

# The Farmhouse Table



*All food all the time*

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## SICILY FOOD TOUR- FALL 2009

### Palermo Saturday September 26— Catania Monday October 5

Saturday 26 September: **Day 1** Guests arrive in Palermo and transport to agriturismo Baglio Fontana, located in Buseto Palizzolo. The Baglio produces olive oil, honey, wine, and organic fruits and vegetables. There is also a spa on the premises for those wanting a little pampering using the Baglio's almonds, honey and local sea salt in their treatments. This beautiful agriturismo will be our home for the first 3 days in this picturesque region of Sicily. Get settled in and relax before we have dinner and a wine tasting from vineyards nearby.

Sunday September 27: **Day 2** After breakfast we'll take a day trip to the charming town of San Vito Lo Capo overlooking the Tyrrhenian sea for the 2009 International Couscous Festival. The Arab influence in this region of Sicily is not only apparent in the cuisine, but also the architecture. We'll wander the streets, eat couscous, and drink wine,----not necessarily in that order! On the way back to the Baglio, we'll stop at Segesta Archeological Park where the best preserved Greek temple in the world dominates the landscape. Dinner at the Baglio.

Monday September 28: **Day 3** An early breakfast at the farmhouse, then a drive down the coast to the city of Marsala which takes its name from the Arabic Mars-al-Allah, meaning the harbor of God. The Marsala wine that you'll taste today is nothing like the wine you cook with back home. We'll take the "Via del Sale" (the Salt Road) on the way and visit the ancient Ettore and Infersa Saltworks.

These salt flats were first started by the Phoenicians and are still operating today as they did thousands of years ago. Later this afternoon, at Baglio Fontana, we'll join the chef for a cooking class featuring some specialties of the region. We'll sup on what we've made in the class and then off to bed.

Tuesday September 29: **Day 4** After breakfast, we bid farewell to our hosts at Baglio Fontana and drive to the hidden village of Ficuzza. There, at an artisanal bakery, we will watch a bread baking demonstration where the ovens are fired with almond husks rather than wood. The aroma is intoxicating! Then, we will meet Nino Barcia at the Antica Stazione Ferroviaria di Ficuzza, a restored train station from the 1800's. Nino will talk to us about their house-made salumi and cheeses while we enjoy a degustation of these and other products made at the agriturismo. After lunch, we drive south to Palma di Montechiaro. where we'll be staying for the next 3 days at the gorgeous olive oil estate, Mandranova. We'll settle in and maybe have a dip in the pool before dinner.

Wednesday September 30: **Day 5** Breakfast, then we'll tour the Mandranova estate, and pick olives if you'd like, tour the olive mill, and a very special treat---taste freshly pressed olive oil. Guiseppe and Silvia di Vincenzo, the proprietors of Mandranova, produce fine mono-cultivar

olive oil and other artisanal products from their farm. Then we'll take a short drive to the Valley of the Temples, an ancient city founded as a Greek colony in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC near Agrigento and have a picnic lunch. Returning to Mandranova, we will join Silvia for a trip to the market and buy ingredients for a cooking class featuring Sicilian home cooking. We'll enjoy what we've made in the cooking class for dinner and then off to bed.

Thursday October 1: **Day 6** Today we'll take a day trip to the town of Caltagirone, known throughout Sicily for its colorful ceramics and majolica tiles. Then a drive through the countryside to the village of Butera for a wine tasting and lunch at Feudo Principi di Butera. Tonight we'll have a special dinner at "La Madia" in nearby Licata. Chef Pino Cuttaia was awarded a Michelin star in 2006 and uses only the freshest local, seasonal ingredients in his updated classic Sicilian cuisine. Sleep at Mandranova.

Friday October 2: **Day 7** After breakfast we'll leave Mandranova early and drive east to the Baroque towns of Ragusa and Modica. Both of these towns were reduced to rubble in the 1693 earthquake. They were rebuilt in high Baroque style, and share UNESCO Heritage city status. We stop in Ragusa Ibla for a gelato break and then move on to the city of Modica, famous for its "Cioccolata Modicana". We'll have a chocolate tasting and demonstration at Antica Dolceria Bonauto. Traveling north, we'll arrive at Tenuta Scilio Di Valle Galfina. Located in Linguaglossa on the northeastern side of Mt. Etna, the farmhouse and cellars date back to 1815 and are surrounded by organically cultivated vineyards. Get settled in and relax before we have a tasting of the wines from the Scilio estate with dinner at the Valle Galfina farmhouse.

Saturday October 3: **Day 8** Breakfast and a guided morning walk around the vineyards and cellar of the Tenuta Scilio estate before taking a short drive to the town of Bronte. There, we'll taste everything from gelato to cannoli made from the famous Bronte Pistachios nuts (YUM!). After lunch, we'll head back for a cooking class with Elizabeth Scilio at Tenuta Scilio de Valle Galfina. We'll enjoy what we've made in the cooking class for dinner and toast one another with some incredible Mt. Etna DOC wines.

Sunday October 4: **Day 9** For our last day on the island, we'll take a daytrip south to explore Sicily's loveliest city, Siracusa. Founded by Corinthians in 733 BC, we'll stroll through the market and historic quarter located on the island of Ortigia in the heart of ancient Siracusa. After lunch, we'll drive to Taormina to enjoy the breathtaking views of the Ionian Sea and Mt. Etna, take in the sights and do some shopping. We'll have a special farewell dinner in Taormina and then off to bed at Valle Galfina.

Monday October 5: **Day 10** Guests transfer to Catania airport (Approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour from Valle Galfina) for departure. Arrivederci Sicilia!