



Rome, Venice & Tuscan Villa

8 Days

Tour Description

Explore quintessential Italy on this Italian adventure to Rome, Venice, Assisi, Florence and Siena. The trip begins with the formality of Vatican City and the landmarks of ancient Rome. It then continues on to the magical city of Venice and the art mecca that is Florence with stops in enchanting Assisi and Siena. Get a taste of Italy's best architecture, art and history.

Highlights

- ❖ **Tour of the Vatican and St. Peter's**
- ❖ **Visit Assisi, birthplace of St. Francis**
- ❖ **Walking tour of Venice**
- ❖ **Tuscan villa stay**
- ❖ **See Michelangelo's statue of David at Florence's Accademia**
- ❖ **Walking tour of Siena including the location of the Palio horserace**

Sample Tour Itinerary

Rome – 2 nights

Day 1: Arrive Rome

This morning you will arrive into Rome's Eternal City. After you collect your bags and proceed through Customs, you will be greeted by our friendly English-speaking assistant, who will welcome you to Italy and escort you to your awaiting motor coach. From here we will transfer you to your hotel in Rome, where you may relax in your room, or explore your surroundings a bit on your own, before meeting your tour director for a welcome reception late this afternoon. This evening you are on your own to enjoy the illustrious capital, or have a quiet dinner in your hotel and rest up for tomorrow's busy day.

Day 2:

This morning tour the Vatican, the world's smallest, yet wealthiest independent state. Your guide will start the tour with an overview of the history of the Vatican Museums and Sistine Chapel. You will see the Hall of Tapestries and the Maps Gallery, but the highlight of your tour will be the Sistine Chapel, where the ceiling is covered with Michelangelo's famous paintings of the 'Creation' and 'Last Judgment.' Then we will explore St. Peter's Square, with Bernini's 284 columns, before entering St. Peter's Basilica, the largest church in Christendom. See the many treasures including the golden mosaics of the apse, Bernini's bronze baldachin and the famed 'Pieta' by Michelangelo.

After a break for lunch (on your own), we will continue on a tour of the city. This afternoon we will see the sites of Ancient Rome, including a visit to the Pantheon, commissioned by Marcus Agrippa around 27 BC as a temple to all of the gods of Ancient Rome, and then rebuilt in 126 AD by the Emperor Hadrian. We will also see the Roman Forum, surrounded by ruins of ancient governmental buildings, and the epic Roman Coliseum, capable of seating up to 50,000 spectators in its day. We'll return to our hotel in late afternoon to freshen up after a long day. This evening, we will gather together for dinner at our hotel or nearby restaurant.



Venice – 2 nights

Day 3:

After our breakfast we will head north, passing through the Umbria region to the delightful town of Assisi, best-known as the birthplace of St. Francis, founder of the Franciscan Order. Here we will have time to visit the cathedral and its amazing frescoes by Giotto, who is generally considered to be the first of the great Italian Renaissance artists. We then continue on to Venice -- nicknamed "City of Water", and "City of Masks" over the ages, among other titles -- where we will spend two nights.

Day 4:

After breakfast this morning your guide will take you on a delightful walking tour of this City of Islands. We will see St. Mark's Square, the lively central square where the only traffic is that of humans. We will visit St. Mark's Basilica, one of the best examples of Byzantine architecture found anywhere in the world. See the famed Bell Tower and the Clock Tower, which displays not only the time of day, but also the dominant sign of the Zodiac and the current phase of the moon. Continue on to the Bridge of Sighs, which is made of white limestone which passes over the Rio di Palazzo, connecting the old prisons with the interrogations rooms at Doge's Palace. This afternoon is free. Perhaps you might enjoy a boat trip to the Lagoon Islands this afternoon, or a gondola experience this evening. Tonight, you are free to savor the seasonal flavors of this unique city's cuisine on your own.

Tuscany – 2 nights

Day 5:

This morning we will leave Venice and begin our scenic journey to Tuscany and our villa. We will make a photo stop at the world-famous Leaning Tower of Pisa, the freestanding tower of the cathedral of Pisa. After recent restoration work finished in 2001, the tower now leans about 3.99 degrees. This afternoon we will arrive at our Tuscan Villa for our two night stay. Our home is a splendid villa not far from Florence, and surrounded by century-old trees and parkland. The villa offers a beautiful swimming pool which blends seamlessly with its delightful garden amidst the natural setting of the Tuscan hills. This evening we will enjoy a dinner of local Tuscan cuisine at the villa, prepared with care by our friendly hosts.

Day 6:

After breakfast this morning we will set off on tour though the bustling city of Florence. During our excursion we will see the Duomo (Cathedral Church) and Piazza della Signoria, a central gathering place for locals as well as tourists. We will end our tour with a visit to the Accademia to admire Michelangelo's statue of David. After seeing so many of Florence's Renaissance attractions, the afternoon is yours to relax or explore further. We return in the afternoon to our villa and prior to dinner we will enjoy a tasting of wine produced by the vineyards of the area.

Rome – 1 night

Day 7:

Today, we drive through the beautiful countryside to Siena. This fine medieval city sits on gentle hills between three river valleys. Notice the medieval ramparts where you are greeted with the Latin inscription 'Cor Magis Tibi Sena Pandit' (Siena opens its heart to you). Take a walking tour through the maze of narrow streets to one of the finest squares in Italy, the Piazza Del Campo where the famous 'Palio Horse Race' is held twice a year. Visit the 13th century Cathedral to see the many works of art including the black and white marble walls and columns and the marble floors with decorative inlays.



We continue on to our hotel in Rome. This evening we will enjoy a farewell dinner at a local restaurant. After dinner we will see the landmarks of the city illuminated with the soft light of an Italian evening, and we'll make a stop to toss your coin into the Trevi Fountain, a time-honored tradition to ensure we will again return to this Eternal City.

Day 8:

This morning we transfer to Rome International Airport with ample time to check your luggage and board your flight back to the USA

INCLUSIONS

- Accommodations: Rome 2 nights, Venice 2 nights, Tuscany 2 nights, Rome 1 night
- Meals: Continental breakfast daily, lunch and dinner as noted in itinerary
- Ground transportation via air conditioned luxury coach
- English speaking assistants and guides
- Admission tickets as outlined in the itinerary