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Treasures of ITALY AND SPAIN

Traditions and beauty are the keywords of this special tour



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.

D03: ROME – SIENA

Driving northward, we will exit the highway and get through the Orcia Valley (UNESCO heritage), with its small Tuscan hamlets and rolling hills, home of world-renowned *Brunello* wine. Arrival in Siena, jewel in the crown of Italian art from the twelfth to the thirteenth centuries. We will spend the rest of the day with our local guide, visiting this unforgettable city. *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. Also, the collection of the Duomo museum, with the works of the master painter Duccio da Buoninsegna, the old *Spedale*. Walking among the old Contrade (sienese city quarters). We will be guests of the Contrada dell'Aquila for dinner, with its people telling us the traditions of Palio rules. Nice walk after dinner. Overnight in Siena.

D04: SIENA - SAN GIMIGNANO - VOLTERRA – PISA

After continuing the visit in Siena city centre we will be moving to two “pearls”, outstanding examples of medieval architecture in the surroundings of Siena on the way to Pisa: San Gimignano and its towers

(named the New York of the Middle Age) and Volterra, former Etruscan capital, a walled city. (Interesting note: the city in the fifth century BC had seven kilometers of walls, while Athens, in the great era of Pericles, had just six). Overnight in Pisa.

D05: PISA – FLORENCE

Pisa, the Tuscan city famous for its intellectual tradition, the city of Galileo Galilei and the Normale University. A walk in the center, then onto the Leaning Tower, the *Duomo* and *Battistero* in *Piazza dei Miracoli*. The afternoon is dedicated to Florence, capital of Tuscany. Be ready to visit the *Museo degli Uffizi*, *Ponte Vecchio*, *Museo Accademia* and the marvelous churches of the historical centre: *Santa Maria del Fiore*, *Campanile di Giotto* e il *Battistero*, *Santa Maria Novella*, *Santa Croce*. Dinner in local *trattoria* and overnight in Florence.

D06: 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.

D07: FLORENCE – VENICE

3 hours driving to reach the Capital of the Veneto region. We will take the ferry on the *Canal Grande* and start our stay in this magic city, with almost two entire days at our disposal to visit *Piazza San Marco* with its incredible *Basilica* and the marvelous *Palazzo Ducale*. Dinner and overnight in Venice.

D08: 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. In the evening, to the airport of Venice for the flight to Barcelona.

D09: BARCELONA

Barcelona is one of the most brilliant cities of Europe. We will enjoy visiting the best sites in the city. Gaudí's famous masterpieces *Sagrada Família*, *Casa Batlló* and we walk *the Ramblas*, colorful main avenues to the Waterfront: we will be seeing Columbus Monument, the Old Port, *Montjuic* Hill, to end with a panoramic view over the city, whose night is full of life. Overnight in Barcelona.

D10: BARCELONA – MADRID

Morning flight to Madrid. Visit to the capital of Spain with its monument and prestigious *Museo del Prado* (Velasquez, Goya, El Greco) and *El Centro de Arte Reina Sofia* (Picasso 'Guernica'). Overnight in Madrid.

D11: MADRID – SEGOVIA – TOLEDO (BY BUS)

The tour starts with the visit of Segovia and the intact roman waterworks with overlapping arches, then San Lorenzo de El Escorial and Toledo, traditional elegant city with a gothic cathedral located on the *Rio Tajo*. The Archbishop of Toledo is still nominated *Primate* of Spain. Toledo is extremely interesting during the

traditional Easter week processions. Home of the finest craft made by the local artisans. Overnight in Toledo.

D12: TOLEDO

Before going to Consuegra , we might still enjoy some time in Toledo. Consuegra is an extremely popular city as it's the set of the famous fight scene against the mill of Don Quijote. Cervantes' *Don Quijote de la Mancha*. The journey continues through the endless stretches of spanish olives trees. During the journey we will stop in Baeza and Ubeda, both UNESCO sites for their characteristic architectural Renaissance origins. We will arrive in Cordoba. Overnight in Cordoba.

D13: CORDOBA

The Great Mosque (or *Mezquita*) with rectangular shape and 900 columns, now the *Cathedral of Cordoba*, is the most important monument of Muslim Spain and the second in size only to that of Mecca. It was built in 785 B.c during the reign of Abd Al-Ramān I on top of the old plan of the *Basilica of San Vincenzo* which was transformed back into a Cathedral by Ferdinand in 1236 after the conquest. We will see the roman bridge, the walls and the ancient arab canals, the characteristic neighborhoods and streets like the *Juderia*, the house of the most important Jewish philosopher (Mosé Maimonide) and the little synagogue. *Medina Al Zahara* was the headquarter of the ommayade Abd Al-Rahman III during the X century; also, *Almodovar del Rio's* castle is worth a visit. Overnight in Sevilla.

D14: SEVILLA

Main city of the Andalusia region. Full of interesting visits such as the *Plaza de Espana*, The *Giralda* Tower, the biggest Cathedral of Spain, *Reales Alcazares*, The archives of all the colonies (unesco heritage) full of Arab and Christian treasures. Dinner in a typical neighborhood, probably *Barrio de Santa Cruz*. Overnight in Sevilla (or Granada)

D15: SEVILLA – GRANADA (250km)

During its history, the city reached a number of 100 mosques and at the same time was called "Jewish Granada". *Al Hambra* (in Arabic it means *the red*) was on the run for being nominated one of the seven wonders of the world in 2007. We will visit the Cathedral, and walk to the gipsy neighborhood of *Sacromonte* where, by the end of the day, it's possible to see a *flamenco* and *Zambra* dance (Gipsy traditional dance) show. Overnight in Granada or Malaga. Heading to the airport for a happy farewell.

The individual participation fee includes:

- All the transfers by private bus + drive (train)
- 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 340€
- International/domestic flights (can be provided – ask for a quotation)

All dietary requirements will be catered for

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