



M/Y STARFIRE Itinerary · 7-Day Cruise · Palermo to Catania

We invite you to spend seven days of luxurious relaxation aboard the magnificent **STARFIRE**. From the historic bay of Palermo, we will leisurely explore the enchantment of Sicily's dramatic northern coastline. We will sail on to experience more remote Mediterranean islands, such as Ustica, Lipari, and Stromboli, as we make our way to the northeastern coast of Sicily, visiting the chic destinations of Portorosa, Taormino, and Messina.

Keep in mind that itineraries are only guidelines, and they are not etched in stone! The following outline for your journey is subject to change, as we are dependant on **favorable** winds and seas. However, we know the area very well and will have a contingency plan!

Our **STARFIRE** crew will ensure you see all the highlights while offering the ultimate in personal service and guest care. **Welcome aboard!!**

Day 1 – Pick-up Palermo

On arrival at the Palermo airport, a host from the **STARFIRE** crew warmly welcomes you to Sicily's capital city – also the largest city on the island – stupendously located in its own wide bay underneath the limestone bulk of Monte Pellegrino. Within minutes you will be on board the M/Y STARFIRE, moored in the **Port of Palermo**.

After your journey there will be time to relax, explore your surroundings, and meet the entire **STARFIRE** crew before perhaps heading ashore to explore some of Sicily's legendary sites.



If you care to head ashore, visit the ornate Piazza Bellini, the cathedral, and the Arab-Norman Palantine Chapel in the Royal Palace. A trip up to Monreale allows for a panoramic view of the Conca d'Oro (the golden shell) – the beautiful valley beyond Palermo with a spectacular and evocative landscape.

This evening, dine on board under the stars and enjoy the view, or head ashore to dine at one of Palermo's many fine restaurants.



Day 2 – Ustica

The next morning your crew will serve breakfast alfresco as your Skipper sets sail for a short, three-hour hop to the tiny volcanic island of **Ustica** – measuring just 3.3 square miles. We can spend the day exploring this oasis of peace and tranquility.

Unspoiled by tourism, Ustica's magnificent seabeds are protected as a natural marine reserve, capturing an abundance of life in its clear, turquoise waters. It is not surprising that the area around Ustica is a paradise for scuba divers and snorkellers.

STARFIRE will sail casually around the island visiting the numerous grottos along the coast. We will also spend time at anchor near Ustica, allowing you to relax on the sundeck or participate in what will surely be some unbelievable scuba diving.



Gaze out at the small town perched above the harbor. Along with little restaurants and cafes, Ustica also houses an underwater archaeological museum.



Some of the highlights on the scuba diving list are the delicate fan-like red gorgonias and the rainbow-colored sponges which can be found at Grotta dei Gamberi (a depth of approximately 42m) and at Secca di Colombara (a depth of approximately 40m). At Punta Gavazzi (a depth of 9 and 17m) many archaeological artifacts can be admired and photographed.



This evening, **STARFIRE** will head out for an overnight run to Lipari and the Aeolian Islands.



Day 3 – The Aeolian Islands – (The Lipari Group of Islands)

You will awake this morning to find we have traveled on from Ustica and are now further tucked between the toe of Italy's boot and Sicily.

Welcome to the **Aeolian Islands**. Today, we cruise these blue waters of Sicily's northeastern coast, dotted with islands that vary in character and landscape. From lunar-like **Vulcano**, to the quiet beaches of **Salina** (of "Il Postino" film fame) to the lush, cliff-top meadows of **Lipari**, the Aeolian Islands will fascinate us with their diverse and unusual topography.

We will first sail past **Filicudi** and **Alicudi**, which will surprise you with their enchanting sea.



We may also sail on to **Panarea**, the smallest island of the archipelago, which can offer you a relaxing mud bath if you choose, thanks to its natural springs.

The diving center "**La Gorgonia**" is on the island of Lipari, and they offer dive expeditions to such famous Aeolian Island dive spots as:

- Punta Castagna** - A dive in unreal scenery, a platform at 10 meters, completely covered with white pumice that originates from the pumice mines above, and reminds us of a snow-covered roof-top in a skiing resort.
- Capo Grosso** – A dive down a beautiful perfectly vertical rock face, which from the surface, stops on the sandy bottom at 50 meters.
- Scoglio Quaglietto** - This is one of the nicest dives that the island of Vulcano has to offer. From the walls of the rock, to the inside of the grotto where there is a statue of the Madonna and a large quantity of shrimp.
- Le Formiche** – This is an extremely varied dive site, where you can enjoy snorkeling as well as diving.
- Capo Grillo** – This dive takes place alongside an impressive volcano slope that reaches great depths. The site is very interesting for photographers, offering them an infinite number of fantastic colorful macro opportunities.
- Secca del Bagno** – The Secca del Bagno in without doubt one of the most interesting dive sites in the Eolian Archipelago, and is not very easy to find. It is not an easy dive. It consists of three submerged points, the highest of which is at a depth of 22 mt. The walls are very colorful.
- Pietra Menalda** – This is one of the splendid rocks found on the southern side of Lipari, and offers divers a special naturalistic site. The most interesting dive is to circumnavigate the rock at a depth of between 18 and 40 mt.





Day 3 – The Aeolian Islands, cont.

During the evening hours, we will have the option to sail over to **Stromboli**, the “Black Giant,” which is one of the few constantly active volcanoes in the world; the view from the sea is most unforgettable! We just may glimpse the volcanic eruptions lighting up the night sky.

Tonight, we anchor overnight near one of these enchanting islands.



Day 4 – The Aeolian Islands (Day II)

We will spend the entire day cruising the Aeolian Islands. Today, you could opt to take advantage of more scuba diving opportunities, or we may sail to nearby **Vulcano**, studded with fantastic lava formations.

We may choose to spend the afternoon anchored in a remote bay near the island of **Lipari**, where you can relax, sunbathe, and take a light lunch. Take advantage of some of the numerous water sports offered on **STARFIRE**. Your crew will delight in taking you out water skiing or wake boarding! There is also ample opportunity for fishing.

Lipari is the largest of the Aeolian Islands, and it will invite you to its pumice beaches. If you wish to explore Lipari, take a tender ashore to enjoy an afternoon at leisure. Meander through the narrow streets or pause in a local pastry shop.



Tonight, we will anchor out once again near the island of Lipari and prepare to head on to Portorosa in the morning.

Enjoy your final evening of solitude out amidst these remote treasures of the Mediterranean.



Day 5 – Portorosa

After breakfast this morning, we will depart for a 2-hour cruise back to the Sicilian Coast, where Sicily's most modern and efficient marina awaits us. Welcome to bustling **Portorosa**, a fashionable tourist harbor located on the northeast coast near Milazzo.



Besides a splendid swimming pool surrounded by green vegetation, a wide beach, and an efficient shopping center, Portorosa offers a great base for getting out and exploring the surrounding areas. Perhaps we will set out for a small fishing or diving expedition.

Day 6 – Historic Taormina

We will depart Portorosa early this morning for a 5-hour cruise around the northeast coast of Sicily towards **Taormina**, a city that clings to the cliffs high above the eastern coast.



We will drop anchor just off the island. If you'd like, spend the afternoon in picturesque Taormina, built on terraces cascading down to the sea. During a walking tour, pass cobblestone piazzas, elegant shops, and outdoor cafes en route to the Greek theater.



Appreciate the ingenuity of the Greeks who created the spectacular theater with a beautiful natural backdrop of Mt. Etna in the distance.



Day 6 – Historic Taormina cont.

Spend the day enjoying this beautiful resort town at your own pace. Stroll along Taormina's Corso Umberto (central street) for excellent shopping choices. Alternatively, take an optional excursion to Mount Etna; although, it is also nice to enjoy it from afar. This active volcano is very present and visible even from the sea.

This evening, enjoy authentic Sicilian cuisine in one of the many restaurants in Taormina, or dine on board ship this evening and reflect on the day's sites by relaxing under the stars.

Day 7 – Messina

This morning, we will head out for a 2-hour hop over to the port of Messina. The setting for Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing," Messina has much to offer in the way of history. Its dramatic, boulder-filled harbor has challenged navigators since the days of Ulysses.

The Strait of Messina also offers opportunities for fishing and hosts many different types of fish with a good gastronomical reputation.

Near the Torre Faro, a small fishing village overlooked by a lighthouse, you can find the "Fossa dei sugarelli" – a dark blue, cylindrical shaped fish only found off the Sicilian coasts.



Many other varieties of fish can be found around Messina, including tuna, moon fish, red picarel, and grey mullet. Far out off the coast of Capo Peloro, large amber jacks are caught with a fishing line.

End your final day aboard **STARFIRE** with a wonderful Sicilian meal and nighttime celebration.

Day 8 – Catania (Noon drop off)

This morning, we continue our tour of the Sicilian coast with a 4-hour cruise to our final destination: **Catania**.

As your journey aboard **STARFIRE** comes to an end, you can be certain that you have enjoyed the definitive Sicilian coastal experience.