



CLASSIC
EDELWEISS TOURS

ROME TO SICILY

” A memorable motorcycle tour on the fantastic roads of beautiful southern Italy and Sicily. “

RIDING DAY 1 : ROMA (ROME) - POMPEI (POMPEII)

Standard Route (326 km / 202 miles)

After exploring Rome extensively, with the Colosseum still on our minds, we leave the eternal city for the south. High above Lake Albano, we stop briefly to take a look at the former papal summer residence, Castel Gandolfo, which sits on a hill on the other shore.

Afterward, we embark on a fun ride through the "Monti Lepini", on tiny and traffic-free roads full of curves. Eventually, we reach the sea, take a little coffee or ice cream break, and then get in the fast lane to Pompeii.

To avoid the big city of Naples and its notorious traffic chaos, we'll invest a few euros in highway tolls and take the A1 and A3 to the Pompeii West exit. Our hotel is in the center of Pompeii, the famous city that was buried by the neighboring volcano Vesuvius in 79 AD. We will be shown around this fascinating excavation site by a knowledgeable guide. It is quite something to walk through the 2000-year-old city so perfectly preserved by the volcanic ash. An incomparable experience!

Highlights:

#1: Castel Gandolfo



Within the town's boundaries lies the Apostolic Palace of Castel Gandolfo which serves as a summer residence and vacation retreat for the pope, the leader of the Catholic Church. Although the palace is located within the borders of Castel Gandolfo, it has extraterritorial status as one of the properties of the Holy See and is not under Italian jurisdiction. In October 2016, Pope Francis announced that he would no longer use Castel Gandolfo as a summer residence. As a result, the pope's residence was converted into a museum open to the public.

#2: Pompei (Pompeii)



Enigmatic Pompeii is the thriving resort town for wealthy Romans that was buried under ash and mud during the devastating eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 AD. Thus, the buildings and streets remained excellently preserved until their rediscovery in the 18th century.

The vast ruins provide fascinating insights into how the ancient Romans lived, and include impressive temples, a forum, one of the largest Roman amphitheatres, luxurious houses with frescoes and mosaics, and streets lined with shops.

RIDING DAY 2 : POMPEI (POMPEII)

Standard Route (120 km / 75 miles)

Of course, if you stay in Pompeii, you should visit the world-famous excavation site. It is a bit crowded - after all people come from all over the world to see this ancient city preserved in a unique way - but this does not diminish the allure. You can spend all day at the site, but there are many other things to see in the area. One of the highlights of any trip to southern Italy is the Amalfi Coast, with its narrow and often dizzying road built into the cliffs. It connects several small towns whose houses are built more on top of each other than side by side. Riding along this coast is an unforgettable experience!

You could also take a bus to Naples on this rest day and taste the best pizza in the world, or take a boat to Capri to watch the red sun disappear into the sea, hike up Mount Vesuvius, or just go to the beach and swim.... the choice is yours.

Highlights:

#1: Sorrento



Wonderfully located on the steep cliffs, Sorrento offers a great view of the Gulf of Naples. Writers and painters have immortalized the place in words and pictures. Sorrento and the Amalfi Coast are known for their large lemons. A typical product from these fruits is, among others, Limoncello, a lemon liqueur that is consumed cold after the meal. The

heart of the town is the shopping street Via S. Cesareo and Piazza Tasso. Popular is Sorrento because of its strategic location as a starting point to see the sights of the region. The tip of the peninsula of Sorrento is just 5 km away from Capri, which can be easily reached from the port of Marina Piccola.

#2: Costiera Amalfitana (Amalfi Coast)



Stretching for 50 km (30 miles) along a promontory from Sorrento to Salerno is one of Europe's most beautiful coastlines. The road hugs the rugged cliffs of the coast in countless twists and turns, overlooking intensely blue waters and passing picture-perfect villages that cling to the cliff walls like matchbox houses. Positano is the first port of call out of Sorrento, and it's truly sublime: tiered arcades of rose- and honey-colored houses hover precariously over an iridescent sea, and further investigation reveals cafés and hotels to die for. Further around several intervening bends is Amalfi. Its former status as a supreme naval power that rivaled Pisa and Genoa is evident from its arsenal and imposing dome. Hairpin bends separate Amalfi from Ravello, which sits overlooking the bay.

#3: Dome of Amalfi



The charm of Amalfi Cathedral is due to its ancient tradition, which has absorbed influences from some great civilizations. The first signs of religious buildings on the hill overlooking the coast date back to the 6th century. Inside, there is a 9th-century Byzantine church that will make you feel like you are traveling back in time when you visit the Duomo. Until the 12th century, Amalfi was a powerful maritime republic and the magnificent cathedral bears witness to the fabulous wealth of that time.

RIDING DAY 3 : POMPEI (POMPEII) - ACQUAFREDDA

Standard Route (218 km / 135 miles)

In order to traverse the densely populated area around Salerno as quickly and unhindered as possible, we take the autobahn this morning, even if we have to pay a few euros in tolls. After about 50 km we take the Battipaglia exit and shortly thereafter arrive at the excavations of Paestum. This city was built here by the ancient Greeks 2,600 years ago and flourished for several centuries. Under the Romans, it lost its splendor and eventually fell into oblivion, with the result that the beautiful Doric temples and other buildings became overgrown, but still remained in excellent condition. Paestum is rightly on the UNESCO World Heritage List!

In the afternoon you might as well stay away from the coast to avoid the often heavier traffic there and instead enjoy yourself - and all by yourself - on the exceedingly twisty roads in the hinterland. Shortly after Paestum, the first switchbacks await you, and in Vallo della Lucania you can treat yourself to a cup of coffee and a sweet pastry before the narrow road folds into a thousand bends and gives you miles of riding pleasure. It's a roller coaster!

Our destination today is Aquafredda, which means "cold water". But the name is deceiving, the sea is mostly pleasantly tempered and also very clean. And the sundowner on the hotel terrace will make you feel like you're on vacation...

Highlights:

#1: Paestum



Paestum, as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is one of the most important excavation sites in history, as temples from Roman and Greek times, an amphitheater, and an almost 5 km long city wall from different historical construction phases were discovered here.

Paestum was founded by the Greeks around 600 BC under the name of Poseidonia. In the course of time, magnificent buildings were erected here, the remains of which are still visible today. These include the imposing Temple of Hera, built around 540 BC, the Temple of Athena, and the Temple of Poseidon, built around 450 BC. In addition, one can still find a comitium and an amphitheater, as well as the remains of other public buildings. The almost 5 km long city wall from different construction phases and its four city gates are also still well preserved. (www.italien.de)

After the Roman conquest in the late 3rd century AD, the city began its decline, accelerated by the increasing silting and swampiness of the area. Malaria drove the inhabitants to the hills of the hinterland, where they founded the town of Capaccio. Saracen raids in the 9th century and Norman raids in the 11th century destroyed what was left and the ruins were forgotten until they were rediscovered in 1752.

#2: Mozzarella di Bufala



Campania is the home of the buffalo mozzarella. The first preserved document that mentions the mozzarella from Aversa dates back to the beginning of the 15th century. It is said that the monks of the Abbey of "San Lorenzo ad Septimum", at the gates of Aversa, offered a "Mozza" (cut piece) of the cheese with a piece of bread to the members of the chapter who made an annual procession there.

We visit the "Caseificio Barlotti" - one of the most famous mozzarella producers, where the water buffaloes graze lazily in the sun and the cheese tastes wonderful.

RIDING DAY 4 : ACQUAFREDDA - PARGHELIA

Standard Route (227 km / 141 miles)

High up on a cliff south of Acquafredda stands a statue of Christ more than 20 meters high, which certainly reminds one of the even larger and older statue in Rio de Janeiro. If you look closely, however, you will notice an important difference: the local "Cristo Redentore" does not overlook the sea, but faces away from the coast, towards the hinterland. The access road was built on stilts and is only suitable for vertigo-free riders. From the top, a little over 620 meters above sea level, the view sweeps far across the Basilicata coast and down to Calabria.

The Calabrian coast is also called Costa dei Cedri. The name does not come from "cedars", but from the cedrat lemon, a fruit weighing up to 3 kg, which is still cultivated here and used for the production of citronate. Endless beaches and beautiful little towns are lined up along the coast and make for great ice cream and coffee breaks.

Our hotel is located in or very close to Tropea, a small town with a beautiful historic center and with lovely beaches. So it is worth arriving there not too late.

Highlights:

#1: Cristo Redentore (Christ of Maratea)



If you want to feel like you are in Rio de Janeiro, you have to go up to the Monte San Biagio and visit the statue of Christ the Redeemer, or the Christ of Maratea. It was built of a special mix of concrete and Carrara marble in 1965 by Bruno Innocenti, a sculptor from Florence. The road leading up is one of the most spectacular ones in this region. It is built like a roller coaster on stilts on a steep cliff. The view

from the top is breathtaking and you can take unbelievable pictures.

ROME TO SICILY

#2: Diamante



Since 1980, artists have been coming to Diamante to paint their works on the walls of the houses. By now, there are more than 180 works of art by artists from all over the world, turning Diamante into an open-air museum. Very interesting!

#3: Pizzo



Tartufo is an Italian ice cream specialty that is modeled after truffle chocolates. The traditional Tartufo ice cream is made of nut as well as chocolate ice cream, which is filled with a chocolate sauce (after which it is wrapped and placed in the freezer) and rolled in a mixture of cocoa powder and sugar before serving. Tartufo is also offered as a chilled dessert without ice cream. In this case, fluffy chocolate mousse is placed on a sponge cake and sprinkled

with cocoa powder. The name is based on the Italian word for truffle. The place of origin of this ice cream variety is the town of Pizzo in Calabria.

#4: Tropea



Tropea, built on steep cliffs and with its beautiful beaches right nearby, is a well-known destination for summer holidays. Enjoy a walk to the little chapel Santa Maria dell' Isola right at the beach or through the historical center with its narrow streets and charming old buildings.

RIDING DAY 5 : PARGHELIA - TAORMINA

Standard Route (253 km / 157 miles)

Once again we follow the coast this morning, heading south towards the tip of the Italian "boot". Tropea and its historic old town are worth a closer or a second look if you haven't had a chance to see it yet. Scilla, a bit further down the road, is also a lovely place to spend some time in. Take a dip in the sea, have ice cream or lunch or both, and enjoy the day. And seize the opportunity to say goodbye to the Italian heartland as we will be leaving it shortly - Sicily is waiting!

In Villa San Giovanni we cross the Messina Strait by ferry (the proposed bridge never made it past the initial planning stage due to funds disappearing without a trace) in less than half an hour. In Messina, we take the highway towards Palermo, exit at Barcellona, find the road with the number SS185 and follow it up into the mountains. It is an absolute roller coaster and will thrill you! We may arrive at our hotel a bit later than usual, but that is really a small price to pay for all that fun.

Highlights:

#1: Scilla



Where does the saying „between Scylla and Charybdis“ come from?

According to Greek mythology Scylla, a pretty girl, was in love with Glaucus. Circe also loved him and she was jealous. Circe poisoned the water in which Scylla loved to take a bath.

After bathing in the poisoned water, Scylla had turned into a six-headed monster. Looking for revenge she attacked everything passing by.

On the Sicilian side of the Messina Strait, on a rock, lived Charybdis. Her body consisted of 12 tentacle-like legs and with those legs, she caught everything in her reach.

They were regarded as a sea hazard, located so close to each other that sailors could not avoid both of them. Avoiding Charybdis meant passing too close to Scylla and vice versa.

„Between Scylla and Charybdis“ means between a rock and a hard place, a situation you can't win.

The town of Scilla is actually very pleasant, neither rock nor hard place. There is a wonderful beach, a citadel on a cliff, and many cozy cafes and restaurants.

#2: Villa San Giovanni



Look at the 2 power poles on both sides of the strait. There is an interesting story about them.

At the narrowest point of the strait, where the distance is only 3 km, rise two high-voltage pylons, each 224 meters high - one on the Sicilian side, one on the Calabrian side. They were in operation until 1993 and connected the electricity network of Sicily to the mainland. When the capacity was no longer sufficient, submarine cables were laid. Today, the pylons are listed as historic monuments. On some summer nights, the Messina mast is alternately illuminated in different colors. A spectacle that does not miss its effect on the Calabrian side.

Between the 2 masts is the place where the "Golden Gate Bridge" of Italy was planned. The bridge that was supposed to connect the mainland with Sicily. The project was never realized. Do you have any idea why?

#3: Sicily



The island of Sicily is a place of contrasts, from the crumbling grandeur of its capital, Palermo, to the Greek ruins at Syracuse, the volcano Mt Etna and the Aeolian Islands. Its home to the touristy Lipari, the jet-setters' Panarea, a rugged volcano and spectacularly spouting Stromboli. Squatting strategically in the Mediterranean Sea, Sicily has attracted waves of invaders and colonists whose detritus includes Greek temples, Roman ruins, Norman churches and castles, and Arab and Byzantine domes. Sicilians remain strongly tied to the land, despite the summer heat, which can be utterly scorching. Luckily, the beaches are superb.

#4: Monti Peloritani



This mountain range between Messina and Taormina features one of the curviest and most spectacular roads in all of Sicily. In good conditions, it allows nice views of snow-covered Mount Etna - if you have time to look! With its narrow alleys, the village of Novara invites us for a coffee break.

RIDING DAY 6 : TAORMINA

Standard Route (155 km / 96 miles)

On this rest day, there are two things you shouldn't miss. One is the ancient city of Taormina, which is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful cities in all of Italy. The view over the Greek amphitheater to Mount Etna - preferably snow-covered and "decorated" with a column of smoke - is something you have to enjoy once in your life. There is a reason why this picture adorns almost every book about Sicily. On the other hand, there is Etna, the most active volcano in Europe, which towers over the island of Sicily and rules it like a mighty king. Fantastic roads lead up to it, are destroyed again and again by eruptions and buried by lava flows, and then have to be rebuilt. In many places the lava is still steaming, fresh green sprouts everywhere, creating a unique landscape. If you want to spend more time on the mountain, you can take a cable car and jeep to the top. Except when the mountain rages and spits fire, which happens fairly often....

Highlights:

#1: Taormina



The most famous spot in Sicily, situated very scenically on a terrace of Monte Tauro 200 meters above the Mediterranean Sea, was already a big attraction for European kings and emperors in the 19th century. They spent the wintertime here in this mild climate. Today the ancient little town with all the shops and restaurants is a must for any visitor to Sicily. The most impressive building

in Taormina is the Greek-Roman theater from the 2nd century BC that could hold up to 5,400 people.

#2: Mount Etna



Europe's highest active volcano, at 3,340 meters, is called "the mountain of the mountains" by the locals. Eruptions are basically ongoing, especially in recent times no year went by without volcanic activity. In history, Etna destroyed a lot of villages and the town of Catania twice. We can have a close look at the cold lava stream of the last eruption. The loop on well-paved roads through all climatic zones around

this giant volcano is a panoramic highlight and rewards riders with breathtaking views.

RIDING DAY 7 : TAORMINA - CEFALÙ

Standard Route (218 km / 135 miles)

When the Sicilians want to drive from Taormina to Cefalu, they always take the highway along the coast, because the roads through the interior are just too curvy for them! This is good for us because first of all we love these curves and secondly we have them largely to ourselves.

We ride along the northern side of Mount Etna and arrive at Cesarò, a typical Sicilian mountain village. Here we are already at the outskirts of the Nebrodi Nature Park, which protects the unspoiled nature of this remote mountain area. A little further west is the Madonie Natural Park, which is a little smaller, but just as beautiful. The roads are just as narrow and winding.

After thousands of curves, we finally reach the north coast of the island and just a few minutes later we are in Cefalù, our destination today. Cefalù is "only" a small town, but from a tourist point of view it is one of the heavyweights of Sicily because its old town is located at the foot of the enormous rock that simply goes by the name of "Rocca di Cefalù". An evening stroll here should definitely be on your program.

Highlights:

#1: Gole Alcantara (Gorge)



The Gole Alcantara is a set of gorges on the Alcantara River in Sicily. They are up to twenty meters deep and four to five meters wide and have eroded into the lava rock of nearby Etna over thousands of years. The lava rock is one of the most characteristic features of the gorges.

#2: Sperlinga



This picturesque village in the Madonie Mountains is famous for the unique Norman castle carved into a giant rock formation. Some of the houses are also built into the rock; this is what gives Sperlinga its special character.

#3: Madonie e Nebrodi



These two mountain ranges are not only home to the highest mountains in Sicily (apart from Etna) and one of the most biodiverse forest areas in all of Italy, they are not only a popular hiking destination, summer retreat, and winter sports area and a wonderful territory for motorcycling, but beyond that, they are also home to the Targa Florio, which is considered the oldest car race in the world. It was held

for the first time in 1906 and at times even had World Championship status. In the early 1970s, pure-bred racing cars were participating here, reaching average speeds of over 120 km/h on the narrow, winding mountain roads!

#4: Castelbuono



Castelbuono means "beautiful castle", and yes, the famous Castello Dei Ventimiglia, built by the powerful Ventimiglia family in 1316, is quite stunning, even though "beautiful" may be a bit of an exaggeration.

Apart from the castle Castelbuono is famous for Manna, a product made from the locas ash trees, and for the fact that back in 2007 the four local garbage trucks were replaced by six donkeys in an effort to cut costs and protect the environment.

#5: Cefalù



With its enormous cathedral and the giant rock as a backdrop this is one of the nicest towns on the island. Famous for its charming historical center and its long, sandy beach, it is a good place to taste the many local specialties or to find some nice souvenirs. And after dinner there are numerous bars to choose from, great places to enjoy a drink with the locals.

RIDING DAY 8 : CEFALÙ - VALLE DEI TEMPLI (VALLEY OF THE TEMPLES)

Standard Route (235 km / 146 miles)

Today we cross the island from north to south, navigating once again on very small and extremely low-traffic roads. They lead us up into the mountains, where the Mafia ruled the small, remote villages for a long time - and still does? You are probably familiar with the towns of Corleone and Prizzi. Much more "original", however, are the countless smaller villages along our route, where we occasionally stop for a Caffè or to refresh ourselves with a Gelato. Time seems to stand still here, but the villages are struggling with rural exodus and decay.

On the south coast lies the city of Agrigento, and it has been there for 2,600 years. Under the ancient Greeks, it was a metropolis, the number 2 in Sicily, and from that time date the monumental temples, which today attract so many tourists. Don't miss a stroll through the "Valley of the Temples"!

Highlights:

#1: Caccamo



Sicily has more to offer than Greek and Roman remnants: here in Caccamo, you can even find a Norman castle that dates back to the year 1093. It is possible to visit and explore the castle, but the views of the surrounding landscape are also worth the trip.

#2: Corleone



Corleone and Prizzi became famous thanks to Hollywood. The movies "The Godfather" and "Prizzi's Honour" showed some of the Mafia heritage, which is quite common in these regions. Fittingly, Corleone is where Salvatore Pacino was born, the father of Al Pacino, one of the main actors in "The Godfather." Corleone has a museum telling the story of the Mafia and of those trying to fight it.

#3: Valle dei Templi (Valley of the Temples)



The beginnings of the settlement, which today is called Agrigento and has about 60,000 inhabitants, are attributed to the Sican people. There is historical evidence of the foundation of the city of Akragas for the early 6th century BC by the Greeks, as well as the conquest by the Carthaginians in 406 BC and by the Romans in 261 BC, who Latinized the name of the city to Agrigentum.

The monumental temples were built in Greek times and demonstrated the importance of the ancient metropolis, which in its heyday had close to 200,000 inhabitants. The buildings survived two and a half millennia in amazingly good condition and today attract numerous tourists. Even for Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, a visit to the Valley of the Temples was a highlight of his "Italian Journey".

RIDING DAY 9 : AGRIGENTO - CATANIA

Standard Route (226 km / 140 miles)

The south of Sicily does not offer such high mountains as the north, but here too the vast chains of hills and mountains fold the roads that pass through them into countless curves. So there's plenty of riding fun awaiting us as we make our way to one of the most famous sights on the entire island. The Villa Romana del Casale is one of the best-preserved buildings from Roman times and impresses above all with its magnificent mosaics. About 120 million little stones were laid to decorate the 45 rooms. The most famous one is certainly the painting that proves that it was not the French who invented the bikini.

After lunch right next to the villa, more curves await us and one last Caffè in Raddusa, then we catch the highway. Mount Etna greets us from afar, the traffic gets heavier and heavier. Catania is the second-largest city on the island! Our hotel is therefore located outside the city and away from the hustle and bustle. After all, we want to dream of Rome and Sicily tonight...

Highlights:

#1: Villa Romana del Casale



This Roman villa from the 4th century AD is famous for its 45 rooms that are all decorated with floor mosaics. Covering 3,500 square meters, they show various scenes from the life of the time. Probably the most famous is the one depicting 10 Roman girls in bikinis.

#2: Catania



Catania, with 320,000 inhabitants, is the second largest city in Sicily after Palermo. It is one of the late Baroque cities of the Val di Noto, declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. After being almost completely destroyed by the volcanic eruption of 1669 and the earthquake of 1693, Catania was rebuilt mainly in the Roman Baroque style under the direction of the master-builder Giovanni Battista Vaccarini.

Among the sights are many buildings and monuments of this era, including countless churches and palazzi. Also the traditional fish market Pescheria di Catania (Piscaria in Sicilian) near Piazza del Duomo. the Fountain of the Elephant, built by Giovanni Battista Vaccarini, the emblem of Catania; the Castello Ursino from 1240, the 3km long via Etnea with countless stores and squares. You should not miss to stroll through the horse meat market in the evening and have a delicious meal in one of the street restaurants. It doesn't have to be horse meat...



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