The Pleasures of Sketching
May 1 to 6, 2018 with Ximena Maier

A week spent sketching in the Sicilian hills, the better to take in all the beauty and inspiration. We will cook and we will walk, and travel and eat and sit around in a beautiful garden. And all the time we will be keeping a sketchbook. Because everybody can draw, even if they think they can't. I will be there to nudge and encourage and advise, and it doesn't matter if you are a professional illustrator (like me) or somebody whose last drawing was handed in at the end of the 5th grade. Sketching is a wonderful way to make the most of travel. It is a way to stay in the moment, to look around, to absorb, to sit still and really see what is in front of you. Call it mindfulness or call it therapy or just plain pottering around, it feels good to sketch. We will not concentrate on the result but on the process, because it doesn't matter how each individual drawing turns out. This will be just plain fun.

Ximena Maier is a Spanish illustrator. She works with the main publishing houses and magazines in Spain, both in children's and general books, including many on food. In 2006, she began "Lobstersquad: a food blog with drawings". She is passionate about sketching and is often to be seen insisting that everyone around her take up pencil and paper too, and have a go. Have a look into her website: www.ximenamaier.com

Example Program

Tuesday, May 1
Check in from 3:00 to 5:00 pm.
7:00 pm introductory discussion followed by aperitivo and a traditional Sicilian meal at Case Vecchie

Wednesday, May 2
Early to rise. At 7:45 am depart for a visit a local shepherd and cheesemaker Filippo Privitera, to see the ricotta making. A picnic breakfast provided at the shepherd's.

Return to Case Vecchie for a Sicilian cheese tasting followed by lunch.

In the afternoon, we will have time to wander through the garden of Case Vecchie, illustrating and writing, and then meet for a gathering to discuss thoughts and share illustrations.

5:30 pm In the evening, we will cook a fresh, seasonal meal together for dinner.

Thursday, May 3
9:00 am Breakfast followed by a morning workshop of illustrating on site among fields, vines and the 19th Century Estate. We will focus on our surroundings, finding the delights around us.

Meet for lunch at Case Vecchie then leave at 3:00 pm for a visit to the beautiful hillside village of Polizzi Generosa with a chance to draw and write in the scenic piazza and visit one of the most renowned pottery producers in the area.

Return through the the twilight hills for dinner at Case Vecchie.

Friday, May 4
9:00 am Breakfast followed by a walk in the garden in search of seasonal ingredients.
Meet in the kitchen to make lunch together, sketching and jotting notes all the while.

In the afternoon, we will have time to take a walk together, and sit and draw in a nearby field.

5:00 pm We will visit Case Grandi winery for a tour of the winery and a wine tasting.

Dinner at Case Vecchie.

Saturday, May 5
8:00 am Meet for an early breakfast and then leave to visit Agrigento's ancient "Valley of the Temples" where we will have the chance to draw in the ancient garden of Kolymbetra. After a well-deserved picnic in the citrus groves we will return to Case Vecchie by 4:30 pm.

Refresh and then meet as a group to share words and drawings.

7:30 pm Sicilian aperitivo and farewell dinner.

Sunday, May 6
9:00 am Breakfast followed by goodbyes.

Costs
Single Room: €2,750
Double Room (price per room for two people): €5,000

Costs include accommodation at Case Vecchie or one of the nearby cottages, and indicated lessons, meals and excursions.

*Airfare and transportation to and from Case Vecchie are not included in the price. Please request transportation arrangements at the time of booking if you would like us to book a car to and from the estate.

**Please note, due to the seasonal rhythm of life and agriculture in Sicily, planned activities and schedules may change at short notice. If this is the case, an equally engaging activity will be arranged.