

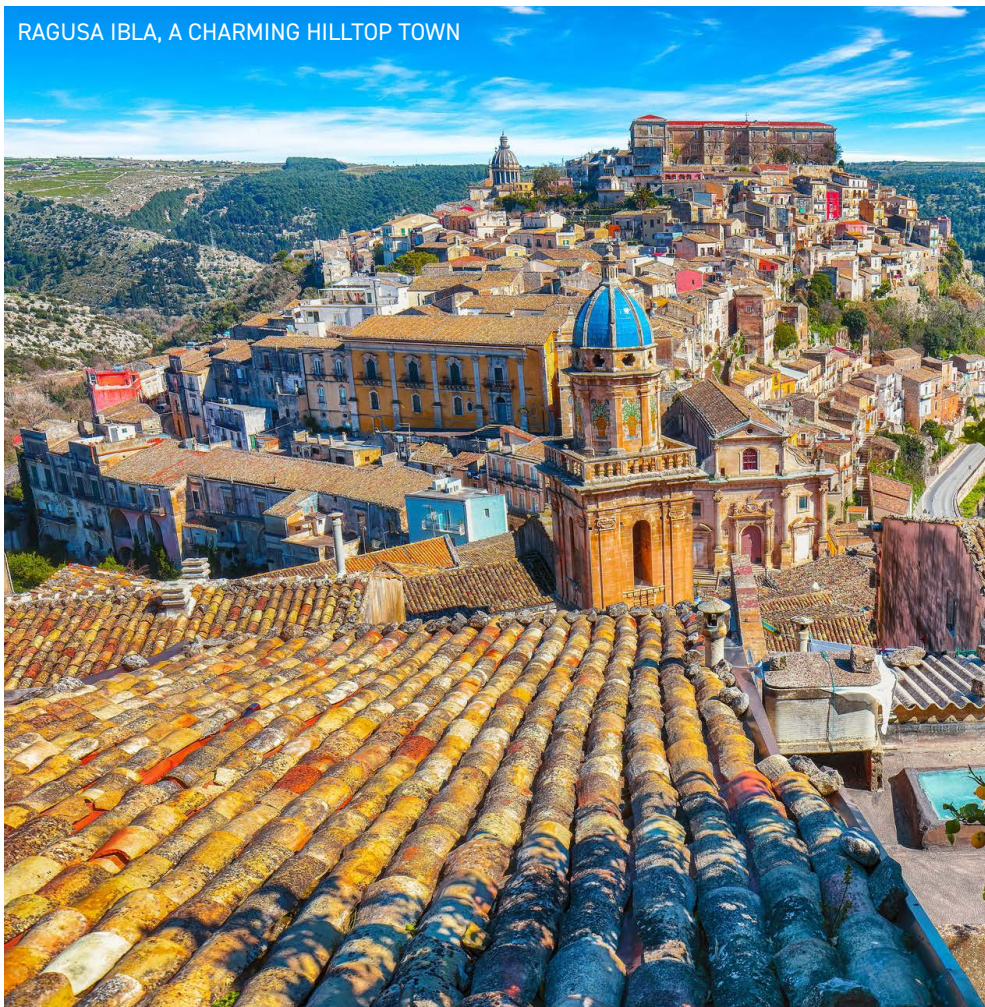


Tasting Sicily

A Culinary Adventure in Italy
Hosted by
The Chopping Block + Onward Travel
October 7—15, 2025

ONWARD TRAVEL ✈️
EST 2014

RAGUSA IBLA, A CHARMING HILLTOP TOWN



Join Executive Chef Lisa Counts and The Chopping Block for their newest culinary tour destination: Sicily! For our next food lover's adventure, we're heading to the largest and most diverse island in the Mediterranean.

Let's go to a place where east meets west, where African and European influences mingle. Where the lemon trees are fragrant, the sun shining, the history of ancient cultures woven into daily life. Alluring Sicily awaits!

Explore Sicily's fascinating cuisine, culture, and scenery. The first five nights will be based in Siracusa's ancient quarter: Ortigia. Siracusa was the largest city in the ancient world, and these days Ortigia is full of atmosphere and timeless beauty. Then, three nights will be spent at an agriturismo on the slopes of Mount Etna. A wonderful base for exploring Taormina and Mount Etna DOC.

Sicily has been a source of inspiration for millennia – from Homer, to the Greek legends, to The Godfather, and now it's your turn. Be part of The Chopping Block's travel and food loving community and join us to experience The Island in the Sun.



IMAGINE YOURSELF...

Cooking (and eating!)
Sicilian specialties.

Exploring picture-perfect
Baroque hilltop towns.

Peering over the edge of
a volcanic crater.

Welcome to Sicily!

DAY 1: TUESDAY OCTOBER 7

- Settle-in to Siracusa... look out at the Mediterranean and relax
- Savor local flavors and great company at our welcome dinner

Benvenuto! Travelers will be collected from the Catania airport and transferred to Siracusa depending on arrival time. Take some R&R this afternoon for a siesta or stroll around charming Ortigia. We'll gather at Hotel Gutowski to share some wine and soak in the views together. Gaze at the sea and get to know your fellow travelers. Tonight we'll have a festive welcome dinner at a restaurant that honors traditional Sicilian recipes, but adds a French twist to keep it creative and interesting.

Meals Dinner

Culture & Cuisine in Siracusa

DAY 2: WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 8

- Learn local specialties at a hands-on cooking class
- Admire Ortigia from the water

Enjoy a delicious breakfast, included at your hotel each day. We'll start the day with engaging local guide Elisa, who will introduce us to Ortigia and its rich history. She'll end her tour at the daily market where a local chef is waiting to explore the market together and shop for today's hands-on cooking class. Get an introduction to the products of Sicily at the sensory-pleasing market, then roll up your sleeves as we prepare a delicious multi-course meal...a fabulous lunch awaits.

Ortigia is a small island just off mainland Syracuse that was colonized by Corinthians in 734 BC. It is an immensely charming and atmospheric place. This afternoon, we'll admire the island from the water on a boat tour. Entertaining and scenic... it is so fun to get out on the water, glass of wine in hand! Enjoy a free evening, restaurant recs provided.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

Baroque Hill Town Beauty

DAY 3: THURSDAY OCTOBER 9

- Explore two gorgeous hill towns
- Taste some of Italy's best chocolate and cheese

In 1693 a devastating earthquake all but ruined many of the hill towns in Southeast Sicily. In a couple days you will experience rebuilt Noto, and today we'll visit two stunning towns: Modica and Ragusa. When these towns were rebuilt, they were rebuilt in meticulous Baroque style, so the piazzas are picturesque and the town centers are full of detail, drama, and grandeur.

We'll start in Ragusa Ibla. We'll get a view of the rooftops and the beautiful blue dome of Santa-Maria dell'Otria. Stroll the public gardens at Giardini Iblei and enjoy the stunning piazzas in this beautiful rebuilt old town. Then, we'll have a classy lunch at Michelin starred Ristorante Duomo. After a lovely and memorable lunch, relax on the short transfer to Modica.

Modica was once a very powerful town in Sicily. It remains a beautiful and interesting destination. We'll visit Dolceria Bonajuto, Sicily's oldest chocolate factory, for a tour of their kitchen and a chocolate tasting. The chocolate is a legacy of Spanish rule, but it remains some of the best in Italy. Then, take some time to shop and stroll... maybe stop by Casa del Formaggio to taste local cheeses such as Ragusano, a cow's milk cheese and fresh ricotta. As the sun gets lower, it's time to head back to Hotel Gutowski. We'll have dinner at the hotel's creative restaurant tonight, Gutkowskino.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Your Chef Host from The Chopping Block



Lisa Counts, executive chef and owner of The Chopping Block, Chicago's premier recreational cooking school, is excited to accompany the group to Sicily. Lisa is deeply rooted in her Sicilian heritage, as her father was born in Sicily. She enjoys making traditional Italian recipes both in TCB's kitchens and at home. When she's not cooking, Lisa enjoys soaking in the energy of live music with her husband, Bo. She also finds joy in spending time with their two beloved English bulldogs, Elsa and Diamond.

Savoring Siracusa

DAY 4: FRIDAY OCTOBER 10

- Experience ancient history through Greek and Roman ruins
- Take some free time to explore Ortigia at your own pace

Spend the morning as you please, Ortigia is a wonderful place to wander. After lunch, we'll visit nearby Parco Archeologico della Neapolis. Considered one of the most compelling archeological sites in Sicily, Parco Archeologico has a 5th-century Greek theater carved out of rock and a Roman amphitheater originally used for gladiatorial combats and horse races. Guide Elisa will interpret the site for us.

Enjoy some more free time to explore Siracusa before another excellent group dinner a short walk from the hotel.

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

Wine, Nature & Charm

DAY 5: SATURDAY OCTOBER 11

- Immerse yourself in Italy's Slow Food movement.
- Stroll picture-perfect Noto, gelato in hand

Today we're in pursuit of the best of Southeast Sicily. We're getting off the beaten path with a garden to table, Slow Food focused, off-grid culinary experience, literally going to the roots of Sicilian food culture. We'll make ravioli from freshly milled wheat flour and other wholesome, seasonal dishes. Enjoy cheese, olive oil, and wine tasting; all created by local award-winning producers. A private riverside farm setting rounds out the memorable experience!

After our foodie morning, we're heading to nearby Noto, a picture-perfect Baroque town with an elegantly manicured main street, Corso Vittorio Emanuele. Did you know ice cream is rumored to have been invented in Sicily? And it was absolutely perfected in Noto. Save room for an ice cream – pistachio, mulberry, amaro, or almond, perhaps? – to complement your strolling and shopping.

Once we arrive back at Hotel Gutowski, enjoy your last evening in Ortigia.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

Drinking in the Landscape

DAY 6: SUNDAY OCTOBER 12

- Taste world-famous wine and honey from Mount Etna's slopes
- Make yourself at home at an agriturismo.

At last, it's time to leave Ortigia and Siracusa, but lots of wonderful adventure remains! Mid-morning we'll head 100 kilometers north to the Mount Etna wine region. High altitude wineries produce excellent wines from the mineral-rich volcanic soils. The primary grapes grown are Carricante (white), Nerello Mascalese (red), and native grape Nerello Cappuccio (red, for blending). Taste these world famous wines at the source as we enjoy a leisurely 5-course lunch at a DOC winery.

We have one more thing to taste after lunch...we'll visit a family run apiary with pollinator-friendly gardens. Taste a variety of honeys and buy some locally produced edible products if you'd like.

Just a few minutes away is our next home base: Agriturismo Tenuta San Michele. Settle into your comfortable accommodation and enjoy strolling the property. The Agriturismo has been family owned and active since 1860, with on-site wine production, plus 26 hectares of vineyards and panoramic views. We'll enjoy dinner together at the on-site restaurant.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

AGRITURISMO TENUTA SAN MICHELE



Majestic Mount Etna

DAY 7: MONDAY OCTOBER 13

- Visit a pistachio farm - does it get more Sicilian?!
- Ascend Mount Etna to see a volcanic crater

Wake up to peace and quiet and volcano views... plus a nice breakfast spread. Now it's off to finally experience that volcano we've been staring at. Today we'll drive around the base of Mount Etna to Bronte, famous for pistachio production. Our destination is a pistachio farm to see the plants and operation, then we'll visit their store and enjoy lunch and tasting of famous pistachio products.

Next, we'll ascend Mount Etna, by minibus, to get up close and personal with a crater. Folklore and legend surround the volcano and it is now a national park full of otherworldly vistas. Eventually we'll return to our homebase for a cozy dinner together.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Tantalizing Taormina & a Farewell Feast

DAY 8: TUESDAY OCTOBER 14

- Explore absolutely beautiful Taormina
- Savor a farewell cooking class feast!

This morning our destination is Taormina, a seaside resort town popular since the 19th century. The town is spectacularly perched on the side of a mountain, with beautiful views of Mount Etna and class and sophistication for days. Enjoy a guided tour including the Greek theater, a 3rd century BC amphitheater with breathtaking views. Then you have free time for wandering and lunch. Take time to explore the medieval streets, especially pedestrian friendly Corso Umberto, lined with shops.

After a fun day, we'll convene at the agriturismo's restaurant to prepare a farewell dinner together with a local chef leading us in a cooking class. The class will feature traditional recipes and you'll expand your repertoire. We'll savor our dinner tonight, toasting our time together (with Sicilian vino) and sharing stories.

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

Arrivederci!

DAY 9: WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 15

Thank you for sharing this special week in Sicily! Transfers are available this morning for flights out of Catania.

Meals Breakfast



Trip Essentials

BEGINS	<p>Siracusa, Italy, on Tuesday, October 7, 2025</p> <p>Transfer provided from Catania Airport or city center to Siracusa</p>
ENDS	<p>Catania, Italy on Wednesday, October 15, 2025 (no activities scheduled 10/15)</p> <p>Transfer provided from to Catania Airport</p>
SUITABILITY & MOBILITY	<p><u>This tour includes walking for 15-30 minutes at a time, plus stairs and cobblestones.</u> Travelers should be able to walk a mile at a comfortable pace. If you have limited mobility, we may be able to accommodate you, but it is essential to let us know at the time of registration. Travelers may always opt out of activities they deem too physically challenging but refunds will not be provided.</p>
TOUR DATES & PRICE	<p>October 7–15, 2025</p> <p>Double Occupancy \$4,650 per traveler</p> <p>Single Supplement \$400 additional</p> <p>Contact Onward if you are interested in a room upgrade.</p> <p><i>Note that air travel is not included and a current passport is required for travel to Italy. You are welcome to pay by credit card, please add a 3% surcharge.</i></p>
LODGING	<p>Unique lodging with a Sicilian sense of place has been selected for <i>Tasting Sicily</i>.</p> <p>Hotel Gutowski 5 Nights A fresh and stylish hotel on the Ortigia waterfront with tile floors, lots of light, and a calming aesthetic. Enjoy the terrace with sea views.</p> <p>Tenuta San Michele 3 Nights A 15-room agriturismo with winery on-site located in the Mt. Etna DOC. Traditional and rustic, peaceful and well kept with pool and restaurant.</p>

Air Travel

The tour will start and end with transfers to/from Catania International Airport (CTA). Please confirm with Onward Travel that the tour is a “go” before booking non-refundable airfare. Contact Onward Travel for assistance.

Trip price includes the following:

- Airport transfers and ground transportation to/from all scheduled activities.
- Five nights accommodations at Hotel Gutowski and three nights accommodations at Agriturismo.
- Most meals: daily breakfasts, five lunches, and five dinners. We have fantastic gourmet experiences, wine included, of course!
- Local guide services throughout the tour to truly understand Sicily.
- Activities, tastings, cooking classes, and tours as detailed in the itinerary.

Register Now!

Visit onwardtravel.co to complete the registration form.

\$1,500 deposit due upon booking, balance due by August 1, 2025.



The Onward Travel Tour Director for this trip is Barbara

Barbara Bandinelli is a tour guide in her home city of Florence and Onward has been working with her there for so many years we’ve lost count! Her fun and interesting Florence walking tours are always a highlight of our travelers’ Tuscan experience.

Barbara considers herself a true Italian who loves “to talk, to chat, to eat, to drink” and she can’t wait to enjoy life together in Italy with you!

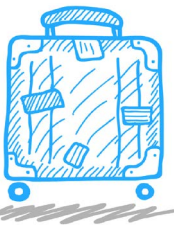
Please take note of the following useful information, and view more at www.onwardtravel.co/letsgo



Once Onward Travel receives your registration form, we will send you an **invoice** with instructions to pay the **deposit**.



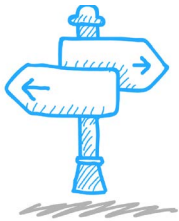
If you'd like to purchase **trip insurance**, we suggest Travelex. For more info, call them at 800-228-9792 or visit www.travelexinsurance.com and refer to location number 32-0704.



Four to six weeks before the tour **we will mail you a packet** with a packing list, traveler directory and other useful info.



Make sure you know where your **passport** is now! For travel to Italy it should be valid for six months beyond your return date.



Onward Travel's cancellation policy in a nutshell:

- \$250 of your initial deposit is nonrefundable
- Cancel within 90 days and the full deposit is nonrefundable
- Cancel within 60 days and 50% of total trip fee is nonrefundable
- Cancel within 30 days and the full trip fee is nonrefundable

See the full [Terms & Conditions](http://www.onwardtravel.co/terms) at www.onwardtravel.co/terms

Get in Touch!

Contact Onward Travel with questions or special requests:
letsgo@onwardtravel.co
845-293-2729

