



North- East Sicily Self-Guided Walking Tour

Montalbano Elicona -Nebrodi Mountains – Etna – Alcantara River - Castelmola/Taormina

This extraordinary walk encompasses the North-Eastern triangle of Sicily, beginning above the Tyrrhenian coastline at Montalbano Elicona, (named ‘The Most Beautiful Town in Italy’ in 2016), and ending at the town of Castelmola above the Ionian Sea.

The itinerary takes you through lesser known areas of Sicily such as the ‘Argimusco’, (the Stonehenge of Sicily), the Bosco of Malabotta with its ancient oak trees and sensational views of the coastline of Calabria on one side and the Aeolian Islands on the other.

There is an overnight stay in Floresta, the highest town in Sicily at 1,275m above sea level, nestled in the alpine landscape of the Nebrodi Mountains with spectacular views towards Etna. From Floresta, the walk follows the river Alcantara down to the medieval town of Randazzo, known as the ‘Black Town’, then on to Castiglione in Sicilia. You have the opportunity to swim along the way, and visit sites such as the famous Alcantara Gorge.

You have the choice of a lower or higher Mt Etna walk, which vary in length and level of activity, however both are set in a dramatic landscape, which allows you to walk over petrified lava from the 1981 and 2002 eruptions.

At the foothills of Mt Etna, you walk through fertile land where the Etna Rosso, one of the most prestigious wines in Sicily, is grown and produced.

The walks are mostly easy to moderate level, however there are two days which are slightly more demanding.

On request the tour can be shortened by 1 or 2 days.

Day 1:

Transfer from Catania airport to Montalbano Elicona

Montalbano Elicona is a medieval town originally built in 1233 by Emperor Frederick II, known for its most impressive monument, the castle, and the fact that it won the title of the ‘Most Beautiful Town in Italy’ in 2016. It sits perched on a mountain top overlooking the Aeolian Islands. Meeting with our staff member, who will explain to you the walks, the sections that may be difficult, how to organise the daily luggage pickups and answer any queries you may have. Overnight: Restored medieval home.

www.montalbanoelicona.com/appartamento/galleria-foto/Luna

www.montalbanoelicona.com/appartamento/galleria-foto/Kaaba

Day 2:

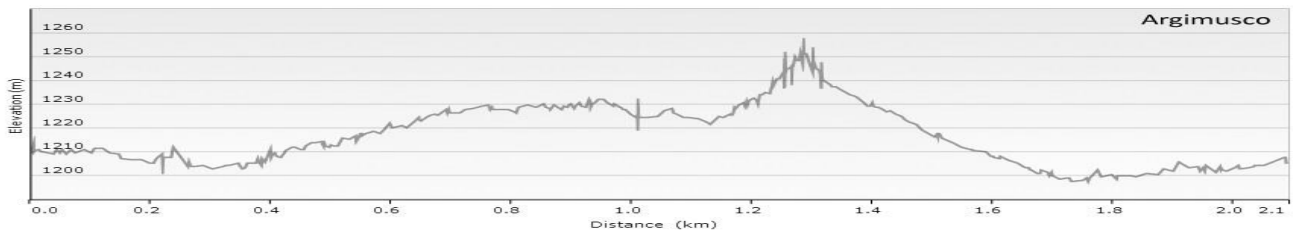
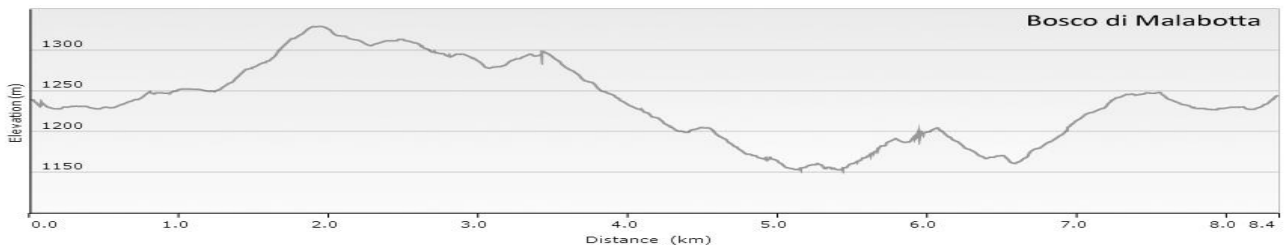
Bosco Malabotta to Argimusco

The short drive to the beginning of the walk at Bosco Malabotta, takes you past the 2,000BC dwellings called 'Tholos'. A forest track leads you past ancient oak trees to an open landscape with sensational views. The walk continues on a country road to the site of 'Argimusco' where you are collected for your transfer back to Montalbano Elicona.

Overnight: Restored medieval home.

Breakfast and packed lunch included.

Distance: 10.6kms; ascent: 318m; descent: 318m



Day 3:

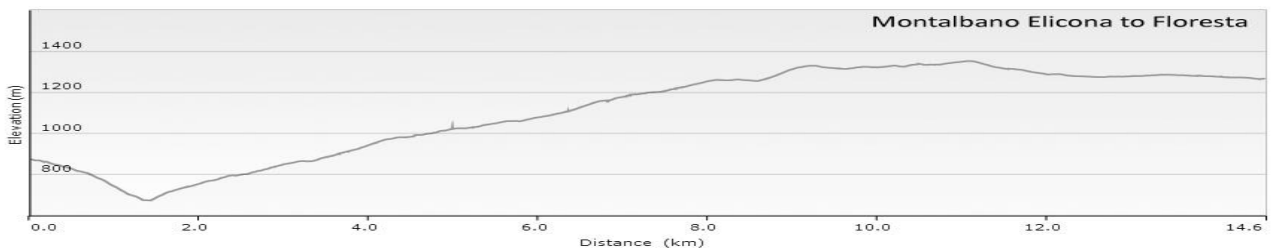
Montalbano Elicona to Floresta

Leaving Montalbano Elicona, you follow an ancient path down to the river Elicona, from where there is a steady walk uphill on a wide track passing through hazelnut groves and open farmland to reach Floresta, located at 1,275m above sea level. From here you are able to admire spectacular views towards Etna and the Peloritani Mountains.

Overnight: Hotel Sant'Anna, a family run hotel. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uQqYJrcEu2o>

Breakfast, packed lunch and dinner included (with house wine).

Distance: 14.7kms; ascent: 738m; descent: 343m



Day 4:

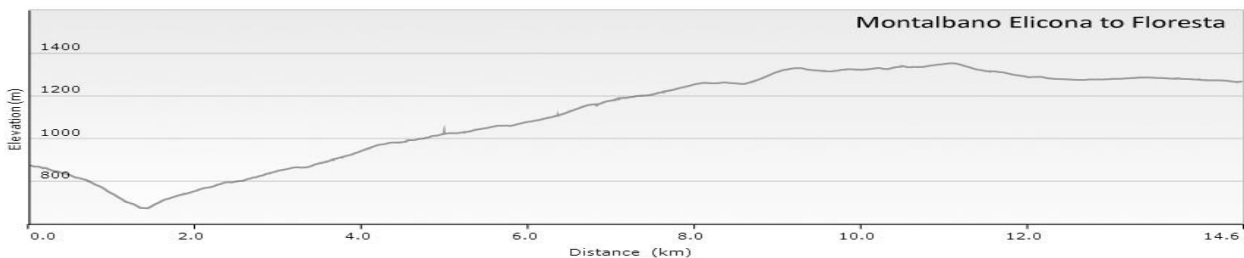
Floresta to Randazzo

Today's walk is the longest in distance, but not difficult, as it's a gradual descent from Floresta travelling along the river, mostly through woodlands. Half way through your journey, there's a lovely picnic area with fresh drinking water available from a fountain, where you may like to stop and have lunch. The day ends with your arrival into Randazzo, known as the 'Black Town', as it's built almost entirely of volcanic lava.

Overnight: B & B Domus Fisauli. www.domusfisauli.com

Breakfast and packed lunch included.

Distance: 17.1kms; ascent: 230m; descent: 757m



Day 5:

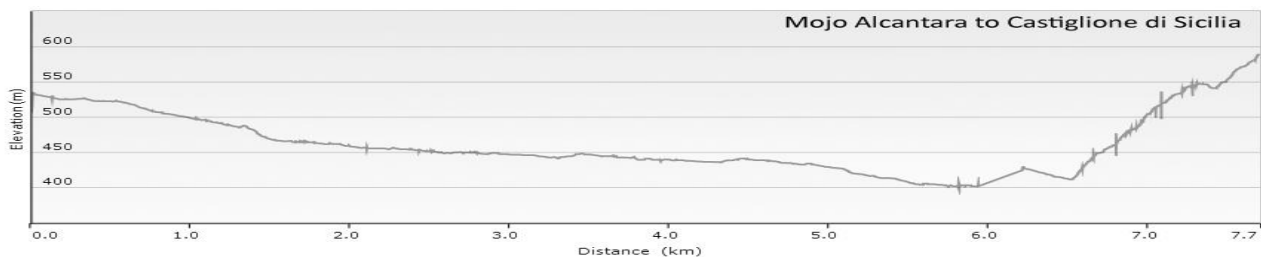
Mojo to Castiglione di Sicilia

This morning, if you wish, you have time to explore Randazzo, as today's walk is short and leisurely. You are driven to the beginning of the walk, a short distance away and close to the nearby town of Mojo. The walk continues to follow the Alcantara river, with a detour to the 'Cuba Bizantina' (*Byzantine chapel*). You may like to stop for a swim in a shady spot along the way before you walk the last section which is uphill. This final part of your walk is once again on an ancient path, taking you into the town of Castiglione di Sicilia, where the Greeks built a fortress in the 5th century BC.

Overnight: Cento Tari Guest House www.centotari.com

Breakfast and dinner included (excluding wine).

Distance: 7.7kms; ascent: 260m; descent: 178m



Day 6:

Mt Etna

Weather permitting, today you walk on Mt Etna, after choosing one of the two routes on offer: the low or high route, the difference being distance and level of activity.

You are driven to the beginning of the walk and collected at the end for your return to Castiglione di Sicilia. Both walks are set in a dramatic landscape, which includes walking over petrified lava flows, an experience which is sure to amaze you. Along the way you discover the various

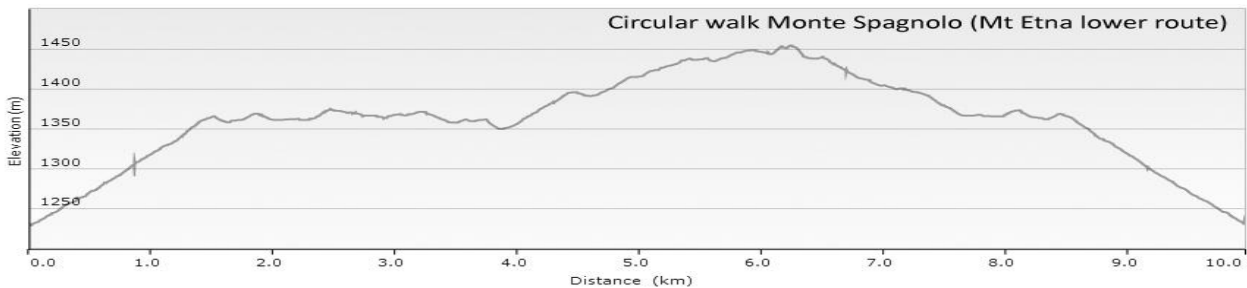
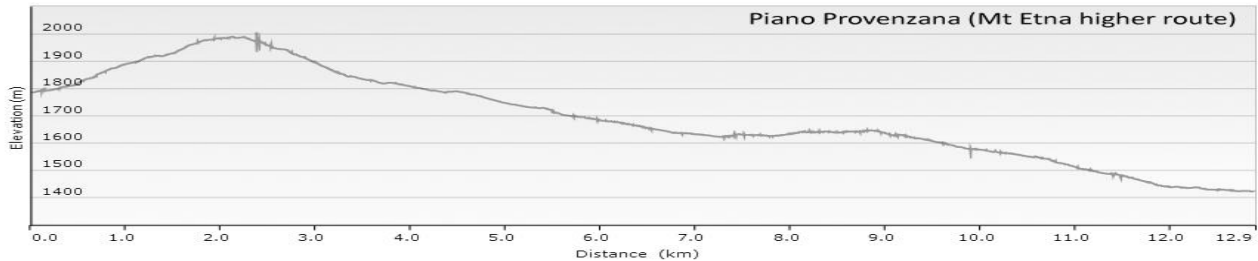
phenomena created by the eruptions of 1981 and 2002. Upon request, an English speaking guide can be organised to accompany you on this walk.

Overnight: Cento Tari Guest House www.centotari.com

Breakfast included.

Higher route - Distance: 13kms; ascent: 267m; descent: 631m

Lower route - Distance: 10kms; ascent: 310m; descent: 310m



Day 7:

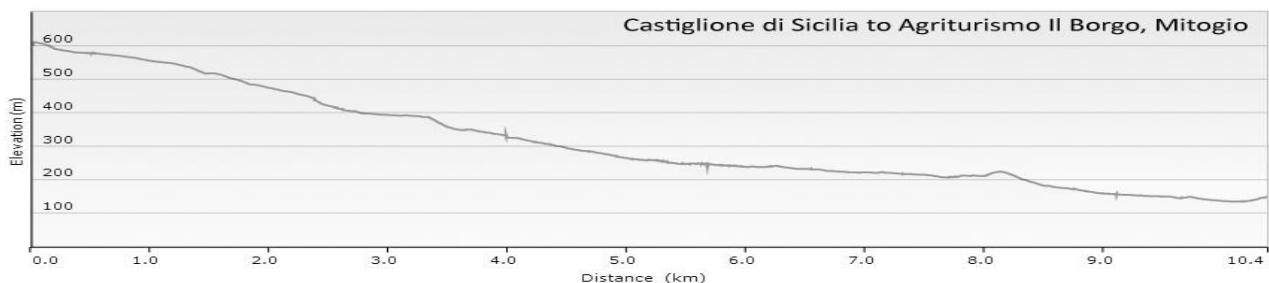
Castiglione di Sicilia to Alcantara

Descending from the town of Castiglione di Sicilia, you arrive at the fertile plains of Alcantara river. The plains are surrounded by beautifully cultivated fields consisting of vineyards, olive groves, fruit trees and well cared for gardens. The first interesting stop is at 'Le Gurme' which are small pools found in the river of the nearby town of Francavilla. You have time to enjoy a swim or just relax by the Gorge of Alcantara.

Overnight: Il Borgo 'Agriturismo' (farm stay) www.ilborgoalcantara.it

Breakfast and dinner included (excluding wine).

Distance: 10.4kms; ascent: 51m; descent: 512m



Day 8:

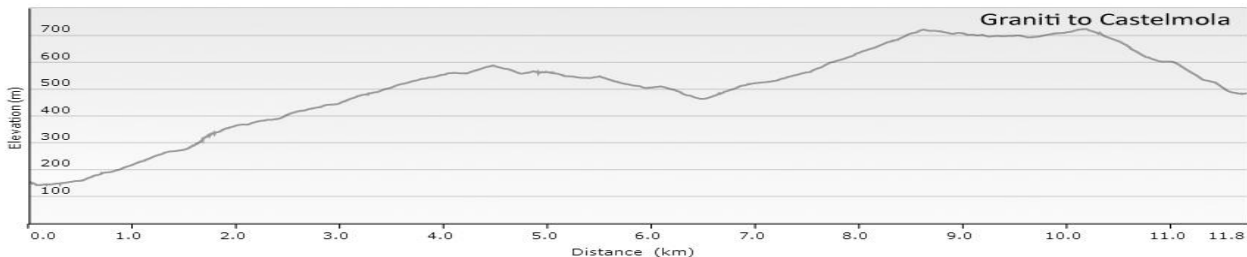
Graniti to Castelmola

A 5-minute drive takes you to the town of Graniti, situated in a nearby valley, where your walk begins. From here the path starts to wind uphill gently through olive and almond groves. Half way up, views of the coastline of Giardini Naxos begin to appear, increasing until you reach the peak, where breathtaking views of Castelmola and Taormina appear below.

Overnight: Hotel Villa Sonia www.hotelvillasonia.com

Breakfast included.

Distance: 11.8kms; ascent: 766m; descent: 434m



Day 9:

Free day

A free day for you to visit Taormina and explore this, the most well-known tourist destination, in Sicily. Walk through the elegant medieval streets lined with bougainvillea, once a haven for the world-famous writers, poets, musicians and painters who were inspired by her beauty.

A visit to the magnificent Greek/Roman theatre, with Mt Etna in the background, is not to be missed.

Overnight: Hotel Villa Sonia www.hotelvillasonia.com

Breakfast included.

Day 10:

Transfer to Catania airport

Breakfast included.

The walks:

The walks are on obvious paths/tracks and even though they aren't always marked, they can be easily followed. There are only very short sections of steep uphill, with mostly gentle ascents on wide tracks. We try to balance out the walks so that after a more strenuous day, a shorter day with an easier walk usually follows. A moderate level of fitness is required.

The accommodation:

Different styles of accommodation are experienced based on what is available in the region, and also to provide you with an interesting and varied experience, thereby giving you a better understanding of the location and its history.

The food:

Recommendations for authentic and unique dining experiences, using fresh local produce, are provided for places visited throughout the tour.

The Nebrodi mountains are famous for farming animals. The cold meats made from a special breed of black pig found only in this area are renowned, as are the numerous varieties of local cheeses.

Cost: Euro 1,250 per person for minimum of 2 people
(two people sharing a double room)
Single room supplement Euro 275

Tour Dates: on request

The tour includes:

- Transfers from and to Catania airport.
- Accommodation as specified
- Meals as specified
- Transfers as outlined during the walks.
- Transferal of luggage between accommodation.
- Maps, photos, gps coordinates and walking notes.
- Historical and cultural information.
- The services of a Tour Manager for any assistance required throughout the tour.

The tour does not include:

- Air travel to Sicily.
- Personal items or services not specified in the itinerary.
- Travel insurance which is a requirement of the trip.
- Single room supplement

This itinerary is to be considered **LAND ONLY**. Your air fare is not included in the above price.
Deposit of 30% due upon confirmation of booking and balance 70 days before departure.

Cancellation charges:

Up to 71 days before departure: 25% of deposit

70 – 31 days before departure: 50% of the tour price

30 or fewer days before departure: 100% of the tour price

We accept payment via bank transfer or via PayPal with extra charge of 2%.

Itinerary Notes: Sicilian Experience will make every effort to operate your tour as planned. However, itinerary times for activities are indicative and may undergo modification due to events beyond our control – ‘force majeure’ such as (but not limited to) local strikes, traffic, road closures, adverse weather conditions or availability of local services whether threatened or actual.