



Southern Italy Conference

MAIN TOUR

Puglia 20 - 28 October 2020

PRE-TOUR

Sardinia Longevity Tour 12 - 20 October 2020

POST-TOUR

Sicily 28 October - 4 November 2020



















MAIN TOUR

Puglia

OCTOBER 2020

Kissed by the Adriatic sun, southern Italy's Apulia region is a land of olive trees, impressive Norman castles, and charming hilltop towns overlooking aquamarine seas. Join us on this exciting adventure to one of Italy's little-known regions and discover why this area has been settled and contended for centuries with its incredible nature, history, food and wine traditions.

Day 1 Arrival Bari Tues 20 October



We will arrive into Bari either from Australia, or for those doing the pre tour, from Cagliari and have the rest of the day to relax.

We can discover the tiny lanes and picturesque perspectives of old Bari, the capital town of Apulia, with a stroll through the historic centre and admire the enchanting area along the sea promenade.

ACCOMMODATION: Grande Albergo delle Nazioni <u>www.grandealbergodellenazioni.com</u>

DELEGATES ONLY

Morning conference/Hospital visit including morning tea

NON-DELEGATES

Morning at leisure



In the afternoon we will be amazed during our walking tour of Alberobello, a small town in the southern region of Puglia, which has made the UNESCO World Heritage list due to its districts of trulli. These trulli are ancient whitewashed conical roofed houses built from local limestone found only in this part of Italy.

With our local guide we will delve into the authentic life of the village and visit a private trullo museum. We may also visit the church of Sant'Antonio, the only one with a trullo shape.

We will have free time to explore the town, perhaps purchase some of the local ceramics or taste some of the local produce such as wines, olive oil, almonds, regional sweets and taralli breads. In the evening we will transfer to Cisternino where we will have a unique dinner experience, a Butchery's dinner, famous for meat lovers who dine inside Real Butcheries.



ACCOMMODATION: Grande Albergo delle Nazioni B D



Day 3

Castellana's Grottos • Locorotondo

Thurs 22 October

This morning our guided tour of Castellana's Grottos, the longest underground tunnels of Italy will be a true spellbinding sight. The interlinked galleries, first discovered in 1938, contain an incredible range of underground landscapes, with extraordinary stalactite and stalagmite formations.

The visit to the caves starts from the Grave, the first and most extensive cave, the only one where we can see a corner of Puglia's blue sky. However the highlight will be the Grotta Bianca (White Grotto).

Following this we will transfer to Polignano a Mare built on the edge of a craggy ravine pockmarked with caves. The town is thought to be one of the most important ancient settlements in Puglia and was latter inhabited by successive invaders ranging from the Huns to the Normans.

Our last stop will be Locorotondo endowed with a whisper quiet pedestrianised Centro Storico where everything is shimmering white aside from blood red geraniums that tumble from the window boxes. This village lies in a stunning green expanse of countryside known as Valle D'Italia.

We will end the day at our luxury accommodation a member of the Leading Hotels of the World.





ACCOMMODATION: Borgo Egnazia **B D** https://borgoegnazia.com/



Morning at Leisure OR

OPTIONAL TOUR: HIKE THROUGH HIDDEN TREASURE

Hike through hidden treasure from Capitolo to San Procopio.

Together with a local expert, we will discover an ancient settlement dated back to the 10th Century, cave art graffiti and crypts A prosperous vegetation hides these secret places where old inhabitants of Egnathia used to take refuge during hard times.

This hike is a learning experience with a perfect balance of outdoor activity and cultural notes, a quick trip to ancient days and back, all garnished by the typical southern sunny game of light and a pleasing breeze coming from the sea.

In the afternoon we will visit Ostuni, a tumble of white-washed buildings perched strategically atop a hill with views of the endless olive trees in the Valle d'Itria countryside. It is one of the most stunning cities in Southern Italy.

The stark white buildings are dazzling in the southern sun and are brightened by vivid green and blue wooden doors, pots of red geraniums and cacti.

In the early evening we will transfer to Lecce also known as "Southern Florence" for its huge architectural heritage.



ACCOMMODATION: Risorgimento Resort B <u>www.risorgimentoresort.it</u>

DELEGATES ONLY

Morning conference including morning tea

NON-DELEGATES

Morning at leisure

Afternoon at Leisure OR

OPTION 1: FOOD WALKING TOUR OF LECCE

Art, culture, traditional food, secret spots, hidden gardens, historical private buildings and a local guide are the ingredients to enjoy a perfect walking tour in the fabulous Lecce. An authentic "Leccese" friend will guide us through the stunning old town centre unveiling hidden spots far from crowded areas. We will have the occasion to taste some of the various specialties of the local gastronomy such as the "pasticciotto leccese" or the "rustico".



OPTION 2: PAPER MACHE WORKSHOP-LA CARTAPESTA

The processing of papier-mâché is a very ancient art and it is strongly anchored to the city of Lecce and Baroque architecture, which had maximum artistic expression during the 17th and 18th centuries. The papier-mâché is made of paper, water and glue. With its versatility, it can reproduce more noble materials such as silver, marble or bronze. It was also commissioned for religious reasons to cover sacred statues. This made the figure of the artisan of that time very noble, combining it with the phenomenon of baroque. If you are keen on learning about this enchanting craft, we offer you the opportunity to attend a papiermâché ("cartapesta") workshop, in an artisan's laboratory in the heart of the town.



ACCOMMODATION: Risorgimento Resort B



Day 6 Otranto • Gallipoli Sun 25 October

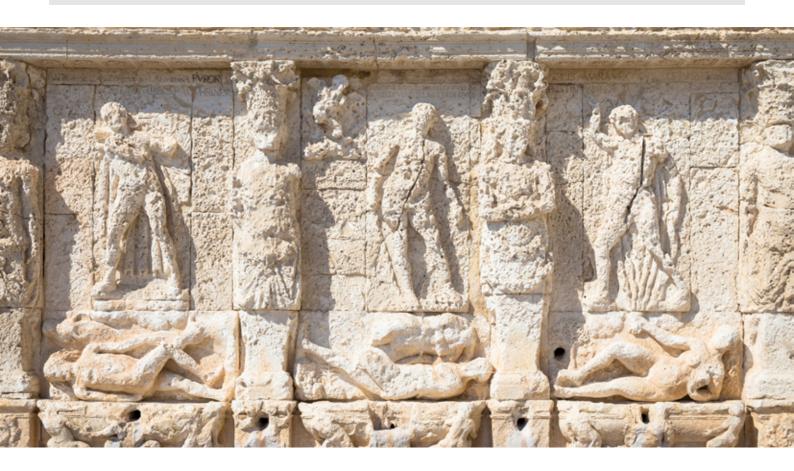
Our trip today will take us to the southern part of Puglia to visit two of Puglia's loveliest coastal cities, Otranto and Gallipoli.

Our drive from Lecce along the coast is dotted with villages and olive groves. Once in Otranto we will start our walking tour to discover the 11th-Century Otranto Cathedral, renowned for its mosaic floor and rose window, the Byzantine Church of St. Peter, and the Aragonese Castle of Otranto and admire views of the old town.

After this a wonderful lunch will await us in one of the local seaside restaurants.







We will then drive to another wonderful fishing village. The town formerly called Kallipoli has only one original building, the Fontana Greca. In the medieval period, the town belonged to the Roman



Pope, and later Normans settled here. In the 18th Century, a port was built in the city and Gallipoli became one of the most significant importers of olive oil.

Our walking tour will take place in the old town, perched on a limestone island. Before exploring the narrow paved streets of the historic centre, we will stop at the authentic fish market, held in what used to be the moat of the imposing castle, to view, with the locals, the best of the day's catch. The Angevin fortress, almost completely surrounded by the sea, was recently restored and is now accessible from the old town. Here we can immerse ourselves in the history, as we wander through fortified towers, tunnels, corridors, and majestic halls. We will also see the famous Greek Fountain, a monument which actually dates to the Renaissance.

ACCOMMODATION: Risorgimento Resort B L



Day 7 Lecce • Matera Mon 26 October

DELEGATES ONLY

Morning conference including morning tea

In the afternoon we will transfer to Matera. Continually inhabited for over 10,000 years it is thought to be one of the oldest cities in the world, a jumble of stone dwellings built alongside each other and linked by narrow jagged lanes.

Matera's aura is magical. The town is a disarming blend of contrasts with beautiful, unique cavedwellings, magnificent baroque palaces and beautiful stone churches. At dusk the city and its biblical landscape resembles an enormous, stupendous crèche. It's no surprise that this city, already a UNESCO World Heritage Site and unique in its genre, was declared the 2019 European Capital of Culture.

We will have free time to enjoy our luxury hotel.

NON-DELEGATES

Morning at leisure



ACCOMMODATION: Palazzo Gattini B www.palazzogattini.it



Day 8 Matera Tues 27 October

Matera is one of the most interesting, unusual and memorable tourist destinations in Italy in the remote southern region of Basilicata still little-visited by foreign travellers. It is in a unique setting lying within a small canyon. Also known as the Subterranean City, Matera is well known for its historical centre called "Sassi", considered a World Heritage Site by UNESCO since 1993, along with the Park of the Rupestrian Churches that we will also visit during our guided walking tour.

Matera was also one of the filming locations for Mel Gibson's film The Passion of the Christ, with shots showing the sassi and the gorge below.

We will end the tour at the Museum of Contemporary Sculpture at Pomarici Palace. This unique museum provides the perfect environment for the symbiosis of sculpture and the characteristic carved sites in the Sassi. The exhibition galleries consist not only of the rooms of the Palazzo but also the vast hypogea where the works of art are revitalised by the strength and beauty of the surrounding rock hewn spaces.







Day 8 Continued Matera Wed 27 October

Afternoon at Leisure OR

OPTIONAL COOKING CLASS

An Italian focaccia "Hands-on" Cooking School

The workshop includes the whole history of bread and its peculiarities, the processing of a loaf until it is baked and cooked, ending with a tasting of baked goods.



We will end the tour with a sumptuous farewell dinner.

ACCOMMODATION: Palazzo Gattini B D www.palazzogattini.it

Day 9 Depart Puglia Weds 28 October

We will transfer from Matera to Bari for our flight to Palermo for those doing the post tour to Sicily

MAIN TOUR

Puglia

20 - 28 OCTOBER 2020

Trip Inclusions

- Conference sessions/hospital visits with tea as indicated (delegates only)
- 8 nights at well-appointed accommodation mentioned in the itinerary (or equivalent)
- Meals indicated in the itinerary including welcome and farewell dinner
- All group airport-hotel transfers with airfares purchased through Convention Abroad
- All sightseeing, activities and entrance fees as outlined in the itinerary
- Porterage
- Bilingual guide
- Tipping
- Convention Abroad escort
- All taxes and handling fees

Trip Exclusions

- International airfares Australia Italy
- Individual airport-hotel transfers
- Meals and drinks not indicated in the itinerary
- Optional tours/activities other than those specified
- Personal expenses (laundry, telephone, mini bar, etc.)
- Travel insurance (compulsory)
- Individual airport-hotel transfers
- Visas (if needed)
- Airport taxes (if applicable)
- Anything not mentioned in the trip inclusions



To receive all costing details

Please proceed to the 'Register Your Interest' page on our website to complete and submit the form.

www.conventionabroad.com.au

For any questions, please contact

Dr Naomi Jacobs 0413 62 62 74

Sardinia Longevity Tour

12-20 OCTOBER 2020

A wonderful journey about the discovery of Sardinian longevity secrets and visiting some of the areas of the island where many residents live up to more than a hundred years.



Day 1 Arrival Cagliari Mon 12 October

We will arrive into Cagliari and have time to relax depending on our flight arrival time.

Cagliari is known for its vespas buzzing down treefringed boulevards, its seafront marina district and its historic historical ruins, centuries-old churches and elegant palazzi.



ACCOMMODATION: Hotel Regina Margherita <u>www.hotelreginamargherita.com</u>



Day 2 Cagliari • Orroli Tues 13 October

This morning we will visit San Benedetto fish and food market, one of the most colourful places in Cagliari and the largest covered fish market in Europe. Here we will enjoy some interesting tastings.

We will then travel through the heart of the voluptuous green countryside and visit the UNESCO site Su Nuraxi Nuranghe dating back to 1800BC. Nuraghes are a characteristic and unique Sardinian megalithic edifice that dot the whole of Sardinia. The purpose of Nuraghes is still controversial, most archaeologists assume they were used as religious temples, meeting halls, or military strongholds.

Many of the settlement buildings here were erected in the Iron Age and it is these that constitute the beehive of circular interlocking buildings that tumble down the hillside.

On our way to the small village of Orroli we will stop at a flour grinding mill to see the grinding of ancient flours.

Up until a few years ago, the village was quite unknown and only recently has been reassessed for its archaeological and environmental value.

Handicrafts are also bountiful including hand-woven carpets, embroidery, leather tanning, wrought iron work and knife engraving.



ACCOMMODATION: Antichi Ovili, Orroli B L D www.antichiovili.it



The full morning will be dedicated to bread making and baking within a small local community. We will learn the secrets of ancient flours!!



Afternoon at Leisure OR Optional Tour

(see box to the right)

In the evening we will enjoy local wine tastings before dinner and discover the links between longevity and red wine in Sardinia.

OPTIONAL TOUR- HIKE TO GIARA WILD PARK

Giara Wild Park is a high and steep-sided basaltic plateau which covers almost 45 square kilometres on the highland overlooking the hilly valleys of Marmilla and high Trexenta. The Giara was formed some 3 million years ago when lava covered older sedimentary rock. During our hike we will observe the endemic flora species and try to spot the gracious little wild horses.



ACCOMMODATION: Antichi Ovili, Orroli B L D



This morning we will transfer to an olive oil mill for a guided tour, extra virgin olive oil tasting and cooking demonstration/workshop followed by a beautiful lunch comprising local organic produce at a local agriturismo. During the cooking demonstration we will learn about the centenarians diet.

Afternoon Medical Session

We will meet with a local general practitioner and learn more about the medical system in Sardinia.

In the evening we will transfer to the Barbagia of Seulo, a mountain area of Inner Sardinia.



ACCOMMODATION: Hotel Miramonti B L D <u>www.hotelmiramontiseulo.eu</u>



Day 5 Seulo Fri 16 October

This morning we will spend time and hike with a goat shepherd and visit the traditional pinnettas (ancient shepherd's huts) and enjoy a traditional roast lunch.

Afternoon Medical Session

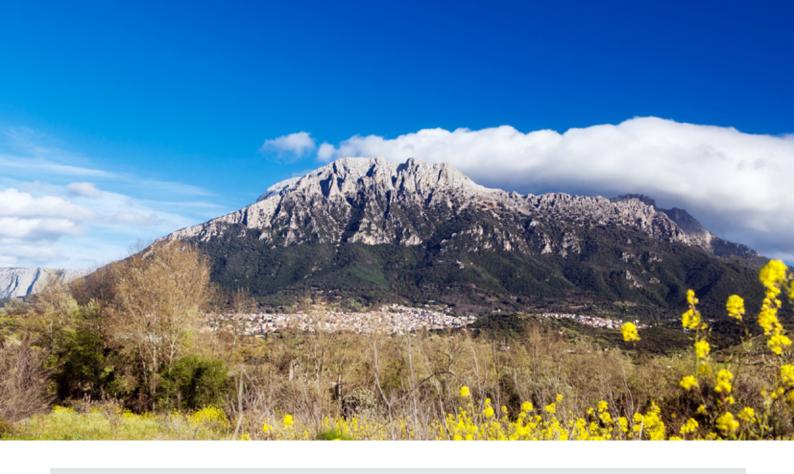
In the afternoon we will visit a centenarian and enjoy an educational "Centenarian dinner "with an eminent local Professor.

Seulo is a true factory for centenarians-a person born here is statistically ten times more likely to live to 100 than the average Italian. The ancient populations here – and often ones with an ancestor in common – have lived isolated for centuries. These men and women have lived in a harsh, but unpolluted climate and fed themselves on what nature has to offer. In essence, their lives have been characterised by hard work and intense physical activity but little emotional stress.





ACCOMMODATION: Hotel Miramonti B L D



Day 6 Seulo • Oliena Sat 17 October

Today we will transfer to Oliena via the wild Supramonte Mountains.

The rest of the afternoon will be at leisure in our unique accommodation or we will have the opportunity to take a short walk to the nearby Su Gologone resurgences with our guide.





ACCOMMODATION: Su Gologone Experience Hotel **B** <u>www.sugologone.it/en/</u>

Day at leisure OR





This excursion allows us to admire the picturesque coast of the Gulf of Orosei up to the beach of Cala Goloritze. Starting from the Port of Cala Gonone, we will admire the beautiful beaches as well as the famous "Venus Pools". We will also visit the marine grotto rich in

stalactites and stalagmites that are reflected in the clear waters of a large salty underground lake. Depending on the weather there may also be time for some swimming.

OPTION 2: FULL DAY JEEP AND HIKING TOUR IN THE SUPRAMONTE MOUNTAINS

We will be driven to the historic "Lanaitto" Valley, rich in endemic flora, caves, Nuragic archaeological remains and sheep herds of the shepherds, where encounters with wild animals such as mouflons, wild boars, buzzards and golden eagles are not unlikely. It was the first part of the island inhabited by man, dating back to the Paleolithic period.

After a short walk we will reach the cave of "Sa Ohe" known for its underground river before reaching the local shepherds who will prepare an excellent lunch of cured meats, cheeses and wine.



ACCOMMODATION: Su Gologone Experience Hotel E



Day 8 Oliena • Cagliari Mon 19 October

Today we will transfer to Cagliari via Cabras. In Cabras we will stop at the ancient ruins of Tharros from VIII BC and enjoy a guided tour of the remains of this strategic port town set in the beautiful gulf of Sinis and overlooking the Promontory of Saint Marc before enjoying a seafood lunch.

ACCOMMODATION: Hotel Regina Margherita **B** <u>www.hotelreginamargherita.com</u>

Day 9 Depart Cagliari Tue 20 October

We will transfer to the airport for our flight to Bari.

PRE TOUR

Sardinia Longevity Tour

12-20 OCTOBER 2020

Trip Inclusions

- 8 nights at well-appointed accommodation mentioned in the itinerary (or equivalent)
- Flight Cagliari to Bari
- Meals indicated in the itinerary
- All group airport hotel transfers with airfares purchased through Convention Abroad
- All sightseeing, activities and entrance fees as outlined in the itinerary
- Bilingual guide
- Convention Abroad escort
- All taxes and handling fees

Trip Exclusions

- International airfares Australia Sardinia
- Meals or drinks not mentioned in the itinerary
- Individual airport -hotel transfers
- Optional tours/activities other than those specified
- Personal expenses (laundry, telephone, mini bar, room service etc.)
- Tipping
- Visa (if required)
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- Porterage
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Dr Naomi Jacobs 0413 62 62 74

POST TOUR

Sicily

28 OCTOBER - 4 NOVEMBER 2020



Day 1 Palermo Wed 28 October

Today we will fly from Bari to Palermo arriving late morning. Palermo, a city over 2,700 years old, is noted for its history, culture, architecture and gastronomy and was voted the Italian Capital of Culture in 2018.

After check in at our hotel we will explore the Old Town in the unique 'Ape Calessino' three wheel cars. The best way to enjoy this town!!



ACCOMMODATION: Hotel Wagner Palermo <u>www.grandhotelwagner.it</u>

DELEGATES ONLY

Morning conference at ISMETT hospital including morning tea

NON-DELEGATES

Morning at leisure



In the afternoon we will visit the extraordinary chapel Capella Palatina designed in 1130.

Its glittering gold mosaics are complimented by inlaid marble floors and a wooden muqarnas ceiling, the latter a masterpiece of Arabic-style honeycomb carving reflecting Sicily's cultural complexity. The chapel's well-lit interior is simply breathtaking. Every inch is inlaid with precious stones, giving the space a lustrous quality.

In the evening we will visit Palermo's Teatro Massimo "Vittorio Emanuele" whose façade resembles a classic temple, and is the largest theatre in Italy and in Europe.

We will also have the option to visit Palazzo Alliata di Villafranca.

Stopping at Piazza Bologni you'll surely be enchanted by one of the most majestic palaces of the city which dates back to the 15th century and housed the powerful Beccadelli family of Bologna. The building housed one of the most important art collections of the city, including the still visible "Crucifixion" realised by Van Dyck, and two magnificent paintings by Matthias Stom.



ACCOMMODATION: Hotel Wagner Palermo B



Today we will visit the "Valley of the Temples" just outside the town of Agrigento, ancient "Akragas" founded in the 6th Century BC.

We will admire these majestic Greek temples, considered one of the most well-preserved Greek archaeological sites in Italy and better preserved than some ancient ruins in Greece.

The most breathtaking temple is that of the Temple of Concordia.



We will end the day at a beautiful resort which will offer us a stay of tranquillity in the rustic simplicity of an ancient farmhouse and in the renovated rooms of an old train station and winery.



ACCOMMODATION: Mandranova Hotel & Resort **BD** <u>www.mandranova.com</u>



Morning at Leisure

Afternoon at Leisure OR

OPTIONAL TOUR: SCALA DEL TURCHI

This tour lead by a naturalist guide will see us visiting one of the most incredible and unusual cliffs in Italy-Scala dei Turchi.

A natural stunning white staircase will lead us into the marvels of a turquoise beach.

The contrast of the different blue colours with the rock formation are spectacular!

Also the white mud that can be found there is considered to have rejuvernating and healing properties.



ACCOMMODATION: Mandranova Hotel & Resort BD



Day 5 Agrigento • Taormina Sun 1 November

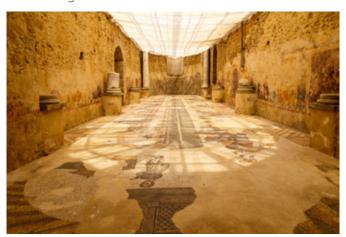
On our way to Taormina we will travel deep in the Sicilian hinterland to Piazza Armerina where we will visit the famous Villa Romana del Casale, now a UNESCO Heritage Site.

Built in the middle of the 4th Century AD as a hunting lodge by a Roman patrician the Villa is home to some of the best preserved and extensive examples of Roman mosaics.



These extraordinarily vivid mosaics, probably produced by North African artisans, deal with numerous subjects, ranging from Homeric escapades and mythological scenes to portrayals of daily life, including the famous tableau of girls exercising in their "bikinis".

Almost completely covered by a landslide in the 12th Century, the Villa was partly rediscovered in the 19th Century. However, not until the 20th Century, with further excavations did the magnitude and magnificence of Villa Romana del Casale come to light.



Our afternoon will also include a visit to Caltagirone, an attractive hilltop town known for its ceramics of swirling patterns, vibrant colours and painstakingly detailed designs. The towns earliest inhabitants worked with terracotta until Arab settlers added the yellows and blues that have distinguished these local ceramics ever since.

Virtually all buildings in the old town are decorated with ceramic tiles, shops spill their delightfully crafted wares onto the pavements and the effect is one of multichromatic vivacity.



Day 5 Continued Caltagirone Sun 1 November

The highlight is undoubtedly the 142 steps of the Scalinata di Santa Maria del Monte that connect the lower town with the older upper town. The upright of each step is decorated with ceramic tiles, offering a colourful alternative to the grey lava stone of the horizontal parts.

Very much an aristocratic town, Caltagirone is brimming with splendid palaces and churches.

We will have free time here to explore.

We will end the day in Taormina, a town spectacularly perched on top of a mountain from where we can enjoy spectacular views of snowcapped Mount Etna and the Ionian Sea.



ACCOMMODATION: NH Hotel Taormina **B L** <u>www.nh-collection-taormina</u>

DELEGATES ONLY

Morning conference including morning tea

NON-DELEGATES

Morning at leisure

Afternoon at Leisure OR

OPTIONAL TOUR: ALCANTARA CANYON WITH LUNCH



Centuries of erosion of the river Alcantara in the lava-stone created this marvellous wonder of Mother Nature. Unique shapes have been created in the walls of this Canyon, one of a kind in Europe (only in Iceland there can be found similar canyons).

We will have the opportunity to climb down towards the canyon taking the stairs and see the fantastic canyon from the river. Alternatively, we can visit the geological and botanical park with a view into the canyon from above and take a lift down to the river.

ACCOMMODATION: NH Hotel Taormina B



Day 7 Mount Etna Tues 3 November

Today we will experience a unique excursion by fourwheel drive to the volcano of Mount Etna guided by a qualified geologist/volcanologist.

Our knowledgeable guide will show us the Etna landscapes and wildness, endemic flora and geological features explaining the fragile environment. We will travel through Etna's lava fields driving on tracks and walking to reach some of the highlights.

There is an option to do a trekking excursion starting from 2,000m and walking across the lava flows of the 2002 eruption up to the 2002 eruptive fissure to experience the incredible power of nature. There is also the possibility to visit a lava tunnel.

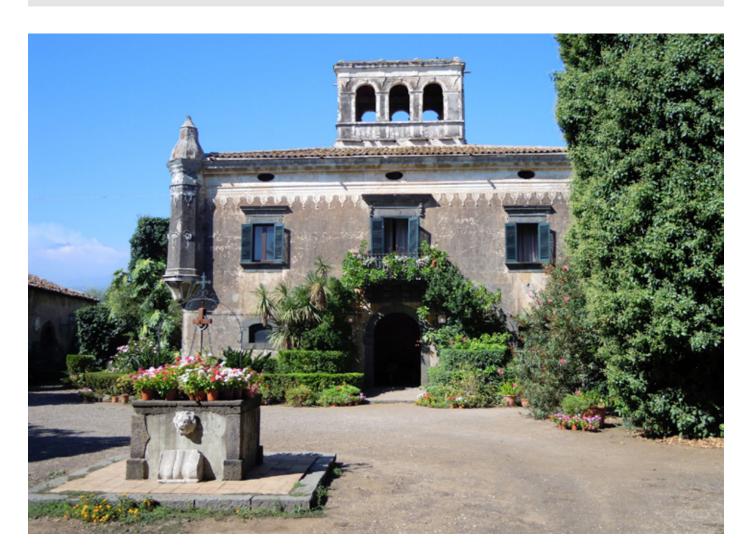
Etna volcano towering over Catania, Sicily's second largest city, has one of the longest documented records of historical volcanism dating back to 1500 BC.

In the evening we will enjoy a farewell dinner at a one Michelin-star restaurant.





ACCOMMODATION: NH Hotel Taormina B L D



Today on our way to Catania airport we will visit the Godfather villa featured in the film series.

The "Castello degli Schiavi" (known as the 'Godfather Villa') is a beautiful sicilian baroque jewel close to Taormina. The house was location for several scenes throughout the Godfather films, including the unintentional murder of Apollonia in The Godfather I and also the brutal revenge killing of Don Ciccio, by Vito Corleone in Godfather part II. This is also the villa where the godfather (Al Pacino) dies in Part III.

Here we will be guided around by the very friendly owner Mr. Platania. Anecdotes together with moviematerial make the visit particularly interesting.

Depending on the time of our international flight home to Australia we may have some time at leisure in Catania home of Sicily's iconic pasta alla Norma and the extraordinary La Pesheria market.



POST-TOUR

Sicily

28 OCTOBER - 4 NOVEMBER 2020

Trip Inclusions

- Conference sessions/hospital visit with tea as indicated (delegates only)
- 7 nights at well-appointed accommodation mentioned in the itinerary (or equivalent)
- Flight Bari to Palermo
- Meals indicated in the itinerary
- All group airport hotel transfers with airfares purchased through Convention Abroad
- All sightseeing, activities and entrance fees as outlined in the itinerary
- Bilingual guide
- · Convention Abroad escort
- All taxes and handling fees

Trip Exclusions

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- Meals or drinks not mentioned in the itinerary
- Optional tours/activities other than those specified
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For any questions, please contact

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