



GOURMET SAFARI – SICILY & MALTA **24 June – 7 July 2025 SAMPLE Itinerary**

Join us for this new 14 day tour of Sicily, Malta and Gozo, exploring the best of these three unique islands with Safaris founder Maeve and a number of guides to open all the right doors.

We journey through the east coast of Sicily with its centuries-old food culture and impressive towns and cities as well as visits to producers of wine, pistachios, buffalo milk, gelato and chocolate.

We start in Catania and explore some of the ancient sites including the Greek Amphitheatre, Ursino Castle and Cathedral. We'll explore the famous open-air market and eat at one of its bustling restaurants; crunch through the volcanic soil of Etna and taste wines from one of Sicily's top wineries; swim at a private beach in Ortigia; spend time in produce markets and with producers including a buffalo milk farm with exceptional buffalo ricotta cannoli.

Highlights include tasting seafood right on the water; enjoying an evening aperitivo on a stylish Ortigia rooftop at sunset; eating at some of our favourite local restaurants and enjoying a unique cooking class where we grind our own flour from ancient grains at a 17th century mill to make scacce - a typical street food in Ragusa.

Our guides in Sicily are Placido who is an accredited guide and a pistachio farmer on the slopes of Etna - he offers a special perspective of food and culinary history on the island. We are also joined by our Sicilian Australian guide Nino Lo Giudice who has a family on Etna with a restaurant - Nino is a link between Sicily and Australia and brings a wealth of food knowledge on this tour.

We catch the fast ferry to Malta and at dusk sail into Valletta's magnificent harbour with its sandstone ramparts, church domes and impressive buildings and marinas. We have 4 glorious nights in the 5-star Phoenicia Hotel before catching the ferry for 3 nights to stay at the luxurious 5-star Kempinski Hotel in Gozo.

Across the islands we are guided by locals who share their insights into their unique country across with bespoke experiences including an evening with a farmer and a chef and some hands-on cooking in the wood fire. We visit salt producers and bakers, musicians and cheesemakers and immerse in the food traditions of Malta and nearby Gozo where Maltese Australian Leanne Sultana shares her knowledge of food and tradition with our guests.

Highlights include a morning in speedboats visiting picture perfect coves and caves with clear turquoise water, a Michelin star dinner with one of the top chefs and travelling across Valletta's breathtaking harbour to immerse in history told through food. This itinerary allows you time to explore other parts of Sicily before joining us...and you have the option of staying further on Gozo or Malta.

Tour Leaders: Maeve O'Meara and Nino Lo Giudice (Sicily)

Day 1 - Tuesday June 24 - Catania

Group meets for welcome drinks at **6pm** at **4 star Palace Catania Una Hotel** high above the city. Dinner tonight at a local restaurant.

Overnight Catania - D

Day 2 – Wednesday 25 June - Catania

Breakfast at the hotel before we walk to the nearby produce market and bustling fish market full of characters all spruiking their wares. We'll taste and explore before a coffee and arancini stop (essential snack food of Catania!). Walk to the Greek amphitheatre, impressive Ursino castle and the Cathedral before

stopping for lunch at a relaxed favourite restaurant in the market area. Relax for a siesta then join us on an optional visit to a local artist's studio and evening passeggiata with pizza and gelato. **Overnight Catania – B, L**

Day 3 - Thursday 26th June - Catania/ Etna

After breakfast at the hotel we visit our guide Placido's pistachio farm, the trees thriving in the black soil, meet his family and learn the extraordinary lengths to which the harvesters go in gathering these world famous nuts. Coffee in Bronte and we taste heavenly pistachio arancini and pistachio granita.

We've organised a private wine tasting with one of the top wineries, tasting amongst the vines at the beautiful cellar door with sweeping views up to Etna. Then we wend our way up through pine forests to a rustic restaurant for a lunch of local foods including the famous Linguaglossa pork sausages. We'll also learn about the bee hives and unique honey they produce. Free evening.

Overnight Catania – B, L

Day 4 - Friday 27th June - Ortigia

After breakfast we drive to honey coloured Noto where we will enjoy a guided walk to explore some of the historical buildings and churches, enjoy some free exploring time before driving on to Syracuse. We stay in the luxe **Grand Hotel Ortigia** and enjoy welcome drinks on the rooftop before strolling to our nearby alfresco dinner.

Overnight Ortigia - B, D

Day 5 - Saturday 28 June - Ortigia

Breakfast at hotel. We'll visit the vibrant open air fresh food market and meet stall holders and taste local delicacies like baked ricotta, pecorino with chilli, cacio cavallo and salami with pistachio. We'll visit the breathtaking Icaria statue, the fort, historic churches...then board a boat to a private beach for a picnic lunch and a swim. Dinner tonight at an Ortigia favourite. **Overnight Ortigia - B, L, D**

Day 6 - Sunday 29th June - Ragusa

Breakfast at hotel and check out. We drive down the coast to have lunch right on the water at Marzamemi. Enjoy seafood and Sicilian wine before travelling to Ragusa where we stay at a charming historic **Relais Hotel - Antica Badia**. Welcome drinks on rooftop before we explore the town and its gardens and churches including an evening walk to Ragusa Ibla.

Overnight Ragusa - B, L, drinks

Day 7 - Monday 30th June - Valletta

Breakfast at hotel and check out. We start at a small cooking school where we grind ancient grains at a 17th century water mill and then enjoy hands on class making the local specialty scacce (a Sicilian stuffed flatbread); visit a buffalo farm to see burrata and mozzarella being made and enjoy tastes including a buffalo ricotta cannoli and in the afternoon enjoy a private chocolate tasting tour in lovely Modica. In the evening we board the fast ferry in Pozzallo for Valletta, sailing in to the breathtaking harbour. Arrive Valetta and short transfer to our **5 star accommodation** at the famed **Phoenicia Hotel**.

Overnight Valletta - B, L, tastes

Day 8 - Tuesday 1st July – Valletta, Malta

Breakfast at hotel overlooking the hotel's gardens and meet our guide who will take us through some of Malta's history walking to a number of remarkable places right on our doorstep with stops for coffee and tastes of traditional foods. Return to our hotel to rest and swim in the hotel's stylish infinity pool before we journey to a highlight - meeting our friends farmer Tony and chef Karl in the fields and then relaxing in Tony's extensive family farmhouse to learn about Maltese cuisine with the opportunity for hands on cooking in their wood fired oven while enjoying some delicious Maltese wines.

Overnight Valletta. B, tastes, D

Day 9 - Wednesday 2nd July - Valletta

Breakfast at hotel and we walk with our guide to the nearby harbour to board the pretty wooden dghajsa boats which take us across to the Three Cities, ready to explore the Inquisitors Palace with its curator; the Malta War Museum and then enjoy a clever idea of matching history with food...a unique lunch offered just for our Safaris guests by historian Liam Gauci. We journey back across the water to our hotel to relax before a special visit to the St John's Cathedral with a musical performance. Optional visit to one of the top restaurants in Valletta.

Overnight Valletta - B, L

Day 10 - Thursday 3rd July - Valletta

Breakfast at our hotel. Today we leave Valetta to explore the beautiful south of Malta, stopping for a classic pastizzi in a family owned bakery, strolling around the harbour at the pretty fishing village of Marzaslott, enjoying a light lunch by the water and taking a boat into the famous Blue Grotto. We return to Valetta to get ready for our dinner at the acclaimed Noni, a Michelin starred restaurant which is run by beloved top chef Jonathan Brincat and his sister Ritienne. It's simply an exquisite experience, telling stories of flavours and techniques that have been woven into Maltese cooking over the centuries. Each dish explained by the staff and accompanied by matched wines. An experience and memories that resonate.

Overnight Valletta - B, L, D

Day 11 - Friday 4th July - Malta to Gozo

After breakfast, we check out of the Phoenicia ready for our next adventure which includes a walk through the winding streets of the "silent City" Mdina and a visit to one of Malta's wineries to taste and learn. We'll visit a local cafe where some classic 'street food' dishes are served and then journey to the ferry which will take us the short journey to beautiful nearby Gozo and where our friend guide Leanne Sultana will meet us and introduce us to some Gozitan food and traditions. We check in at to the 5-star luxury **Hotel Kempinski** where our rooms are all close to the huge swimming pool. We'll gather for dinner tonight on the terrace with a menu highlighting Gozitan specialties, the chefs offering traditional food presented in a modern way.

Overnight Gozo - B, L,D

Day 12 - Saturday 5th July - Gozo

After breakfast at the hotel we take you to spend the morning exploring some of the stunning turquoise bays and coves by boat with plenty of opportunity to swim...and being in that water is like a dream. We are with captains who know the best places to visit. Our guide Leanne then takes us to her cousins who will cook some traditional specialties in their wood fired oven. Mid-afternoon we'll relax at our hotel before meeting a mother and son for a cooking demonstration in their home with some local music and wine. This evening we have the opportunity to join the locals in the main square of the town of Xaghara to enjoy a drink and a chat. **Overnight Gozo - B, L, D**

Day 13 - Sunday 6th July - Gozo

After breakfast we spend the morning at the sweeping ancient salt pans of Xwejni and meet the charming old man of salt who will show us the techniques that have been passed down the centuries. Meet his family and taste some of this pure gift of the sea. We'll explore the famous "church of miracles" Ta Pinu before a guided tour through the ancient historic settlement of Gigantia and the charming city of Victoria with its secret alleyways and historic buildings. We will have lunch with a local favourite restaurant who grows all his own produce. Opportunity to visit some of the charming small shops before we enjoy a siesta. In the evening we walk to a beautiful new restaurant for our final night dinner on their terrace, looked after by young dynamic chefs Zack and Kristina. **Overnight Gozo - B, L, D**

Day 14 - Monday 7th July Gozo - Valletta

Breakfast at our hotel and we return to Valletta on the morning ferry - we will drop at the airport by 1pm **(TBC)** and then central Valetta by 2pm **(TBC) - B**

2025 Costs: \$14,700.00 per person, twin share or double. Single supplement ++\$2100

Included: 13 breakfasts,10 lunches, 8 dinners, many with wine included, wine tastings, 2 cooking classes, all accommodation (4-5 star), 2 boat cruises, bus & ferry transport, some gratuities, entry fees, experienced guides throughout.

Not included: International Airfares, taxes, passport fees, travel insurance, visas (if applicable), items of personal nature, transfers other than those stated.

Note: many of the streets are winding and cobblestoned and some are quite steep. There are also steps to be negotiated so **a good level of mobility and fitness is required** to participate in this safari.

Bookings & Information:

<p>Initial bookings and information: Gourmet Safaris Pty Ltd P O Box 877 NEUTRAL BAY NSW 2089 Australia Ph : +61 2 8969 6555 email: info@gourmetsafaris.com.au</p>	<p>Recommended Travel Agency for Airline Tickets, travel insurance etc: David Vuong Travel – ATAS Accreditation No.: A10652, AFTA Member No.: 02712 PO BOX 5296 MARRICKVILLE NSW 1475 Suite 4, Level 1, 333 King St, Newtown NSW 2042 Ph: 02 9516 2990 / FAX:02 9516 3990 email: dvtravel@bigpond.net.au /web: www.davidvuongtravel.com</p>
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Terms & Conditions:

Deposit & Payment: A non-refundable deposit of \$1000.00 per person is required on confirmation in order to secure your reservation. Final payment is due 90 days before your departure date.

Special Requirements: Please advise **Gourmet Safaris** or David Vuong Travel of any special requirements such as Special Meals, Medical Requirements etc., as soon as possible. If you get motion sickness it is imperative that you bring with you motion sickness pills as we travel by boat and coach through sometimes mountainous roads. Many of the sites in Greece are open-air and necessitate a reasonable amount of walking. Normally the walking is quite easy but the heat and uneven paths can sometimes make it a bit tiring.

Accommodation: Our accommodation are selected for location and facilities and is rated 4 – 5 Star. Please remember payment of a single room does not automatically guarantee better accommodation only privacy. Tea and coffee making facilities in the rooms are the exception rather than the rule.

Travel Insurance: We strongly recommend you purchase a comprehensive travel insurance policy of your choice at the time of booking. Insurance covers cancellation fees payable for airline tickets, accommodation, loss of deposit, luggage etc. Normal travel insurance conditions apply. (Insurance may not cover trip cancellation due to pre-existing medical conditions.) Please read your policy carefully.

Cancellation: If cancelling prior to final payment the deposit is non-refundable. After final payment is received a cancellation fee of approximately 75% applies. This percentage may be less depending on the date of cancellation. A cancellation fee of 100% is applicable within 14 days of travel. If cancellation is not due to pre-existing illnesses, travel insurance will cover most or all of the cancellation fee. Please read your policy carefully.

Pricing: All prices are shown in Australian dollars and are current as the date of printing this itinerary. If there is dramatic fluctuation in the exchange rate or the price of services provided which are beyond the control of Gourmet Safari, Gourmet Safaris reserves the right to adjust tour prices accordingly, even though the balance of payment may have been made. This would only happen in very unusual circumstances.

Exclusions: Visas, insurance, excess baggage (can be applicable on some internal flights), extra meals, laundry, drinks, items of a personal nature, some tips, and international departure taxes.

Itinerary Validity and Content: This itinerary is valid for the period of **2025** unless otherwise specified. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy. Gourmet Safaris shall not be liable for any injury, damage or loss caused by any inaccuracy. Gourmet Safaris reserves the right to change tour arrangements or accommodations due to safety or security reasons, and will endeavour to provide alternative arrangements of the same standard as that originally booked.

Disclaimer: Gourmet Safaris is not a carrier or hotelier, nor do we own aircraft, hotels or coaches. The services Gourmet Safaris supplies consist of arranging and co-ordinating accommodation, tours and transfers, making bookings and issuing vouchers to be redeemed by suppliers if necessary. We exercise every care in the selection of reputable airlines, tour operators, coach operators, hotels and other suppliers of the various travel services which are used in these tours. It is important to note, therefore, all bookings with Gourmet Safaris are subject to the terms, conditions and limitations of liability imposed by the service providers whose services we utilise, some of which limit or exclude liability in respect of death, personal injury, delay and loss or damage of baggage. Because of this Gourmet Safaris does not accept liability for events beyond our control nor liability for accidents incurred due to actions taken at your own risk.

Clients' Responsibilities: It is your responsibility to obtain visas, passports, health certificates or other travel documents where required for the tour. It remains your responsibility to ensure that these documents are in order and to meet any additional costs incurred as a result of failure to comply with such requirements. It is also your responsibility to book your own airline tickets to meet the tour at the designated place where tour begins.