

TEXAS  EXES®

— FLYING LONGHORNS —

# *Undiscovered Italy*

EXPLORE ITALY'S ALLURING SOUTH

TEXAS EXES FLYING LONGHORNS

OCTOBER 13-23, 2019



*A unique travel experience*

UNCOVER ITALY'S RICH HISTORY AND CULTURE  
BEYOND THE TOURISTIC DESTINATIONS

[www.SOFIATRAVEL.ORG/texasitaly](http://www.SOFIATRAVEL.ORG/texasitaly)

*We Invite You to*

## TRAVEL AS OUR GUESTS

For over thirty years, our boutique group tours have been centered around one guiding principle: personal attention. Rather than take your registration and pass you off to a hired tour operator, our experienced family team has created this tour with the Texas Exes in mind. Not only do we answer every email, plan each menu, and select all of the experiences ourselves, but we will personally accompany you overseas and guide you through all the sites, focusing on creating an engaging, comprehensive narrative that will bring 3,000 years of Italian history to life. Most importantly, we want you to experience Italy as our guest, with the kind of hospitality that only a boutique travel provider can provide. Come join us on this truly unforgettable experience!



*Your  
Travel Guides*

**ADAM AND  
BLAKE SPARKS**

## EXPLORE THE HIDDEN SIDE OF ITALY

- Make authentic Neapolitan pizza from scratch with an expert local chef
- Explore haunting Pompeii and visit the world's greatest archaeological museum
- Stay in Stone Age cave dwellings carved into the cliffside of unforgettable Matera
- Sail through the bay of Naples to the hidden thermal islands of Procida & Ischia
- Hear engaging lectures on topics from Italian culture to the Bourbon dynasty
- Enjoy the sea view from your hotel along Naples' picturesque harbor promenade
- Taste fresh buffalo mozzarella at a historic farm & make bread with a Puglian chef
- Marvel at golden artifacts and amazingly preserved temples left by the Ancient Greeks
- Stay in an ethereal countryside masseria & harvest olives at a Roman era mill



Dear Texas Ex,

We are excited to offer you this unique experience in southern Italy with Adam and Blake Sparks of Sofia Travel. With over thirty years of experience, and with personal attention as their foundation, Sofia Travel offers this off-the-beaten-path tour with in-depth historical context and genuine cultural encounters. We expect this limited-size tour to fill up quickly, so we encourage you to register today!

Every traveler's participation in the Texas Exes Flying Longhorns travel program helps to further the association's core purpose: to formally organize alumni and friends to champion and advance the mission of the University of Texas at Austin. We do this by advocating on the university's behalf, enriching the student experience, connecting and engaging alumni everywhere, and communicating the value the university brings to the world.

*Shelley Norton*

Shelley Norton  
Director of Travel  
Texas Exes

*"Sofia Travel provided an outstanding combination of cultural exploration, local food, historical sites, and locations off the beaten path. Their service is seamless, and the experiences are marvelous because of their passion for what they do!"*

*- Donna Tierney, Sofia Travel 2018 Tour*

# Undiscovered Italy

## PRICE

\$5,495 per person

## SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

\$1,345 per person

## DEPOSIT

\$600 per person



## THREE UNFORGETTABLE DESTINATIONS

### Naples

One of the planet's truly legendary cities, Naples is awash in history. From our waterfront hotel in Naples' most elegant neighborhood, we'll explore this unofficial capital of Southern Italy with its world-famous cuisine, opulent grandeur, and larger-than-life culture.



### Matera

Matera is like a dream. Carved into the side of a gorge during the Stone Age, Matera is one of the world's longest continually inhabited cities. Stay in an unforgettable, restored cave hotel as we explore this haunting stone city, Europe's 2019 Capital of Culture.



### Puglian Countryside

Explore Italy's rustic heel in an ethereal *masseria*—a fortress-like countryside estate—beautifully restored to its 16<sup>th</sup> c. glory. Experience the traditional Puglian lifestyle as we harvest olives from 2,000 year old trees, bake bread with a local chef, and learn to dance the *pizzica*.

## EXPERIENCE THE SOFIA TRAVEL DIFFERENCE

**ADAM SPARKS** is passionate about sharing his vast knowledge of Italian history. His enthusiasm and rich storytelling brings each museum and archaeological site to life. Instead of a series of disconnected guides, Adam provides an engaging, comprehensive narrative throughout the tour that makes for a seamless journey through 3,000 years of Italian history.



As the Italian cultural conduit, **BLAKE SPARKS** makes sure that all conversations are facilitated by good wine and delectable cuisine. She personally ensures that every aspect of your tour is up to the highest Italian standards.



*"We've been on a lot of trips and we have found that a really good guide makes all the difference. Adam was superlative. With Blake at his side to make sure every little detail was taken care of, we had an unparalleled experience."*

*- Mont Phelps, Sofia Travel 2018 tour*

# Daily Itinerary

## DAY 1&2 ARRIVE NAPLES

Arrive Naples and enjoy the sea view from your room at our hotel along the picturesque harbor promenade. Enjoy a welcome reception and waterside dinner with your fellow travelers. (D)



## DAY 3 NAPLES, PIZZA MAKING CLASS

After a cultural orientation to life in Italy, we see the great sites of Naples, including the Piazza del Plebiscito and the Duomo. Enjoy Naples' culinary fame with Italy's best espresso and sweets and take a pizza making class with an expert *pizzaiolo*. Sample the fresh ingredients before making and firing your own pie during this unforgettable evening. (B,L,D)

## DAY 4 CRUISE TO TWO STUNNING ISLANDS



Cruise to two picturesque islands in the Bay of Naples famous since Roman times for their thermal, curative waters. Enjoy lunch in stunning, sleepy Procida and relax in a thermal pool by the chic harbor town of Sant'Angelo on the island of Ischia. (B,L)

## DAY 5 POMPEII, ARCHAEOLOGY MUSEUM

Take an optional day trip to unforgettable Pompeii and explore this hauntingly preserved ancient city. Then, visit the Naples Archaeological Museum that contains the amazingly preserved statues, wall paintings, and personal items excavated from Pompeii. (B)

## DAY 6 MOZZERELLA FACTORY, PAESTUM

Leaving Naples, visit a 9th generation water buffalo farm and taste the deliciously fresh cheese. Then, walk beneath 2,500 year old Greek temples at the amazingly preserved ancient site of Paestum.



Arriving to the hauntingly beautiful town of Matera, we check in to our unforgettable cave hotel and enjoy dinner in a candle-lit, deconsecrated cave chapel. (B,L,D)

## DAY 7 MATERA WALKING TOUR

Wake up to the stunning river valley views from the hotel terrace before exploring this one-of-a-kind city on foot. Marvel at 12<sup>th</sup> c. Byzantine style frescoes, rock hewn churches, and modern sculptures as we explore Europe's 2019 Capital of Culture. (B)

## DAY 8 MATERA, TARANTO, MASSERIA

After a free morning in Matera with time to hike the gorge, visit Taranto and its amazing museum covering the ancient Greek settlements of Magna Grecia. Then check in to our countryside *masseria* for three serene nights in the Puglian countryside. (B,L,D)



## DAY 9 ALBEROBELLO, OLIVE OIL MILL

Exploring Puglia, we begin in Alberobello, famous for its unique conical *trulli* houses. Then, visit a countryside olive grove with 2,000 year old trees that sits upon an ancient Roman olive mill where we learn about pressing techniques and sample the delicious oils. Then, visit a traditional pottery workshop famous across Europe before dinner in the nearby town of Manduria. (B,D)

## DAY 10 MASSERIA COOKING CLASS

Today we soak up the rustic, countryside charm of our *masseria* as we join the owner in her garden and kitchen to learn the art of traditional bread making and prepare a sumptuous feast. In the evening, learn the traditional *pizzica* dance to the accompaniment of traditional musicians. (B,D)

## DAY 11 DEPART

Depart Italy renewed and inspired! (B)



**EXTEND YOUR TRIP  
WITH FOUR LUXURIOUS NIGHTS**

**TAORMINA** *Sicily*



**AT THE BELMOND GRAND HOTEL TIMEO**



**BEAUTY, RELAXATION, FOOD & WINE**

Soak up the vibrant culture of Sicily and enjoy the views of Mount Etna and the sea from your room at our elegant five-star accommodations. Your hotel, the Belmond Grand Hotel Timeo, has played host to emperors, artists, and kings for over a century and is located just beneath a 2,200 year old Greek theater. Enjoy a tour of stunning Taormina, make cannoli with a local chef, and drive a vintage Fiat 500 through the winding hills of Sicily to the hillside villages made famous in *The Godfather*.



**PRICE: \$2,695 PER PERSON  
DOUBLE OCCUPANCY**

Availability is limited.

For a list of included amenities, please see the Terms and Conditions.

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