Discover Sicily: Heart of the Mediterranean

LAND TOUR

Plus optional extensions in Amalfi Coast, Italy; Malta

SIC 2014

Grand Circle Travel
Discover Sicily: Heart of the Mediterranean
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1. PASSPORT, VISAS AND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Passport Required

You need a passport for this itinerary. Please take a moment to check if your passport meets all of these requirements. If not, you could be refused entry into a country. And if that happens, you might be required by that country to return to the U.S. immediately, **which would be at your own expense**.

Your passport should meet these requirements for this itinerary:

- It should be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- It should have the recommended number of blank pages (see below for details).
- The blank pages must be labeled "Visas" at the top. Pages labeled "Amendments and Endorsements" are not acceptable.

Recommended number of blank pages:
This recommendation is based on a "worst case" scenario. When you are on this adventure, you might use fewer pages, depending on the whims of the Immigration official on duty that day. Since the consequence of having too few pages can be severe—you could be denied entry into a country—we feel that it's better to be safe than sorry, and we strongly recommend that you follow these guidelines.

- **Main trip only**: 2 blank "Visa" pages.
- **Optional pre-trip extension to the Amalfi Coast**: No additional pages needed.
- **Optional post-trip extension to Malta**: 1 additional page, for a total of 3.
- **Both a pre- and a post-trip extension**: A total of 3 pages.

If you need to renew your passport or get extra pages:
Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778,** or visit their website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport, renewing your existing passport, or for additional pages. You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

NOTE: When updating your passport, it is worthwhile to check the prices on all the different services that might apply to you. For example, it might be less expensive to renew your passport than to have pages added, depending on the number of pages you need.

Visas Not Required

U.S. citizens do not need visas for this itinerary.

No U.S. Passport?

Non-U.S. citizens or non-U.S. passport holders: If you are **not** a U.S. citizen or if you possess a passport from a country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate or embassy about possible visa requirements. Or, you may contact PVS International who can also assist non-U.S. citizens:

PVS International
Passport & Visa Services
1700 N Moore Street
Rosslyn Center, suite 310
Arlington, VA 22209
Telephone: 1-800-556-9990

Backup Photocopies

The smartest security precaution you can take is to make photocopies of your passport's personal information pages, your air tickets, your traveler's check serial numbers (if you're using them), and your credit cards. Also, bring extra passport-sized photos. Make a list of the phone and fax numbers for reporting lost credit cards, your travel protection plan company (if you have an optional travel protection plan) and medical emergency network. Keep these documents separate from the originals, and they can save you immeasurable time, money, and trouble if your originals are lost or stolen as you travel. In addition, scan these photocopies and email them to your email address; you can then print out replacement copies if necessary.

2. YOUR HEALTH

Keep Your Abilities In Mind

We've worked closely with our local Program Directors and regional associates to identify the aspects of this adventure that you should be aware of, from physical requirements to cultural factors. **Please carefully review the information below prior to departing on this trip.**

Pacing

- 5 locations in 15 days

Physical Requirements

- Not accessible for travelers using wheelchairs or scooters
- Travelers using walkers, crutches, or other mobility aids must travel with a companion who can assist them throughout the trip
- You must be able to walk 2-3 miles unassisted and participate in 3-5 hours of physical activities each day, including stairs

Climate

- Daytime temperatures range from 50-92°F during touring season
- Temperature on excursion to Mount Etna (altitude: 11,000 feet) range from 32-85°F
- June-August are the warmest months
- March and December weather can be unpredictable and change quickly within a short period of time

Terrain

- Travel over uneven walking surfaces, unpaved paths, steep hills, stairs, and cobblestone

Transportation

- Travel by 45-passenger coach

Cuisine

- Meals will be based on the local cuisine

Health Check and Inoculations

If you have any ongoing medical conditions or concerns about your health, we highly recommend that you schedule a checkup with your personal physician at least six weeks in advance of your departure date. Discuss with your doctor any aspects of your international itinerary that may affect your health and be guided by his or her advice. A loose filling or developing cavity would be difficult to remedy while you are traveling. You may want to have a dental exam before your trip.

If you have a condition that requires special equipment or treatment, you must bring and be responsible for all necessary items related to your condition. If you take medications regularly, be sure to pack an ample supply that will last your entire trip, as obtaining refills of your medication can be difficult during your trip. Pack these medications in your carry-on bag, and keep them in their original, labeled containers. To be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications, you should also bring copies of the prescriptions, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name.

Vaccinations:

Check with the CDC: To ensure you receive any needed vaccinations we suggest that you check the current recommendations of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for your destination. You can contact them at:

On-line — if you have access to the Internet, we suggest you visit the CDC's Web site at **www.cdc.gov/travel**, where you will find comprehensive information about preventing illness while traveling.

By phone—at the CDC's Hotline toll-free at **1-800-232-4636** 24 hours a day. Please note that automated information may be arranged topically by disease, rather than by country or region.

Consult your doctor: After checking the CDC's recommendations we strongly suggest that you consult your family physician (at least 6 weeks prior to departure) concerning any vaccinations or medications that you may need on this trip. At the time of print there were no specific vaccinations required for entry into any of the countries on your itinerary.

3. LUGGAGE REGULATIONS

Size, Number and Weight Restrictions

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current **standard** is **50lbs for checked bags** and **15 lbs for carry-on bags**.
Size restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (*length+width+depth*). Generally, **62 linear inches is the checked bag limit**; **carry-on limit is 45 linear inches**.
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.
TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS	
Both the pre and post extensions have the same luggage restrictions as the main trip.	
REMARKS / SUGGESTIONS	
One suitcase and one carry-on bag per person: Due to the space limitations on bus transfers, you'll be restricted to one suitcase and one carry-on bag per person. This is to ensure that we have room for everyone's luggage. We ask that you abide by this limit to avoid inconveniencing your fellow travelers and prevent additional airlines luggage fees (which are your responsibility). Most airlines now charge to check more than one suitcase per person for flights to Europe and other international flights. **Note**: Enforcement of published restrictions by countries and airlines is a matter of governmental and corporate policy. Enforcement may include spot checks and may be inconsistently applied. Expect penalties and fines to be imposed immediately, however, when and if enforced. Before you choose to ignore the published restrictions you should ask: *Do I feel lucky?* And, even if you answer yes, you should make sure that you have the ability to pay the fine.	

Should I confirm luggage restrictions with my U.S./international airline(s) before departure?
Absolutely, confirm current restrictions about a week or so before your departure. You should take this step no matter if your vacation has a lower limit then the average international flight or not, because there may be recent changes, such as new security regulations, or an update to the standard weight/size allowances. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our webpage in the *FAQ* section.

You should also check with the airlines on luggage fees—many airlines charge to check luggage, even on international flights. Others may charge a fee if you bring a second carry-on item, like a purse or a laptop. **These fees are not included in your trip price**; they are payable directly to the airlines. If you are making a connecting flight, you should also confirm if your luggage can be checked through to your final destination. For more information about air travel, see the "Air Travel" section of your *Important Information* booklet.

Luggage Suggestions

Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase for your checked luggage. Due to space limitations on our motor coaches, you are allowed one piece of checked luggage per person. Porterage at airports and hotels is provided for **one** bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags.

Consider a daypack or small backpack as your carry-on bag. It will do double duty during excursions and walking trips. A daypack leaves your hands free and distributes its weight onto your back. Packed with daily travel needs (sweater, camera, rain/wind jacket, water bottle, etc.), it will compress to fit the storage space of foreign motorcoaches, and yet still have room for an impulse buy at a local street market.

Tip**:** *Bring a second, empty lockable bag folded into your main suitcase, with a luggage tag and small lock. Use this to carry souvenirs home – but remember that you may incur extra luggage fees. If you're traveling with a companion we recommend "cross-packing," i.e., pack 2 outfits of your clothing in your companion's luggage and vice-versa, in case one bag is delayed.*

Airport Security/TSA

Restrictions on what can be included in your carry-on luggage may change. To avoid inadvertently packing restricted items in your carry-on, we suggest that you consult the Transportation Security Administration website at www.tsa.gov/public, which keeps a current list of restricted items. From the main website click on *Our Travelers*, then *Air Travel*, and then you will see a link for *Prohibited Items*.

Liquids and your carry on: Follow the **TSA's 3-1-1 rule**: Liquids must be in a 3.4 ounce or less (100ml) bottle (by volume); all bottles must be in a 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag; 1 bag per passenger placed in screening bin. One-quart bag per person limits the total liquid volume each traveler can bring. The 3.4 ounce (100ml) container size is a security measure. Note that this rule is used increasingly in Europe, as well.

Locking your luggage:
To reduce the risk of damage to your luggage, *either* do not lock your bags when checking in for flights that originate in the U.S. *or* use TSA-approved locks. (These are locks that TSA screeners can open and relock with a special tool, avoiding damage to your luggage or lock if a physical inspection is required. Look for the words "TSA" or "TSA-approved" on the lock's packaging.) Outside of the U.S., we strongly recommend that you lock your luggage as a preventative measure against theft.

4. WHEN YOU ARRIVE

Your GCT Program Director

During your Grand Circle Land Tour, your group of up to 42 travelers will have reliable assistance available at all times from an on-site Grand Circle Travel Program Director. Your Program Director is a resident of Italy who is fluent in English and can give you an inside perspective on your destinations. Your Program Director is supported along the way by local tour guides, who guide you expertly through particular sites and cities.

Many Grand Circle Program Directors are graduates of professional education programs for travel guides. In addition, they receive specialized training directly from Grand Circle, training that is based on what we've learned from thousands of past travelers about how to make the trip most enjoyable. Your Program Director offers both a deep knowledge of the region and a commitment to make this a very pleasant, informative, and rewarding travel experience for you.

Your Program Director will provide sightseeing tips, handle all travel details, reserve optional tours you choose to take, oversee your Discovery Series events, and provide any other assistance you may need. You will be in the company of the Program Director throughout your Land Tour. During the optional extensions (if you've chosen to take them), you'll enjoy the services of Grand Circle Hospitality Desk Representatives.

GCT Air Travelers

U.S. Departure: If you are among a group of ten or more GCT travelers who depart the U.S. from your international gateway city, it is our goal to have a GCT Representative assist you at the U.S. airport with the check-in of your flight. Unless there are extenuating circumstances beyond our control, the Representative will be at the check-in counter three hours before your departure time. If you are flying domestically before your international flight, the representative will be stationed at the check-in counter for your departing international flight, not at the domestic arrival gate.

Italy Arrival: At the beginning of your base program or your optional pre-trip extension, a GCT Representative will meet you at the airport after you exit customs and assist you with your transfer to the hotel. If you are not met upon arrival, we ask that you immediately call our emergency contact number listed in your final documents.

Important note: *Airport porters are NOT allowed in the customs hall area. On arrival, you must take your luggage off the baggage carousel and load it onto a cart (in Italian airports you'll need a one- or two-euro coin for the cart), which you will then move through customs. When you exit customs, you'll handle your cart until reaching your motor coach. Your motor coach driver will load your luggage onto your motor coach.*

U.S. Return: At the end of your base trip or optional post-trip extension, you'll be transferred by motor coach to the airport for your return flight to the U.S. If you are among a group of ten or more GCT travelers who return to the same U.S. gateway city, a GCT Representative will meet you as you exit Customs and help you find taxis, buses, hotel accommodations, or connecting flights. Again, it is our goal to have our GCT Representative waiting to assist your group. In rare instances, unforeseen circumstances may prevent this service.

Grand Circle Travel is not responsible for flight delays or cancellations. In the unfortunate circumstance that your flight is delayed or changed, please try to reach the GCT local contact in order to make new arrangements for your transfer. Due to airline regulations our staff are not notified of flight rerouting, and our airport representative won't necessarily be aware of your new arrival time. In these cases you will need to arrange your transfer by taxi to your hotel.

Flying with a Travel Companion

If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.

Please note: *If you plan on booking your own international flights or arranging with our air department to arrive/depart on an earlier/later date than standard for your program, airport transfers will NOT be included in your program price. Transfers must be purchased separately, as an optional add-on, and are subject to availability. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Traveler Support team at 1-800-321-2835. For more information, please see your Important Information booklet.*

5. MONEY MATTERS

How to Carry Your Money

The European financial infrastructure is as developed and modern as America's – sometimes even better developed. Currencies vary and banks have different names, but most are allied with global institutions and offer the same services you use daily. You can expect to have ready access to ATMs (to get local currency from your account), to have major credit cards accepted at most popular tourist sites, restaurants, and major stores, and to exchange US dollars for local currencies. There will be localized exceptions and perhaps some limitations on availability and amounts, and don't forget the fees. However, a little forethought can make juggling currencies a fairly painless process.

While there is no need to obtain local currency before your trip, many travelers do exchange $50 to $100 or so into the currency of their first destination. This can smooth your arrival should you run into closed banks/exchanges or broken ATMs. Otherwise, rely on a mix of credit/debit cards and ATM use (for ready access to cash) as the best way to manage your money as you travel. U.S. cash should be mixed into the blend, but it's wise to minimize how much you carry. Just as at home, carrying large amounts of cash can be risky. It's generally wise to have spending money in the local currency rather than to rely on American dollars.

You can exchange money at money exchange offices and some hotels. A few banks will also offer this service, although many are cutting back on this service or only offer it to clients who have accounts with them. Be aware, however, that torn, dirty, or taped U.S. bills will ***not*** be accepted for exchange. **New** (in terms of use *and* issue date – post 2004) and large bills ($100) will *usually* be accepted by banks and onboard ships; **old** $100 bills (again, in age and condition) will ***not*** be accepted. Money in smaller denominations is much more universally accepted, but even there, new bills are preferred. Note that U.S. currency is not an accepted form of currency in Europe.

TIP: Our Program Directors would like to warn you that changing money in small villages is not as easy as it used to be; plus it is more expensive. You might want to change your money in a city like Palamero and/or use your ATM card to withdraw euros while traveling around Sciliy.

Traveler's checks—not recommended: We urge you not to rely on traveler's checks for your personal expenses. They can be difficult to exchange and the commission fee for cashing them is quite high. It's most practical to view any traveler's checks you might bring as a last "cash" resort in the event of a special situation. U.S. dollars have an advantage over traveler's checks. Cash is more readily exchanged and accepted, and sometimes commands a better exchange rate.

Credit Cards

Though major American credit cards (American Express, Visa, and MasterCard) are accepted abroad, always inquire if your type of credit card is accepted before deciding on your purchase. It is also wise to notify your credit card company that you will be using your cards abroad so that they may remove any security block. When using a major credit card you may receive a different exchange rate than if you pay with cash; inquire about the rate first. Please be aware that credit cards might not be accepted for small purchases or in some restaurants or stores. Note that the Discover credit card is not widely accepted outside the U.S. Keep your receipts in case you have questions about the conversion or exchange rate. Also, keep your receipts as proof of purchase for items to be shipped home.

***TIP**: Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company or bank that you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure. You should also double-check what phone number you should call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don't assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1-800 numbers don't work outside of the U.S.!*

IMPORTANT NOTE: European countries have been phasing in a new type of credit card technology, called a "smartcard" or a "chip-and-PIN" card. These cards have an embedded computer chip instead of a magnetized strip, and the card owner authorizes a purchase by entering a four digit numerical PIN (Personal Identification Number) instead of signing a slip. Some businesses in Europe have already switched to the new system completely; some can process both smartcards and regular cards; and some haven't switched at all.

This new technology is not common in the U.S., so occasionally there may be machines that can't read U.S. cards. Or the machine can read the card, but asks for a PIN. Although it is not common for U.S. credit cards to have PINs (and some providers will not even be able to provide one at all), requesting one prior to your departure is recommended. In some shops you will still be able to sign a slip as usual if you inform the vendor at the point of sale. And if the shop in question requires a smartcard, you can always try a different form of payment, like a debit card or cash. (U.S. debit cards usually have a PIN, so sometimes they work when credit cards don't.) Since there is no way to predict in advance what each shop will do, we recommend that you bring more than one type of payment when you go shopping. For example, a mix of a couple different credit cards, a debit or ATM card, and some cash is ideal—you'll be prepared for anything.

Please note: Optional tour payments made by credit card may take up to 3 months to process. For this reason we ask that you use a credit card that will not expire until three months following your trip. Because our headquarters are in Boston, charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as "**OPT Boston**" (depending on your credit card company).

Debit cards: Debit cards are very popular in Europe, and are widely accepted, but will *almost always* require a PIN. Many U.S. banks offer a combined ATM and debit card. Check your ATM card, and if it has a Visa or a MasterCard logo, ask your bank if it can be used as a debit card in Europe. (If there's no logo, then you probably can't use it as a debit card, but your bank will know for certain). If it can be used as a debit card, all you'll need is the same PIN you use at the ATM.

ATMs

When traveling, typically PLUS, Cirrus, and other bank networks are available throughout large cities and small towns. Always notify your bank before you leave home that you are going abroad so that they may remove any blocks on your account, and also ask them about the number of withdrawals you may make abroad. For cash withdrawals, don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's 4-digit PIN (Personal Identification Number), as many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their numeric keys, they only display digits.

TIP: Memorizing your PIN is especially important for Sicily. If you mis-type your PIN more than twice, the machine will keep your card and the bank will mail it back to your U.S. address.

Many banks have begun imposing a fee ranging from $1 to $5 every time you use an ATM in a foreign city. You may want to limit the number of withdrawals that you make. Your Program Director/Hospitality Desk Representative can advise you on locations, but when to exchange money is left to your discretion.

Currency

The euro is the official currency of Italy. Euro banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, and 500
- Coins: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 cents; 1 and 2 euro

There is no need to obtain local currency before your trip (except as noted above). Please note that torn, dirty, or taped bills are generally not accepted for exchange.

Currency exchange rates fluctuate daily. Your Program Director will advise you of the exchange rate upon your arrival. For current exchange rates, please refer to our website, or the financial section of your newspaper. On our website select the region and then click on the country you'll be visiting. A link to the currency converter is included in the menu on the page of each individual country.

Banking Hours

Italy: Bank hours are usually Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 1:30 pm, and 3 pm to 4 pm; banks are closed on Saturday and Sunday. A few banks will exchange money, although many are cutting back on this service or only offer it to clients who have accounts with them. In Italy, money can be changed not only at banks, but also at CAMBIOs (Exchange Offices), General Post Offices, and some travel agencies and hotels. Any of these businesses (including a bank) may charge a commission for the service. You will need to have your passport with you to exchange money.

Malta: Maltese bank hours vary according to the season. From June 15 until September 30, banks are typically open 8 am to noon, Monday through Friday, as well as 2:30 pm–4 pm on Tuesday and Friday; hours are 8 am–11:30 am on Saturday. From October 1 to June 14, the hours are 8:30 am to 12:45 pm, Monday through Friday. On Saturday, hours are 8:30 am to noon. Foreign exchange facilities are also selectively available.

Shopping

There is **no** requirement to make a purchase during stops at local shops or markets, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. **Grand Circle Travel cannot be responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.**

Sicily& Italy

Whether it refers to high fashion or Maserati automobiles, "Made in Italy" has become synonymous with style and quality craftsmanship. Among the most popular buys are leather goods, silk ties, knitwear, gold jewelry, ceramics, straw goods and other handicrafts, small cabinets, and jewelry boxes. Each region in Italy has its specialties.

- **Sicily**: Taormina has perhaps the best selection of antiques, ceramics, jewelry, and lace handiwork in all of Sicily. Conveniently, most of the shops are concentrated on the main street, Corso Umberto I, which stretches from one end of the old town to the other. The corso is off limits to cars, making it ideal for strolls and window-shopping. It is also an unusually beautiful street, with bougainvillea-filled balconies, shady piazzas, outdoor cafés, and inviting pastry shops. Don't be afraid to browse farther afield, such as around the area just below the corso, which can provide some interesting finds.
- **Amalfi Coast**: Sorrento is primarily a resort but you can find quality gloves, cameos, embroidered blouses, tarsia (intricate boxes with inlaid wood decorations), and Capodimonte ceramics.

Bargaining is **not** common in Italy. Prices in most shops are fixed and include taxes. If you see the sign *prezzi fissi* (price fixed) you can be sure that there is no bargaining to be done.

Local shop hours: Shops are generally open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 9 am to 1 pm; they close for lunch and re-open 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm. Individual stores might vary these hours. Some shops are closed on Sundays and on Monday mornings.

We recommend that wherever possible you carry your purchases home with you, especially if they are valuable or fragile. (Remember to leave some extra space in your luggage when you are packing for your trip, so you can fit in your vacation purchases.)

If you plan a major purchase, we strongly recommend that you research the prices and quality available at home before your trip. Just one visit to an import shop or gold dealer will put you way ahead when you go shopping. This is the only way to know if you are getting a good price.

Malta

Maltese shops range from small, family-run businesses and quaint boutiques to large shopping complexes and chain stores. In nearby Valletta, Republic Street is a major shopping thoroughfare, and Valletta's Sunday market, held below St James Bastion, is one of Malta's top attractions. Among the best Maltese buys are:

- **Glassware:** Mdina decorative glass has earned a reputation for good workmanship and attractive colors.
- **Jewelry:** Finely worked filigree using both gold and silver is to be seen in shops all over the island.
- **Lace:** Malta is renowned for its delicate lace. It has been the traditional craft for generations of the women of Gozo, who work in their own homes.

Shop hours: Stores are generally open 9 am to 1 pm and 4:30 to 7 pm, Monday through Saturday. Prices are fixed on all items; bargaining is not practiced here.

VAT Refunds: Visitors from outside Europe can take advantage of the "cash-back" system on value-added tax (VAT) if purchases total a minimum amount of approximately 230 Euros. The VAT will only be refunded on the purchase of items worth approximately 58 Euros or more.
A cash-back voucher must be filled out by the retailer at the point of sale. Ask the shopkeeper or salesperson about the VAT at time of purchase, or talk to your Program Director about it before you shop. Be sure to save all receipts and VAT forms for Customs, as receipts alone are not enough.

U.S. Customs Regulations and Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, **www.cbp.gov** has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511.**

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is $800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than $800 are subject to duty fees.
- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S**. Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the *export* duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the *import* duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins.

U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20229
Tel. **1-877-227-5511**
www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/

Problem with a Purchase?

The best way to address a problem with a purchase is to not have one in the first place! So don't forget to examine merchandise before paying for it, check contracts or agreements before signing, and review your receipt before leaving the shop. For major purchases, don't hesitate to ask in advance about the return policy—local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up.

But what if you do discover an issue with an item later on? In that case, your best recourse is to contact the vendor directly. For this reason we recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. due to delays in communication, the complexities of international shipping/customs duties, and even cultural differences in how business is conducted.

To Tip or Not to Tip?

Sometimes *that* is the question. The good news is twofold: we're fresh out of Shakespearean soliloquies, so no thesauri will get hurt here; and the answer the question "**to tip or not to tip** (and how much to tip if you so choose)" is ***always*** a personal decision. Tipping is a common practice both at home and abroad and we offer these guidelines to answer requests for appropriate tipping amounts. It can be useful to have this information on site – when the question *must* be answered – and ahead of time for travel budgeting purposes. Tips below are quoted in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency (usually preferred) or in U.S. dollars (personal/traveler's checks should ***never*** be used for tips).

GCT Program Director: It is customary at the end of your trip to express a personal "Thank You" to the Grand Circle Program Director or the hotel Hospitality Desk Representative, especially if he or she has provided you with individual assistance. We recommend $4-$6 per person, per day. Please note that tips for our Program Directors can only be in the form of cash, and local currency is appreciated.

Airport/Hotel/Pier Porterage & Transfers: While using GCT transfer services, tips to hotel, airport, and pier porters are included in the cost of your trip. Tips to the motor coach driver for your airport/hotel/pier transfers are also paid by GCT.

Included Group Meals: Your Program Director will tip waiters for the included meals when the group dines together.

Local tour guides and drivers: $2 per person for each half-day tour; $3 per person for each full-day tour.

Time at Leisure: When you eat in one of the Dine-Around restaurants, the tip is not included and a gratuity in appreciation of good service is your responsibility. Also, during the times that you explore independently, you may dine in a local restaurant, take a taxi, or avail yourself of some other service where tipping is customary. In Italy, restaurant checks sometimes include service charges (*servizio incluso*), but you might consider adding another 5% to 10% for the waiter. Taxi drivers expect about 10%. If the doorman calls a cab for you, the tip is generally about 50 euro cents.

Public Restrooms: Most public restrooms in this region are manned by a local staff that takes care of cleaning and supplies. It is customary to leave a small tip for the staff—about $.65 per person (in local currencies).

Malta (Optional Extension): Tips for your included meals are included in the cost of your tour, although it is always acceptable to give a little extra for exemplary service or if someone has performed a special service for you. A tip of about 10% is customary in restaurants, cafés, and for room service. It is customary to tip an extra 10% to taxi drivers.

6. PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP

In General

Travel light. A good rule of thumb is to gather together everything you want to bring; then take half of that. Eliminate all but the essentials and start packing a few days before you leave. That way, you'll have time to think—not fret—about what you might be forgetting. To have a varied travel wardrobe, yet keep your luggage light, we recommend you select a color scheme and pack color-coordinated clothing items that can be mixed to create different outfits.

Pack casual clothes. Comfortable, informal apparel is acceptable at each of your destinations. Basic pants, shirts, walking shorts, sportswear, everyday dresses and skirts, supportive shoes, and functional outdoor clothes that are relatively easy to care for are recommended. At dinner, you will not need to don "dressy" clothing; men do not need jackets or ties and women do not need fancy dresses. You may want one or two “smart casual” outfits for the Welcome Reception or Farewell Dinner, but it’s completely up to you. Even at the opera, formal wear is definitely the exception rather than the rule. You would only need nicer dress if you plan to dine at a deluxe city restaurant on your own.

Comfortable, supportive walking shoes: These are essential. The country's magnificent archaeological sites, churches, museums, markets, and shops truly invite exploration by foot. But negotiating the cobblestone streets and rather uneven sidewalks can be a challenge—even for the most surefooted traveler.

Rain gear: Regardless of your month of travel, rainfall is certainly a possibility. We suggest you bring a folding umbrella and waterproof shell. Water-resistant walking shoes are advantageous in case heavy downpours pass through.

Proper attire in churches: To satisfy dress codes for Italian churches, men and women are requested to cover their shoulders and legs. No shorts above the knees or sleeveless garments please. Men should also remove their hats inside a church. Women wearing sleeveless blouses can cover their bare arms with a scarf. It is not necessary for women to cover their heads or wear dresses/skirts; trousers, jeans, or pantsuits are fine. If you are traveling in cooler months, when it’s unlikely that you’ll want to put on shorts, the church dress code might not be an issue. However, if it’s apt to be “shorts weather” when you travel, we suggest you pack a pair of light trousers and modest knee-length shorts to wear on days when church visits are featured. Women have the option of slipping on a long skirt with an elastic waistband over their shorts.

Malta (optional extension): Be prepared for a variety of weather conditions. The weather in Malta may be quite warm, especially in September and October, but play it safe by including cotton sweaters, heavy knits, and/or light woolens. Rain and strong winds are common occurrences on the island from October to March. While you should pack some clothes for warm weather, definitely also include a waterproof, wind-resistant jacket, warm pants, and a fleece top or sweater.

Packing Your Carry-On

Using a daypack as a carry-on bag for your flights is a smart solution. We **strongly urge** you to pack your carry-on with at least one full change of clothes, your camera gear, medications, changes of socks and underwear, your important travel documents, and other irreplaceable items, in case your checked bags go astray. Store camera gear and important papers in plastic bags to protect them from dirt and moisture. With a daypack you can then remove these items on arrival and load your bag with the gear you’ll need on walking tours and excursions.

What not to pack: do not pack aerosol cans, as they tend to leak during air travel. Avoid packing glass bottles; use plastic containers instead. Leave at home checkbooks and any credit cards not essential for your trip, valuable jewelry, and anything that you would hate to lose.

Clothing Options

The luggage weight and size restrictions imposed by travel realities today have made traveling light an absolute necessity. With modern fabrics – Gore-Tex, Polarfleece, polypropylene, etc. – lightweight packing for comfort and protection through a wide range of weather is easy. A visit to any on-line or local sporting goods/outdoor stores (L.L. Bean, REI, EMS, etc.) will yield a treasure trove of lightweight, specialized, and fashionable clothing and gear that is readily adaptable to your itinerary.

Travel Gear Suggestions

Though it's often fun to do things as the locals do, it can be frustrating when daily necessities or conveniences from home aren't available. To travel wisely these days you must juggle your personal needs and preferences against the physical constraints of your transportation—whether it's an international airplane, a transfer motorcoach, a small ship or a day-long trek on a camel. You'll have to distinguish between what you **must** have, what you'd *like* to have, whether you can zip your suitcase closed, and what you can reasonably expect to wrestle through airport hallways and security checkpoints. Consult the following items to create your personal checklist – ignoring what you don't need and making the tough decisions over borderline cases. Remember that many airlines today will charge you extra for added luggage.

General Clothing Recommendations

- ❑ Causal shirts or blouses, plus trousers and/or jeans: Comfortable and loose-fitting so you can easily walk, hike or be active.
- ❑ Shoes and socks: Comfortable, sturdy, highly supportive walking shoes yo walk through archaeological sites, churches, museums, and markets. Hiking shoes—or shoes that you feel comfortable hiking in—for your Etna excursion. Also recommended is a pair of water-tolerant footwear in case of rain.
- ❑ Underwear and sleepwear
- ❑ Light sweater. During colder times of year, this is useful for layering. During hotter times of year this can still be useful because the air-conditioning on the bus can be cold.
- ❑ A light scarf might be also useful, especially for women (it can double as a warp), if it gets windy or for cool nights.
- ❑ Some sort of rain gear—a raincoat, a waterproof jacket, an umbrella, etc. Rain can be expected any time of year.
- ❑ Wide-brim hat or visor for sun protection.

Seasonal Clothing Recommendations

For winter (December-February)

- ❑ For 80% of the trip, you'll want long, warm jeans or trousers. You can take a pair of shorts just in case of unusual warm days when we get "Scirocco", the hot wind from Africa.
- ❑ You'll mostly want long-sleeved shirts, but might want a couple short sleeves for sunny days.
- ❑ Winter in Sicily is not very cold, and the island it doesn't get any snow except on Mt. Etna, so wool sweaters and a warm jacket or coat will be enough for city excursions. But since there can be snow on Mt. Etna, you might want a hat, scarf, and gloves for our visit to the mountain.
- ❑ Bring clothing you can layer (sweater, fleece, jacket, etc.); thermal or long underwear adds warmth without bulk and doesn't take up much room in your luggage.

For spring (March-May)

- ❑ Spring is especially tricky to define. March is a shoulder month that can have both winter and spring weather; May is a transitional month from spring to summer.
- ❑ You'll want a mix of long jeans/trousers and walking shorts, plus a mix of long- and short-sleeved shirts.
- ❑ Snow can occur as late as April on Mt. Etna (which we visit for one day), so factor that into your clothing and footwear choice. We suggest bringing a couple of layers and waterproof shoes.
- ❑ Some warm clothing is still a must, but it doesn't need to be as heavy-duty as for winter.
- ❑ Layers (sweater, fleece, jacket, etc.) are key for this season, so you can adjust to the varied weather.
- ❑ Warm sleepwear, or a layer you can add to your sleepwear, is recommended.
- ❑ A swimsuit will become more useful as spring progresses.

For summer (June-September)

- ❑ Summer is hot and muggy, so the best choices are walking shorts and/or lightweight trousers. But you'll still want a pair or two of long jeans/trousers for Mt. Etna and for cooler nights.
- ❑ For female travelers: Our female Program Directors suggest that a skirt (to the knee or longer) is a great choice for hot days. There is no need to wear a skirt all the time; jeans/trousers/walking shorts are fine too, and are usually a better choice on our most active days. But a skirt allows for air movement and is a nice alternative to shorts.
- ❑ A swimsuit is recommended as you might want to swim in the Mediterranean Sea. Keep in mind that hotels in Italy usually do not provide beach towels, so you might want to bring your own towel or a cover-up.
- ❑ A pair of flip-flops or sandals is also recommended.
- ❑ This is the driest season, but rain can still occur, especially on Mt. Etna. A light waterproof jacket or umbrella is suggested.

For fall (October-November)

- ❑ As the season progresses, you'll want to lean more towards long sleeves and long trousers, but still keep a few lighter things for warm days.
- ❑ Fall can bring rainstorms, so you might want to have a raincoat or an umbrella.
- ❑ October can feel as hot as summer. You might want to have a swimsuit with you, especially in early October.
- ❑ November is a transitional month into winter. Temperatures can vary widely from day to day, plus weather patterns have shifted over the last few years, so the weather in this month will be a mix of hotter days (80s) and colder days (60s).
- ❑ Like spring, layers (sweater, fleece, jacket, etc.) are key for this season, so you can adjust to the varied weather. As the season progresses, the more warm layers become useful.

Medicines

- ❑ Your own prescription medicines
- ❑ Vitamins
- ❑ Cold remedies: Sudafed, Dristan, etc.
- ❑ Pain relief: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin
- ❑ Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax
- ❑ Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta
- ❑ Anti-diarrheal: Imodium
- ❑ Band-Aids
- ❑ Moleskin foot pads
- ❑ Antibiotics: Neosporin/Bacitracin

Consider…

- ❑ Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, shower cap, body soap, etc.
- ❑ Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- ❑ Sunglasses with a neck strap
- ❑ Sunscreen, SPF 15 or stronger
- ❑ Insect repellent with DEET
- ❑ Travel money bag or money belt
- ❑ Compact umbrella
- ❑ Pocket-size tissues
- ❑ Moist towelettes (packets) and/or anti-bacterial "water-free" hand cleanser
- ❑ Flashlight, extra batteries/bulb
- ❑ Photocopies of passport, air itinerary, credit cards
- ❑ Written prescriptions for medications

Other Gear

- ❑ Compact binoculars
- ❑ Hanging toiletry bag with pockets
- ❑ Hair dryer (this is provided in all hotels)
- ❑ Washcloth (not a standard amenity in Italian hotels)
- ❑ Hand-wash laundry soap (Woolite) clothespins/travel clothesline/stopper
- ❑ Electrical transformer & plug adapters — ee "Regional Electricity" section
- ❑ Travel journal/note pad
- ❑ Home address book/email address
- ❑ Photos, small gift for home-hosted visit
- ❑ Phrase book
- ❑ Collapsible walking staff
- ❑ Pocket calculator for exchange rates
- ❑ Earplugs
- ❑ Reading materials

7. REGIONAL CLIMATE INFORMATION

We can't predict the weather you'll have on your travels – our local weathermen are lucky to get tomorrow right! So, as your departure nears, it's a great idea to visit the *My Account* feature of **www.gct.com** for a current 10-day forecast of temperatures and conditions at your destinations. Or check Internet weather sites (www.wunderground.com is very comprehensive) for those forecasts and tweak your wardrobe accordingly. You'll find historical averages and general information on local climates below – but, given recent weather extremes, it's even more important to consult up-to-the-minute resources.

Sicily: Sicily's varied topography includes mountains in the north and east (where Mt. Etna's snow-capped peak dominates), a vast central plateau with near desert-like conditions, and a fertile coastline dotted with sea-level resort towns. Consequently, the island has an array of weather patterns, depending on where you are—down by the sea, up in the mountains, or inland. Your accommodations are in coastal towns, where the year-round weather is relatively mild. Winter temperatures average in the 50s and often reach into the 60s. Occasional rains are followed by long periods of sunny weather. Spring comes early and ushers in even warmer temperatures, mostly in the 70s, though the weather can still be somewhat unpredictable. Summer has settled, sunny weather, and July high temperatures can range from 75 to 95. In contrast, near the mountains weather can be very unpredictable: chilly, mild, sunny, or wet. Night temperatures always drop due to the higher altitude. Inland weather tends to be dry and sometimes windy.

Amalfi Coast (optional extension): The weather in Sorrento, along the Amalfi Coast, is a typical Mediterranean climate with temperate winters and hot, dry summers. Spring and fall usher in delightful weather, with plenty of bright skies and pleasantly warm temperatures.

Malta (optional extension): Situated midway between Sicily and North Africa, the Maltese islands have a distinctly Mediterranean climate, similar to that found in southern Italy or southern Greece. The warmth of summer lingers well into the fall, and the mild winter days have sufficient rain to produce grassy patches across the rocky landscape. Wild flowers, too, abound in autumn, winter, and spring—with more than 600 varieties carpeting the valleys, ravines, and ridges of the island with a blaze of color. Malta has a very sunny climate with an average of seven to eight hours of sunshine a day in midwinter and over twelve hours a day in summer.Erratic showers are common in the late fall and winter.

Malta can be windy. Most gusts come from the northwest (this wind is known as the *majjistral* in winter, when it blows strongest), but the northeasterly *grigal* and northerly *tramuntana* can stir up an occasional storm from late summer onwards. Better known is the *sirocco* or *xlokk*, the hot southeasterly wind that blows off the Sahara that sometimes roughens up the sea along the southern shores.

Winter departures: If you are traveling during the winter, please be aware that the weather in Italy can be somewhat volatile at this time of year, though it's still relatively mild compared to that of the rest of the world. Moreover, while "off-season" travel may involve stints of inclement weather, it rewards you with the chance to explore Italy's museums, piazzas, and ruin sites at a time when they are wonderfully free of the summer tourist crowds.

Here is the data from the weather observation stations closest to our destinations.

WHAT'S THE TEMPERATURE? *Average* highs (taken at 2 pm) and lows (taken just before sunrise) in °F.												
	JAN	**FEB**	**MAR**	**APR**	**MAY**	**JUN**	**JUL**	**AUG**	**SEP**	**OCT**	**NOV**	**DEC**
Palermo												
High	59	60	63	67	74	81	85	86	81	76	68	62
Low	49	49	51	54	60	67	72	74	69	64	57	52
Taormina												
High	58	59	62	66	74	82	87	88	81	75	67	60
Low	51	50	53	56	63	70	75	77	71	65	58	53
Sorrento (optional extension)												
High	53	53	57	62	69	77	82	84	78	69	62	55
Low	44	44	46	50	55	62	66	68	64	57	51	46
Malta (optional extension)												
High	59	59	61	65	72	80	86	86	82	75	67	61
Low	49	49	51	54	59	66	71	72	69	64	57	52

Please note: The data cited here reflect *climate* as opposed to *weather* conditions, and serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. A 60 degree ***average*** high temperature means that days may be as warm as 80 or as cool as 40 – but it's most likely you'll encounter temperatures in the 50 to 70 degree range.

8. TRAVEL AND TECHNOLOGY

In General

Smartphone, tablet, digital camera/camcorder, MP3 player: travel today can involve technology that didn't exist even five years ago. The usefulness of digital devices is enormous: smartphones can keep you connected and offer up-to-the-minute information via your cell plan or a local Wi-Fi connection. With a tablet (or smartphone) you can store multiple country guidebooks, access maps and connect to the internet in a small, lightweight device. (***Tip**: you can download **this** document from the Grand Circle Travel website and import it into your tablet or e-reader, many of which can display PDF files.)*

Compact and lightweight, digital camcorders and cameras take high definition movies and still images of the people you meet and places you visit. For robust use a laptop may be effective; for occasional use it's wiser to rely on Internet cafes or a tablet and hotel Internet access rather than shoulder the heft and size of a laptop.

To use these devices you should first consider the services available at your destinations. You'll encounter a range of electrical standards, varied plug configurations to access the local current, erratic availability (electricity and internet access), and differing technological standards.

You'll need to assess your power and data storage needs, and the accessories required to recharge/connect/use these devices. Finally, it's smart to read the owner's manual *before* you depart. Pay particular attention to electrical, power and storage requirements to ensure that you understand exactly what you need. Thorough preparation is the best guarantee that your devices will work up to their potential.

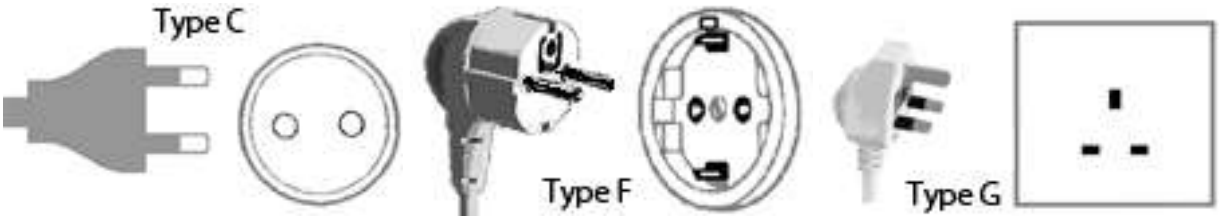
Regional Electricity

The standard U.S. electrical system — 110V 60Hz current and flat two- or three-pronged polarized plug system — is rare elsewhere. The overwhelming choice for the rest of the world is 220-240V and 50/60Hz current with a variety of plug shapes, sizes, and configurations. Some plugs will work with multiple receptacles, while others won't. Europe is largely standardized to the Type C "Europlug."

Plugging a 110V U.S. appliance into 220/240V 50/60Hz service will ruin the motor. We suggest that you bring *dual* voltage appliances (widely available) that work on both 110 and 220/240 voltage. Dual voltage appliances are inexpensive and need only plug adapters.

If you bring 110V appliances, such as a hair dryer (note that hotels often supply hairdryers and coffee makers) or shaver, you'll need a transformer (to halve the 220/240V current) in addition to plug adapters. Regional transformer/adapter kits can often be found at hardware or online stores but transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave those larger items at home.

Italy uses the Type C "*Europlug*" and receptacles (Type F & Type L) that accommodate it. Malta uses a Type G plug and receptacle. Both countries use 230 V/50 Hz current.



Because you'll need various plug types on this trip, it may be a good idea to invest in a versatile and lightweight all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. If you use multiple digital devices—cell phone, digital camera, and MP3 player for instance – it's also handy to have a travel power strip, perhaps with a surge suppressor and USB-style port for charging cell phones, MP3 players or e-readers without the use of device-specific plugs.

TIP: Some hotels in Sicily will have a limited number of "converters" to led travelers. These are usually plug adaptors only—they will not change the electrical current.

Smartphones

It will require some effort to get the most out of your smartphone when you travel. Even with an international roaming plan, costs can add up quickly – those handy apps often pile up download fees. The simplest solution is to shut down all cell phone functions, automatic data feeds and roaming options, and take advantage of the apps via available Wi-Fi. With an Internet VOIP app (like Skype) you can make inexpensive calls. If necessary, turn international roaming back on and your phone will work as usual – albeit at some cost. If your phone doesn't support international roaming (most smartphones do), some carriers offer loaners.

Cell Phones

If you want to use a standard cell phone while traveling overseas, be sure to check with your service provider (www.verizon.com, www.t-mobile.com etc.) to see if your phone will work outside the U.S. or whether you're better off renting an international phone. The websites www.travelcell.com and www.globalcellularrental.com have good information on rentals. Or, consider buying an inexpensive local phone for your stay.

Phone Calling Cards

If you don't carry a phone, you can use a prepaid calling card to call the U.S. with minimal additional charges. Besides the prepaid long distance charges, you might have a local fee of a few cents and possibly a connection fee if you are using your card at a hotel. Check with the reception desk prior to using it to avoid unexpected charges.

Calling cards purchased locally are usually less expensive than those purchased in the U.S. and are more likely to work with the local system. Note that dialing a U.S. 1-800 number outside the continental United States will incur costly long distance fees, since 1-800 does not work outside the U.S.

Photo Gear

For many people, capturing the highlights of their travel experiences in photographs or movies and sharing them is one of the most enjoyable aspects of the journey. Remember, however: some individuals and cultures and are less tolerant of photography than others. It's always best to respect local customs. And in some places you may be charged for photography at specific sites, or restricted from any photography at all.

Digital cameras and camcorders are excellent travel companions—and many do dual duty by recording movies *and* still images. Fist sized camcorders can capture HD movies and high quality still photos; cameras the size of a deck of cards are great for snapshots and casual movie clips. With an ample supply of high-capacity memory cards you can record your whole trip with a small, lightweight package.

But you must remember the batteries. Recharging batteries is sometimes impossible, cameras can drain batteries *very* quickly, and replacements may be unavailable. Whether you need standard or proprietary batteries, it's good to have spares. Be sure your charger will work with the local electrical system, and bring more than enough memory cards—they may be hard or impossible to find. Memory cards are small, thin and light: you can never have too much storage.

Compact cameras are impractical for distant subjects. Some models have a zoom lens of up to 120mm, which is good for middle distances. For distant subjects a *megazoom* (with a zoom lens of at least 300mm) or a single lens reflex (DSLR) camera with up to a 300mm telephoto lens are good choices. With a DSLR you can use multiple lenses, though your gear can quickly get complex, weighty and cumbersome. Cameras or lenses that need a tripod are impractical for travel photography. A single mid-range telephoto lens coupled with a small, fast prime lens (for low light/no flash situations) is an effective, flexible and compact kit. Consider mirrorless interchangeable lens cameras (MILC), which combine small bodies and multiple, small lenses with high quality for both still and HD movie images.

If you use a DSLR or MILC camera, protect the lenses with a UV filter and bring lens caps, covers, cleaning paper and a waterproof bag (a heavy duty Ziploc-style bag is good) to protect your gear. Be sure your camera has a flash that you can turn off, and if it's detachable, remember to pack it. (At many sites and museums, flashes are ***not*** permitted.)

Consider disposable cameras, as well. They are inexpensive and capable of acceptable photos as long as the light is not too dim *or* bright. X-rays do not damage the data of digital cameras (in any media format), and so pose no problems for travelers using digital cameras.

9. ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS

We’re including some handy practical details and a brief introduction to the places you’ll visit on your Land Tour. If you expect to explore in depth on your own, we recommend that you consult one of the many available book-length guides to your destinations. If you have one or two specific sites, museums or features that you’re interested in, an internet search is the ideal way to get-up-to-date information and details. And of course your Grand Circle Travel Program Director or Hospitality Desk Representative will be able to assist you with suggestions and arrangements of activities you wish to participate in during your stay.

Cuisine

Sicily: Given the abundance of Sicilian fruits and vegetables and the flavorful local meat and fish, it is not surprising that the pleasures of the palate play such an important role in Sicilian life. Though Americans tend to confuse it with the garlic and tomato sauces of Naples, Sicilian cuisine stands apart from other Italian food in the noticeable Arab influence left by centuries of Saracen domination. The sweet-and-sour contrasts that are minimal in most other Italian cooking are essential to Sicilian cooks, who frequently use raisins and pine nuts or almonds, and who liberally spice their desserts with cinnamon, sesame, almond, and pumpkin.

Mainland Italy: The ancient Romans were the originators of the first fully developed cuisine of the Western world. Drawing on an abundance of fine, natural ingredients from the fertile Roman countryside and influenced by Greece and Asia Minor, they evolved a gastronomic tradition still felt in kitchens the world over. Traditional Italian cooking is quite like the Italian people themselves—robust and hearty.

Popular ingredients include any combination of tomatoes, garlic, olive oil, onions, celery, parsley, seafood, parmesan cheese, mozzarella cheese, chicken, and, of course, every type of pasta, from spaghetti and fettuccine to penne and ravioli. Seasonal vegetables include yellow, red, and green sweet peppers; eggplant; mushrooms; green and broad beans; zucchini; asparagus; and artichokes.

Drinking Water

The water in Sicily and Malta is safe to drink, but it can have a stronger than usual taste due to chlorination. Many prefer bottled mineral water which is sold everywhere in 33 centiliter and 1½-liter clear-plastic bottles. Other choices for water include mineral water and mineral soda (carbonated mineral water). If you're out of bottled water, hotel tap water is okay to drink, but it may taste unpleasant because of heavy chlorination.

Hotel Courtesy

Italian hotels do not allow food and beverages to be taken from their breakfast rooms, nor is it courteous to eat or drink food or beverages purchased elsewhere in hotel common rooms. In conformity with municipal laws to promote urban decorum, hotels do not allow hanging laundry on room balconies. Travel clotheslines, used in your bathroom, are a more private and effective solution.

Laundry Service

Your Program Director or concierge can assist you with making arrangements for this service.

Amalfi Coast in Brief—Optional Extension

City Layout and Details

The gateway to the Amalfi Coast, Sorrento, located on the southern side of the Bay of Naples, is a resort town famed for its great location and mild climate. Built high on a cliff that sweeps down to the ocean, Sorrento is a port city with a charming old quarter, lush gardens, nearby Roman ruins, and a long history that extends from before the Roman Empire through World War II when it was occupied by Allied forces.

The main street, *Corso Italia,* runs from the train station through the town center and out to the cape where it is renamed Via Capo. The town center, called *Piazza Tasso* (named after a 15th-century Italian poet), is close to the train station and intersects with the town's major streets. At night you will see throngs of locals taking their evening stroll in and around the town center.

The gardens of the *Villa Comunale* offer some breathtaking views out to sea. The 13th-century church of *San Francesco* is a quiet cloister that offers a peaceful haven away from the hustle and bustle of town. If you are interested in Roman ruins, visit the Villa di Pollio—a charming park with several ancient structures scattered about.

The best beach is the small sandy *Marina Piccola lido*, right below the Villa Comunale gardens. During the summer months, many visitors rent a pedal-boat to view the beach away from the busy shore.

The *Soggiorno e Turismo* (Tourist Information) is close by the *Piazza Tasso* and offers maps, bus and boat schedules, and listings of upcoming events. Be aware—there are several travel agencies in the vicinity that pose as the tourist information center in an attempt to sell tours. Inquire to be sure you have the official Sorrento Tourist Information center.

The Museobottega is described as "a new model of museum, a multifunctional structure designed to re-qualify those sectors of the decorative arts which have not only a past worthy of being recorded but also a productivity which needs to be sustained and helped to renew its contents." Within its series of small rooms it offers modern items of marquetry, on display and also for sale. The Museobottega is located in the 17th-century Palace Pomarici-Santomasi in via S. Nicola.

The local museum, the *Museo Correale di Terranova,* is located in a former palace (the *Via Correale)* and offers an excellent spot behind the main building for viewing Sorrento's legendary sunsets. It is a museum of nature and art that was set up from private foundations by the Correale brothers Alfredo and Pompeo (who were the Counts of Terranova), the last descendants of an old Sorrentine family. The art collection is outstanding and houses many treasures.

Evening Entertainment

The best nightlife in Sorrento is to be found in the city center. With many markets, restaurants, and pizzerias nearby, a relaxing and casual dinner is easily arranged. A favorite pastime in Sorrento is the evening *passeggiata*, when many locals and visitors dress up for a promenade or stroll through the town center, window-shopping and people-viewing along the way. Marina Grande is the local fishing village and harbor—a delightful place for a stroll or a fish lunch.

Local Transportation

Bus: Local orange busses leave from the *Piazza Tasso* on a regular schedule for the port (Punta del Capo) and other sections of the city. Blue or green and white buses depart frequently from the Circumvesuviana station for nearby cities and towns and even Rome.

Ferries: There are several good ferry and hydrofoil services. Inquire about times and locations**.**

On foot: Many of the major sights are easily accessible by foot, and this is the recommended mode of travel whenever possible.

Trains: The Circumvesuviana is the train station located in the center of town with service to Naples and other major cities and towns.

Malta in Brief—Optional Extension

City Layout and Details

Situated between St Julian's and Valletta, Sliema is part of Malta's main coastal resort area. It's a residential area, having developed from beginnings as a small fishing port into a summer resort for wealthy residents of Valletta. You'll find their villas and town houses on the quiet inner streets, creating a quiet charm. More recently, it has become a major commercial and residential area with several of Malta's burgeoning hotel developments.

Sliema (with St. Julian's) is a center for the island's shopping, dining, and café life. Tower Road, the seaside promenade that runs north to St. Julian's offers shops, restaurants, Internet cafes, and day cruise boats – as well as plenty of seats and lovely views over the open sea. The coastline is studded with two towers: a 17th century watch tower and a British built neo-gothic tower from the 1880s.

Both St. Julian's (you can walk there via the promenade) and Valletta (by bus) are easily explored from Sliema.

Cuisine

Typical Maltese cuisine features many types of seafood specialties, Mediterranean-style dishes, Italian-influenced pasta entrees, local wines, and sweet desserts. International restaurants also abound, including Chinese, Indian, Japanese, French, and even Turkish. Common Maltese dishes that are offered in a wide range of restaurants include:

- **Soup** (***minestra):*** A hearty vegetable soup that is similar to minestrone.
- **Pasta** (***timpana):*** Baked flaky pastry filled with a mixture of ingredients—such as ricotta cheese, macaroni, minced meat, eggplant, onions, and tomato sauce.
- **Fish** (***torta tal-lampuka):*** The *lampuka* is a Mediterranean fish. In this dish, it is baked with tomatoes, cauliflower, spinach, onions, olives, and parsley.
- **Meat** (***bragioli):*** Minced meat, bacon, eggs, onions, and breadcrumbs wrapped in thin slices of steak and deep fried.
- **Dessert** (***kwarezimal):*** Toasted almonds are ground and mixed with flour, sugar, and the rinds of lemon, orange, and tangerine. After baking, it is served warm and often topped with honey and sliced almonds.
- **Cheese** (***gbejna):*** A popular local cheese made from goat's milk.

- **Fruit**: Malta grows oranges from December to March; strawberries, tangerines, melons, grapes, mulberries, and pomegranates are available at various times of the year.
- **Wine**: Local labels include Lachryma Vitis, Marsovin Special Reserve, Verdala, and La Valette. Gozo produces a potent wine, and you can also buy French, Italian, and German wines.
- **Beer**: Popular local brands include Hop Leaf, Cisk Lager, and Blue Label.

Entertainment & Recreational Activities

Golf: There is a par-68 course at the Royal Malta Golf Club, spread across 5,567 yards of ground.

Tennis, squash, mini-golf, billiards, and **swimming** in a freshwater pool are offered at the extensive Marsa Sports Club complex. Visitors may obtain weekly or daily memberships.

Tenpin bowling: Available at the computerized Eden Super Bowl in St George's Bay.

Trotting: Trotting is Malta's most popular spectator sport and regularly attracts crowds of up to 4,000. Often the races are held on Sunday afternoons at Marsa Race Track. The circuit has been there since 1869. Immediately outside the arena, some of the 700 trotters registered with the Malta Racing Club are stabled. Races are usually held from October through March.

Local Transportation

Taxis: Traveling by taxi is not cheap, and fares increase sharply after midnight. Taxis are white (usually Mercedes) with distinctive red number plates. The taxis have no meters but operate on fixed prices; therefore, we suggest you agree on the fare in advance. Taxis are readily available in the main resort areas, but note that they do not cruise the streets in the hope of picking up a fare. They are available at taxi stands and on request at hotels.

Buses: Malta's new bus lines have standardized, modernized travel on the island – while making the charming old yellow buses a thing of the past. The buses operate more frequently, with more routes and stops than before and is inexpensive. A 24 hour pass costs about $3.25 and a full week pass about $15. Buses run along the seafront on either side of Sliema. Routes radiate from the Sliema and Valletta bus terminals to nearly every town, village, and sandy beach on the island.

Karrozzin*:* The Maltese horse-drawn victoria—the Karrozzin—was introduced in 1856 and is still in use in the larger towns. It is advisable to negotiate the cost before the ride starts. Horse cabs can be found in Sliema on the Promenade.

10. DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Italy

Area: 116,348 square miles
Capital: Rome
Languages: In addition to Italian, many of Italy's natives speak French and English.
Location: Italy lies in southern Europe, bordering France in the northwest, the Ligurian Sea and the Tyrrhenian Sea in the west, the Ionian Sea in the south, the Adriatic Sea in the east, Slovenia in the northeast, and Austria and Switzerland in the north. The country includes the Mediterranean islands of Sicily and Sardinia and several other small islands.
Geography: Campania (the region of Naples, Sorrento, and the Amalfi coast) has 220 miles of coastline and is on the southwestern side of the Italian peninsula. Its two famous gulfs, the Bay of Naples and Gulf of Salerno, are enclosed by picturesque promontories, including the Sorrento Peninsula. The town of Sorrento, about 32 miles south of Naples, spreads out along the crest of its fabled cliffs, which offer spectacular views of the Bay of Naples.

The region of Tuscany is a blend of rugged hills, fertile valleys, and long stretches of sandy beaches that curve along the west coast of central Italy and fringe the pine-forested coastal plain of the Maremma. The cities and towns of Tuscany house the centuries-old heritage of culture and art that produced magnificent medieval cathedrals and the marvels of the Renaissance.

Population (2014 estimate): 61,680,122
Religion: Roman Catholic 98%, Other 2%
Time zone: All of Italy is on Central European Time, one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (six hours ahead of Eastern Time). Summer hours operate from the last weekend in March until the last weekend in September.

Holidays:

01/01	New Year's Day
01/06	Epiphany
04/20	Easter Day
04/21	Easter Monday
04/25	Liberation Day
05/01	Labor Day
06/02	Founding of the Republic
08/15	Assumption Day
11/01	All Saints
12/08	Feast of the Immaculate Conception
12/25	Christmas Day
12/26	St. Stephen's Day

ITALY HAS A LONG AND COMPLICATED HISTORY. Its earliest recorded civilization dates back to around 2000 B.C., when the peninsula was settled by fair-complexioned Ligurians, ancestors of the Latins. Sometime near the 9th century B.C., boatloads of Greeks landed on Italian shores, and Italy became the site for the myth of Ulysses and other famous legends. The Greeks inhabited southern Italy and Sicily during the 8th century B.C., forming colonies of city-states called Magna Graecia. The Greek civilization prospered in the 6th and 5th centuries B.C., but waned in the 4th century B.C. While the Greeks were busy settling the south, the Etruscans, a highly artistic populace from Asia Minor, built strong communities in central Italy.

The Etruscans ruled until the Roman revolt around 510 B.C. By 250 B.C., the Romans had conquered Italy and established Rome as the seat of their empire. Julius Caesar reigned throughout the 1st century B.C., and his defeat of France made Rome the ruler of the entire Mediterranean world. Under Caesar, Roman culture flourished. Its unprecedented splendor was further enriched by Greek architectural and artistic influences. Caesar was assassinated in 44 B.C. and succeeded by his nephew Octavian, later known as Augustus, who instituted the Pax Romana, two centuries of peace during which the Roman Empire was as mighty as it would ever be. At the end of the 2nd century A.D., the Roman bishop was made head of the new Christian religion—a position that granted him enormous power in the political arena.

Rome's glory during the 200-year-long Pax Romana began to decline in the 3rd century A.D., when a succession of inept and corrupt emperors weakened the city. By the 4th century A.D., Rome had become very divided politically, and new administrative capitals were founded in such cities as Milan and Trier, Germany. In A.D. 395, Constantine moved the Roman capital to Constantinople (Istanbul), which left the city of Rome very vulnerable. During the 400s, it was repeatedly attacked by barbarians and in 475 completely fell to a barbarian chief, who soon after opened regions of Italy to Teutonic settlement.

Italy was briefly reunited in 800, when Charlemagne was crowned Holy Roman Emperor by Pope Leo III. But over the next century, the country disintegrated into contentious kingdoms at constant battle for control of provincial lands. Italy's turmoil continued for an astounding length of time, as different city-states waged war after war up to the early 19th century, when Napoleon took over Italy.

Despite this internal dissension and strife, Italian society and culture reached its peak during the Renaissance in the 15th and 16th centuries. The independent city-states formed a delicate balance of power, and affluent patrons such as the Medici family of Florence greatly supported the arts. This golden age of human endeavor and artistic creation spawned some of the greatest painters, sculptors, and inventors of Western civilization—Leonardo da Vinci, a genius in many vocations, the epitome of the Renaissance man (1452-1519); Michelangelo (1475-1564); Raphael (1483-1564); and the architect Brunelleschi (1377-1466).

After Napoleon's series of invasions, the Italian people sought to squelch foreign domination, which gave birth to the movement for political unity in Italy, known as the *Risorgimento* (Resurrection). Italian nationalism gathered broad support under the popular leader Giuseppe Garibaldi, and Italy was finally united under King Victor Emmanuel II in 1870.

The country was ruled as a monarchy and joined the Allies in World War I. Benito Mussolini rose to power during the early 1920s and ushered in one of the darkest periods in Italy's history. Mussolini ("Il Duce") organized discontented Italians into the Fascist Party to "rescue Italy from Bolshevism,"—but what he actually delivered was a totalitarian state controlled by the militia. Mussolini formed an alliance with Hitler and fought against the Allies during World War II. The Italian Resistance Movement fought Mussolini and the Nazis, but their reprisals took a heavy toll: 400,000 people were killed, hundreds of thousands were left homeless, and the economy was sharply disrupted. In 1945, Mussolini was captured in Milan by Partisans and executed.

Italy was declared a republic in 1946, but during the postwar era it was seriously divided by extreme political differences. Dozens of governments rose and fell. The leading parties were the diametrically opposed Centrist Christian Democrats and the Italian Communist Party. In the 1970s, a prolonged outbreak of terrorist acts by the left-wing Red Brigades threatened domestic stability, but by the early 1980s, the terrorist groups had been suppressed.

In the early 1990s, public discontent with the government intensified due to a soaring inflation rate and disillusioning scandals that involved the Mafia and many government leaders. In 1996, Italians elected a new government dominated by a center-left coalition for the first time since the proclamation of the Italian Republic. Italy adopted the euro as its currency in January, 1999. The new bills and coins started circulating in 2002. Treasury secretary Carlo Ciampi, who is credited with the economic reforms that permitted Italy to enter the European Monetary Union, was elected president in May 1999.

11. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Books, Maps, and Movies

If your local store or library doesn't stock the books or movies below, the Internet offers a wide variety of options for finding older or rare stock – try AbeBooks (abebooks.com), Alibris (albris.com), Amazon (amazon.com) or Barnes & Noble (bn.com) — or any of the smaller websites. Of course, this selection is not meant to be comprehensive, and is offered as a starting point for your research.

Atlas of the Roman World by Tim Cornell and John Matthews (History)
A compact yet thorough illustrated history of the rise, zenith, and decline of the Roman Empire.

Desiring Italy edited by Susan Neunzig Cahill (Travel Account)
A collection of writings penned by 31 renowned women authors, each inspired by her experiences in Italy. Edith Wharton writes on Rome, George Eliot on Florence, Shirley Hazzard on Naples.

History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire by Edward Gibbon (History)
A landmark scholarly work ever since it was written in the 18th century. Coverage extends from the 2nd century A.D. to the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

Italian Backgrounds by Edith Wharton (Travel Account)
Originally published in 1906, Wharton's travel diary still rings true in its depiction of the Italian people and culture.

Italian Days by Barbara G. Harrison (Travel Account)
An absorbing travel journal that reads more like literature and offers witty insights into Italy's history, politics, food, architecture, and art.

The Italians by Luigi Barzini (Culture)
Barzini's classic book offers readers a refreshingly frank discussion of the history and culture of his homeland, past and present.

Midnight in Sicily by Peter Robb (Historical Fiction)
"Peter Robb presents a labyrinthine tale that brilliantly juxtaposes essays on food and art with historical accounts…and offers an understanding of Mafia culture…"—*The New York Times Book Review*

Naples: A Traveller's Companion by Desmond Seward (Travel Account)
A compilation of excerpts from works of fiction, letters, memoirs, and journals, which collectively capture the spirit and history of Naples.

On Persephone's Island: A Sicilian Journal by Mary Taylor Simeti (Memoir)
The American wife of a Sicilian professor recounts her experiences while living in Palermo during 1983. Full of perceptive insights into the Sicilian people and social customs.

The Seasons of Rome: A Journal by Paul Hoffman (Memoir)
A former New York Times bureau chief who lives in Rome fondly discusses such topics as the city's weather, politics, cafés, mail delivery, police, and opera.

A Short History of Italy by H. Hearder (History)
A concise chronology of Italian history from the Ice Age to the present.

Sicilian Carousel by Lawrence Durrell (Travel Writing)
Lighthearted and humorous tour of Sicily on a carousel bus.

Under the Tuscan Sun: At Home in Italy by Frances Mayes (Memoir)
The best-selling memoir of a California-based poet who leaves it all behind to start over in Tuscany. *Bella Tuscany: The Sweet Life in Italy* is the recently published sequel.

Guidebooks:
Your Program Director will be happy to provide recommendations and suggestions during the trip, so a guidebook is not a necessity. But a good one can be invaluable as a one-stop reference, so for those travelers who have asked for suggestions, we offer these guidelines. Since different guidebook series each have their own target audience and structure, it is well worth your time to browse your local library or bookstore to find the one(s) you like best. To get you started, here is some general information on the most popular series:

Culture Smart! – Focuses on local customs and etiquette instead of sights, dining, etc.
DK Eyewitness – Innovative visuals make these books easy to use and a nice souvenir once the trip is over. The focus is primarily on the sights and activities.
Fodor's – A classic guidebook with strong information on activities, shopping, and dining. Good mix of upscale recommendations and budget suggestions.
Frommer's – A comprehensive guide series that is known for its restaurant recommendations.
Insight – Offers more information on history and culture than usual, nice visuals, good maps.
Lonely Planet – Practical guides geared towards a more adventurous traveler on a budget.
National Geographic – From the same company that publishes the magazine. Excellent photographs, good information on history, nature, and culture.
Rough Guides –For the independent traveler on a budget. Particularly known for their maps.

Maps:
Most hotels will provide maps free of charge at the reception desk or in your room. These maps are usually sufficient for our travelers, but if you plan on any independent exploration, you may wish to consider purchasing a map before your departure. This can be especially useful in a country that doesn't use the Roman alphabet as the hotel maps may only be printed in the local language.

Some recommended map series include: Rand McNally international maps (especially the StreetWise series), Insight's FlexiMaps, and Rough Guide's destination maps. We suggest that you visit your local bookstore or library to get a better sense of which type of map is best for your needs before making a purchase.

Suggested Movies
Here are few of our favorite movies that are about, or set in, or from the region you'll be traveling. Most are available at movie rental stores and websites—or even your public library. Sometimes films produced outside of the US may be hard to find, but they are usually available online. Lists are highly subjective – and choosing the best of Italy's films in under fifty pages is a fool's errand. If your favorites are missing, start a chat with fellow travelers and you'll likely find even more treasured movies to share.

Italy

La Strada *(Federico Fellini, 1954) starring Guilietta Masina, Anthony Quinn*
Masina was tiny and had an almost clown-like face, like a female Charlie Chaplin. The plot is about a pair of circus performers who travel all over Italy, juggling in the street. Quinn's character is oblivious to the importance of his partner — in both life and work – until too late. One of great tragic love stories it's a lovely film that seems to define the magic of cinema.

La Dolce Vita, "The Sweet Life" *(Federico Fellini, 1961) Starring: Marcello Mastroianni, Anita Ekberg*
An engrossing social commentary, and one of Federico Fellini's masterpieces (though the competition is keen). It's a detailed panorama of Rome's modern decadence and sophisticated immorality, held tightly in focus by the detached, wandering protagonist through whom we see it all. (Other important Fellini films include *City of Women* and *8 ½.)*

The Bicycle Thief *(Vittorio De Sica, 1949) Starring: Lamberto Maggiorani, Enzo Staiola*
As it follows a man desperate to retrieve the stolen bicycle that is crucial to his family's survival, De Sica's film subtly examines the human condition, society, family, justice, and anguish in the poverty of post World War II Italy. It won an Honorary Academy Award for Best Foreign Language film in 1949. (De Sica's other important films include *Umberto D.*, *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*, and *Two Women*.)

1900 *(Bernado Bertolucci, 1977) Starring Robert de Niro, Gerard Depardieu*
Bernardo Bertolucci's epic history follows the lives of two friends (one a peasant, the other a land owner) born on the same day in Italy. Their lives unfold with vivid cinematography and lush imagery of the beautiful countryside. The movie jumps forward, to the end of World War 1, and follows their story until 1945. At 5 ½ hours longs, it rewards patience.

The Conformist *(Bernardo Bertolucci, 1970) Starring Jean-Louis Trintignant, Stefania Sandrelli*
The story of a weak man persuaded by Fascist secret police to assassinate his former university professor, a leading anti-Fascist. The film explores how a totalitarian state manipulates people and how people allow themselves to be manipulated. Technically, aesthetically, and visually, this is a rich film.

Open City *(Roberto Rossellini, 1954) Starring Anna Magnani, Aldo Fabrizi*
Filmed on bits and pieces of scavenged film, Rossellini started this movie as the Allies drove the Nazis out of Rome. The film looks improvised, but actors and screenwriters (including Federico Fellini) were pros. A classic war tale, its semi-documentary camera style and use of actual locations gives the film a very real feeling. The plot involves attempts by the Italian underground to smuggle money out of Nazi-occupied Rome to partisan fighters in the mountains.

L'Avventura *(Michelangelo Antonioni, 1960) Starring Gabriele Ferzetti, Monica Vitti*
One of the early experimental films in modern Italian cinema, this is one of the first thrillers where what happens is never revealed: a woman disappears on a Mediterranean island and is never seen again. Antonioni uses this as metaphor to imply the absence/disappearance of meaning in the lives of the surrounding characters.

Ossessione *(Luchino Visconti, 1943) Starring Clara Calamai, Massimo Girotti*
The first film based on the book The Postman Always Rings Twice. Set in rural Italy, it is an earthy exploration of human desire. The plot is the tale of a wandering tramp who has an affair with the wife of a restaurant owner. The two then conspire to murder her husband and attempt to live happily ever after. Often considered one of the first films of the Neo-Realism movement.

Pane, amore e fantasia *(Luigi Comencini, 1953) Starring Gina Lollobrigida, Vittorio De Sica*
A wonderfully innocent, sexy comedy set in central Italy in a backward and rural village. The plot is simple: a young woman is courted by a lot of admirers, including a local police chief, but the movie embodies the resilient Italian spirit, and plays to the clichés — spaghetti, sun, the cult of love, and feisty women — as it suggests the honest basis for those truisms.

Life Is Beautiful *(Roberto Benigni, 1997) Starring Roberto Benigni, Nicoletta Braschi*
The Jewish country boy Guido, a romantic in Mussolini's Italy raises a son in the shadow of fascism. He is determined to shelter his son from the evils around them, maintaining a ruse with comic ingenuity, even as the horrors escalate. Despite being a over the top in many instances, this is a moving and poignant tale of a father's sacrifice to save not just his young son's life but his innocence in the face of evil acts.

Summertime *(David Lean, 1955) Starring Katharine Hepburn, Rossano Brazzi*
A lovely Venetian travelogue-cum-love story with a plot that has Hepburn's spinster character falling out of character and in love with a married man. A deceptively simple romance, Hepburn brings her skills to the fore in a poignant characterization. It doesn't hurt that she's surrounded by the architecture, art, Italian conversation, music, and fine cuisine of Venice.

A Room with a View *(James Ivory, 1986) Starring Maggie Smith, Helena Bonham Carter*
From Merchant/Ivory and screenwriter Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, this adaptation of E.M. Forster's novel is a comedy of the heart, a passionate romance and a study of the repressions of Britain's manners and mores. The fascination here is with how Lucy (Carter) finally frees herself from those repressions. The film received eight Academy Award nominations, and won the Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay, Art Direction, and Costume Design.

The Wings of the Dove *(Iain Softly, 1997) Starring Helena Bonham Carter, Linus Roache*
Another Helena Bonham Carter vehicle, based on the Henry James's novel of the same name. Set in London and Venice, it's a tale of passion, temptation and greed. Carter is Kate, a beautiful society woman whose desire for a lowly journalist offers an impossible decision: leave him, or marry — him and a life of poverty. Events take a twist when Kate befriends a lonely young heiress and discovers a secret that offers a tempting, but dangerous, solution.

Roman Holiday *(William Wyler 1957) Starring Gregory Peck, Audrey Hepburn*
The film that brought Audrey Hepburn to prominence in her first starring role. She's a European princess on an official tour of Rome who slips her handlers and goes on a spree, aided by Peck as a tough reporter. The locations are irresistible, and Hepburn establishes a chic style that would rule through the fifties. She won an Oscar, as did veteran costume designer Edith Head.

Ciao, Professore! *(Lina Wertmulla, 1994) Starring Paolo Villaggio, Isa Danieli*
A comedy from Lina Wertmulla, this is the tale of an upper-class teacher from conservative Northern Italy who finds himself teaching third-grade truants at a ramshackle school in the south. Along the way, the earnest "professor" becomes the student as he starts to see things through the fresh, vibrant eyes of his scrappy young students.

Tea with Mussolini *(Franco Zeffirelli, 1999) Starring Judi Dench, Maggie Smith, Cher*
A semi-autobiographical account of Zeffirelli's life in World War II Italy. Luca, Zeffirelli's character, is raised in Florence by his absent father's secretary among a group of British and American women, who must deal with the rise of fascism, the dangers of resistance, and weather dictatorial custody and betrayal.

Grand Circle Community & Useful Websites

If you have access to the Internet, the following sites offer a wealth of information:

Visit the Grand Circle Community website for a world of travel news and information:
www.gct.com/community

Government websites:
International health information: CDC (Centers for Disease Control)
www.cdc.gov/travel
U.S. Customs & Border Protection: traveler information
www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel
Transportation Security Administration (TSA): agency responsible for screening luggage in U.S.
www.tsa.gov/public
National Passport Information Center (NPIC): for passport information
www.travel.state.gov

General travel information websites:
Travel books
www.amazon.com
www.barnesandnoble.com
World weather
www.intellicast.com
www.weather.com
Foreign languages for travelers: basic terms in more than 80 languages
www.travlang.com/languages
Travel tips: packing light, choosing luggage, etc.
www.travelite.org
Net café guide: 100s of locations around the globe
www.cybercafes.com
Electric current and plug types
www.kropla.com/electric2.htm
Foreign exchange rates
www.oanda.com/converter/classic
ATM locators
www.mastercard.com/atm for **Cirrus ATMs**
www.visa.com/pd/atm **for PLUS ATMs**

Country information:
www.bestofsicily.com/**Sicily**
www.italiantourism.com **Italy**
www.visiteurope.com/ **Links to countries**
www.inyourpocket.com/free-instant-city-guides.html