

IMAGINE/DISCOVER/LIVE

Archaeoastronomy

Stars, rocks and megaliths:
the origins of Sicilian religiosity

EXCITING
HORIZON
Be Your Journey

In this journey, as well as being professional guides, you will be in the company of a nuclear astrophysicist, president of the Institute of Sicilian Archaeoastronomy (I.A.S).

10 DAYS

*Argimusco's megaliths
of Montalbano Elicona*



ITINERARY

ARCHAEOASTRONOMY



DAY 1

Arrival in Catania, transfer to the accommodation. Dinner with briefing on the trip hosted by our Living Heritage, Andrea Orlando, nuclear astrophysicist and president of the Institute of Sicilian Archaeoastronomy -I.A.S.- the leading expert in archaeoastronomy in Sicily, author of scientific publications presented in international conferences and magazines on this topic, who will present a preview of the emotions you will experience in his company during your stay.

DAY 2 - Gurfa Cave and Alia

In the morning you will visit the rock complex, consisting of various rooms all carved into the rock; the large bell-shaped environment is considered a barn of the early Middle Ages, but the history of this place begins in the Iron Age; lunch in Alia and in the afternoon, a visit to the Museum of Photography to learn about the project of the American artist and patron James Turrell who linked the Gurfa to the Roden Crater. The Roden Crater is a large-scale, unique work of art, made by him. This was created within a cone of volcanic ash, located in the Painted Desert region of northern Arizona that represents a gateway to the contemplation of light, time and landscape.

It is the magnum work of the career of James Turrell, who found the Gurfa alongside the representation and narrative meaning.

DAY 3 - The other side of Cefalù

In the morning visit to the Temple of Diana located on the Rocca di Cefalù. The temple, made of cyclopean stones, dates back to the Greek era; inside there is a cistern, partly carved into the rock, of protohistoric origins, dated, between the early Bronze Age and the Iron Age, the first half of the fourth millennium B.C.. The time of entry is east-to-the other area of pollution. In the afternoon, we take the opportunity to be on site for a walk through the historic center of the town of Cefalù, thus also understanding why its cathedral is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and visit the Mandralisca museum, where the painting "Portrait of a Man" by Antonello da Messina is exhibited.

DAY 4 - Solunto and Randazzo

During the morning, a visit to the site of the city

of Solunto, indicated by Thucydides as one of the main Phoenician cities, after Mothia and Palermo, but which, unfortunately, was razed to the ground, in the phase of conquest, by the Greeks. In the area, however, we find the Hellenistic-Roman city, which houses a remarkable sector of the urban fabric, including the famous 'Casa di Leda', which preserves a room with a mosaic floor, which represents an armillary sphere of great interest. Light lunch and transfer to Randazzo for dinner with meeting with our living heritage luthier and medieval musician Giuseppe Severini.

DAY 5 - Argimusco in Montalbano Elicona

In the morning visit to the Argimusco plateau, one of the most fascinating sites in Sicily, where, among hundreds of rocks, we will discover some anthropomorphic and zoomorphic of great beauty. From the site you can practice the astronomy of the horizons and, therefore, it will be possible to know in detail, together with you, the archaeoastronomical features of the East horizon. The plateau has always been a place to which man has paid attention, certainly frequented by prehistoric men as a place of worship, cultivated with wheat until the last century and today an area dedicated to grazing. A place with a strong magnetic charm. Lunch and afternoon walk in the medieval historic center of Montalbano Elicona, proclaimed in 2015 in a national competition the most beautiful village in Italy, and visit to its castle.

DAY 6 - Rocca Pizzicata

After breakfast, visit to the rock complex of Rocca Pizzicata, where you will be fascinated by the rock millstones, ancient artifacts carved into the rock that were used for the production of wine. At the top of the Rocca there is also one of the largest astronomically oriented cave tombs in the Alcantara Valley. Lunch at Tenuta Rustica, owners of the Rocca. In the afternoon, we will move towards Bronte to discover one of the most fascinating and lesser-known prehistoric monuments on the island: the small 'cromlech of Etna', a megalithic building with a spiral plan oriented to the sunset of the equinoxes.

DAY 7 - Sperlinga Cave in Novara di Sicilia land

In the morning, a visit to the prehistoric shelter of Sperlinga, one of the few sites in Sicily dating back

to the Mesolithic, a period that identifies the history of man between 10000 and 9000 years ago, which testifies to the presence of man in those areas. Here are also some linear engravings whose meaning still remains unknown. Lunch in Novara di Sicilia and in the afternoon transfer to Noto.

DAY 8 - Pantalica

Full day dedicated to the discovery of another Sicilian World Heritage Site: Pantalica and the rocky necropolis.

The site is located on a plateau well circumscribed by canyons formed over the centuries by rivers Val d'Anapo and Calcinara that flow to the sides digging the limestone rocks. This plateau provides us with the example of a phenomenon known as "rock civilization", that is the use of inhabiting man in caves from the most ancient phases of prehistory. Man in this area settled even before Asian homo sapiens. In fact, the human presence is traced back to the period of glaciation, in which, due to marine regressions, it was possible to pass and migrate from north Africa to Sicily.

We will then travel through the archaeological area formed by more than 5,000 tombs, also focusing on caves, rock environments and the Anaktoron 'Prince's palace' retracing a journey through time of millennia. Packed lunch.

DAY 9 - Thapsos and other signs of the past

In the morning, visit of the Magnisi peninsula, a small portion of land located in the center of the Gulf of Augusta and connected to the mainland by thin sandy isthmus, home to the site of the Middle Bronze Age of Thapsos, one of the most important Sicilian protohistoric, dating back to the fifth millennium B.C. approximately. We will visit the town and the necropolis.

This site remains an oasis of history whose peculiarities are still identifiable with those described in the ancient historical and literary sources that we find in Thucydides, Ovid and Virgil who narrate and describe it.

Lunch at Palazzolo Acreide, in the afternoon visit to the site of Akrai, a fortress city founded by the Greeks in 660 B.C., a few decades after the foundation of Syracuse, and became the bulwark of Syracuse expansion in the Sicilian territory.

DAY 10

The trip comes to an end: after breakfast, check-out transfer to the airport for the end of services.

The estimated budget for this trip is

**from € 6.570,00 per person (minimum 4 pax)
to € 4.480,00 per person (maximum 16 pax)**

Ad hoc quotation for 2 pax.

Maximum group 16 pax.

Included

Half board for 9 days in a double or twin room, lunch organized for 9 days, service of a Guide for all days of the tour, living heritage, transport by private vehicle and driver, medical insurance, possible covid 19 tampon through an approved laboratory.

Not included

Flight, single room supplement, tips, portage at the airport, luggage tax at the hotel, drinks at dinners, meals not mentioned in the program, tastings for a fee. Anything that is not specified under "include".

