



Vacation Overview:

This 9-day trip will show you the highlight cities of Italy, covering all the notable features from St. Peter's, the Sistine Chapel, the Colosseum and the Forum in Rome to Michelangelo's David in Florence and St. Mark's Basilica and Doges' Palace with the Bridge of Sighs in Venice. Local Guides in these cities will answer all your questions. Also included are a special welcome dinner in a lively Roman restaurant, and stops in Pisa to admire the Leaning Tower, and in Verona to see Juliet's balcony. Scenic rides will show you the Tyrrhenian coast, the Lombardian plains, the flat Po area, the wooded Etruscan Apennine mountain range, and Tuscany's Chianti wine country. In Venice a private boat ride and a glassblowers' demonstration are included.

Vacation Highlights:

INCLUDED FEATURES:

ROME:
Welcome dinner at a local restaurant; guided sightseeing including headsets, visit the Vatican Museums and Sistine Chapel, St. Peter's Square and Basilica, the Colosseum and Roman Forum

PISA:
Picture stop at the Leaning Tower

FLORENCE:
Guided sightseeing including headsets, visit Michelangelo's David, the cathedral, and Signoria Square

VERONA:
Orientation including Juliet's Balcony and the Arena

VENICE:
Private boat ride; guided sightseeing including headsets, visit St. Mark's Square and Basilica, Doges' Palace and the Bridge of Sighs; glassblowers' demonstration

INSIDE VISITS:
Inside visits and special features are shown in the description, including admission charges when applicable

Day by Day Itinerary:

Day 1: Board your overnight transatlantic flight.

Day 2: Arrival in Rome, Italy. Time to rest or start exploring the Eternal City. At 6 p.m. meet your Tour Director and traveling companions and leave the hotel for a special welcome dinner with wine at one of Rome's lively restaurants. (D)

Day 3: Rome. Sightseeing with your Local Guide starts with a visit to the VATICAN MUSEUMS and SISTINE CHAPEL (arranged next morning if closed today), world famous for Michelangelo's ceiling paintings and The Last Judgement. Continue to monumental ST. PETER'S SQUARE and BASILICA. Cross the Tiber and visit the COLOSSEUM and the ROMAN FORUM, where Roman Legions marched in triumph. Then time for independent activities and exciting optional excursion possibilities. (BB)

Day 4: Rome-Pisa-Florence. Visit stunning Florence and the Ponte Vecchio. Follow the Aurelian Way along the Tyrrhenian coast to Pisa. Here take your pictures of the amazing Leaning Tower, 180 feet high and no less than 12 feet out of the perpendicular. Then on to Florence, the splendid capital of Tuscany. (BB,D)

Day 5: Florence. Follow your Local Guide to the ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS with Michelangelo's celebrated David and the magnificent CATHEDRAL. Admire Giotto's Bell Tower, the Baptistry's heavy bronze "Gate of Paradise," and sculpture-studded SIGNORIA SQUARE. The afternoon is free. Florentine leather goods and gold jewelry sold by the ounce are attractive buys. You may wish to join an optional dinner outing to a fine Tuscan restaurant. (BB)

Day 6: Florence-Verona-Venice. North to Verona, medieval setting of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. See Juliet's Balcony and the well-preserved Arena. Stroll around the picturesque market square. Tonight you are in Venice, a powerful magnet for romantics and art lovers from around the globe. (BB)

Day 7: Venice. Start the day in style by PRIVATE BOAT to meet your Local Guide. Highlights of your walking tour are ST. MARK'S SQUARE and the byzantine BASILICA, lavish DOGES' PALACE and the BRIDGE OF SIGHs. Also watch skilled GLASSBLOWERS fashion their delicate objects in an age-old traditional manner. Afterwards, enjoy Venice at your own pace or join an optional cruise to the charming island of Burano. Tonight is your chance to sample the city's fine restaurants. (BB)

Day 8: Venice-Rome. A scenic drive today through the lush plains of the mighty River Po, across the wooded Apennine mountain range, and past the vine- and olive-clad Tuscan Hills, which are the home of the popular Chianti wines. An optional festive dinner may be just the way to celebrate the success of your Italian vacation. (BB)

Day 9:
Your homebound flight arrives the same day. (BB)