



Food & Wine: Southern Italy & Sicily

13 days | 15 days with Naples extension

Throughout history, southern Italy has served as a cultural crossroads, and a mashup of international influences remains evident in the region's cuisines. On this small group Food & Wine Tour, explore tucked-away coastal towns, medieval villages, and hillside vineyards—and experience the flavors and culinary traditions that make Sicily, Calabria, Basilicata, and Campania so utterly and deliciously unique.



Your tour package includes

- 11 nights in handpicked hotels
- 11 breakfasts
- 3 lunches
- 5 dinners with beer or wine
- 3 wine tastings
- 1 liquor tasting
- 6 tastings
- 1 cooking class
- 6 sightseeing tours
- Expert Tour Director & local guides
- Private deluxe motor coach
- 1 ferry transfer

Included highlights

- Baroque Noto
- Avola wine region
- Italian contessa dinner
- Sassi di Matera cave dwellings
- Campanian cooking lesson
- Taurasi wine tasting
- Paestum ruins

Tour pace

On this guided tour, you'll walk for at least 2 hours daily across uneven terrain, including cobblestone streets and paved roads, with some hills and stairs.

Group size

12–22

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Overnight Flight → 1 night

Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to Catania today.

Catania → 3 nights

Day 2: Arrival in Catania

Included meals: welcome dinner

Welcome to Italy! Tonight, get to know your Tour Director and fellow travelers over a welcome dinner at a local restaurant in Catania. Savor the signature flavors of the city—along with local, Sicilian wine—and whet your appetite for more of Sicily's culturally and historically rich cuisine still to come in the days ahead.

Day 3: Sightseeing tour of Noto & the Avola wine region

Included meals: breakfast, tasting, dinner

Head outside of the city of Catania today to explore the culinary traditions of southeastern Sicily.

- Join a local guide for a tour of Noto, a UNESCO World Heritage site known for its Baroque churches and palaces.
- Wander along Noto's Corso Vittorio Emanuele, a long, pedestrian-friendly avenue lined with cafes, shops, and historic buildings.
- Visit the Cathedral of San Nicolò, an imposing Baroque structure that was built in the 18th century and stands at the top of a wide, stone staircase.
- Stop in a local sweets shop to sample Sicilian pastries and chocolates, keeping an eye out for varieties made with almonds or pistachios—both types of nuts grow on the island and are commonly featured in Sicilian confections.
- Enjoy a pasta or seafood lunch on your own in one of Noto's cafes, or treat your sweet tooth to a distinctly Sicilian dessert; local specialties include dense and creamy gelato, which you can enjoy atop a crunchy cone or sandwiched between two slices of buttery brioche.

Travel northeast to the Avola wine region. Its

thick-skinned, namesake grape, the Nero d'Avola, has grown on Sicily for hundreds of years. It remains the most widely planted grape on the island—in its indigenous region and beyond—for the production of red wine.

- Visit a local winery for a behind-the-scenes look at its growing and production processes.
- Learn what factors contribute to Nero d'Avola's fruit-forward flavor, full-bodied structure, and high acidity.
- Enjoy light snacks paired with a variety of vintages of Nero d'Avola wines.

After your winery visit, transfer to a historic countryside villa and the home of an Italian contessa.

- Enjoy wine with focaccia, olives, fresh buffalo mozzarella, and other antipasti, then sit down for a homemade, family-style dinner set in the villa's former stables.
- Learn some of the contessa's most-trusted cooking tips, which will help you recreate her rustic dishes—such as linguine with lemon, and rice with mushrooms—at home.

Day 4: Sightseeing tour of Catania

Included meals: breakfast

Meet your local guide and set out to discover Catania, an ancient port city that sits at the base of active Mount Etna volcano.

- Discover Catania's historic city center, with its narrow, stone streets, busy Piazza del Duomo, and Baroque Catania Cathedral.
- Explore the city's famous, open-air fish market, where you're likely to spot whole branzino, tuna, and many other freshly caught delicacies neatly laid out on ice.
- Tour the Museo Storico dello Sbarco, a WWII museum focused on the allied invasion of Sicily.
- Try to spot ash from previous Mount Etna eruptions in Catania's streets as you make your way through the city.

Enjoy a free afternoon in Catania or add an excursion.

+ Mount Etna Wine Region Tasting & Dinner

Tropea Region → 2 nights

Day 5: Tropea Region via Messina & Reggio

Calabria

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Travel to Messina, Sicily's third-largest city, then take a ferry across the Strait of Messina to Reggio Calabria. You'll explore this coastal city in southern Italy alongside your Tour Director.

- Visit the National Museum of Magna Graecia to view the storied Riace Bronzes—two life-size, bronze statues of Greek warriors sculpted in Greece in the 5th century B.C. and pulled from the Ionian Sea in the 1970s.
- Enjoy free time to explore Reggio Calabria on your own.

Then, travel north to Tropea. The town is situated along the coast in Calabria, a southern Italian region whose culinary traditions are rooted in la cucina povera, or peasant food. This evening, sit down for an included dinner. Enjoy wine alongside dishes such as fried seafood and stuffed eggplant, which capture the spirit of Calabrian cooking.

Day 6: Sightseeing tour of Tropea & Pizzo

Included meals: breakfast, tasting, dinner

Get to know Tropea on a sightseeing tour led by your Tour Director.

- View the spectacular Santa Maria dell'Isola monastery perched high above the sea in Tropea.
- Stop for a tasting of locally made pecorino sheep's-milk cheese, salami, breads, roasted vegetable spreads, and cipolla rossa, the sweet red onions for which Tropea is known.
- Continue on to Pizzo for a taste of the coastal city's famous tartufo di Pizzo—a ball or bombe of chocolate and hazelnut gelato shaped around a hidden center of melted chocolate and rolled in cocoa powder.

Sit down this evening for an included dinner served with wine. Traditional dishes to try might include baked spaghetti-and-eggplant involtini.

Matera → 2 nights

Day 7: Transfer to Matera

Included meals: breakfast

This morning, pass through the Calabrian

countryside on your way to Matera. The ancient town is built on a rocky outcrop in Basilicata, a southern Italian region whose traditions of grain cultivation and baking have endured for centuries.

Day 8: Sightseeing tour of Matera

Included meals: breakfast, tasting

Explore Matera, known as the Subterranean City, with a local guide.

- Visit Sassi di Matera, the two districts that make up Matera, which are known for their 9,000-year-old cave dwellings.
- Stroll through the Old Town, passing Matera Cathedral and the ruins of the 16th-century Castello Tramontano.
- Admire the bell towers, mosaics, sculptures, and other architectural details of the 16th-century Palazzo del Sedile, or Palace of the Seat, which has served as the seat of the municipality of Matera as well as a music conservatory.
- Step inside Casa Grotta di Vico Solitario to see what life was like inside a typical cave dwelling.
- Explore the chiese rupestri, or rock churches.
- Visit a local shop to taste regional breads, such as highly regarded, sourdough-style Pane di Matera, and cheeses, like soft mozzarella and gooey stracciatella.

Enjoy a free evening in Matera or add an excursion.

Please note: Depending on the season, this may take place on the afternoon of day 7.

+ Puglia Wine Tasting & Dinner

Benevento Countryside → 2 nights

Day 9: Samnium villages & Sannio wine tasting

Included meals: breakfast, liquor tasting, wine tasting, lunch

Today, venture to Sannio, a hilly and highly regarded wine-producing area and Domain of Controlled Origin, or DOC. In Sannio, regulations require that grapes—Aglianico, Falanghina, and other varietals among them—be sourced from hillside vineyards, where the climate is ideal for producing high-quality fruit.

- Walk along steep streets in the medieval town of Guardia Sanframondi, and take in views of its hilltop castle.

- Grab a seat at a local bar and enjoy a cocktail made with Falanghina wine and Strega—a saffron-infused, after-dinner liqueur that originated in Benevento in the late 1800s.
- Visit a sustainable winery co-operative that produces wines under the brand Janare.
- Sit down at the co-operative for an included lunch paired with Janare wines, which are produced from Falanghina and Aglianico grapes grown on Sannio vineyards.

Please note: The order of today’s activities is subject to change.

Day 10: Benevento Countryside via San Marco dei Cavoti & cooking class

Included meals: breakfast, tasting, lunch

Today, make your way to San Marco dei Cavoti, located northeast of Naples. This mountain village in the province of Benevento is one of the best-known places in Italy for the production of toronne, a nut-and-nougat confection.

- Join a local chocolatier for an artisanal chocolate tasting and shop tour.
- Watch a chocolate-making demonstration and try a few different sweet treats, including Croccantino—a crunchy torrone covered in dark chocolate.

Later, settle in to your agriturismo in the Benevento countryside. Then, head to the nearby town of Telese Terme for a cooking class in the kitchen of a Michelin-starred restaurant known for its creative dishes that marry traditional and innovative techniques. Follow along as the restaurant’s world-class chefs teach you how to craft traditional Campanian dishes, such as tortellini Campagnola, and make note of tips and techniques to try out when you get back home. For dinner tonight, savor the fruits of your labor, along with wine, in the company of your fellow travelers.

Please note: The order of today’s activities is subject to change.

Salerno → 2 nights

Day 11: Sightseeing tour of Benevento & Salerno via Taurasi wine region

Included meals: breakfast, tasting, wine tasting, farewell dinner

Take a guided sightseeing tour of Benevento this morning.

- Marvel at the Arch of Trajan, a triumphal arch built by Emperor Trajan in the second century.

- Continue past the 10th-century Church of Saint Hilary, a stone structure that has served as a church, a convent, and a farmhouse.
- Enter the UNESCO-recognized Church of Santa Sofia, which was built in the eighth century and features an unusual, star-shaped structure and radial arrangement of columns and pillars.
- Cap off your guided tour with a taste of ice cream or chocolate infused with Benevento Strega liqueur.

Then, continue on to the Taurasi wine region. This is where the flagship red wine of southern Italy is produced from 100% local Aglianico grapes or, in some instances, a blend of Nebbiolo and Sangiovese grapes as well.

- Walk through a vineyard alongside a local wine expert to learn about the harvest and wine production processes.
- Enjoy light snacks and a taste of white and red wines—including Taurasi, the region’s signature red, which is known for its structure, complexity, and aging potential.

Continue on to Salerno, a lively port town steeped in cultural tradition. This evening, celebrate your trip over a farewell dinner served with wine. Menu items might include regional products such as seafood, prosciutto, sardines, zucchini, and other local specialties.

Please note: The order of today’s activities is subject to change.

Day 12: Mozzarella farm & Paestum

Included meals: breakfast, lunch

Explore the coastal area of Cilento today. This spot is known as the birthplace of the widely celebrated Mediterranean diet, which is a set of skills, rituals, symbols, and traditions centered around food production and consumption—and which UNESCO declared an Intangible Cultural Heritage.

- Tour a local, organic dairy farm, and savor freshly made mozzarella, ricotta, and buffalo-milk gelato during a light lunch and tasting served with wine.
- Travel to nearby Paestum for a guided tour of the ancient city’s Greek and Roman ruins.
- Visit the Archaeological Museum of Paestum to see the Tomb of the Diver, which was created around 470 B.C. and contains a rare Greek wall painting.

Raise a toast to your trip—and your fellow travelers—as you enjoy a farewell drink this evening.

Flight Home

Day 13: Departure

Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Transfer to the Naples airport for your flight home or extend your stay to visit Naples.

Transfer to the airport for your flight home.

+ Naples extension

What's that line that Dean Martin sang? Ah yes... "That's amore!" He was singing about Naples, of course, and for good reason: There's so much to love about this busy coastal city. Discover that feeling while exploring with a local guide and seeking out your interests, be they history, food, or both, with the help of your Tour Director.

Naples → 2 nights**Day 13: Transfer to Naples & sightseeing tour**

Included meals: breakfast, tasting

After a short ride to Naples, set off on an afternoon tasting tour in the city with a local guide.

- Walk through Piazza del Gesù to view the Church of Gesù Nuovo.
- Stop at a local cafe to try a dark and dense espresso Napoletano.
- Enter the Basilica of Santa Chiara, the largest Gothic church in Naples, to see its beautifully tiled cloister.
- Step inside a shop to taste the famous Vesuvius chocolate.
- Walk along Via dei Tribunali and enjoy a cuoppo, or cone, filled with fried street foods such as arancini, polenta, croquettes, and vegetables.
- Sample sfogliatella, a flaky pastry, near the Church of San Domenico Maggiore.

Day 14: Free day in Naples

Included meals: breakfast

Spend a free day in Naples or add excursions. This evening, enjoy a farewell drink as you celebrate your trip with your fellow group members.

- + A Naples Tradition: Neapolitan Pizza
 - + The Lost City of Herculaneum
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Flight Home**Day 15: Departure**

Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Customize your experience

Customize your tour by adding excursion options. Excursions offered on the same day will occur at different times, so there's no need to choose. Save \$10 when you book your excursion up to three days before your tour departs.* Excursions requiring advance reservation only list this discounted price. Call or go online to customize your tour: goaheadtours.com/TSI | 1-800-597-0350

Day 4: Mount Etna Wine Region Tasting & Dinner

\$125/\$135* (4 hours, departs in the evening with dinner)

Travel to the Etna wine region for a traditional Sicilian dinner and wine tasting on the grounds of a local vineyard estate. The area's volcanic soil and distinctive climate infuse the wines with an intense and pleasing minerality that perfectly complements traditional Sicilian cooking. You'll sip on Etna Rosso blends made of the sleek nerello mascalese and nerello cappuccio grapes while in view of the majestic Mount Etna.

Day 8: Puglia Wine Tasting & Dinner

\$119/\$129* (4 hours, departs in the afternoon, dinner included)

Journey to the scenic Puglia region and tour a boutique winery outside of Gioia del Colle. You'll learn about the flavor profiles and production of the varietals, including Primitivo. While the grapes are a near identical twin to Zinfandel, Primitivo produced in this rich volcanic soil is known for its bold flavor and is one of Italy's best and most underrated wines. Taste the winery's Primitivo alongside other wines as you enjoy passed appetizers. Then, sit down to enjoy a three-course dinner paired with more wine.

Extension excursion options

Day 14: A Naples Tradition: Neapolitan Pizza

\$79/\$89* (3 hours, departs in the afternoon)

Visit one of Naples' most famous pizzerias for a demonstration of the local art of pizza making—and a tasting of the final product, of course. Pizza as we know it today was born in Neapolitan peasant towns in the late 18th century, nearly 200 years after explorers brought tomatoes back from the New World. Lucky for pizza lovers, the fruit finally made its way onto rustic, yeast-based flatbreads. The new creation drew tourists in to the poorer areas of the town just for a taste—and this tradition of quality and freshness still reigns supreme in Neapolitan kitchens.

Day 14: The Lost City of Herculaneum

\$75/\$85* (4 hours, departs in the morning)

Part of the family of Lost Cities, Herculaneum was also glazed over by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. On this excursion, a guide will take you through the small city and all of its well-preserved wonders. Unlike Pompeii, the conditions in Herculaneum allowed for many buildings and artwork to remain intact. Examine the frescoes and mosaics that decorated the homes of the wealthy, and the narrow streets that characterized the area. Before you leave, take some free time to shop.

*Optional excursions may be purchased up to three days prior to departure or while on tour. Pre-purchased optional excursions cannot be canceled within three days prior to departure or while on tour. Select optional excursions require advance booking and cannot be purchased or canceled after the advanced reservation deadline. GAT accepts payment by cash, Visa or MasterCard for optional excursions purchased on tour. Additional fees may apply for optional excursions purchased on tour. Excursions require a minimum number of participants to operate. Details and prices are subject to change. Due to seasonal hours of operation and availability, some excursions may not operate. If this occurs, you will be refunded any payments made for that excursion post-tour. Learn more at goaheadtours.com/terms