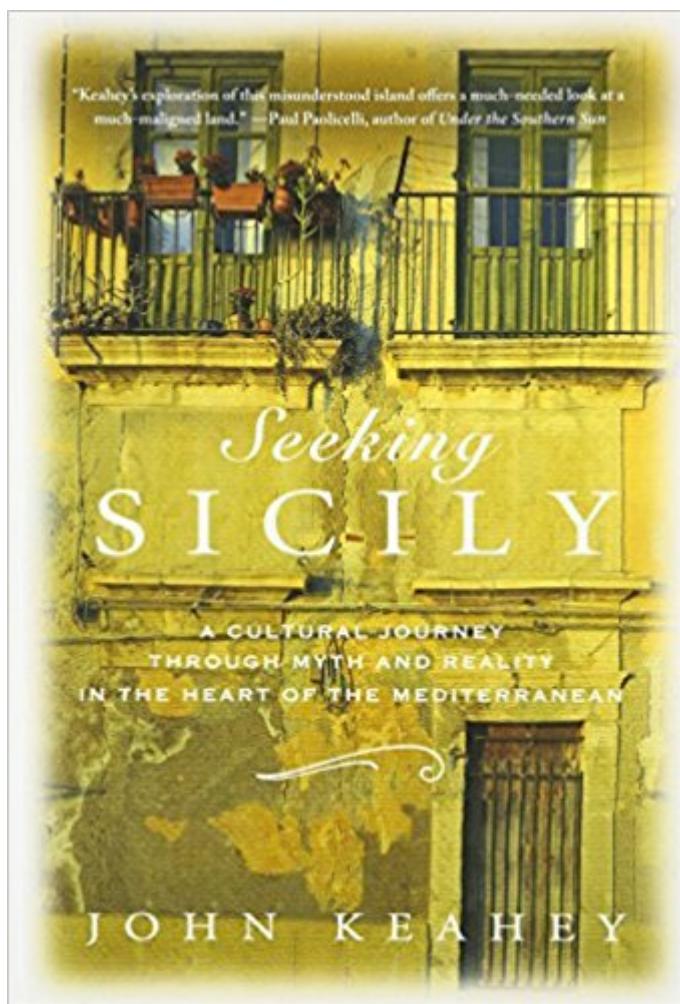


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# Seeking Sicily: A Cultural Journey Through Myth And Reality In The Heart Of The Mediterranean



## Synopsis

"Keahey's exploration of this misunderstood island offers a much-needed look at a much-maligned land." •Paul Paolicelli, author of *Under the Southern Sun*  
Sicily is the Mediterranean's largest and most mysterious island. Its people, for three thousand years under the thumb of one invader after another, hold tightly onto a culture so unique that they remain emotionally and culturally distinct, viewing themselves first as Sicilians, not Italians. Many of these islanders, carrying considerable DNA from Arab and Muslim ancestors who ruled for 250 years and integrated vast numbers of settlers from the continent just ninety miles to the south, say proudly that Sicily is located north of Africa, not south of Italy. *Seeking Sicily* explores what lies behind the soul of the island's inhabitants. It touches on history, archaeology, food, the Mafia, and politics and looks to nineteenth- and twentieth-century Sicilian authors to plumb the islanders' so-called Sicilitudine. This "culture apart" is best exemplified by the writings of one of Sicily's greatest writers, Leonardo Sciascia. *Seeking Sicily* also looks to contemporary Sicilians who have never shaken off the influences of their forbearers, who believed in the ancient gods and goddesses. Author John Keahey is not content to let images from the island's overly touristed villages carry the story. Starting in Palermo, he journeyed to such places as Arab-founded Scopello on the west coast, the Greek ruins of Selinunte on the southwest, and Sciascia's ancestral village of Racalmuto in the south, where he experienced unique, local festivals. He spent Easter Week in Enna at the island's center, witnessing surreal processions that date back to Spanish rule. And he learned about Sicilian cuisine in Spanish Baroque Noto and Greek Siracusa in the southeast, and met elderly, retired fishermen in the tiny east-coast fishing village of Aci Trezza, home of the mythical Cyclops and immortalized by Luchino Visconti's mid-1940s film masterpiece, *La terra trema*. He walked near the summit of Etna, Europe's largest and most active volcano, studied the mountain's role in creating this island, and looked out over the expanse of the Ionian Sea, marveling at the three millennia of myths and history that forged Sicily into what it is today.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 336 pages

Publisher: Thomas Dunne Books; 10.9.2011 edition (November 8, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0312597053

ISBN-13: 978-0312597054

Product Dimensions: 5.7 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 75 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #275,390 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #299 in Books > History > Europe > Italy #398 in Books > Travel > Europe > Italy > General #665 in Books > Reference > Writing, Research & Publishing Guides > Writing > Travel

## Customer Reviews

Keahey meticulously observes the history, colorful customs and culture of Sicilians with boundless curiosity | Keahey marvels at variations in Sicilian cuisine with mouthwatering descriptions flooding the pages of this lush travelogue. • KIRKUS Keahey's journey is a rich guide to the culture and history of Sicily. • PUBLISHERS WEEKLY Keahey can shift swiftly from, say, a hard-nosed investigation into the origins of the Mafia to a mouth-watering chapter on Sicilian cooking | He peppers the trip with tidbits from some of the best literature about Sicily and balances his joyful participation in island rituals and festivals with serious analysis. • BOOKLIST

JOHN KEAHEY is a veteran newspaper journalist who, since 1989, has been a reporter and news editor for The Salt Lake Tribune. He has a history degree from the University of Utah and spends as much time as possible in Italy.

I am not yet finished reading "Seeking Sicily", but without a doubt what I have read so far, is the most heartbreak, and yet joyful, book I have yet read. I am the last of 14 children born to Eugenio and Marianne (Lipari) Zenone who were marred in Sicily and came to American in 1915. I listened attentively as a boy to all the stories my parents told me of their life in Sicily. This book has made me cry! It is a story of a people that has largely been untold! One of the most oppressed people in the world, anyone would be enlightened by reading this book about the land of my parents birth. Yes, I am an American. I am also proud to be a Sicilian! Ernest Zenone, Sr. Age: 72 Born in Southwest Philadelphia, December 30, 1939

I got this book because I've never been to Sicily, but my family is from Adrano and Palermo. I wanted to learn more about where my family came from and the culture. The way the author wrote the book is interesting, and I liked how he wrote about him being there in present day, then going back and telling you about the history and customs of the places he visited. I've learned about the island's history, occupations, wars, food, and of course there is a chapter on the Mafia. Also, I

enjoyed the pictures provided in the middle of the book. Overall, it was a great purchase. Even the design of the book is nice. I would recommend this book to anyone who is interested in reading about Sicily.

This is an easy-to-read history of the political, cultural, and historical influences that have shaped the persona of Sicilians today. It is very well researched. I am planning a trip to Sicily and I feel that I'll be much better able to make the most of my trip.

John Keahey's work is neither a tourist guide, nor a pedantic historical dissertation. It is a wonderful memoir of the author's four visits to Sicily, in which he humbly dedicates himself to the job of being a witness about Sicily, its peoples, and its history, with a keen perception, and sensitiveness. The reader feels as if s/he has been there, and vicariously experienced the landscape, the food, the traditions, the people, at the same time wetting one's appetite to go and experience it oneself. A real jewel of travelog writing.

Very interesting read which explains much about Sicily, Sicilians and how they differ from Italians. How they are different and why is fascinating. This is a history book and a travel book that explores the people as much as the places. Wish I had read it before travelling to Sicily. Things make more sense now.

A fascinating, highly readable portrayal of My Beautiful Sicily. The island has endured so much pain and abuse by invaders. Keahey provides a tour of the history, natural wonders, landmarks, and personalities using a most entertaining, personal, and vivid prose.. My eagerness to re-visit the island just got stronger and stronger as I read his account of the many things I missed on my first visit in 2014.

I truly loved this book but I don't know why but it took weeks to arrive while most of my books only take days. I am travelling to Sicily in the Fall and this book was quite informative about the history of the country and told me some things I'm delighted to learn and makes me even more eager to get on to my journey.

Outstanding-- I really understand much more about the culture of Sicily-- not a guidebook but a cultyral journeyAnyone going there should read it

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