



Blue Dot Travel





\$16,490 pp

Twin-share

Single supp \$2,000

CORSICA AND SARDINIA WITH MALTA EXTENSION

Three Mediterranean Islands, and all very different.

Sardinia is part of Italy but has its own unique culture and influences. The laid back French-governed Corsica is much like regional France 50 years ago. Then there is wonderful Malta, an independent nation that was once a British colony and is packed with history. The Island of Corsica is one of France's 18 regional territories. It lies directly north of Sardinia and can be easily reached by ferry. Its capital, Ajaccio, is the birthplace of Napoleon Bonaparte, and his ancestral home is used as a museum today. Like other Mediterranean islands, Corsica was visited, conquered, and highly influenced by many people from the ancient world. The Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Phoenicians, Genovese and Northern Africans all left their mark. France invaded and occupied in the mid-1700s. Today it relies heavily on agriculture and tourism. It is far less developed than many islands in the Mediterranean. Visitors come for the weather, the food and the glorious scenery.

Sardinia is the second largest island in the Mediterranean, presenting a rather rugged mountainous landscape balanced by placid bays. In rural parts, stone-walled Neolithic fortresses call Nuraghes can still be seen in the fields. Sardinian towns and cities, especially those along the coast, have a rich tradition of shellfish and seafood. In contrast, the inland towns and cities are known for game and farm produce, notably capers, olives and Pecorino Sardo. The sea around this large Mediterranean Island is among the most beautiful and transparent in all the world. You will love the sights, the people, the food and the culture of this very special destination.

If you would like to extend your stay in the glorious Mediterranean, the ex-British colony of Malta is the perfect place to do so. This independent nation comprises three islands: Malta, Gozo and Comino. Malta is a traveller's dream because everything the country offers is within a small radius. You can enjoy the grand architecture, stunning fortified harbour, traditional hilltop towns, amazing history, fishing villages, and an upbeat, lively capital city against the languid backdrop of the magnificent Med.

Join us on this wonderful Mediterranean tour!



Tuesday 12th May DEPARTURE

Depart Australia for your flight to Nice. Please get in touch with us for further information about flights.

Day 1, Wednesday 13th May



ARRIVE NICE, FRANCE

We'll be picked up from the airport and transferred to our accommodation on arrival in Nice. The afternoon will be at leisure, allowing you to freshen up and/or stroll

the Old Port area near the hotel before our group welcome dinner early in the evening at a local restaurant. Overnight in Nice. **D**

Day 2, Thursday 14th May NICE – BASTIA

Today is a free day to explore this gem of a city, noting that today is unguided and un-hosted. Stroll the beachfront promenade, visit the panoramic belvedere, the Cours Selaya markets, or the captivating Old Town. Have an early dinner in Nice, then meet back at the hotel for our transfer to the airport for an evening flight to Bastia in Corsica. On arrival, we'll meet our Corsican

guide and driver and transfer to our hotel in the city's heart for a three-night stay. **B**



Day 3, Friday 15th May BASTIA

Today, we'll take a walking tour of charming Bastia. Our day includes the city's impressive citadel (it involves some uphill sections, but the old city's views and sights are well worth it), the bustling marina, and the picturesque historic quarter. We'll return to our hotel in the afternoon to freshen up and conclude our day with dinner at Bastia's Old Marina. **B/D**



Day 4, Saturday 16th May CAP CORSE DAY TRIP

Today, we'll enjoy a full day in and around the Cap Corse, a finger of land at the top of Corsica. Explore from east to west, with its rocky terrain, crystal-clear waters, and quaint villages. We'll stop at Erbalunga (a charming village with a 16th-century Genoese tower), Macinaggio, Pino and Nonza, with its black pebble beach. We'll enjoy wine tasting at a local restaurant, then return to Bastia via the Col de Teghime. Dinner is at a local restaurant near our hotel in Bastia. **B/D**



Day 5, Sunday 17th May BASTIA – CALVI

Today, we'll travel through the Castagniccia region, a collection of 29 villages, with slated rooftops, cobbled streets, traditional bakers' ovens and washhouses. The villages are set in a chestnut grove that gave its name to the area. After lunch, we'll continue to beautiful Calvi for a walking tour and a two-night stay. Dinner is at your leisure. **B/L**



Day 6, Monday 18th May CALVI AND SURROUNDS

We'll enjoy a guided tour of Calvi's impressive citadel, followed by lunch at a restaurant with fabulous views. We'll

explore the picturesque villages of San Antonino and Pigna followed by the small harbour town of Ile Rousse, then return to Calvi for an evening of leisure in. **B/L**



Day 7, Tuesday 19th May TO PORTO via CORTÉ

Today, we'll drive to the beautiful mountain village of Corté, with its citadel perched atop the rocky mountain crags. Board "Le Petit Train" for a novel way to reach this historic site, where we'll visit the Museum of Corsica. We'll continue on a scenic drive, showcasing Corsica's beautiful nature, to the lovely seaside town of Porto, where we stay for one night. Dinner is at a local restaurant. **B/D**



Day 8, Wednesday 20th May PORTO - AJACCIO

Weather permitting, we'll take a boat trip to the World Heritage-listed Scandola Nature Reserve, with its stunning rock

formations and wildlife. Lunch is at your leisure, then we'll drive through the Calanque de Piana, a bizarre geological formation of granite rocks rising 400m above sea level, to Ajaccio for a one night stay. Dinner is at a local restaurant in Ajaccio. **B/D**



Day 9, Thursday 21st May AJACCIO – PROPRIANO

This morning, we'll explore the beautiful imperial city of Ajaccio. The birthplace of Napoleon, this bustling city is brimming with history; the tangled streets of the city's old town, the marketplace, citadel and cathedral. It is also home to fantastic modern art and culture like the Fesch Museum of Modern Art. We'll then take a short drive out of town for a special lunch at a family-run auberge. In the afternoon, we'll visit the archaeological site of Filitosa with its megalithic art before continuing to the beachside town of Propriano, for a one night stay. Dinner is at your leisure, and it's a great place for a stroll watching the iconic Mediterranean sunset. **B/L**



Day 10, Friday 22nd May PROPRIANO – SARTENE – BONIFACIO

This morning we'll explore nearby Sartene, known as the "soul of Corsica". We'll take a walking tour, exploring its well-preserved medieval buildings and charming streets. Then, be ready for some stunning scenery as we drive the "Colle de Bavella", through the Corsican mountains. We'll pass through small villages and watch as the landscape changes from dramatic rock formations to forests of giant Laricio pines. The most beautiful panorama is at the pass of Col de Bavella (1,218m elevation) inside the regional reserve. We'll have lunch in this scenic area before continuing to the stunning city of Bonifacio for a two night stay. Dinner and the evening are at your leisure. **B/L**



Day 11, Saturday 23rd May BONIFACIO

The ancient fortress town of Bonifacio sits atop limestone cliffs carved by centuries of endless waves, and makes for some fabulous photos. This morning, we'll take the local mini-train up the steep ascent to the high town and enjoy a guided tour explaining the citadel's interesting history. There's free time to explore the winding laneways, local shops, and craft outlets. After lunch at your leisure, return to sea level for a boat excursion (subject to weather conditions) to discover the caves of Bonifacio. The rest of the afternoon is free, before dinner at the port. **B/D**



Day 12, Sunday 24th May TO ARZACHENA, SARDINIA

This morning, we'll take a one-hour ferry to Santa Teresa at the northern tip of Sardinia. We'll meet our Sardinian guide and driver, then board another ferry to La Maddalena Island, where there will be free time for lunch. Once a fishing village, La Maddalena attracted the attention of several famous leaders who understood its strategic position between Sardinia and mainland Italy. Now, the town centres around the animated cafes and buildings of Piazza Garibaldi, named after Giuseppe Garibaldi, the father of Italian independence. We'll visit the museum then continue to the island of Caprera, Garibaldi's last retreat. The panoramic views of the azure-blue sea against the green vegetation of the hinterland are just stunning. Returning to the main island, we'll arrive at our hotel in Arzachena late in the afternoon for dinner and a two-night stay. **B/D**



Day 13, Monday 25th May AGGIUS

This morning we'll take an archaeological tour of the "Giant's Tomb" at Coddù Vecchiù. This necropolis dates

back to the Neolithic age (1600 BC) and is the biggest in Sardinia. Next, we'll travel to Aggius to visit both its interesting museums. The MEOC Museum explores Sardinian traditions and culture from 1600 to the present. Aggius was the epicentre of banditry in Gallura for about three centuries, and the Museum of Banditry documents this interesting slice of local history. We'll continue to Tempio Pausania, the "city of stone", a picturesque town famous for its granite and cork production. We'll return to Arzachena in the late afternoon, and dinner is at our hotel. **B/D**



Day 14, Tuesday 26th May
ARZACHENA – ORGOSOLO – BITTI

Today we'll travel to Orgosolo, in the heart of the Barbagia del Supramonte mountain area. Its hinterland is strewn with the traces of the ancient dwellers of Sardinia, domus de janas, tombs of the giants and nuraghes. After a stroll through the narrow streets and alleys of the village, we'll enjoy lunch with the local shepherds, who will share the "Cantu a Tenore" with us (a style of polyphonic folk singing characteristic of the Barbagia Area.) After lunch, we'll explore the beautiful Barbagia Region Panoramas en route to the quaint village of Bitti in the North Barbagia region. Our hotel, located in the countryside, allows you to slow down and feel immersed in the surrounding natural beauty. Your evening is free to enjoy the local hospitality. **B/L**



Day 15, Wednesday
27th May
BITTI – BOSCA –
ALGHERO

After breakfast, we'll travel to Bosa, arguably one of Sardinia's most beautiful towns. Lunch is at your leisure, and

sitting in the main square with a bowl of pasta is hard to beat! After lunch, we'll take a walking tour of the village with its pastel houses stacked up the hillside and fishing boats bobbing in the river. We'll continue through one of the most scenic roads on the island to our next destination – Alghero, where we will spend the next two nights. With its fortified walls and towers that surround the old town built under Catalan rule, it is known as the "little Barcelona". We'll take a short walking tour of this beautiful town with its medieval main square, Piazza Civica, showcasing the famous Duke of Arbus palace and the 16th-century S Maria Cathedral. Dinner is at our hotel tonight. **B/D**



Day 16, Thursday 28th May
CASTELSARDO

After breakfast, we'll drive to the ancient town of Castelsardo for a walking tour. Overlooking this picturesque city sits Castello dei Doria; the 11th Century castle that gives the town its name. It is wonderfully preserved and houses the famous Museo dell' Intreccio (entrance not included). The nearby Maria's Basilica is famous for the so-called Cristo Nero (Black Christ), carved from wood. After returning to Alghero, the afternoon is free with an opportunity to arrange a boat tour or swim in the famous crystal waters of The Med. We'll enjoy dinner at a local restaurant tonight. **B/D**



Day 17, Friday 29th May
ALGHERO – CAGLIARI

A long but rewarding day today! We'll begin our journey South, with our first stop at Bonorva to visit the huge Necropolis of Sant'Andrea Prius, one of the largest in the Mediterranean. We'll continue to lunch at a local farm where the owner will share his knowledge about the farm and his traditional home-grown food. After lunch, we'll travel to Torralba to visit the magnificent Nuraghe Santu Antine. Dating back to 1600 BC, this ritual fortress is composed of a central tower surrounded by a fortified court and three side towers disposed as a perfect triangle. We'll walk through the beautifully preserved corridors inside the fortress to truly appreciate this ancient building. Finally, we'll arrive in Cagliari in the early evening, where we will spend the next three nights. There are plenty of options for dinner nearby. **B/L**



Day 18, Saturday 30th May
CAGLIARI

Today, we'll discover the scenic coastline of the Sulcis Region, from Fontanamare to Porto Flavia. As we drive this amazing road, the mountain's rocky face has an amazing purple colour contrasting with the surrounding greenery. The cliff-face port of Porto Flavia is a masterpiece of mining engineering. Now abandoned, the fascinating site was dug into the cliffs 50m above sea level. The southward coast from Buggerru is panoramic and full of little paradises like the beach of Cala Domestica, dominated by a Spanish tower, and the mining village of Nebida, suspended between the sea and the mountains beyond. There will be free time for lunch (own cost), and plenty of stops for panoramic photos on the way back to Cagliari. Dinner is at our hotel this evening. **B/D**



Day 19,
Sunday 31st
May
CAGLIARI

This morning we'll enjoy a walking tour of the beautiful Cagliari Medieval district, overlooking the Golfo degli



Angeli. Founded by Phoenician traders, the city has preserved soaring towers and sections of the city walls that once encircled its medieval Castello district. It's also home to one of the Mediterranean's largest and most important Phoenician necropolises. We'll walk through Saint Augustine, Piazza Matteotti and Via Roma. We'll visit the 17th-century cathedral, known for its ornate Baroque interior, grand towers and magnificent bastions. This part of the town is known as 'Castello', a once impregnable fortress that offers excellent panoramic views over Cagliari. Lunch will be served in a local restaurant. In the afternoon, we'll visit the ruins of the ancient town of Nora. Founded by the Phoenicians, then

ruled by Punics and Romans, Nora is at the end of a beautiful promontory southwest of Cagliari. The Romans made the town wealthy and beautiful, adding a theatre, several thermal baths and stunning mosaics. After a full day, return to the hotel in the early evening. **B/L**

Day 20, Monday 1st June

CAGLIARI DEPARTURE, or EXTENSION TO MALTA

Our time in Sardinia concludes after breakfast.

For those continuing to Malta, you'll transfer to the airport for a lunchtime flight to Valetta. For those returning home, you'll have some free time before your afternoon flight. **B**

MALTA EXTENSION

Tour cost: \$2,500 pp

Single Supp: \$650

Excludes flight from Cagliari to Valetta



Day 1, Monday 1st June VALLETTA

We'll arrive from Cagliari in the early afternoon and transfer to our hotel for a five-night stay. Our hotel is in Sliema, a ferry ride across the harbour from

Valetta. Dotted with charming cafes and shops, Sliema is a vibrant neighbourhood that oozes local charm, away from the busy cruise port. Dinner is at the hotel tonight. (A Blue Dot host does not lead this extension. Experienced local guides accompany all inclusions.) **D**

Day 2, Tuesday 2nd June VALLETTA

Malta's capital, Valletta, is a fortified city between two stunning natural harbours on a hilly peninsula. When UNESCO named Valletta a World Heritage site, it described it as 'one of the most concentrated historic areas in the world', with 20 monuments within an area of 55 ha. This morning, we'll explore its key sites on foot, including the Upper Baraka Garden and St John's Cathedral. To



best appreciate the famous harbour, we'll travel on a "fregatina", the traditional fishing boat of Malta, to the medieval city of Birgu. We'll return in the late afternoon to freshen up before enjoying dinner at a local restaurant. **B/D**

Day 3, Wednesday 3rd June SLIEMA & MARSAXLOKK

This morning, we'll explore Sliema with a stroll on the waterfront promenade before heading to Marsaxlokk, a pretty bay-side fishing village, for a short boat trip. Dotted with charming fishing boats, it's a fabulous spot to wander with your camera and enjoy lunch (at your own cost). In the afternoon, we'll return to Sliema, where you have an afternoon free to relax and enjoy Mediterranean life at its best. For those interested, your guide can organise a "Valletta by night" tour, which we recommend. **B**



Day 4, Thursday 4th June GOZO

Today, we'll take a short ferry ride to Malta's second-largest island, Gozo. Arriving at the quaint seaside town of Xlendi is the perfect coffee stop before continuing to the Basilica of Ta'Pinu. We'll continue to the island's capital city, Victoria, and the Ggantija Temples, one of the world's oldest known free-standing structures. Enjoy a fabulous seafood lunch at a local seaside village where the feast is so good. Dinner is not included tonight, as most will want to give it a miss! **B/L**



Day 5 Friday 5th June VALLETTA

Today, we'll explore the historic sites surrounding Valletta. Stroll the cobble-stoned streets and enjoy the beautiful architecture of the Silent City of Mdina and its Glass factory. We'll see the stunning Mosta Dome, famous for its beauty and fascinating history, and the ancient Hagar Qim temples. The temple of Hagar Qim, excavated for the first time in 1839, dates to 3600 - 3200 BC. It stands on a hilltop overlooking the sea and the islet of Filfla. Weather permitting, we'll take a short boat ride to experience the beautiful light reflections and cave systems of the Blue Grotto. We'll meet for a farewell dinner at a local restaurant in the evening. **B/D**



Day 6, Saturday 6th June DEPARTURE

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight home. **B**



Icon indicates a day where there is **moderate physical exertion**. A basic level of fitness is required: eg. A trek over 'mostly flat' terrain or climbing several flights of steps without the support of handrails or elevators.



Icon indicates a day where there is a **particularly active section**. A good level of fitness is required: eg. A longer trek over non-groomed, uneven terrain, or ascending to reach a panorama. May also include exposure to higher altitude. An alternate activity may be offered if you choose to sit out an active section. Please call - we are happy to discuss each tour in more detail.