes, hotel overbookings, inclement weather, travel warnings by the Canadian Government etc. may necessitate changes in the itinerary. There may also be other circumstances in which changes become necessary or advisable.

By commencing the tour, I agree to the release and agreement as included below.

RELEASE & AGREEMENT:

By placing my deposit and commencing the tour I understand and agree to the following:

1. That all tours are delivered in conjunction with other service providers, including but not limited to travel agent and booking services, airlines, hotel and accommodation providers, transportation providers including but not limited to coach, train and ferry services, restaurant providers, and local guides. We shall not be held responsible for the failure by any person or company to render any transportation, lodging or other travel service to be provided on the tour. All hotels, transportation and other travel services are provided subject to all the terms and conditions under which they are offered to the public generally.
2. I know that tour programs include walking, and may including hiking and fitness programs that have potential hazardous activities associated with them. I should not participate prior to approval by my physician. I assume any and all other risks associated with these events included but not limited to falls, contact with other participants, the effects of the weather including high heat and/or humidity.

3. To release, indemnify and hold harmless Pauwels Travel Bureau and their affiliates (which term shall include parents, subsidiaries, officers, directors, shareholders, agents and employees of Pauwels Travel Bureau as well as Pauwels Travel themselves) (the "Released Parties") from, and agree not to sue the Released Parties for, any claims that I may have arising from, or in connection with, any personal injury, bodily injury, mental anguish, emotional distress, physical, property or other damage that I may suffer from any cause whatsoever related in any way to my participation in this tour. Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, I release, indemnify and hold harmless the Released Parties from, and agree not to sue them for any personal injury, bodily injury, mental anguish, emotional distress, physical, property or other damage that I may suffer from the Released Parties' negligence other than from intentional or reckless acts by such parties. I further agree to release, indemnify and hold harmless the Released Parties from any and all acts of God, war (whether declared or undeclared), terrorist activities, incidents of politically motivated violence, illness or quarantine, strikes or government restrictions or the acts or omissions of any other agents over which the Released Parties have no direct or indirect control, including, without limitation, airlines, railways, bus companies, hotels, shipping companies, guides and sub-contracted agents or tour operators. This release also includes activities not offered that may be considered risky. I further release any Tour Directors, bus drivers or other individuals involved in my tour.
4. That the air carrier's liability for loss of or damage to baggage or property, or for death or injury to person, is limited by their tariffs, or the Warsaw Convention, or both.
5. That Pauwels Travel Bureau shall have no liability or responsibility for me when I am absent from activities, such as visits to friends or relatives or during stay-ahead/stay-behind option periods if the stay-ahead/stay-behind period does not include the services of a Tour Director.
6. To abide by directions of my Tour Director or other leadership personnel during my tour. Failure to do so may result in my termination from tour immediately. I understand that to disobey such rules or directions are to waive the right to any refund, and that I may be sent home at my own expense. The participant and family undertake full financial responsibility for any damage caused by the participant and agree to pay his/her return home on the first available flight, should his/her behavior be deemed detrimental to the welfare of the group.
7. To abide by all local laws when in Canada and abroad, including those concerning drugs and alcohol. (Minors must have parents' permission to use alcohol even if the local law would otherwise permit them to.) I understand that if I abuse or disobey such laws, even unintentionally, I waive my right to a refund, and Pauwels Travel may send me home at my own expense. I also understand that should local authorities be involved, I will be subject to the laws of the country I am visiting.
8. That if I become ill or incapacitated, Pauwels Travel and its employees, or a designated chaperone may take any action they deem necessary for my safety and well-being, including securing medical treatment (at my own expense) and transporting me home. Pauwels Travel retains the right, in its sole discretion, to contact the traveller's parent(s) and/or guardian or emergency contact with regard to health issues or any matters whatsoever that relates to the traveller's tour. These rights transcend any and all privacy regulations that may apply. In the event of a medical emergency, Pauwels Travel will attempt to cause appropriate treatment to be administered, and the traveller authorizes Pauwels Travel to do so. Pauwels Travel, however, makes no warranty that it will be able to cause effective (or any) emergency treatment to be administered.

9. That Pauwels Travel may use any film likenesses taken of me and any of my comments while on a tour for future publication and also use my contact information for future Pauwels Travel communications.

A WORD ABOUT *GROUP* AIRFARES:

Please note that when booking one of our air inclusive tours, Pauwels Travel has negotiated reduced rates with the airline that we are able to confirm and lock in up to 359 days before travel. While it is wonderful to share the savings and flexibility this provides with you, our valued guests, the privilege does come with some restrictions. In some cases it may not be possible to collect frequent flyer miles, you may not be able to check in online 24 hours before travel, or you may need to try checking in with your ticket number rather than your booking reference and, in almost ALL cases we are not able to offer advanced seat selection.

It is the airline that makes the reservation and has control over the booking so it is their policy, not ours, that prevents us from assigning specific seats. If a request is made, it is passed on to the airline by our staff when they submit the names to the airline, i.e., 30-60 days prior to departure. Calling us several days before you leave will not change this fact nor will getting upset with our staff.

If a certain type of seat is indispensable to you, we suggest that you book our tour on a “land only” basis and make individual flight arrangements, in which case you may be able to get the seat of your choice; Pauwels Travel would be happy to assist you with that reservation at absolutely no additional charge. We will offer you the best fare available, but please note that this can only be done once a tour is a guaranteed departure because your individual airfare’s conditions are likely to involve cancellation penalties.

We thank you in advance for your kind understanding of the above!

REGISTRATION FORM

Please book _____ seat(s) on the "Taormina and the Best of Sicily" tour of November 14 – 24, 2019.

Enclosed is my/our deposit of _____ (\$750 per person, *plus* insurance premium if taken.)

Please indicate with an X if you intend to travel on Group flights _____ or Land only _____.

Deposit and insurance premium, if taken, are due with registration. You will be invoiced for an interim payment of \$1,000.00 and the balance due 45 days prior to departure.

WE REQUIRE A COPY OF YOUR PASSPORT (INFORMATION PAGES ONLY) VALID 3 MONTHS AFTER TOUR TO BE SENT IN WITH YOUR APPLICATION.

PASSPORT NAME(S): **Please** indicate the appropriate title (Mr., Mrs., Miss, Dr., Ms.)

Surname _____ First _____ Middle(s) _____

Surname _____ First _____ Middle(s) _____

If applicable, give your commonly used first name as you would like it to appear on your name tag:
(e.g. "Liz" for "Mary Elizabeth")

Address _____

Postal Code: _____ Phone: _____

(Email) _____

If traveling alone, is a SINGLE ROOM REQUIRED? YES _____ NO _____

If sharing, what is your bed preference: twin _____ double _____?

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: We find the earlier a request is made, the more success we have in filling it, so please list any dietary requests, allergies, any special physical needs or frequent flyer numbers etc here. We cannot ensure requests made 30 days or less prior to departure will be possible.

Insurance, Please call the office for premiums then record it on application and add premium to deposit.

I /we would like to purchase (please check and record your rate):

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

All-inclusive Package _____ Non-medical Package _____

Other _____ **OR** Decline Insurance _____

PAYMENT: Cheque payable to Pauwels Travel Visa Mastercard American Express

Amount Paid: _____ Card Number: _____

Expiry: _____ Security Code: _____ Signature: _____

"I/we agree to the terms and conditions attached to the program, have indicated our insurance choice, indicated any special requests and included payment".

Date _____ **Signature(s)** _____

Please forward this completed and signed form, copy of passport and payment to:

PAUWELS TRAVEL BUREAU LTD.

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Email: caroline@pauwelstravel.com