









IHRE REISE

<i>Reisetermin</i> 08.07.2026 - 19.07.2026	<i>Reisedauer</i> 12 Tage	<i>Reederei / Schiff</i> Douglas Mawson / Aurora Expeditions
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Aurora Stateroom Twin Share

	<i>Doppelbelegung</i>  € 5.798 <small>pro Person</small>	<i>Einzelbelegung</i>  € 8.697 <small>pro Person</small>	<i>Gemeinschaftsbelegung</i>  € 5.798 <small>pro Person</small>
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Aurora Stateroom Superior

	<i>Doppelbelegung</i>  € 6.148 <small>pro Person</small>	<i>Einzelbelegung</i>  € 9.222 <small>pro Person</small>	<i>Gemeinschaftsbelegung</i>  € 6.148 <small>pro Person</small>
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Balcony Stateroom Category C

	<i>Doppelbelegung</i>  € 6.348 <small>pro Person</small>	<i>Einzelbelegung</i>  € 9.522 <small>pro Person</small>	<i>Gemeinschaftsbelegung</i>  € 6.348 <small>pro Person</small>
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Balcony Stateroom Category B



Doppelbelegung


€ 6.648
 pro Person

Einzelbelegung


€ 9.972
 pro Person

Gemeinschaftsbelegung


€ 6.648
 pro Person

Balcony Stateroom Category A



Doppelbelegung


€ 7.148
 pro Person

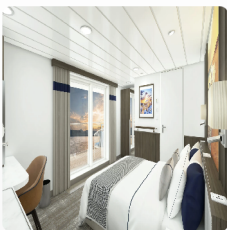
Einzelbelegung


€ 10.722
 pro Person

Gemeinschaftsbelegung


€ 7.148
 pro Person

Balcony Stateroom Superior



Doppelbelegung


€ 7.798
 pro Person

Einzelbelegung


€ 11.697
 pro Person

Gemeinschaftsbelegung


€ 7.798
 pro Person

Junior Suite



Doppelbelegung


€ 9.798
 pro Person

Einzelbelegung


€ 14.697
 pro Person

Balcony Stateroom Category A - Solo



Einzelbelegung


€ 14.295
 pro Person

Captain's Suite



Doppelbelegung


 Nicht verfügbar

Einzelbelegung


 Nicht verfügbar

Aurora Stateroom Superior Single



Einzelbelegung


 Nicht verfügbar

Aurora Stateroom Single



Einzelbelegung


 Nicht verfügbar

Aurora Stateroom Triple Share



Doppelbelegung



Nicht verfügbar

Einzelbelegung



Nicht verfügbar



Day 1 Rome,
Italy

Welcome to Rome. On arrival at Rome airport, make your way to the Arrivals Hall, to meet our representative, followed by a transfer to our group hotel. At the hotel, visit our hospitality desk in the lobby to meet our team who will provide you with useful information regarding pre-embarkation procedures and about your time in Rome. You will also receive cabin tags for your luggage. Please clearly label the tags with your name and your cabin number on the ship. This evening enjoy dinner at one of the local trattorias (own expense), with time to relax in preparation for our day tomorrow
 Accommodation: Rome Hotel

Day 2 Rome

An intriguing tale of historical drama and legendary myths make Rome every trivia buff's dream. Scandalous and sanguine, Roman lifestyle swung from democratic to autocratic, slavery to liberation, paganism to Christianity. The Roman empire's public relations machine flaunted its sovereignty with triumphant arches and fluted columns, monolithic mausoleums, statue-ridden stairways and masterfully engineered temples. Enhanced by the wealth of the Catholic Church, the city added to its opulence and grandeur with baroque fountains, obelisk-centred piazzas and Christendom's domed cathedrals. The story of ancient Rome's insurmountable empire, its dramatic demise and the rise of the powerful Catholic Church is one of Europe's most compelling stories. A tour of Rome is a highlight of any visit to Italy, especially for those of us whose homeland is anything other than ancient. Imperial relics rekindle the era when Rome's population of one million surpassed any other city worldwide. Our local guides merge the city's past and present through their stories on every street corner, along every alley and in every piazza. Choose a shorter, comprehensive tour to see a slice of Roman life, or lace up your walking shoes and experience Rome from street level on a locally guided walking tour. In the afternoon, enjoy some time for independent exploration before we gather this evening for a welcome dinner and drinks. Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Morning experience: Highlights of Rome – Walking and Driving Tour. Rome tells its tale as we tour its major sights on this morning experience. We encounter the Colosseum, the Roman Forum and the Circus Maximus, while our guide inspires us with stories of Rome's past. Gifted to the people of Rome as a museum to house the generous number of sculptures and statues left scattered throughout the city, the Capitoline Museum was the brainchild of Pope Sixtus IV. We visit the museum with our art historian guides to piece together the city's past through its numerous artworks before our journey continues with a drive to our central drop off point. We walk to the Trevi Fountain to ensure you have the chance return to Rome (do not forget your coin) before rejoining our coach for the drive back to the hotel, where the afternoon will be yours to enjoy at leisure.

Option 2 – Half day experience: Roaming Rome walking tour. Lace up your walking shoes, slip on a hat and slap on sunscreen to join this comprehensive locally guided tour. Established in an era when few Romans owned transportation, the centre of historical Rome is perfect for walking. With every square foot offering a fascinating fact, the list of sites we experience is limitless. Architectural highlights include the chariot stadium of Circus Maximus, and ancient sites such as the Colosseum, the Forum, Trajan's column, and the engineering marvel, the Pantheon. Artistic gems and political enigmas include the Trevi Fountain, the Piazza Venezia, Vittoria Emanuele II Monument and the Piazza Navona. Each site tells a story as we take time to witness its place in the past with our expert guides telling tales of the emperors, gladiators and plebs, Renaissance men, Popes and militia who made Rome their home.

*Note: Ongoing metro extension works at Piazza Venezia may limit our ability to view some of the sites listed. Accommodation: Starhotels Metropole Rome. Meals: Breakfast, Welcome Event canapés.

Day 2 Rome
Excursion
Introduction

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Day 3 Vatican
 City, Rome –
 Embark
 Civitavecchia

After breakfast, enjoy free time to explore the city independently, return to your favourite sites, or join us for a morning at Vatican City. A former circus where Nero's barbaric spectacles entertained the masses, the Vatican hill became consecrated ground when Rome's first Christian emperor, Constantine declared the land to be 'the hill of the martyrs'. This sovereign state, gifted independence from Italy in 1929, encapsulates St Peter's Cathedral, the Vatican museums and a labyrinth of corridors, apartments and gardens housing the Pope and the Vatican staff. Feel the lure of the Catholic church with the choice to tour St Peter's Basilica or combine it with the Vatican Museums and Sistine Chapel, this morning on 'Your Choice' of two locally guided tours. Early afternoon we transfer to the port of Civitavecchia to board the Douglas Mawson, where we board late afternoon. This evening, after an important safety briefing, we enjoy a 'Welcome Aboard' dinner where we meet our Aurora Expedition team and crew. Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences. Option 1 – Full day experience: Christendom's most renowned church. We visit the Vatican City and Christendom's most renowned church; St. Peter's Basilica, a masterpiece of Renaissance architecture. At the age of 72, Michelangelo designed its majestic dome to soar above the tomb of the first apostle, St. Peter, and the resting place of his successors; the Popes. Yet it is his earlier work, the Pietà, sculpted when he was only 22, that captures the Basilica's grandeur in the most intimate and moving way: the Virgin Mary cradling the lifeless body of her son. Outside, St. Peter's Square, framed by Bernini's sweeping colonnades, can accommodate over 300,000 people, making it the stage for some of the most significant moments in Catholic history. Here, Popes have celebrated Mass and addressed the faithful for centuries, continuing a tradition that underscores the Basilica's role as the spiritual heart of the Church. Our local guides bring this extraordinary site to life on a guided walking tour, sharing the stories behind its religious buildings, artistic treasures, and even the scandals that have shaped its history. Having stood in awe at this incredible site, there's free time to enjoy lunch (own expense), before continuing to the coast at Civitavecchia where our ship awaits. Option 2 – Full day experience: Treasures of the Vatican. We enter the Vatican City and meet our guides at Christendom's most famous church, St Peter's Basilica, a Michelangelo masterpiece. At 72 he designed the cupola to cover the sky above the bones of the first apostle, St Peter, and his successors – the Popes. Yet it is his sculpture of the Virgin Mary cradling the body of her son, the Pietà, which he created at only 22 years of age, that so succinctly distils the grandeur of St Peter's to a personal experience so succinctly. Next door, the 55 galleries that make up the Vatican Museum, house the world's greatest artistic treasure chest. Ranging from the Vatican library with its 65,000 manuscripts including the original love letter from Henry VIII to Anne Boleyn, to the sarcophagus of Saint Helen, Constantine's mother. Each sala builds on the wonders of the previous. There are rooms decorated by Raphael, barrel vaulted ceilings covered with ancient maps, endless halls lined by statuesque marble sculptures and corridors of secret souvenirs collected by various Popes over centuries of rule - capped off by Michelangelo's masterful frescoes of the Sistine Chapel. When viewed in real life, The Sistine Chapel will take your breath away. Having walked the Vatican City, there's free time to enjoy lunch (own expense) prior to driving to the coast at Civitavecchia where we meet our ship.

Day 3 Rome
 Excursion
 Introduction

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Day 4 Gaeta
(Port: Gaeta)

Jutting into the Gulf of Gaeta, the town of the same name has a rich history featuring everyone from the Romans to Saracens, emperors to pirates and popes to kings. This authentic medieval town, dominated by its fortress castle and framed by a protected marina, can be explored independently. Our 'Your Choice' experiences provide a morning to reflect on the bravery of those who fought at Monte Cassino, or to explore an extraordinary Roman achievement at nearby Formia. You will have the afternoon at leisure to enjoy Gaeta before we set sail south to the Bay of Naples. Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experience.

Option 1 - Morning experience: The Battle for Monte Cassino. This morning, we pause to honour the soldiers and innocent residents who were deeply affected by the tragedy at Monte Cassino: lest we forget. Amidst fields of white crosses, each one a poignant reminder of a life lost, the Monte Cassino region and its historic Benedictine monastery now attract visitors seeking to pay their respects. Each year, thousands come to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice while pushing north towards Rome in June 1944. Perched high on its rugged hilltop, the monastery—filled with priceless artworks—was tragically misidentified as an ammunition depot by the Allied forces. The area, fortified with cannons, minefields, and machine gun nests, saw fierce combat, resulting in the loss of entire divisions as they bravely attempted to scale its slopes. Reduced to ruins in one of the most controversial actions of World War II, the rebuilt monastery now stands as a moving tribute to the 70,000 troops who gave their lives at Monte Cassino, striving to break through the Gustav Line and open the road to Rome.

Option 2 - Morning experience: What Did the Romans Ever Do for Us. If you enjoyed Rome, you'll be equally captivated by Formia, an unassuming coastal town that holds some impressive relics of the Roman Empire. We go underground to explore the Cisternone, a 1st-century cistern that was once the largest urban water reservoir in the world. This colossal structure, with its expansive 7,000-cubic-meter capacity and intricate network of 53 pillars, was vital in supplying water to the Roman fleet, which was instrumental in Rome's conquest of Europe. One of Rome's gifts to the world, Rome's highly engineered water systems remain the basis of those we use today. Also, captivating is Formia's archaeological museum, housed in the 18th-century Town Hall. It boasts a rich collection of Roman artifacts, including statues of notable figures and deities, as well as intricate architectural and burial items. Both sites provide a compelling glimpse into Formia's significant role in Rome's ancient legacy.

Day 4 Gaeta
Excursion
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Day 5 Naples
(Port: Naples)

Shrouded by the shadow of a brooding Mount Vesuvius, Naples' 'underworld' reputation has mellowed in recent years providing the perfect culmination of our explorations. Survivors of successive imperial invasions, outbreaks of plagues and infamous natural disasters Neapolitans are well-known for their dramatic personalities. A dedication to family and their ancestral roots makes them natural storytellers, with a passion to share their stoic city and its intrinsic tales with all they encounter. Hear tales from the city's dubious past on a locally guided walking tour, or if you prefer to 'stay above ground', join a guide for a 'foodie' tour in the home of Neapolitan pizza, Sfogliatella and Polpetta, or visit "Naples' Versailles" - the Palace of Caserta. We sail early evening, as the sun sets over the mythical island of Capri and the celebrity playground of the Amalfi Coast. Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experience.

Option 1 - Morning experience: Naples; Yesterday - Today. A city of complex themes, and one of the bedrocks of Italian culture, Naples' immense history plays out amongst the winding alleys of its old town, and what lies beneath. We begin with a stroll through these lively streets that still follow the decumani, or ancient Roman roads, originally laid out 2,000 years ago. Underneath the Gothic church of San Lorenzo Maggiore where the city of Neapolis' forum once lay, we encounter its main street - Decumanus Maximus. Here we see traces of the former city, as we descend underground and explore this archaeological complex, which has both Greek and Roman roots. We learn the role of the Greek Agora and the subsequent Roman Forum, in civic and commercial life during antiquity, before skipping to the 20th century. Naples was Italy's most bombed city during World War II, and these tunnels are thought to have saved the lives of more than 200,000 people who used the tunnels as bomb shelters. Back above ground we explore the city's political and social history, from its Greek origins as Neapolis (the new city) to modern times.

Option 2 - Morning experience: Napoli on a Plate. Embark on a journey through time as you delve into the rich tapestry of Italy's culinary heritage. Join us on a gastronomic expedition through Naples where the timeless traditions of the beloved pizza originated. Experience the artistry of centuries-old culinary practices as you savour two distinct varieties of pizza, immersing yourself in the gastronomic culture of Naples. Soak up the authentic charm of a local pizzeria, and indulge in one of Naples' iconic pastries, a sweet finale to a morning steeped in the flavours of history and tradition.

Option 3 - Full day experience: The Palace of Caserta. You are forgiven if you have never heard of the Palace of Caserta, but once you have visited it you may never stop talking about it. A masterpiece of Baroque architecture, Caserta sprawls over five floors, 1,200 rooms, 11 acres of gardens, pools, fountains and cascades, and almost 300 acres of parklands. Designed according to the wishes of Charles of Bourbon III, by Luigi Vanvitelli, one of the greatest Italian architects of the 18th century, Caserta was a palace ahead of its time. Respect for nature became the palace's calling card, drawing from trends spreading across Europe at the time. Hundreds of rare and precious plants from around the world were brought to Caserta, and still grown there today. Grand, excessive and opulent, a visit to Caserta will fill your diary with superlatives. On our return to Naples, we pause to savour authentic cuisine and enjoy a traditional lunch prepared in true Neapolitan style.

Day 5 Naples
 Excursion
 Introduction

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Day 6 Salerno
 (Port: Salerno)

The historic city of Salerno acts as a gateway to one of Europe's most famous coastlines: the Amalfi Coast. A magnet to both ancient and modern visitors, its interspersed villages appear to almost grow from the rockface on which they are built. The dramatic cliffs and natural harbours of the Amalfi Coast have hosted holiday homes of the rich and revered throughout time. Our excursions offer a hint of the coast's abundant past and present as we view the excavations of luxurious villas, theatres and bathhouses at Pompeii, or search the beachfront villages of the Amalfi for tantalising tales at the heart of Amalfi life. Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences. Option 1 – Full day experience: Pompeii and the Wines of Mount Vesuvius. Known to the Neapolitans simply as 'him', Mount Vesuvius towers over the surrounding fertile plains at 13,779 feet (4,200 metres). He has been quiet of late, but it was a different story in 79 BCE, when lava and ash vomited forth engulfing the city of Pompeii. Albeit a tragedy, the excavation of these extensive sites reveals treasure for travellers. Physical evidence of the city's final dramatic moments, preserved forever amongst the volcanic ash, speak louder than words. Each tells a tale of intrigue, returned to life by the ruins and remains of these Roman cities. Our guided tour of Pompeii's buried city is amongst one of the most intriguing in world history. After exploring Pompeii, we journey to the sun-drenched lower slopes of Mount Vesuvius, where centuries-old vineyards thrive in mineral-rich volcanic soil. Here, we uncover the secrets behind the region's iconic wines, followed by a curated tasting paired with local specialties for a light lunch, before returning to Salerno mid-afternoon. Option 2 – Full day experience: The Amalfi Coast by Land and Sea. Driving the Amalfi Coast is like navigating a real-life postcard, with a delightful twist. The famously winding road twists around hairpin turns and clings to cliff edges, offering breathtaking drops and stunning views of the turquoise Tyrrhenian Sea. Hold on tight as you wind your way through charming coastal villages. Make a stop in Amalfi, the town that gives the coast its name. Explore its narrow streets, medieval architecture and vibrant piazzas, which are perfect for a leisurely stroll and a gelato break. As you continue, the road curves around the rugged coastline, leading to Positano, where colourful buildings cascade down the hillside to a sun-umbrellaed sandy beach. This drive is filled with twists, turns and spectacular vistas, making it an unforgettable journey along one of Italy's most scenic driving routes. Your homeward journey begins on the water, with a local motorboat transfer back to Salerno, where we reconnect with our own vessel in the mid-afternoon. Option 3 - Morning experience: Amalfi. Sail from Salerno and discover the Amalfi Coast in true local style, aboard a local ferry that sails past dramatic cliffs, sparkling turquoise waters, and hillside villages that tumble toward the Tyrrhenian Sea. It is like cruising through a living postcard, with a splash of glamour and a twist of lemon. As we cruise along this iconic coastline, keep an eye out for sleek super-yachts and the endless terraces of lemon groves clinging to the cliffs. These golden fruits are more than just scenic; they are the soul of the region, flavouring everything from desserts to the famous Limoncello, Italy's beloved citrus liqueur. Stop at Amalfi, the waterfront town that lends its name to the coast. We will hear some salty tales while enjoying one of Amalfi's iconic lemon sorbets, before time to wander through winding alleys and soak up the lively atmosphere of its piazzas. It is the perfect spot for a refreshing lemon sorbet or a bit of boutique browsing. Whether you are snapping photos, sipping something citrusy, or simply soaking in the sun, this coastal adventure is a feast for the senses and a highlight of any visit to southern Italy.

Day 6 Salerno
 Excursion
 Introduction

The historic city of Salerno acts as a gateway to one of Europe's most famous coastlines: the Amalfi Coast. A magnet to both ancient and modern visitors, its interspersed villages appear to almost grow from the rockface on which they are built. The dramatic cliffs and natural harbours of the Amalfi Coast have hosted holiday homes of the rich and revered throughout time. Our excursions offer a hint of the coast's abundant past and present as we view the excavations of luxurious villas, theatres, and bathhouses at Pompeii, or search the beachfront villages of the Amalfi for tantalising tales at the heart of Amalfi life.

Day 7 Messina,
 Sicily (Port:
 Messina)

We follow the coastline to the 'boot' of Italy, arriving around midday at the gateway to the island of Sicily: Messina. The city of Messina guards the mouth of the straits of the same name – a mere 15-minute ferry crossing from the Italian mainland. The recipient of more than its fair share of disasters, Messina has faced many invasions. However, it is the city's notorious bad luck - two major earthquakes and a tsunami, that destroyed the entire town. Famous as the finish line for Monty and Eisenhower on their wager as to who would reach Messina first, this stoic city acts today as our gateway to Europe's highest active volcano and its surrounding coastal gems. Our experiences this afternoon offer a variety of activities. Scale Mt. Etna, take a seat at an ancient Roman Amphitheatre for one of the best views in Sicily, or follow Francis Ford Coppola's iconic trilogy on a 'Godfather' tour. As always, it is 'Your Choice'. Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences. Option 1 - Afternoon experience: Taormina. Topped by an ancient Greco-Roman theatre, with spectacular views of Mt Etna, the hilltop enclave of Taormina is at the top of the list when it comes to visiting Sicily. Once a holiday resort for Greeks and Romans, it attracted numerous foes, however today it fights a different form of invasion with the town performing solidly on the Hollywood A-list bucket list. Its luxurious hotels, restaurants and tile-terraced piazzas appear on the front page of Vogue, and with views across the Mediterranean, no wonder it is a 'must see' for all travellers to Italy. Option 2 - Afternoon experience: The Godfather. Follow the footsteps of Marlin Brando and Al Pacino on the guided tour of 'Godfather' proportions. Our first stop is the charming village of Savoca, one of the picturesque seafront towns immortalised in Francis Ford Coppola's iconic trilogy. In Savoca, we visit the renowned Bar Vitelli, which houses a rich collection of film memorabilia. A leisurely stroll through Savoca leads us to the Catacombs and the Capuchin Convent, both steeped in history and mystery. Our journey continues to the hilltop village of Forza D'Agro, perched at an impressive 365 metres. This picturesque setting served as the backdrop for numerous scenes in the trilogy. As you wander the narrow lanes and historic churches, you'll be transported to a world where the real and cinematic past intertwine, creating a truly immersive experience. The region was chosen for the film shoots due to its timeless Sicilian atmosphere. The rustic charm and historic architecture provided an ideal backdrop for the dramatic narrative of 'The Godfather'. While Sicily, including Savoca and Forza D'Agro, has a complex history with the Mafia, today it is celebrated more for its cultural heritage and cinematic connections. Option 3 - Afternoon experience: Mt. Etna. At 3,369 metres Mt Etna is the highest active volcano in Europe. Her constant state of irritation is monitored by volcanologists worldwide, yet it is the people who live in her shadow who know her best. We join a local guide to scale her slopes in a 4 x 4 WD. We will drive through charming villages imbued with history and tradition before finding the winding dirt roads which take us along the edge of extinct craters where we experience the life cycle of an eruption, while we view Etna in all her glory with a deeper understanding of her eruptive power.

Day 7 Messina
 Excursion
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Day 8 Palermo
 (Port:
 Palermo)

Once infamous as the centre of the Sicilian Mafia, Sicily's capital, Palermo, now proudly claims to be 'a clean city,' offering travellers the chance to enjoy its ancient sites, colourful markets, and vibrant Sicilian lifestyle once more. Steeped in history, culture and Mediterranean charm, Palermo was founded by the Phoenicians as early as the 8th century BCE. Its strategic location at the crossroads of civilisations has seen it influenced by Greek, Roman, Arab, Norman and Spanish cultures, making it a fascinating city to explore. Its diverse cultural heritage is reflected in its architecture, from ancient ruins and Norman palaces to baroque churches and Arab-Norman art, while the city's famous street markets, such as the bustling Ballarò Market offer a glimpse into Sicily's famous culinary traditions. Palermo's recent history includes a challenging period with the Sicilian Mafia or Cosa Nostra, most notably, the courageous actions of two anti-Mafia judges, Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, who dedicated their lives to combating organised crime, and subsequently, became symbols of resistance to Mafia influence. Tragically, both judges were assassinated in 1992, but their legacy spurred significant anti-Mafia efforts, which have transformed Palermo's social and political landscape. Beyond its historical and architectural treasures, Palermo is known for its lively atmosphere, with bustling piazzas, a vibrant street food scene, and sun-soaked beaches. The city's resilience, rich history, and diverse cultural mix, make Palermo a captivating destination for travellers seeking to explore Sicilian heritage.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences

Option 1 – Morning experience: The 'Real' Godfathers of Palermo Exploring the Mafia in Palermo involves delving into a topic far more nuanced than the stereotypes presented in mainstream cinema and TV. Known locally as Cosa Nostra, the Mafia is a profound social and economic phenomenon that has significantly shaped Sicily's history over the past two centuries. From its roots in the aristocracy to its transformation into a political and entrepreneurial powerhouse in the 20th century, Cosa Nostra's impact is immense. Key events include the sack of Palermo, the violent confrontations of the 1970s and 80s, and the subsequent state crackdown, marked by the assassinations of many institutional figures. The 'pizzo' phenomenon, where businesses are extorted for protection money, underscores the Mafia's all-pervasive reach. Yet, Palermo's collective response has led to a remarkable resurgence in the city's confidence. This guided tour offers a unique perspective on Palermo, revealing sites and events tied to Cosa Nostra's history. Each stop provides insight into the city's fight against organised crime, while your local guide shares personal stories, offering a genuine understanding of Palermo's true essence.

Option 2 – Morning experience: Palermo's Private Palaces On this locally guided walking tour, you'll discover how Palermo's oratories and their stunning stucco art reveal the city's intricate social and political fabric. In the 17th and 18th centuries, powerful families vied to showcase their influence by building magnificent oratories. These religious spaces were not just places of worship, but also symbols of their congregation's (known as a confraternity) wealth and status. Each confraternity sought to surpass the others by creating more elaborate architecture and lavish decor. Giacomo Serpotta, a master of late baroque stucco art, was commissioned to craft intricate decorations that underscored their prestige. His masterpieces adorn key sites across the city, including the Oratory of San Lorenzo and oratories in the Loggia neighbourhood. These opulent buildings became focal points for both religious and civic life, reinforcing the authority of their patrons and solidifying their control over Palermo's social and political landscape. This tour will guide you through these monumental sites, revealing the profound impact of Palermo's ruling elite and its cultural legacy.

Option 3 – Morning experience: The Ancient City of Segesta A one-hour drive takes us west to the well-preserved ruins of Segesta, an ancient city that reveals much about life in antiquity. Founded by the Elymians, Segesta was later influenced by various empires, each leaving its mark on the city. The Doric temple, dedicated to an unknown deity, was built in the 5th century BCE and is notable for its imposing columns and alignment towards the Acropolis, reflecting the city's religious and cultural priorities. The ancient theatre, dating back to the 3rd century BCE, is perched on a hillside and offers expansive views of the valley. It reflects the city's past social and entertainment life, hosting performances and gatherings that were central to community life. Walking through Segesta with your expert local guide, you'll see how the city's layout and architecture provide clues to ancient daily life. The remains of houses, public spaces, and fortifications indicate a well-organised urban centre with a blend of local and external influences. This visit offers a glimpse into the lives of its inhabitants and the historical layers that shaped this ancient city. Returning to the ship for lunch allows an afternoon to explore Palermo independently, as we sail early evening.

Day 8 Palermo
 Excursion
 Introduction

Once infamous as the centre of the Sicilian Mafia, Sicily's capital, Palermo, now proudly claims to be 'a clean city,' offering travellers the chance to enjoy its ancient sites, colourful markets, and vibrant Sicilian lifestyle once more. Steeped in history, culture and Mediterranean charm, Palermo was founded by the Phoenicians as early as the 8th century BCE. Its strategic location at the crossroads of civilisations has seen it influenced by Greek, Roman, Arab, Norman and Spanish cultures, making it a fascinating city to explore. Its diverse cultural heritage is reflected in its architecture, from ancient ruins and Norman palaces to baroque churches and Arab-Norman art, while the city's famous street markets, such as the bustling Ballarò Market offer a glimpse into Sicily's famous culinary traditions. Palermo's recent history includes a challenging period with the Sicilian Mafia or Cosa Nostra, most notably, the courageous actions of two anti-Mafia judges, Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, who dedicated their lives to combating organised crime, and subsequently, became symbols of resistance to Mafia influence. Tragically, both judges were assassinated in 1992, but their legacy spurred significant anti-Mafia efforts, which have transformed Palermo's social and political landscape. Beyond its historical and architectural treasures, Palermo is known for its lively atmosphere, with bustling piazzas, a vibrant street food scene, and sun-soaked beaches. The city's resilience, rich history, and diverse cultural mix, make Palermo a captivating destination for travellers seeking to explore Sicilian heritage.

Day 9
 Agrigento
 (Port: Porto
 Empedocles)

Sailing around the western tip of Sicily, we arrive at Porto Empedocle around midday and enjoy lunch onboard. Our 'Your Choice' experiences offer a choice of three engaging options this afternoon. Choose to join a guided tour of the Valley of the Temples, where you will explore the rich history and fascinating lifestyles of Sicily's ancient residents, head inland to a family-owned winery to discover the centuries-old significance of wine production on the island and enjoy a tasting of local wines or relive the liberation of Sicily visiting World War II sites focusing on Operation Husky. If you prefer a more relaxed pace, you can spend time exploring Porto Empedocle independently, soaking in the local charm and attractions at your own leisure. Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Afternoon experience: Agrigento – The Valley of the Temples. A highlight of any visit to Sicily, Agrigento, or the Valley of the Temples as it is known, is an archaeological gem. The site brings to life the stories of the people who lived, loved and died here, dating as far back as the 6th century BCE. "One of the wealthiest colonies in Greece", the city thrived around 2,500 years ago, with an economy based on produce from the rich surrounding land and the trade routes from Greece. Its impressive remains attract travellers from around the world.

Option 2 - Afternoon experience: Sicilian Wine Tasting. The southern Sicilian countryside is scattered with wineries owned and operated by families. Inland from Port Empedocle, surrounded by lush olive and almond groves with wheat fields stretching around them, each winery benefits from Sicily's unique soil, which is enriched by volcanic ash and Mediterranean minerals. Wine has long been a cornerstone of Sicily's economy, dating back to ancient times when the island was a major wine producer for the Roman Empire. During your visit, you will tour the winery and learn about traditional winemaking methods that have evolved over centuries. Following the tour, enjoy a tasting session that features wines paired with local snacks that highlight regional flavours. This experience offers a genuine taste of Sicily's vinous heritage and provides insight into the island's deep-rooted winemaking culture, all while soaking in the natural beauty of the region.

Option 3- Afternoon experience: Operation Husky. Winston Churchill may have referred to Italy as the "soft underbelly of Europe," but for the young men of Operation Husky, the Road to Rome was fraught with danger. On July 10, 1943, 160,000 Allied soldiers landed on Sicily's southern coast, liberating the island from the Nazi-Fascist regime. Licata, the first city in Europe to be freed, marked the beginning of the end of WWII in Europe. Our locally guided tour brings these historic events to life through the stories of elderly locals of Licata who were children at the time. We visit wartime museums displaying relics, photographs, and films from that era, as well as explore an original Air Raid Shelter and bunker, offering a poignant glimpse into the hardships faced by both the island's residents and the soldiers who fought for the island's freedom.

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Day 10
 Syracuse (Port:
 Syracuse)

Syracuse's delightful jumble of Greek, Roman, medieval and baroque layers make every street corner and every ancient site a story unto itself. Greek ruins rise from citrus orchards, baroque churches stand stoic and medieval streets lead down to the sea. They meet, a plethora of stories waiting to be heard. Our 'Your Choice' experiences offer a morning and full day option today. For those visiting the sights of Syracuse this morning, you may wish to stroll from the port to the island of Ortigia. The small Baroque Island of Ortigia, the historic heart of Syracuse, has been inhabited for over 3,000 years and is celebrated for its Greek heritage. As a UNESCO landmark, Ortigia features stunning church facades, vibrant outdoor restaurants, and elegant piazzas. Surrounded by sea, it offers a pleasant afternoon visit, blending historical charm with a coastal vibe.

Personalise your exploration with our included 'Your Choice' experiences.

Option 1 - Morning experience: Syracuse and the Parco Archeologico della Neapolis. Once a rival to Athens, Syracuse is home to one of Sicily's greatest archaeological sites – the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Parco Archeologico della Neapolis. Our local guides tell tales of past realms as we view the 16,000 capacity Greek Theatre, and the 2nd-century Anfiteatro Romano, originally used for gladiatorial combats and horse races, before standing at the foot of the monolithic Altar to Hieron II where up to 400 oxen would be sacrificed in one ritual. Beside the theatre, and just as fascinating, we find the limestone quarries that supplied stone for the ancient city. Honeycombed with catacombs below, and citrus trees above, it is also where the 7,000 survivors of the 5th-century war between Syracuse and Athens were imprisoned.

Option 2 – Full day experience: The Medieval Towns of Noto and Ragusa. An example of architectural elegance, Noto and Ragusa are two of Italy's most picturesque towns. Completely destroyed by the 1693 earthquake, they were rebuilt on a new site under the scrutiny of Guiseppe Lanza, the Duke of Camastra, whose passion for all things baroque is evident at every turn. Flanked by baroque palazzi and churches, the main squares of Noto and Ragusa became the symbol of the Risorgimento, the Italian unification movement of the 1800s. The 17th century Ragusa Ibla is a magical mass of tangled alleys lined with grey-stoned houses, and handsome squares surrounded by baroque palaces, all leading to Ragusa's classic central square – Piazza Duomo. As Allied forces invaded Sicily during Operation Husky in World War II, British and US forces linked up in Ragusa. The local population welcomed them with "unbridled enthusiasm", as Ragusa became one of the first towns in Italy to be liberated.

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Day 11
 Disembark
 Valletta, Malta
 (Port: Valletta)

As a matter of Mediterranean real estate, Malta has location, location, location. For fun in the sun and an island lifestyle that may be ideal, but when it comes to defence from invasion it is not. A convivial, family orientated people, the Maltese have fought hard to defend their country against everyone from the Greeks to Napoleon. Their bravery in World War II during the second siege of Malta moved King George VI to award the nation the George Cross which appears in form on the Maltese flag and coat of arms. Our day is spent in Malta's convivial capital, Valletta, which remains a historical city with streets of fascinating sites telling more than their fair share of stories. We join a local guide this morning for a browse through Valletta's essential sights. We explore the Grand Masters Palace and Armoury, where we uncover an impressive collection gathered by The Knights Hospitaller of St John, while the multimedia show, Malta Experience, places thousands of years of Malta into perspective. This evening, we gather at our hotel for a farewell dinner and drinks, as a local World War II aficionado, Simon Cussins, brings our time in Malta to a close while sharing stories of the resilience and bravery that earned the nation and its people the George Cross. Accommodation: Valletta Hotel. Meals: Breakfast, Farewell dinner and drinks.

Day 11 Valletta
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Day 12 Depart
 Valletta

After breakfast, check-out of your hotel and say farewell to your fellow travellers as you transfer to the airport for your onward flight. Meals: Breakfast

Im Preis inbegriffen

- Airport arrival and departure transfers to/from our group hotel on the first day and final day of your voyage package
- Two night's hotel accommodation, including breakfast, in Rome on Days 1 and 2
- One night's hotel accommodation, including breakfast, in Valletta on Day 11
- Onboard accommodation during voyage, including daily cabin service
- All meals, snacks, tea, coffee, soft drinks and juices during voyage
- Meals listed as included during shore excursions and land portions of the package
- Beer and house wine with dinner
- Captain's Farewell reception including four-course dinner, house cocktails, house beer and wine, non-alcoholic beverages
- Pre-voyage and post-voyage excursions as listed*
- 'Your Choice' shore excursions as listed*
- Enrichment experiences as listed, including Welcome and Farewell Events
- Presentations and guiding services provided by our Voyage Host, Aurora Expeditions Team and local operators
- Gratuities during excursions and enrichment program for local guides, drivers, venues and local sites
- Port surcharges, permits, tender, pilot and landing fees
- Onboard Wi-Fi
- Headsets are available for use during our 'Your Choice' experiences when needed
- Complimentary access to onboard expedition doctor and medical clinic (initial consultation)
- Comprehensive pre-departure information

*Our 'Your Choice' shore excursions listed in the itinerary are included. One excursion per person per port of call and city stay package is included, unless stated otherwise. Note, the listed experiences are indicative only. These must be reserved through our passenger portal at least 60 days prior to embarkation and cannot be amended after this time. If we do not receive your choices by this time, you will be allocated excursions by our automated system. Due to restrictions imposed by site management and government bodies, we must have your passport details to purchase tickets for the included sites at the time of booking. We will always do our best to provide you with your first preference of shore excursion; however, we may occasionally need to place you on an alternative excursion for operational reasons.

Nicht im Preis inbegriffen

- International or domestic flights – unless specified in itinerary
- Transfers – unless specified in itinerary
- Airport arrival or departure taxes
- Passport, visa, reciprocity and vaccination fees and charges
- Travel insurance or emergency evacuation charges
- Hotels and meals – unless specified in the itinerary
- All items of a personal nature, including but not limited to, alcoholic beverages (outside of dinner service), on board gratuities#, laundry services, personal clothing, medical expenses, email or phone charges

#Note: A US\$15 USD per person per day gratuity for the crew is automatically added to your onboard account. It is at your discretion if you would like to remove the tip (or adjust the amount) when you settle your bill. It is not necessary to tip the Aurora Expeditions Team members. This gratuity amount is included for suites as part of their 'Suite Benefits'.

Ihr Schiff

Ihr Schiff ist die "Douglas Mawson". Ausführlich stellen wir Ihnen dieses Schiff auf unseren Schiffseiten vor. [Ausführliche Informationen zu diesem Schiff.](#)

Passagiere
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Bordsprachen


Eisklasse
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