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Let's Travel!

"The Insider's Twist On Travel"



HISTORIC JEWISH SICILY

October 10 - 20, 2010

Accompanied by **Professor Mauro Gabriele Perani** –
President of the European Association for Jewish Studies (EAJS)



LET'S TRAVEL! RADIO hosts, Susi and Michael, have created an "Insider's Take: Sicily" program, offering a unique opportunity to discover the island's fascinating Jewish history with a world-class scholar. We visit Palermo and Siracusa, but also access exclusive sites in Agrigento, Trapani and more!

BOOK BY JUNE 31, 2010, AND SAVE \$300 PER PERSON OFF THE TOUR PRICE!

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LET'S TRAVEL RADIO – HISTORIC JEWISH SICILY

Distinguished Jewish Studies Scholar, Professor Mauro Perani, will guide us as we explore the rich 1,500 year history of Sicily's Jews before their expulsion in 1492 by Spain's King Ferdinand The Catholic. Learn about the important legacy that Sicilian Jews had on Jewish culture, economy, history, and Hebrew as a living language. The Jews first arrived in Sicily after Jerusalem's destruction in 70 C.E. by the Roman army, led by the future Emperor Titus. Until their forced exile off the island by the Crown of Aragon Rulers, Sicily's Jews numbered nearly 30,000, more than all the Jews settled on the rest of the Italian peninsula. The Sicilian Jews had settled in Messina, Taormina, Catania, Siracusa, Palermo, Agrigento, and Agira, and other towns. Due to its strategic position in the middle of the Mediterranean sea, Sicily played a central role in transferring to Europe the Sephardic heritage of the Golden Jewish Era in Spain during the 11th -14th centuries. Not only did Sicilian Jews fully integrate into Sicilian society, speaking Arabic in addition to Sicilian dialect, but they held professions as physicians, noted merchants, bankers, notaries, translators, and precious metal workers. Recently, the most ancient Jewish ritual bath (7thc. Mikveh) in Europe was rediscovered in Siracusa, in addition to many Hebrew inscriptions in the Roman late period catacombs – tour these fascinating sites, and many more, with Professor Perani!

OUR TRIP INCLUDES:

Dining on local specialties, Sicilian wine and produce tasting
Meet local artisans, and be immersed in local town history
Nine nights' accommodation at centrally-located 4-star hotels
Airport-hotel-airport transfers (when purchasing trip with airfare)
21 Meals: 10 breakfasts, 3 lunch, 8 dinners
Comprehensive program of tours and Cross-Culture-Connections®
Coach transportation and transfers & baggage handling overseas
Pre-departure materials, reading lists, and packing suggestions
Hotel service charges and taxes
Gratuities for local guides, waiters and porters

VISIT FASCINATING JEWISH HISTORICAL SITES:

AGIRA - Oldest known stone Aron located in the San Salvatore Church
PALERMO - Museo Civico with documentation about Sicily's communities; a Mikveh and former Jewish quarter "Mosquita"
Jewish inscriptions in Monreale Cathedral
TRAPANI - Fardelliana Library with the oldest manuscript of the Qabbalah in Europe; Museum with artisanal collection of Judaic-Arabi jewelry
SIRACUSA - Museum dedicated to Jewish archaeologist Paolo Orso; oldest Mikveh in Europe; catacombs in Vigna Cassia

Study Leader: Professor Mauro Gabriele Perani

Accompanying us on our travels is Professor Mauro Gabriele Perani, the President of the European Association for Jewish Studies (EAJS), and Padnos Visiting Professorship of Judaic Studies (2008-2009) at the Frankel Institute of Judaic Studies, University of Michigan. Professor Perani teaches at the University of Bologna (Ravenna Campus), and is a leading authority on ancient Judaism. His current field of research includes the discovery of 8,000 Medieval Hebrew manuscript fragments that were hidden as book-bindings in the 18th century. He is an engaging speaker, and his lectures and insights during the tour will add greatly to the enjoyment of this journey of discovery of Sicily's Ancient Jews at this crossroad of civilizations.



DATES AND PRICING:

MAIN TOUR: OCTOBER 10-20, 2010 - \$5,495 (DBL OCCUPANCY) SINGLE SUPPL: \$795

ROME EXTENSION: OCTOBER 21-23, 2010 - \$895 (DBL OCCUPANCY) SINGLE SUPPL: \$395

WITH AIR* FROM JFK (OR EWR): \$6,295*

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DAILY ITINERARY:

Day 1 - DEPART US

Depart the US on your overnight flight(s) to Palermo, Italy.

Day 2 - ARRIVE PALERMO

Arrive at Palermo airport. There you will meet your guide, and transfer to our centrally located hotel. Time to freshen up, and then meet for a Welcome Reception and introductory talk from our accompanying study leader, Professor Perani, before dinner. *Hotel Principe di Villafranca* (D)

Day 3 - PALERMO

Today enjoy a morning guided visit around the historic city center, including visits to the synagogue and the Jewish Quarter, "Mosquita". Also visit the imposing 12th castle of Zisa, built in the Norman Arab style, which still holds Hebrew inscriptions. Lunch is at your leisure in the city center. Afterwards, join your study leader for a visit to the Duomo and the Norman Palace, where we discuss the role of the Jewish community through the centuries. Later, partake in a Sicilian cooking lesson and dinner at a local trattoria. *Hotel Principe di Villafranca* (B,D)

Day 4 - PALERMO

Our morning guided sightseeing takes us to one of Europe's greatest architectural treasures, the cathedral of Monreale, situated in Palermo's outskirts, which houses magnificent mosaics and traces of the Jewish community that flourished here until the 16th century. Later, we visit the Museo Civico to view rich documentation about Sicily's Jewish communities through the ages. *Hotel Principe di Villafranca* (B,D)

Day 5 - ERICE - TRAPANI

Depart this morning by coach to the atmospheric medieval town of Erice. Walking through the cobblestoned streets of this ancient town, a variety of delicious aromas waft from the numerous pastry shops, including that of internationally renowned pastry chef, Maria Grammatico, who shares with us some of her cooking secrets. In Trapani, visit the Ferdelliana Library to view the oldest manuscript of the Qabbalah known in Western Europe. Walk through the Giudecca to the Ciambra Palace. At the Pepoli Museum, see an artisanal collection of Judaic-Arabi coral jewelry. *Hotel Principe di Villafranca* (B,D)

Day 6 - AGRIGENTO - PIAZZA ARMERINA

Travel to the incredible ruins of the Valley of the Temples in Agrigento, a UNESCO World Heritage site. This ancient Greek site was one of the leading cities of the Magna Graecia before it was sacked by the Romans and the Carthaginians in the third century B.C. Explore beautifully preserved temples to Zeus, Castor and Pollux, and Heracles. Sit down to a specially arranged lunch in the Kolymbetra Garden, just steps from the ruins. Then journey by coach into the mountainous interior of the island to another UNESCO World Heritage site - that of Villa Romana del Casale at Piazza Armerina. Arrive early evening at our hotel nearby, with the rest of the day at your leisure. *Hotel Villa Gussio* (B, L)

Day 7 - PIAZZA ARMERINA - AGIRA - SIRACUSA

Travel to the mountain village of Agira, where one of the oldest holy arks (circa 1454) or 'Aron', a repository for Torah scrolls, can be found. This precious relic is stored for safe-keeping in the Norman church San Salvatore, until the original site can be restored. Then we continue to Noto, a charming town with UNESCO World Heritage status that was restored with fine architectural details after its near destruction in the earthquake of 1693. Arrive in historic Siracusa late this afternoon and check into our centrally located hotel. *Hotel Royal Maniace* (B, D)

Day 8 - SIRACUSA

Venture down the winding streets of Ortigia, an ancient town linked to Siracusa and the mainland by a bridge, accompanied by your local guide, and visit the museum dedicated to Jewish Archeologist Paolo Orsi. Pass the ruins of the Temple of Apollo, which served as a church and a mosque, and the 'Giudecca', with its synagogue. Visit the Catacombs in Vigna Cassia, and the oldest Mikveh in Western Europe (7thC), still with flowing water, that was discovered only in 1999. Later, visit the Greek and Roman ruins in the impressive Archaeological Park. *Hotel Royal Maniace* (B, D)

Day 9 - SIRACUSA - MESSINA - TAORMINA

Today we drive to Messina on Sicily's north-eastern coast, once an important center for Jewish culture on the island. Our walking tour with local guide includes Via della Giudecca and the Jewish Quarter, with ruins of the Savoca Synagogue, and a tombstone from the synagogue in the Museum of Messina. Later, we arrive at the seaside town of Taormina and enjoy a tour including the impressive Greco-Roman amphitheater. Enjoy a free evening to explore this beautiful town and its surroundings on your own. *Villa Sant'Andrea* (B, L)

Day 10 - TAORMINA - MT. ETNA

Europe's largest active volcano Mount Etna, dominates eastern Sicily and is a landmark far and wide. Ascend by cable car and then continue by jeep to the rim of the volcano, for some incredible views of the island. After descending again, we celebrate our Sicilian journey with a leisurely festive farewell luncheon at a local winery. Return to the hotel in the early evening and enjoy time at leisure. *Villa Sant'Andrea* (B, D)

Day 11 - TAORMINA - U.S.

After an early breakfast, we transfer this morning by coach to Catania airport for your flights home via Rome, or continue your journey of discovery of 'The Path of Sicily's Jews' by joining our optional post-tour extension in Rome. (B)

(Hotels listed are subject to availability, and may be substituted by other properties of equal or better standard)

POST-TOUR OPTIONAL EXTENSION IN ROME - OCT. 20 - 22, 2010



WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- Two additional nights at First Class hotel in Rome
- Four additional meals: 2 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 1 dinner
- Escorted transfer from and to Rome's Fiumicino Airport

GUIDED SMALL-GROUP DISCOVERIES:

- Ancient Rome: Coliseum and Roman Forum, Jewish Quarter, including The Great Synagogue
- Vatican: St. Peter's and the Sistine Chapel, the Jewish Museum

Day 1 TAORMINA - CATANIA - ROME

We transfer this morning to Catania airport for your flight to Rome. Upon arrival, tour the Jewish Quarter of ancient Rome with your local guide, including the Great Synagogue. See also the Coliseum, renowned for the events held there in ancient and modern times, and visit the Roman Forum, where the ruins of temples, shops and the central Forum itself continue to evoke a powerful sense of the city's history. Check in at your hotel, a restored Renaissance palazzo located near the Tiber in the heart of Baroque Rome, near Piazza Navona and the Jewish Quarter. Evening at leisure.
Hotel Ponte Sisto (L)

Day 2 ROME

After breakfast, board your coach for the Vatican to visit its famed museums. Pass through the monumental colonnade that surrounds St. Peter's Square. Visit St. Peter's Basilica, within which are Michelangelo's beloved *Pietà* and other masterworks. Your guided tour includes a visit to the Sistine Chapel where you will stand surrounded by Michelangelo's great frescoes with scenes from the Old Testament. Your guide will conclude your tour with a visit to the Jewish Museum in the afternoon. Gather this evening for a farewell dinner in a delightful restaurant near your hotel.
Hotel Ponte Sisto (B, D)

Day 3 ROME - U.S.

Leave after breakfast for Rome Fiumicino Airport and your return flight to the U.S. (B)

TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

This program is managed and operated by *Cross-Culture Journeys* on behalf of *Lets Travel! Radio*

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NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE: Personal expenses such as communication charges; laundry, beverages, snacks, excess baggage charges, any expenses which you personally incur; transfers outside of our recommended arrival and departure times; travel and health insurance; passport expenses; optional sightseeing/ performances; gratuities to your *Let's Travel! Radio* tour manager.

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