



ITALY GRAND TOUR

12 days from the ancient Rome to Florence across Tuscany and finally Venice



D01: ROME

Arrival in the morning at Rome Fiumicino Airport, meet with our roman local guide. Check in to the hotel and guided tour of the *Città Eterna*. Three thousand years old urban area among the richest of art treasures worldwide. The heart of ancient Rome: *Foro Romano, Colosseo, Via Sacra, Campidoglio*. Dinner in a typical roman restaurant in the quarter of Trastevere. Overnight in Rome.

D02: ROME

The whole day is dedicated to Rome, walking among its piazzas: *Piazza Navona, Fontana di Trevi*, the palaces of the Italian Government and the Rome churches. *Piazza San Pietro* and the Vatican City, its museums guarding secrets thousands of years old. Another colourful roman dinner and overnight in Rome.

OD:3 ROME – ORVIETO – ASSISI - MONTALCINO

We start moving northward across the core of Italy. Our first stop is the small town of Orvieto (Umbria) impressively built in *tufo* stone, which holds in its centre one of the most splendid architectural work of the Middle Age, the *Duomo* (Main Cathedral). On the way visit of Assisi, home to the legend of Saint Francis. We will walk in the narrow streets, visit its abbeys, the *Basilica Superiore* and *Inferiore* with the famous frescoes of the life of the saint by Giotto. For dinner we will be in charming Montalcino, a small Tuscan hamlet of the Orcia Valley and home of world-famous *Brunello* wine. Free wine tasting and dinner in the family restaurant of our charming agriturismo where we will overnight Montalcino.

D04: THE VAL D'ORCIA - PIENZA - SIENA

The whole day is spent in this part of Tuscany, the province of Siena, with its unbelievable rolling hills and landscapes. After breakfast and a walk in the old streets of Montalcino, travel to the close Pienza (one of the many World Heritage Unesco sites of our trip). During the day wine, olive oil and cheese tasting will be accompanied with examples of know how to produce such local food excellence. Late afternoon: arrival to the astounding Siena and begin our walking tour of the medieval city. We will be guests of the *Contrada dell'Aquila* for dinner, with its people telling us the traditions of *Palio* rules. Overnight in Siena.

D05: SIENA

Jewel in the crown of Italian art from the twelfth to the thirteenth centuries. *Piazza del Campo*, the place of the famous *Palio* horserace and the Muni Palace. The *Duomo* is considered by some historians to be the finest of Italy. The collection of the Duomo museum, with the works of the master painter Duccio da Buoninsegna, the old *Spedale*. walking among the *Contrade* (sienese old city quarters). Afternoon: moving to two more "pearls" with their outstanding examples of medieval architecture: San Gimignano and its towers (named the New York of the Middle Age) and, later on, Volterra: former Etruscan capital, a walled city. (the city in the V century BC had seven kilometers of walls while Athens, in the great era of Pericles, had six). Relaxing walking among the locals, enjoying the sunset and a local product-based dinner. Overnight in Volterra.

D06: VOLTERRA - PISA - LUCCA

From Volterra, through a delightful country road, we will get to Pisa, the Tuscan city famous for its intellectual tradition, the city of Galileo Galilei and the *Normale* University. Then on to the Leaning Tower in *Piazza dei Miracoli*, the *Duomo* and *Battistero*. The afternoon is dedicated to Lucca, a jewel protected by medieval walls and totally to be discovered. Walking inside the city, its shops, churches and towers. *Piazza Anfiteatro*, *Duomo of San Martino* and the Tomb of the sweet Ilaria del Carretto, rare example of veiled sculptured marble. *Battistero di San Frediano*. Dinner in local trattoria and overnight in Lucca.

D07: LUCCA - FLORENCE

We set up in the morning for the world-famous capital of Tuscany. Ready to visit the *Museo degli Uffizi*, *Ponte Vecchio*, *Museo Accademia* and the marvellous churches of the historical center: *Santa Maria del Fiore*, *Campanile di Giotto e il Battistero*, *Santa Maria Novella*, *Santa Croce*. Dinner in local trattoria and overnight in Florence.

D08: FLORENCE

Full day for Florence. In the morning we'll set off up the hill to the famous *piazzale Michelangelo* and the terrace of *Abbazia di San Miniato* with its enchanting panoramic view of the entire city from across the River Arno. Then a walk down to the *Piazza della Signoria* and a visit to *Palazzo Vecchio*, the old headquarter of the Medici Government and now house to the Florentine municipality. Free afternoon with plenty of time for walking, shopping and enjoying the historic centre. Overnight in Florence.

D09: MODENA - VERONA. FROM TUSCANY TO THE VENETO (Via Emilia)

Today we leave Tuscany and travel to Veneto, crossing Emilia Romagna.

In the morning we start our transfer northwards, stopping along the road in Modena. Historic city centre with its *Duomo*, 1100 AD, named for its architecture, decoration and meaning. Visited by the Templars during the Middle Age on their pilgrimage to Rome: a part of the old *Via Francigena* from Paris and the South of France to Rome. Modena is the home to the Ferrari car, so we will visit the factory and the museum dedicated to this astounding brand. Modena is world famous for its cuisine, balsamic vinegar, pasta and the late most famous Italian tenor **Luciano Pavarotti**. In the late afternoon we arrive in Verona, in the Veneto region, glamorous city on the shores of the river Adige. In this typical Venetian city, we will recognize the streets and the palaces mentioned by William Shakespeare and visit the balcony of Juliet. Then on to the big *Arena Romana*, as big as Colosseo, one of the most important places for European Liric Opera. We will walk through its squares, drink in its bars in *Piazza Bra* and *Piazza delle Erbe*. Dinner in a local and stylish restaurant, sipping the delicious wines of Veneto region. Overnight in a resort in the countryside between Verona and Vicenza.

D10: VERONA – VICENZA - VENICE

The day is leisurely dedicated to Verona and Vicenza, the city of Palladio. The Palladian Villas are a marvellous example of Renaissance Venetian art. We will visit the impressive *Teatro Olimpico*, designed by Palladio and some his villas. Dinner with local food tasting and overnight in Venice.

D11: VENICE

We will take the ferry on the *Canal Grande* and start our walking in this magic city. We'll have two days at our disposal to visit the city jewels: *Piazza San Marco* with its incredible *Basilica* and the marvellous *Palazzo*

Ducale. We will also visit the recently restored *Teatro La Fenice* (possibly with a play). Dinner and overnight in Venice.

D12: VENICE

All-walking day in the streets of Venice, city of the famous Carnival and Historical Boat Races. This incredible city is made of 118 islands tied by 150 bridges. We'll admire *palazzi* in several styles and will enjoy walking along the channels or by Gondola bordering Venice's Noble palaces, its churches, the Accademia Museum and the Old Jewish *Ghetto*. Possible excursion to the Island of Murano, capital of handmade glass. Overnight in Venice. In the late evening, transfer to the airport of Venice for a happy farewell.

The individual participation fee includes:

- All the transfers by private bus + driver
- Hotels 3-4 stars (Double Occupancy B&B)
- Half Board (dinner in typical restaurants or hotel)
- English speaking professional guide, other languages as requested
- Medical/baggage insurance

It does not include:

- Entrance charges for museums, churches or other places.
- Single Room supplement 40€ per night.
- Tips, beverages, or any extras
- Supplement Full Board 240€
- International/domestic flights (that we can provide – ask for a quotation)

All dietary requirements will be catered for.

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