



Picking Time in Sicily

Living the day-to-day experience of picking the olives with the Sicilian people.

Location



Villa Ravidà is an early sample of neo-classical architecture with frescoed ceilings located in an enclosed courtyard in the town of Menfi.

The owners, the Ravidà family, are mostly known for their award winning olive oil, RAVIDA, and have been running cookery courses to highlight its use in their daily cuisine. These are hands-on classes, run in English in their kitchen in an informal atmosphere. Recipes are based on the use of seasonal produce following family recipes.

The region around **Menfi** is rich in archaeological sites (Selinunte, Mozia, Segesta, Agrigento) with an unusual mixture of traditions being reflected on the food and culture.

Day 1



Arrival at the airport and departure for Menfi, accommodation at Villa Ravidà in the town of Menfi. This old patrician family whose roots date back to the 13th century were based in the western Sicilian town of Trapani until the mid 1700s and held high positions in the governments of the Kingdom of Sicily.

The family acquired the estate of "**La Gurra**" in mid-1700 and began to produce mainly cork, wine and olive oil. The olive oil was already known for its excellent quality. Meeting with *Natalia Ravidà*, the author of bestselling "Season of Sicily" a cookbook on Sicilian family food.
Dinner and overnight stay.

Day 2



Breakfast in the family dining room.

In Sicily, the olive harvest begins in late autumn when the olives are ripe but still green. They are picked by hand or with the aid of a vibrating combs. This is a very characteristic scene that will whisk you back to ancient times. Nets are placed under the trees, and baskets are brought to collect the olives. As you will follow olives being taken to

the press, you will follow the whole process of olive oil production. Lunch and relax in the garden.

In the afternoon, you will take part in assist to a comparative olive oil tasting with Natalie, where the basics for tasting olive oil and highlight the differences within the different classifications for olive oil are revealed. Dinner at leisure, we suggest to have a dinner in Menfi where you will find many small fish restaurants. Overnight stay at the Villa.

Day 3

After breakfast, departure for **Selinunte**. This city represents today a strip of land of ancient Greece on the island's western stretch of coast, rich in temples, defensive works and shrines. We will visit with a guide, the Acropolis, and the Hellenic Temples at Selinunte.



Lunch at leisure and return to the Villa. In the afternoon Natalia will share her knowledge of local cuisine and its history and you will learn how to prepare the *caponata*, *arancini* and others typical Sicilian dishes of your choice, using extra virgin olive oil for everything from cooking to seasoning meat and fish, raw on vegetables, salads, pulses and pastas. The family recipes have now been collected in a book 'The Seasons of Sicily' by Natalia Ravidà published by New Holland Australia in Spring 2007 and released in the USA, UK, Australia and South Africa. Dinner and overnight stay.

Day 4



Breakfast and departure for Marsala to visit **The Salt Road** and its Salt Pans located on the coastline between the cities of Trapani and Marsala. Locals extract the salt from the seawater following the same procedure used by the ancient Greeks and Phoenicians who once colonized this part of the Sicily. Once extracted from the water and dried, the salt is heaped into mounds and covered in tiles so the rain won't melt the salt before it's packed.

Transfer to Marsala to visit **Donnafugata**. The winery grew out of the commitment of a family in Sicily that has always believed in the extraordinary enological potential of its land and has 150 years of experience in producing premium wines. Don't miss the delicious red Mille e Una Notte, and Donnafugata's version of the famous Passito di Pantelleria. Guided tasting of 4 wines in the charming "sala delle botti". Lunch at leisure.

In the afternoon you will visit **Erice**, a wonderful and mysterious medieval town made famous in ancient times as the birthplace of Venus. Walking through the cobble – stoned streets of the town, smelling a variety of aromas emanating from the numerous pastry shops for which Erice is famous. Stopping at the world famous **Pastry shop by Maria Grammatico**, here you will taste almond sweets, genovesi and nougat to match with Marsala wine. Dinner at leisure and return to the villa.

Day 5

Breakfast and departure for the airport or choose to extend your stay to visit the East Sicily.

The price includes

- 1 BB + 3 HB + at Villa Ravidà in Menfi;
- Cooking class with dinner and beverages;
- Farm Tour and specialized Olive Oil Tasting;
- Beverages included during lunch and dinner;
- Tasting at Donnafugata Winery and at Maria Grammatico's pastry Shop;

The price doesn't include

- transfer;
- entrances fees;
- individual extras;
- all has not been clearly indicated in "The price includes";

* The price can be reduced with a different number of people

** Supplement for tourist guides or English speaking driver on request

***This tour is available in October and November