

Splendors of South Italy

Benarrivati!

It is with great pleasure that we invite you to join us to enjoy and savor the Splendors of South Italy!

During this special program, you'll live Italy, not as a tourist, but as an Italian, as you travel and dine with food and wine connoisseurs from the real Italy: Magna Grecia, Calabria and Sicily, the places that existed a thousand years before Rome...

Calabria, the birthplace of wine in mainland Europe, with its breathtaking pristine seas, and Sicily, the land of colors, will show you an Italy that visitors rarely see, and once seen, never forgotten...

Created for the most discerning Epicureans, Splendors of South Italy is the most impressive leisure tour available in Italy and is the only that is presented and hosted by Chef Mark McDonald and The Italian Culinary Institute (ICI). Our excursion has been planned by people who love fabulous wine and dining, culture and fun as much as you do...

Join us for a colorful gastronomic and cultural journey through the "old country" where so many wonder about but so few venture.

Splendors of South Italy Itinerary

March 10-19, 2012

Day 1 – Calabria – Arrival & Welcome Dinner

- *Arrival at Lamezia Terme International Airport (CODE: SUF), transfer to the hotel Baia dell'Est.*
- *Welcome dinner with Chef Mark McDonald, owner of Old Vine Café, ICI President John Nocita and Chef Sabrina Mancin.*
- *Overnight at Baia dell'Est, Calabria*

Day 2 – Calabria – Hands-on Cooking Lesson; Evening Pasta Dinner

- *Breakfast at the hotel.*
- *Hands-on Cooking Lesson with ICI chefs: Pasta, Pasta, Pasta!*
- *In Italy, pasta represents a healthy, tasty colorful dish. For chefs and home cooks, pasta represents unlimited creativity. . . In addition to hands-on preparation, participants learn regionalism: understanding where each pasta comes from in Italy enables epicureans to identify the appropriate sauces or condiments for that dish. It also gives a clear idea of how to pair that dish with the perfect wine from a given region.*
- *In this lesson, participants will work hands-on alongside ICI chefs preparing over 50 types of pasta in just one day!*
- *Chef's style kitchen lunch.*
- *Dinner: Pasta Party paired with three Super Southern wines.*
- *Overnight at Baia dell'Est, Calabria*

Day 3 - Calabria - Ciro – Visit & Tasting to an Award Winning Winery & Le Castella, at Isola Capo Rizzuto Visit

- *Breakfast at the hotel.*
- *Late morning departure for Ciro and award winning winery visit. Ciro means "Cyprus" in Italian and is the place where Ancient Greeks named as their capital for what was once Magna Grecia or Great Greece. The Ciro D.O.C. red wines are the oldest wines in Europe and the varietals have recently been dubbed "Super Southern" by the world's most authoritative wine publications. The tasting is accompanied by traditional meats and cheeses from the area.*
- *Visit to Le Castella, at Isola Capo Rizzuto, a picturesque castle nestled on a small island off the coast of the Crotona region. This is a beautiful coastal historical site!*
- *Afternoon return to the hotel.*
- *Dinner: Authentic Mediterranean Feast*
- *Overnight at Baia dell'Est, Calabria*

Day 4 – Sicily – Giardini-Naxos; Taormina

- *Breakfast at the hotel.*
- *Early morning departure to cross the Straights of Messina for Sicily. Those who have read *The Odyssey*, will remember what a terrible time Ulysses had getting past Scylla and Charybdis, which flank what is now known as the Straits of Messina. We'll have an easier time on one of Italy's traghetto. A special tradition that we follow on the boat is to eat an arancino. Aficionados throughout Italy actually travel to the ferry only for a taste of this delicacy.*
- *After crossing with the ferry, we continue and arrive in Giardini-Naxos at Taormina to check into the hotel and for a special lunch at a local restaurant.*
- *Following lunch we continue to the main drag of Taormina, established in 358 BC and "free time" begins. The city is surrounded by incredible beauty and is situated on a bluff overlooking the Mediterranean Sea and Europe's most active volcano, Mt Etna. Shopping and historical sites are a sogno siciliano... a Sicilian Dream!*
- *Free evening in Taormina.*
- *Dinner open.*
- *Overnight at the hotel in Sicily*

Day 5 – Sicily – Taormina; Free Day

- *Breakfast at the hotel.*
- *Free time to explore some of the most precious and intact Roman and Ancient Greek ruins outside of Greece. Taormina stands 200 meters above sea level and looks down onto the Ionian Sea like a terrace, the prettiest you have ever seen. Over the centuries, this magical place has fascinated wretched poets and writers, and restless painters who put down roots here, maybe so they could purify themselves by being in contact with Nature, or perhaps they were attracted by the unique, refreshing climate that makes it seem like it is always springtime. A visit to the Greek-Roman Theater will take your breath away, as this unbelievable work by mankind is perched on a mountain, from where one's gaze simultaneously drops down to the deep blue sea and up to Etna's peak, an overwhelming presence in harmony with the landscape.*
- *Also a short hike or bus ride can take you to and from Castelmola with beautiful views of Mt Etna. After you have fulfilled your cultural fix, shop in some of the hundreds of stores and stop for cannoli, aperitifs and gelato everywhere!*
- *Lunch and dinner open.*
- *Overnight at the hotel in Sicily*

Day 6 – Sicily – Syracuse; Traditional Sicilian Lunch; Taormina

- *Breakfast at the hotel,*
- *Late morning departure to Syracuse.*
- *Visit to Parco Archeologico della Neapolis (Syracuse): Two of the greatest attractions of Sicily, both from the world of the ancients, lie in this city in southeastern Sicily. The Greek Theater is one of the great theaters of the classical period still remaining. The other attraction is the Latomia del Paradiso, or the "Ear of Dionysius," the most famous of the ancient quarries of Syracuse.*
- *Traditional Sicilian lunch at a family owned restaurant.*
- *Browse the beautiful historical streets of Isola Ortigia after lunch. Ortigia is separated from the mainland of Syracuse and Sicily by a narrow strip of sea-water, and is connected by a bridge. The coast of ancient Ortigia has two ports, Porto Grande and Porto Piccolo. The latter, following the meandering coastline east of the island, curves closely together, forming two almost entirely protected landings like watery courtyards for seagoing vessels. Both ports were key links to the Greeks for colonizing Sicily and for trade between the Greeks and Carthaginians in the ancient world.*
- *Free time to explore the wonders of Syracuse.*
- *Early evening return to the hotel in Taormina.*
- *Evening dinner is open.*
- *Overnight at the hotel in Taormina*

Day 7 – Sicily; Calabria; Artisan Cannoli Tasting

- *Breakfast at the hotel.*
- *Late morning departure for Messina where we stop at a Pasticceria and taste the famous Cannoli.*
- *Ferry Transport to Calabria from Messina*
- *Motor coach transport to Baia dell'Est, Calabria*
- *Dinner at Baia dell'Est, Calabria (Risotto Tris)*
- *Overnight at Baia dell'Est, Calabria*

Day 8 – Olive Oil & Balsamic Vinegar Class and Tasting; Visit and Lunch Feast at an Organic Farm; Dessert Dinner & Wine Pairing

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Experience an Olive Oil & Balsamic Vinegar Class and Tasting conducted by Chef John Nocita that will open your mind and educate your palate.
- Late morning departure for a visit to an “agriturismo.”
- An agriturismo is an organic farm that is owned and operated by farmers both of livestock and vegetation. Here we dine on truly local delicacies that are ALL produced on site by the proprietors. Every item on the menu including extra virgin olive oil, cheese, cured meats, breads, and of course, wines are made on the premises offering a unique insight to Italian artisan gastronomy and flavor.
- Late afternoon return to the hotel.
- Dessert Dinner: Three desserts paired with three obscure dessert wines.
- Overnight at Baia dell’Est, Calabria

Day 9 – Calabria – Visit to Roccelletta di Borgia: Archaeological Site; Visit Squillace: The City of Terracotta; Farewell Dinner with live Calabrian Folk Music

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Late morning departure for Roccelletta di Borgia, considered one of the most important Ancient World archaeological sites in Italy today. These well-preserved ruins span two millenniums and three distinct time periods,, showcasing ruins of a Greek Theater, roman Market, and Byzantine cathedral in an unbelievable display of integrated architectural and cultural history.
- Lunch at a local restaurant.
- After Roccelletta di Borgia we proceed to Squillace, a medieval walled town perched on a hill overlooking the Ionian Sea so famous for it’s terracotta that Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus, ancient Roman statesman and writer, mentions the terracotta of Squillace in his writings about two thousand years ago!
- In Squillace we will see how an artisan terracotta Maker assembles a pignata, an earthenware pot which became famous in Italy, and is still used today.
- Free time is perfect for exploring this amazing village.
- Early evening return to the hotel.
- Dinner: Farewell with live Calabrian Folk Music.
- Overnight at Baia dell’Est.

Day 10 – Departure

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Departure and transfer to Lamezia Terme Airport.
- Arrivederci!!!

Splendors of South Italy 2012
Price & Inclusions

****Price: \$3500.00 per person (double occupancy)***
\$3900.00 per person (single occupancy)

*****Payment Information:***

- *Wire Transfer, Visa, Master & American Express are accepted for full payment*
- *Payment due by 90 days prior to departure date*

Price Includes:

- *9 nights of accommodations at 3 star hotels in Calabria & Sicily*
- *Transfers from and to the airport*
- *Breakfast every day*
- *7 lunches*
 - *Wine tasting at a winery accompanied with traditional meats and cheeses from the region.*
 - *Chef's-style kitchen lunch*
 - *Lunch at a local restaurant in Squillace*
 - *Lunch feast at an organic farm including wine*
 - *Lunch at a restaurant in Giardini-Naxos, Sicily*
 - *Traditional Sicilian Lunch at a restaurant at a restaurant in Syracuse*
 - *Cannoli in Messina*
- *6 Dinners*
 - *Welcome dinner paired with wine*
 - *Pasta Party paired with wine*
 - *Risotto Tris paired with wine*
 - *Dessert dinner paired with wine*
 - *Authentic Mediterranean Feast*
 - *Farewell dinner paired with wine*
- *All ground Transportation including airport transfers, all visits and dining, ferry for Sicily and more*
- *English/Italian speaking guides*
- *Cooking lessons*
- *Olive oil & balsamic vinegar class and tasting*
- *Tax and VAT included*
- *All gratuities are included*

****Price does not include airfare or expenses during "free time".***

*****Payments are refundable minus a \$150 administration fee until 90 days prior to start date.***

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