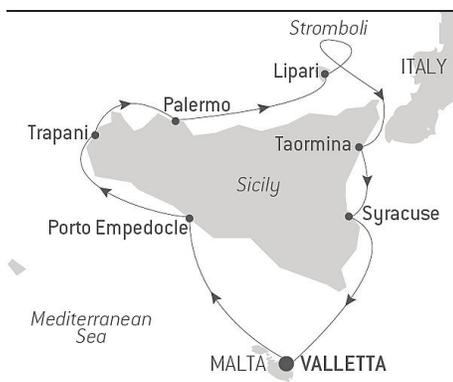


A Circumnavigation of Sicily – with Smithsonian Journeys

From **04/05/2023**
to **11/05/2023**

Ship: **LE BOUGAINVILLE**

From **Valletta**
to **Valletta**



Shore excursion in each port of call + transfers
included

In alliance with Smithsonian Journeys.

This cruise is part of a collection of PONANT voyages that are specially-tailored for English-speaking travellers who want to engage with the world. In addition to the usual elements of the PONANT experience, the listed price for these voyages includes transfers to and from the ship, talks and discussions aboard ship by world class experts, and a shore excursion or activity in each port of call that encourages guests to embrace the sights, sounds, tastes, and smells of the local environment and culture.

We invite you to join us on a **circumnavigation of Sicily**, a crossroads of the many historical civilizations—Greek, Roman, Arab, Byzantine, Norman—that have flourished along the shores of the Mediterranean.

Setting sail from Malta, your first stop is **Porto Empedocle**, gateway to the fabled Greek temples of **Agrigento**, among the most captivating ruins in the entire Mediterranean. Rounding the western tip of the island, you arrive in **Trapani** for an excursion into the countryside and the ancient Doric temple of **Segesta** or to medieval **Erice**, perched on a high triangular plateau sloping down to the sea.

Your fourth day aboard *Le Bougainville* brings you to **Palermo**, founded by the Phoenicians in 827 BC and becoming one of Europe's greatest cities in the 12th century, when the Normans took control. Here you will visit **Cappella Palatina**, a Byzantine-Arab-Norman structure featuring dazzling mosaics and magnificent inlaid marble floors and walls. Or drive to nearby **Monreale** to explore its famed **Norman cathedral**.

In Lipari, discover the 16th-century **Norman castle-turned-archaeological museum** on the site of an ancient acropolis before sailing in the evening to **Stromboli**, whose **active volcano** provides the backdrop as you cruise around the island.

From Stromboli, your ship sails through the Strait of Messina to arrive at **Taormina** on Sicily's east coast. Visit a **winery** on the slopes of **Mount Etna**, the largest active volcano in Europe, or tour Taormina town with its emblematic **Greek theater** offering dramatic views of the coastline.

The final port of call before your voyage comes to an end in Valletta is **Syracuse**, colonised by Greeks in the 8th century BC only to grow to rival Athens as one of the most powerful cities of the ancient world. You will visit the **Roman Amphitheater of Augustus** and the 15,000 seat **Greek theater** or **Ortygia**, the old town and its Baroque cathedral.



The information in this document is valid as of 06/07/2022

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YOUR STOPOVERS :

VALLETTA

Embarkation 04/05/2023 from 16:00 to 17:00

Departure 04/05/2023 at 18:00

The whole of the Maltese capital Valletta is **UNESCO World Heritage** listed and occupies a peninsula in the north-east of the island. From the fountain of Tritons to Saint-Elme fort, there are as many majestic streets as there are narrow staircase vennels to explore. The painted loggia and carved corbels on the tall houses will accompany you in your explorations, and you'll rarely be bothered by traffic. You can visit the Grandmasters palace decorated with coats of arms and frescoes. **Saint-John's cathedral** and the ramparts which have guarded the city since the 16th century are also among the most emblematic sites of the city. Arranged in terraces, the **Barrakka Gardens** will punctuate your promenade with a green and floral experience.

PORTO EMPEDOCLE, SICILY

Arrival 05/05/2023 midday

Departure 05/05/2023 early evening

Huddled on the south-western coast of Sicily, **Porto Empedocles** bears the name of the philosopher Empedocles, who lived in the region in the 5th century BC. An age-old city offered up to sun and sea, this is your doorway to the exceptional archaeological site of **Temple Valley**, a high place of Greek civilisation listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. You can admire the remains of many temples dedicated to Zeus, his wife Hera and Hephaestus. Make sure you take in the magnificent Italian countryside, with its olive orchards that cover the hillsides.

TRAPANI, SICILY

Arrival 06/05/2023 early morning

Departure 06/05/2023 late afternoon

Bathed in the cobalt waters of the **Tyrrhenian sea**, Trapani is the former port of the Greek city of **Erice**, boasting a privileged natural position in western **Sicily**. As you wander through its little streets, you will discover a secular cultural heritage, bearing witness to the many influences of civilisations that came here: **San Lorenzo Cathedral**, Maria Santissima Annunziata sanctuary, the fountain of Triton. On the shaded restaurant terraces, savour some fresh fish from the morning's catch. Or else you can opt for a seafood couscous, a culinary legacy from their Arab neighbours.

PALERMO, SICILY

Arrival 07/05/2023 early morning

Departure 07/05/2023 late evening

Palermo is the guardian of the Sicilian soul. Many have been attracted to this city, the largest capital of the Italian islands. Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Normans... Palermo is a rich culmination of so many cultural influences as seen in the Moorish designs on the **cathedral**, and the Byzantine mosaics of the **Palatine chapel**, which is itself housed within the precincts of the **Norman palace**. You will fall under the spell of the palaces, **baroque splendours** that grace the town with their obsolete beauty. It is thrilling to stumble upon one of those fabulous markets, high in colour, and headily picturesque.

LIPARI, AEOLIAN ISLANDS

Arrival 08/05/2023 early morning

Departure 08/05/2023 early afternoon

Of the seven **Aeolian islands**, this is the largest and the most populated. Lying off the north coast of **Sicily**, in the Tyrrhenian sea, **Lipari** is one of UNESCO's marvellous World Heritage sites. Its lava stone quarries and obsidian flow of **Rocce Rosse** are indications of its volcanic nature. The town, the largest urban area in the whole archipelago, proudly houses its **citadel** and its **castle**, both rooted in Antiquity. If you head further into the centre, you'll be surprised to come across a Norman cathedral, complete with a magnificent baroque façade.

SAILING IN FRONT OF STROMBOLI

Arrival 08/05/2023

Departure 08/05/2023

Like Ulysses during his Odyssey, you will have the opportunity to admire the Stromboli, the capricious volcano that looms over the Aeolian Islands. Its activity, uninterrupted for thousands of years, has earned it the nickname the "Lighthouse of the Mediterranean".

TAORMINA, SICILY

Arrival 09/05/2023 early morning

Departure 09/05/2023 late afternoon

Located on Sicily's eastern coast, in the province of Messina, the seaside town of Taormina is Sicily's Saint-Tropez, boasting heritage sites, secluded beaches and luxury shopping. You can visit its medieval centre, suspended 300 metres above sea level, where terraces offer a spectacular view of the Mediterranean Sea. Another vestige from its past are the ruins of the **Greco-Roman theatre**. This extremely well-preserved site attracts visitors who are fascinated by the natural beauty of the area which overlooks a **turquoise bay**.

SYRACUSE, SICILY

Arrival 10/05/2023 early morning

Departure 10/05/2023 late afternoon

Its undulating rocky coastline, the endless sandy beaches, the menacing form of **Mount Etna** which surveys its island like a patriarch, the flowery gardens on the hillside... **Sicily** lays out its varied landscapes like a shopkeeper displays his wares. Described by Cicero as "the most beautiful city in the world", **Syracuse** was one of the most prestigious cities in Sicily and at her height was even a rival for Athens. **A central city of Ancient Greece**, it was home to a succession of

civilisations, each of which has left their mark. The blend of Arabic, Roman, Norman, Byzantine and Spanish cultures makes Syracuse a town that is extraordinarily rich in fragrances, colours and flavours.

VALLETTA

Arrival 11/05/2023 early morning

Disembarkation 11/05/2023 at 07:00

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