

STROMBOLI

Next in the itinerary is Stromboli—perhaps the most famous of them all. The island is known for its active volcano that has been continuously erupting for 2,000 years. Stromboli is one of the more difficult islands in the itinerary and requires more planning than the others because of the lack of safe harbors. The perfect steep cone-like volcanic shape does not offer any protected coves along the coastline and the bottom only comes up to anchorable depth on the eastern point of the island. Everywhere else the shore drops dramatically hundreds of feet deep as soon as the island meets the sea. You can sail safely along the coast just 30 meters out to enjoy the sights, sounds, and the distinctive sulfur smell of the active volcanic peak.

Rugged and wild is how many locals like to describe Stromboli. The island grows lemons, oranges, capers, grapes, and olives come from its northern and southern slopes. Ashore is a charming town, home to a small welcoming community. Walking the streets you can find a gelateria selling local flavors grown and harvested on the island. There are numerous trattorias serving rustic and traditional menu options and modern restaurants offering fancier gastronomic dishes paired with local island wine.

Stromboli serves as the beacon and spirit of the Aeolian islands, with its volcanic prowess that brings both fear and symbolic fertility to its residents. It has also become a geological muse for explorers and writers for many years. Erupting often, lava flows out of its top, blackening the land and re-molding the earth below. Chunks of pulsating orange rock can be seen from a distance, while shades of glowing lava frequently erupt and light up the night sky. Its deep rumbling emanates from underground and hurls fire into the sky.

FILICUDI

One of the lesser explored islands is Filicudi. Home to two small fishing villages and the archipelago's second-smallest community. There are well preserved ancient ruins scattered throughout its villages dating back to the Bronze Age. It's the second-farthest western island in the group, and sailors come to Filicudi for the true sense of peace and calm that's found there.

The lifestyle is simple and holds a sense of calmness in high regard. Most of the lands are protected parklands, and the entire island has been listed as an UNESCO World Heritage Site. Sailors are greeted with genuine hospitality by the island's residents.

AEOLUS IN GREEK MYTHOLOGY

Greek Mythology tells us that Aeolus was the keeper of the winds and king of the Eolies. He lived on the floating island of Aeolia and was visited by Odysseus in Homer's Odyssey. After experiencing a misadventure, explorers showed up to his home where Aeolus gave them hospitality for a month and offered them winds from the west to take them home to Ithaca. He also gave them an ox-hide bag that contained all the winds, except the western ones. They traveled well for days, but when their native lands were just in sight, Odysseus sank. His men let their curiosity overcome them, and they opened the mysterious bag. The winds roared with such a force that drove the ship all the way back to Aeolus. He refused to help them again and believed their unsuccessful voyage meant that the gods didn't favor them.



HOTEL SIRENA ON ALONG THE SOUTH SIDE OF FILICUDI (ABOVE, LEFT). A TYPICAL SEASIDE SNACK: MUSSELS, SEA URCHINS, AND ANCHOVIES CAUGHT AND SERVED FRESH (BELOW).