



Walking in the Madonie Mountains

Tour Overview

One of the classic Sicily walking tours, our journey takes us right through the heart of the Madonie mountains to the coast near Cefalù.

You will only need to carry a day pack as our support vans will transport the luggage on a daily basis. An added benefit from having transport accompanying us daily is that you can opt out if you so wish at any time. Some of the walking is strenuous at times and you should expect some uneven walking surfaces and some quite steep ascents and descents. However, all the walks can be done by anyone who is reasonably fit even if they have little experience of mountain walking.

Full Itinerary

Day 1

Catania Airport to Gangi

Pick up at the airport and drive directly to the town of Gangi just on the edge of the Madonie Mountains park. (Transfer 2hrs)

We will stay for 2 nights at the *Agriturismo*, Villa Raino a restored Baronial villa from the 1700s with tranquil surroundings, situated in the valley behind Gangi. After dropping our luggage at the We drive into Gangi where we will visit the 'centro storico' with its Baroque townhouses and interesting churches, typical of the Madonie 'Baroque' style.

Evening meal (included) and overnight at the Villa Rainò.

Day 2

Gangi to Sperlinga

Our first day's walk is a fairly gentle start to the week. We begin with a short drive to Gangi Vecchio. The walk then starts with a gently uphill start before reaching a ridge. For the next couple of hours we contour along the ridge with a few gentle ups and downs. Then at last Sperlinga comes into view and we drop down into the valley below. There're also some beautiful views over to Mt Etna in the distance.

Lunch is in the small village of Sperlina. Then after lunch there is an opportunity to visit the troglodyte dwellings and Saracen castle hewn out of the prominent butress of rock.

Walking Time: 15 km / 9.5 miles 4 ½ hours

Day 3

Gangi to Madonie Mountains National Park

We begin our second day's walk with a short drive to the nearby town of Petralia. From there we contour around the Pizzo Catarineci to the village of Geraci Siculo for lunch.

Our afternoon track takes us through the Madonie range on paths with spectacular views over the mountains, across the sea to the Aeolian islands (on a clear day).

We arrive at Porta Mandarini (1,200 m), where we are driven to Pomieri near Petralia Soprana (10 mins).

Overnight stay at the comfortable mountain chalet. The restaurant is part of the Slow Food Association group which supports the traditional organic cuisine based on local produce.

Picnic lunch and dinner included.

Walking time: 5hrs/14.5km – 9 miles, ascend 350 metres

Day 4

Vallone degli Angeli

There is quite a strenuous climb at the start of the day, but then some level contouring to bring you to the spectacular Vallone degli Angeli. The Vallone Madonna degli Angeli is notable for being the only place in the world where the fir tree *Abies Noredensis* can be found growing.

If we are feeling in need of further exertion, there is a possibility to extend this walk and to climb to the top of Monte San Salvatore (1912m)

In the afternoon we return to Pomieri Hotel

Walking time: 4hrs/11km – 7 miles, ascend 350 metres (without extension)

Day 5

Pomieri to Piano Pomo

We commence walking from the hotel (altitude 1346m), through woodland with 600 to 800 year old maple and oak trees.

Continuing through the Madonie mountains, enjoying the spectacular views across the mountains and towards the sea. Our

walk takes us to a forest with giant 1,000 year old holly trees, situated near a traditional thatched shepherd's hut.

Our path finishes shortly after at the mountain refuge Crispi (altitude 1260m).

We return the walk we ascended. Lunch and dinner included.

Overnight stay in Pomieri.

Walking time: 4hrs/10km – 6 miles,

Day 6

Pizzo Carbonara and onward to Isnello

This morning we begin with a short drive (15mins) to Piano Battaglia and the start of the walk. From this elevation (1572m) the ascent of Pizzo Carbonara (1979m), the highest mountain in the Madonie is not too strenuous, but the views it affords are fantastic.

After descending to Piano Battaglia and lunch, we begin the descent through woodland to Piano Zucchi (2 hours). At Piano Zucchi we are once again met by our transport and we transfer to Castelbuono.

Evening meal and overnight in Castelbuono

Walking time: 6 hrs/13km – 8 miles, descend 620 metres

Day 7

Isnello – Gratteri

On our final day of walking, we begin with a transfer back to the village of Isnello (almost to the point we finished at the previous day), to begin the ascent towards Gratteri. Over the col, we have a short drop down to lunch.

After lunch we transfer to Cefalu to our hotel. In the afternoon, there is a chance to visit to Cefalù, the famous Arab/Norman town with its majestic cathedral, important museum, shops, and beautiful sandy beaches.

Dinner at seafood restaurant. Overnight in Cefalu

Walking time: 3 hrs/7km – 4 miles

Day 8

Departure

Dates: 11th to 18th May 2019

(8 days / 7 nights)

Cost: £1,890 per person
(two people sharing a double room)
(single supplement for a double room for single use £545)
(approximately Euro 2,153/ US 2,691 subject to daily exchange rates)

Group size: 7 to 14 people

The tour includes:

- Accommodation in double room with breakfast
- Transfers and pick-ups/drop-offs from/to the main airport of arrival on the day of arrival/departure of the tour are included
- Services of a full-time professional tour guide.
- All meals are included.

Accommodation:

- 2 nights in an Agriturismo in Gangi
- 3 nights in chalet-style mountain hotel
- 1 night in Castelbuono
- 1 night in Cefalù

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