



SICILY & MALTA EXPLORED



TOPDECKER, meet Australasia (TD)

Spoiler alert: if you're looking for culture, you're gonna find it here. Byzantine mosaics, baroque churches, Arabic domes... in Sicily and Malta, Eastern and Western masterpieces stand side by side. Add ancient archaeological sites, amazing natural wonders and delicious food by the BUCKETLOAD and you've got a trip that pretty much covers all bases. Done with the traditional tourist trail? Join us.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Sail & Swim



Nights



Download app



Meals

Thanks for choosing to holiday with Topdeck

Ready for the time of your LIFE?

The countdown's on...

ABOUT YOUR TRIP NOTES

These Trip Notes contain everything you need to know before your trip departs – from where to meet your Topdeck fam to what we suggest you bring.

Read them on the train, in the supermarket queue or on the loo – we don't mind, just look through them carefully so you know what to expect on your trip. We recommend you download this document so it's with you when you travel (and give a copy to your MVPs so they know what you're up to).

IMPORTANT: please refresh this doc as close to your departure as possible. This means you'll have the most up-to-date info available.

INCLUDED EXPERIENCES

- Walking tour of Catania
- Pizza making class and lunch
- Orientation tour of Taormina
- Tickets for the Taormina cable car
- Walking tour of Palermo
- Visit the Valley of the Temples with a local guide
- Orientation tours of Modica, Ragusa and Ortygia
- Chocolate tasting in Modica
- Visit Syracuse Archaeological Park with a local guide
- Full-day Malta mainland tour with a local guide
- Boat trip to Comino with included snorkelling experience
- Night tour of Mdina with a local guide
- Full-day Gozo 4x4 safari
- Photo stop at Popeye Village

YOUR ITINERARY

DAY 1 | CATANIA, ITALY

Sicily, let's do this! Touch down in Catania, drop your bags and get excited: you're on day one of an awesome Mediterranean adventure. What better way to get to know your new Topdecker BFFs than by hitting the streets together on a walking tour of the UNESCO-listed city centre? You'll be all over each other's Instagram stories by dinner time!



MEALS:

- Dinner



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Walking tour of Catania

DAY 2 | CATANIA TO TAORMINA

Ready to roll onto our next smokin' hot stop? Good. Today we've got a date with a slumbering giant: the one and only Mt Etna, Europe's largest active volcano. There's even an optional 4x4 excursion around the smouldering craters to get on board with, if you're interested! Then: prepare to flex your pizza making skills at a cookery class. The best part? We'll get to eat our carb-y creations afterwards. You'll be dreaming of mozzarella and pepperoni after hitting the hay in Taormina tonight...



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Pizza making class and lunch
- Orientation tour of Taormina
- Tickets for the Taormina cable car



OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

- Half-day Mt Etna 4x4 experience

DAY 3 | TAORMINA TO PALERMO VIA CEFALU

Wake up, rub those eyes and prepare for some of the prettiest panoramas you ever did see! Taormina is home to some show-stopping views, so grab your camera and go! And this afternoon? Tear yourself away from the ancient theatre ruins and beautiful public gardens – Cefalù is calling. You'll have plenty of time to kick back and enjoy the beachy vibes before we hit the road to Palermo.



MEALS:

- Breakfast

DAY 4 | PALERMO, SICILY

Byzantine mosaics, baroque churches, Arabic domes... in Palermo, Eastern and Western masterpieces stand side by side. Not sure where to begin? No worries – today we'll hand you over to a super knowledgeable local guide for a fact-filled walking tour. Built up an appetite? Why not swing by the legendary Capo market for an optional street food experience? Think: alllllll the delicious fried goodness.



MEALS:

- Breakfast



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Walking tour of Palermo

DAY 5 | PALERMO TO RAGUSA

Engage explorer mode: today we're off to the Valley of the Temples, a breathtaking archaeological site filled with well-preserved relics. As we explore the seven temples, a local guide will give us the lowdown on their fascinating history. Fact: the site's oldest temple dates back a whopping 2,000 years. Take a moment to let that sink in before we hop back on the coach for the journey to Ragusa!



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Dinner



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Visit the Valley of the Temples with a local guide

DAY 6 | RAGUSA TO SYRACUSE

With so many awesome stops on today's itinerary, there's no time to lose – so polish off that croissant and prepare for action! On our travels, we'll call in at maze-like Modica and the quaint jumble of palazzi and stone houses that is Scicli. Tonight it's Syracuse's time to shine – so get pumped for ancient ruins, amazing architecture and sparkly sea views. To round off the day in style, why not head over to Piazza del Duomo for some people watching and a cool beer or two?



MEALS:

- Breakfast



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Orientation tours of Modica, Ragusa and Ortygia
- Chocolate tasting in Modica

DAY 7 | SYRACUSE TO MALTA

Another day, another incredible archaeological site. You could get used to this! Syracuse Archaeological Park is home to a ridiculous amount of treasures – including a huge amphitheatre dating back to the 5th century BC. After learning some must-know facts from our guide, we'll make a move to our last Sicilian stop: Pozzallo. Don't shed a tear, though – tonight, we'll be boarding the ferry to Malta for the next leg of our epic journey!



MEALS:

- Breakfast



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Visit Syracuse Archaeological Park with a local guide

DAY 8 | MALTA

Awesome news: you've got a full day to spend exploring all that mainland Malta has to offer! Take a deep breath and prepare to tackle a packed agenda including Marsaxlokk Open Market, the temple complex of Hagar Qim, the awe-inspiring Dingli cliffs and the fortified city of Birgu. And that's not all! This afternoon we'll take a traditional dghajsa water taxi over to the island's capital city, Valletta - where we'll check out the amazing views from the lift to the Upper Barrakka Gardens. After a few pastizzi (pastry snacks) and a drop of Cisk (lager), we'll finish up with a city walking tour. Still wanting more? An optional cooking class has got your name on it.



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Full-day Malta mainland tour with a local guide

DAY 9 | MALTA

Awww, yeah – today is a free day. Get out there and do Malta your way.



MEALS:

- Breakfast

DAY 10 | MALTA

Did someone say boat trip? Yep, you heard that right! Grab your bathers, 'cos today we're heading to Comino for a slice of island paradise. And with shimmering waters, white sands and plenty of caves to explore, we mean PARADISE. Take a peek at the sea critters beneath the surface with a spot of snorkelling, then dig into an included lunch. Back in Malta, we'll gear up for a walking tour of Mdina after dark. Oooh, atmospheric!



MEALS:

- Breakfast
- Lunch
- Dinner



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Boat trip to Comino with included snorkelling experience
- Night tour of Mdina with a local guide

DAY 11 | MALTA

Gozo, we're coming for you! Get your binoculars at the ready (or maybe just prep your contact lenses) – today we're hitting the safari trail. Jump in the 4x4 and we'll whisk you around the island to see the likes of Xaghra, Victoria and Marsalforn – stopping off at beautiful Dwerja Bay along the way. Also today: a photo stop at Popeye Village. We hope you've been eating your spinach...



MEALS:

- Breakfast



INCLUDED TODAY:

- Full-day Gozo 4x4 safari
- Photo stop at Popeye Village

DAY 12 | MALTA

Noooooooo! After breakfast, it's time to say goodbye. Quick, stock up on souvenirs!



MEALS:

- Breakfast

MEALS

Your included meals are detailed in the 'Included Essentials' section of this document.

Breakfasts (usually continental breakfasts) are included every day, except on the first morning of your trip. A typical continental breakfast may consist of cereals with milk or yogurt, bread, croissants, cold meats, and cheese – with fruit juice, tea or coffee to drink. It is rare to get a hot breakfast, though on some occasions some hot food may be available.

Included meals will be provided in a mixture of local restaurants and places in which we stay. In most cases, table water is provided with meals. If you wish to purchase additional drinks, you can do so at your own expense.

If you have any dietary requirements, we'll make every effort to cater to your needs – as long as you advise your travel agent or Customer Service Consultant when you book. You can also make a note of dietary requirements in the Topdeck app when you check-in.

PLEASE NOTE: Although we'll do everything in our power to cater to your needs, we cannot guarantee this will be possible in every restaurant we visit. We also cannot cater to tastes or dislikes, as most of our included evening meals feature a set menu.

OTHER INFORMATION

TOPDECK APP

Feeling appy? Download the Topdeck app and get PUMPED for the adventure ahead. Best bit is: from 45 days before departure you'll be able to chat with your soon-to-be tripmates.

Plus, get your itinerary at your fingertips – so you know where you'll be going and what you'll be doing on each day of your trip. Nice!

Links:

Apple <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/topdeck/id994727866>

Android <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.FlexiTechSolutions.TopDeck&hl=en>



YOUR SAFETY

NIGHTS OUT

We love a good night out – experiencing the nightlife and entertainment places have to offer is a big part of travelling. But alongside the fun it's important to be aware of your surroundings and personal safety.

When you're out late, remember to avoid walking alone – particularly through deserted areas like beaches and back streets. Always stick together, take a registered taxi where possible, and keep a note of your accommodation so you can find your way back to your fellow Topdeckers if you become separated. Make sure you have your trip mates' mobile numbers in case you need to get hold of them while out and about.

In some countries, alcoholic measures can be considerably larger than what you may be used to. Try to keep track of what you're drinking – and if you see one of your trip mates looking a little worse for wear, take them back to your accommodation. Never leave your drink unattended.

It's also important to be aware that what you might consider harmless flirting may be interpreted differently in some countries. Be yourself and have fun, but stay savvy – you don't want to find yourself in an uncomfortable situation.

DRUG USE

Topdeck has a strict zero-tolerance drug policy. Customers should not bring any illegal substances onto the Topdeck coach or into any of the accommodation we stay in on our trips. This includes marijuana – even if it is legal in some of the states your trip passes through. If you are found in possession of drugs, you will be removed from the trip immediately. All instances of drug possession will be reported to Topdeck Head Office, who may consider alerting the relevant authorities.

REMEMBER: if you are found in possession of drugs, not only do you risk getting in trouble with the local police, but our Driver will also be held responsible if they are found on the Topdeck coach. Trust us, you don't want that to happen to any of our Drivers – they're awesome.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Culture shock, homesickness, random periods of feeling down – these things happen and are totally normal. You can rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Topdeck crew will do their utmost to cheer you up.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- Call home. Sometimes it's nice to hear a familiar voice and have a good old-fashioned catch up with your loved ones
- Eat well. Never underestimate the power of a good, wholesome meal. Nobody feels at their best when they're hungry!

- Drink responsibly. Not only will you swerve the dreaded hangover, but by keeping an eye on what you drink you could also avoid getting into any potentially uncomfortable situations
- Talk to your Trip Leader. Don't forget, they're probably far from home too – so they're sure to know some tried- and- tested ways to beat the blues
- Integrate with your fellow Topdeckers. This one is key! The more fun you're having on your trip, the less likely you are to feel homesick (fact!)

TRAVEL SINCE COVID-19

Travel looks a bit different since COVID-19. That's why we've put some new procedures in place to help keep you safe on the road.

What remains the same? Your Topdeck trip will be run hygienically, responsibly, and with your safety at the forefront of everything we do. End of.

Here's the info: <https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/travel-safely>

RESPECT ON THE ROAD

RESPECTING FELLOW TRAVELLERS

Our trips are for everyone. We're a family – and we want every Topdecker to have an incredible time.

What we're not about is excluding people or making them feel like they don't belong. That's why we always encourage Topdeckers to be kind and courteous to their fellow tripmates . The golden rules? Respect each other's space, be mindful of causing excessive noise in shared accommodation, and treat others how you'd wish to be treated. Easy!

HOW TO BE A RESPONSIBLE TRAVELLER

Responsible travel isn't difficult to achieve. With a little conscious thought and preparation, you can have an awesome adventure AND a positive impact on the places you visit. Sweet!

Here are five things you can do to ensure you're travelling responsibly:

- Conserve water. You know the drill – reuse your room towels, take short showers and remember to turn off the tap when you're brushing your teeth
- Reduce your waste. Ditch the plastic bag, refuse unnecessary packaging, dispose of your waste responsibly and recycle as much as possible
- Go local. Hunt down locally owned and operated restaurants and bars, shop in local markets, and book tours and activities run by local guides
- Consider the wildlife. Avoid any attractions that involve closely engaging with wild animals
- Respect local people and culture. Obeying local laws is a given – but also remember to dress and behave in a manner appropriate to the community. Be polite and keep an open mind!

INSURANCE

Before your trip departs, it's compulsory for all passengers to take out comprehensive travel insurance covering cancellation, medical expenses (including repatriation), loss or damage to baggage and personal belongings, money and personal liability.

Head to our FAQ for more info: <https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/faqs-0>

Got more Qs? Chat with our Customer Service team: <https://www.topdeck.travel/about-us/contact>

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Please make sure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your trip. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your trip's departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling. Check out our handy interactive map showing global visa requirements:

<https://www.topdeck.travel/resources/latest-border-restrictions>

PLEASE NOTE: some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure, as requirements do change periodically.

TIPPING

Basically: it's not necessary.

Your Trip Leader and Driver don't expect tips, and they won't ask for any either. Meaning? More dollar to spend on optional activities (and a souvenir for your nan).

WHAT TO BRING

Based on our experience, these items are key. Everyone's different though – so if you want to bring more or less, go for it (as long as you don't exceed your 20kg allowance, that is!).

Off to Japan? Your luggage must be no bigger than 160cm in total (height x width x length). So maybe leave the hairdryer at home.

Psst: this is a packing list for Topdeck trips in general. Obv you'd look silly splashing around the Greek islands in a snowsuit.

- 1 pair of comfortable walking shoes + 1 pair of smart casual shoes
- 1 pair of thongs/jandals/flip-flops
- 2 pairs of jeans/trousers
- 2 pairs of shorts/skirts
- 4 shirts/T-shirts
- 2 sweaters/jumpers
- Smart casual evening wear
- 1 warm jacket + 1 rainproof jacket

- Underwear and socks + swimwear
- Towel
- Toiletries
- Hat and sunscreen
- Basic medical kit (including plasters, aspirin etc)
- Adaptor plug
- Reusable water bottle
- Snow gear



THAT'S IT!