

Rail holidays of Italy

Expressions



Michael Portillo's rail holiday to Sicily



Michael Portillo's rail holiday to Sicily

6 NIGHTS / 7 DAYS

Lucerne

Milan

Naples

Strait of Messina

Taormina



Follow in the footsteps of Michael Portillo in this rail tour down the length of Italy to Sicily. This tour encompasses some spectacularly scenic rail journeys: you cross the Alps by train, follow the Mediterranean coast south of Naples into the toe of Italy and then you witness the crossing of the Strait of Messina with your train on the ferry! Travel by train from London to Zurich where you spend one night, then continue on to Milan for another night, enjoying the stunning Alpine scenery en route. Make the journey southwards through Italy to Naples, where you stay for one night, before travelling around Italy's toe to your final destination in Sicily. Spend three nights in Taormina at the Hotel Villa Belvedere and then return to the UK by plane.

PRICES

From £2,170 per person

Price based on two sharing a double or twin room.

First class rail travel can be added for a supplement.

DATES

This rail holiday can be arranged throughout the year. Timings can vary depending on the month and day of the week. For more information regarding rail services to and within Italy, view our train guide.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Accommodation on bed and breakfast as below

- 1 night in a Standard room at the Hotel Wilden Mann in Lucerne
- 1 night in a Superior room at the Baglioni Hotel Carlton in Milan
- 1 night in a Standard room at the Grand Hotel Vesuvio in Naples
- 3 nights in a Standard room at the Hotel Villa Belvedere in Taormina
- Second class travel on all trains including Eurostar
- Private return transfers in Sicily
- One way flights with BA from Catania to Gatwick, Euro Traveller

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Optional extra nights
- Transfers in Paris
- Meals other than breakfast at the hotels
- Early check in or late check out at hotels - though we can arrange this on request
- Supplements for alternative route options
- Any services not mentioned

DAY ONE: London to Lucerne by rail

Begin your rail holiday, leaving London at about 8am by Eurostar to Paris, before changing stations and continuing on the high speed TGV Lyria train to Basel. An easy change here takes you to Lucerne where you arrive at about 7.00pm. Check into the Hotel Wilden Mann where you spend one night. Spend the evening exploring Lucerne's pretty Old Town on foot, crossing the river over the iconic Chapel Bridge.

DAY TWO: Lucerne to Milan by rail

You have the morning to explore Lucerne and set off to Milan around midday. This takes you on the spectacular Gotthard railway route through the Alps, passing striking scenery and traversing wonderful feats of engineering. Once through the Gotthard Pass, you're in the Italian part of Switzerland heading towards Lugano which is located on another magnificent lake. From here it's a short distance to the Italian border at Chiasso. Arrive in Milan around 3.30pm and check in at the Baglioni Hotel Carlton where you spend one night. This afternoon you might like to enjoy some retail therapy on the fashionable streets of Milan, visit the Cathedral or check for performances at La Scala theatre.

DAY THREE: Milan to Naples by rail

Leaving Milan around 10.00am, your train heads further south, passing through Bologna, Florence and Rome before arriving into Naples in the early afternoon. This allows you to spend the afternoon sightseeing, perhaps visiting the Archeological Museum which houses most of the artefacts from Pompeii and Herculaneum or wandering around the Centro Storico. You spend one night in Naples at the Grand Hotel Vesuvio.

DAY FOUR: Naples to Sicily by rail

You leave Naples behind just before 10.00am to travel by train to Taormina-Giardini, following the dramatic coast south through Campania, Basilicata and Calabria to reach the Strait of Messina where your train boards the ferry for the crossing to Sicily. Arrive into Taormina late afternoon and transfer to the Hotel Villa Belvedere where you spend three nights.



Villa Belvedere, Taormina

DAYS FIVE AND SIX: Taormina

We suggest at least two days to explore Sicily from your base in Taormina. The town stands at an altitude of 250m above sea level and forms a perfect balcony overlooking the sea towards Mount Etna. A popular destination, it is renowned for its surprisingly peaceful atmosphere, beautiful monuments and tranquil gardens. A visit to the ancient Greco-Roman theatre here is a must. For travellers who want some time by the beach, it is also possible to descend by cable car to Taormina Mare at the bottom of the cliff.

DAY SEVEN: Fly back to the UK

Leave your hotel in Taormina to take a flight from Catania to London Gatwick.

OPTIONAL

It is possible to add extra nights in any of these destinations if you would like to spend more time there.

HOTELS

Details of the hotels in Switzerland and Italy can be found below.

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LUCERNE

Hotel Wilden Mann 4 star

The Wilden Mann has been in the hospitality trade for 500 years, bringing excellent quality of service and charm each of its guests. With just 48 rooms spread across 6 different houses, the atmosphere is one of a home-from-home and this hotel offers the perfect balance of historic and old-world elegance with modern facilities. It is located just a stones throw from the iconic Chapel Bridge and Nadelwehr and is only a 10 minute walk from the train station, making it the perfect stopover in the enchanting old streets of Lucerne.

MILAN

Baglioni Hotel Carlton 5 star

This luxury five star hotel can be found discreetly tucked away on the Via della Spiga, Milan's most fashionable shopping street, and the Via Montenapoleone, the cathedral and famous La Scala theatre are a short distance away. Inside, discover an intimate and sophisticated atmosphere with marble floors and dark wood wall panels. The hotel provides outstanding levels of service and facilities, including the historic Il Baretto al Baglioni Restaurant which serves national dishes with Mediterranean influences.

NAPLES

Grand Hotel Vesuvio 5 star

The Grand Hotel Vesuvio is a very comfortable property that offers enviable views across the bay to Vesuvius from its privileged waterfront position. The hotel has 250 bright and cheerful rooms furnished in a modern, Mediterranean style. It also has a large outdoor swimming pool with solarium and sunbeds and offers guests a choice of four restaurants in which to sample both regional and international dishes.



Lucerne

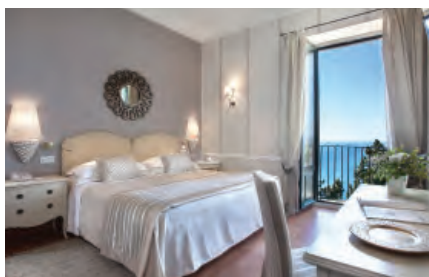
TAORMINA, SICILY

Hotel Villa Belvedere 4 star

The Villa Belvedere is a charming and comfortable hotel, centrally located in the town of Taormina. Occupying a historic Sicilian villa, the hotel's position perched high on the hill-side offers stunning views across the bay and the countryside towards Mount Etna. The bedrooms are simple but pretty, and several of them have balconies with table and chairs. Tasty light lunches are served on the terrace by the pool, whilst there is a delightful choice of restaurants within easy reach in the town.



Baglioni Hotel Carlton, Milan



Villa Belvedere, Taormina



Grand Hotel Vesuvio, Naples

MAP OF TOUR MICHAEL PORTILLO'S RAIL HOLIDAY TO SICILY

The map below illustrates the route outlined in this touring itinerary, with overnight stops and places of interest highlighted.



GENERAL INFORMATION

This tailor-made touring holiday is one of several suggested touring holidays we can offer you exactly as it is but also with any alterations you might want including extra nights in one or more places or adding in extra places. All our tours can be extended so that you can include a longer stay in one mountain or lake resort too, perhaps at the end of the itinerary. Do call to discuss the options with our travel consultants.

OUR TOURS

Our rail tours are for individuals travelling on their own or in their own family group. You do not join a group and you are not escorted.

FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENTS

Our arrangements are very flexible in that you choose to travel on any day you want, subject to availability of trains and hotels. As mentioned above, additional nights can be added at any point.

EUROSTAR

A rail holiday to Italy starts with a journey by Eurostar from London St Pancras, Ebbsfleet or Ashford stations in the UK to either Paris Gare du Nord or Lille Europe. In summer months there are direct trains on Saturdays from London St Pancras to Avignon with no change required.

Eurostar offers almost hourly departures every day, allowing you to travel from the centre of London to the centre of Paris on the same train in three hours. Not all trains stop at the Ebbsfleet and Ashford stations in Kent, but parking is plentiful at both stations and it allows you to avoid London.

Check-in is 30 minutes prior to departure, customs formalities are completed before boarding and there is no limit to the amount of baggage that can be taken on board. The Eurostar trains themselves have 8 coaches which are split into Standard Class, Standard Premier and Business Premier as well as 2 cafeterias. Standard Premier customers are served a light cold meal and enjoy a more spacious environment than Standard Class, while Business Premier customers receive a hot meal and unlimited beverages as well as lounge access.

TRAIN TIMES

We have planned our itineraries based on train times that work day by day at the time of planning which can be up to a year before you travel. Usually train times stay more or less the same every day, season by season. The times we have planned will be discussed with you at the time you enquire about the holiday and they are detailed to you in your written holiday quotation. It may be that the timetable changes between the planning of the itinerary and when you come to book but we can always adjust the itinerary to suit the actual train times and any requirements you have for particular times of travel.

FIRST OR SECOND CLASS

We will automatically include travel in second class but lots of our clients do upgrade to first class service. On Eurostar this is called Premier Standard for leisure travellers as it gives you an upgraded on-board service and more spacious seating but without paying for the fully-flexible business tickets. On the Inter-city trains, upgrading to first class gives you more spacious seating with increased legroom. The price of upgrading varies from route to route but is something that is not always proportionately a lot more on the price of the overall holiday, so well-worth considering.

TRANSFERS

Transfers in Paris between stations and from the station to each hotel are not automatically included in the price of the holiday. In Paris most clients choose to take a taxi between the stations rather than go on the Metro but we can arrange a private car with driver to take you in between. This is quite useful if you are a family group that can't fit into one Paris taxi.

PRICE INFORMATION

This tailor-made touring holiday is one of several suggested touring holidays we can offer you exactly as it is but also with any alterations you might want including extra nights in one or more places or adding in extra places. All our tours can be extended so that you can include a longer stay in one mountain or lake resort too, perhaps at the end of the itinerary. Do call to discuss the options with our travel consultants.

OUR PRICES

The sample prices mentioned in this leaflet are generally a 'from' price based on the cheapest season of travel. However, train fares and hotel rates can change (up and down depending on offers), so we give you an accurate price for your holiday when we provide you with a quotation. Our sample prices should be used as an indication of how much a particular combination will cost and to show the differences on average between the hotel categories on offer.

PRICE INFORMATION IN MORE DETAIL

From £2,420 per person for first class rail travel.

From £2,170 per person for second class rail travel.

Prices based on two sharing a double or twin room.

What's included in this touring itinerary?

Accommodation on bed and breakfast as below

1 night in a Standard room at the Hotel Wilden Mann in Lucerne

1 night in a Superior room at the Baglioni Hotel Carlton in Milan

1 night in a Standard room at the Grand Hotel Vesuvio in Naples

3 nights in a Standard room at the Hotel Villa Belvedere in Taormina

First or second class travel on all trains (as above) including Eurostar

Private car transfers from Taormina station to hotel, and back to Catania airport

Flight with British Airways one way from Catania to London Gatwick, Euro traveller

What's not included?

Meals other than breakfast at the hotels

Private car transfers in other locations

Any services not mentioned above

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BOOKING CONDITIONS

Our booking conditions apply to all holidays. A copy can be found on our website and a copy is also sent to you with a written quotation and when you make a booking.

FINANCIAL PROTECTION

Expressions Holidays offers full financial protection for all holidays you book with us. If your holiday includes a flight, the ATOL (3076) covers the costs of the holiday. If the holiday does not include a flight, it is the ABTOT bond that protects the cost of the holiday. We are also members of AITO (the Association of Independent Tour Operators) and ABTA.



Expressions Holidays
Lynx House, Pynes Hill, Exeter EX2 5JL

HOW TO BOOK

To make a booking, just phone us on

01392 441275

and we can take you through the details we need and start the booking process. A deposit is required to confirm the arrangements and this can be paid by debit or credit card over the phone. The level of the deposit will be confirmed at the point of booking and will depend on the ticketing deadlines of the rail tickets involved in your booking.