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Summer 2011: think Mediterranean island

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Reported by J.S. Fletcher and Kathy M. Newbern



Mt. Etna rises above the island of Sicily
Credits: courtesy Perrillo Tours

When you think of islands of the world, what do you envision? Likely are the palmed-fringed beauties in areas like Tahiti, the Maldives and the Caribbean. Maybe the major ones like Greenland or Australia. But chances are your will not think of the largest island in the Mediterranean Sea, the one at the "toe" of Italy.

Sicily may not come to your mind, but it has been on the minds of visitors to its shores for thousands of years. Many cultures landed and claimed its land for their own on their way to trade with or conquer the continent that lay beyond. Among those people were the Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Saracens, Normans, and Spaniards. If you care to visit today, you will see influences in cuisine and architecture all over the island.

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If you care to visit this summer, you might consider an all-inclusive package offered by [Perillo Tours](#), which has been staging trips to Italy since 1945. Its "Splendid Sicily" tour includes first-class accommodations for three nights in Palermo and four nights in Taormina, airport transfers, most meals, wine tastings and more. Guests have the opportunity to visit Monreale, Marsala, Selinunte, Piazza Armerina, Siracusa, and Noto. Pricing through October 15, 2011, ranges from \$2,590 to \$2,790 per person, double, without air.

Visitors will explore the medieval streets and markets of Sicily's capital, Palermo, a bustling city with an unparalleled exhibit of Norman architecture and Baroque churches, as well as the city of Taormina, settled on a hill of the Monte Tauro and just 45 minutes from Mount Etna, the tallest active volcano in Europe. On the tour, guests will stay in the Grand Hotel et Des Palmes, centrally-located in the heart of the commercial and historic center of Palermo and near two of the most popular theatres in the city: Teatro Massimo and Teatro Politeama. Just a few steps away from downtown Taormina, Hotel Villa Diodoro is a unique four star hotel where guests can enjoy views of Mount Etna and the Naxos Bay.

Group Tours range from 20 to 40 people, comfortably ensconced in deluxe, state-of-the-art motor coaches with extra legroom. Single supplements are available as well as sharing opportunities. Guests can opt to extend their stay by arriving early or departing late.

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