

Italian Renaissance Tour Full Itinerary

Day 01

Depart **LAX for Venice, Italy** Please arrive **3 HOURS PRIOR** to departure.

Prepare for a “**Journey of a Lifetime.**” This will be a experience you won’t soon forget. Enjoy!!

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Day 02

Afternoon arrival in **Venice, Italy’s Marco Polo Airport**. Meet your Tour Manager and continue with your deluxe motorcoach for a short drive to the medieval walled city of **Padua**, town of **St. Anthony**. Remainder of the day at leisure. Relaxing dinner tonight at our hotel.

BD

Day 03

We begin our day with a visit to the Basilica built in 1232, the shrine and burial place of **St. Anthony**, You will admire the high altar with splendid bronze art works by Donatello. Afterwards, continue along the Veneto plains to the magical and truly romantic **Venice/Mestre** the “**Pearl of the Adriatic.**” Afternoon tour of Venice via private water taxi on the Grand Canal, the great water road, filled with gondolas, motorboats and peppermint stick moorings. Enjoy the interior of St. Mark’s Basilica famous for its Byzantine and Gothic design, mosaic, marble and precious sculptures, **St. Marks Square** (the drawing room of Europe) with its strolling musicians and minstrels. View the 15th century Clock Tower, **Doges Palace**, and the **Bridge of Sighs**. End your tour with a visit to a Venetian glassblowing factory and admire the masters at work. Remainder of the day free to wander and discover **Venice** on your own, perhaps a Gondola ride or a stop for a Campari at the fashionable **Florian Café**.

BD

Day 04

Early morning departure for **Florence**, the “Cradle of the Renaissance” dating back to 200 BC around the Via Farnina which crossed the Arno River at the present **Ponte Vecchio** (the Old Bridge). Upon arrival enjoy a city tour starting with the **Uffizi Gallery**, a mecca for art lovers, including works by Giotto, Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael. Continue afterwards to the “Doors of Paradise” by Ghiberti, Piazza della Signora, Cellini’s “Neptune Fountain”. Tonight your hotel, is in the beautiful, quaint spa town of **Montecatini Terme**. Ahhh.

BD

Day 05

Another glorious day in Florence with a morning tour of the famous **Academy of Fine Arts** to view **Michelangelo’s** original “**David**” and other sculptures by the great Renaissance masters. Later continue to **Santa Croce Square** with its magnificent Franciscan Church. Afternoon at leisure to explore this great city on your own. This area of Florence, in the Santa Croce Square, is famous for its **gold and leather marts**. The price is right and the materials used are exquisite.

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Day 06

Morning departure for **Assisi**, the magical enchanting town of **St. Francis**, spread over the hills of Mt. Subasio with its colorful houses of pink stone, narrow streets, and flower-decked balconies. Visit the upper and lower **Basilica de San Francesco**, view the cycle of **Giotto’s** frescos with the twenty-eight episodes from the “**life of St. Francis**”; the **Basilica of Santa Chiara**, housing the **incorrupt body of St. Clare**, and the Abby with its magnificent stained glass windows. Afterwards continue to the lower part of **Assisi** to visit **Santa Maria del Angeli Basilica**, housing the famous **Porziuncola** (little church St. Francis built), the thornless bush, and the cave where St. Francis retired for prayer.

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Day 07

Morning depart for “**The Eternal City**” of **Rome** built on 7 hills. This marble city created by Augustus and founded by Romulus in 753 BC, is considered by many the “**cradle of Western Civilization and the heart of Catholicism.**” Upon arrival enjoy a panorama tour of this glorious city prior to check-in at your hotel. Remainder of the day at your leisure.

BD

Day 08

Morning tour featuring Christian **Rome**, the Catacombs and Basilicas. On your tour you will see Piazza della Repubblica, Esquilino Hill, **Basilica of St. Mary Major** (visit), Piazza Vittorio, **Basilica of St. John Lateran** (the **Holy Staircase**), Baptistry, Imperial Walls, Ancient Roman **Baths of Caracalla**, Appian Way, Chapel of “Domine Quo Vadis”, Tomb of Romulus. Also visit the **Catacombs** of St. Callixtus (or St. Sebastian or St. Domitilla), **St. Peter in Chains** (statue of **Moses by Michelangelo**). Afternoon tour of **St. Peter’s Basilica** in the Vatican (where the **Pieta** by Michelangelo and the **Glory** by Bernini can be admired). On this classic Roman tour see Diocletian’s Bath, Largo Santa Susanna, Via XX Settembre, Quirinale Palace (the residence of the President of the Republic, one the Royal Palace), **Trevi Fountain** (visit), Piazza Venezia, The Synagogue, **Castle St. Angelo**, Via della Conciliazione, The tour ends at the renewed **Borghese Gallery**, re-opened in June 1997, containing masterpieces by Bernini, Canova, Caravaggio, Raffaello, and other great artists.

BD

Day 09

Morning transfer to **Vatican City** for a **Papal Audience**. Afterwards enjoy a guided tour of **Sistine Chapel** (seat of the Conclave for the election of the Popes) with frescos by **Michelangelo**, followed by the **Vatican Museum**.

BD

Day 10

Free day in **Rome** to explore this city on your own. Possibly take this opportunity to do a little shopping on the **Via Veneto**, or a great photo opportunity on the **Spanish Steps**. And remember to toss a coin in the **Trevi Fountain** to assure your return to Rome.

BD

Day 11

Morning departure along the “**Highway of the Sun.**” On the way, you will view the 13th century **Benedictine Abbey of Monte Cassino** high up on a hill. The adventure continues southward along the **Amalfi Coast**, on the road to **Naples**, famous for sun, songs and **pizza**. Included is a fabulous panoramic view from the cliffs above, featuring one of the **most romantic** bays in the world. This area of Italy is known for the craftsmanship and intricacy of the **Cameo** designers, the precious **Capodimonte figurines**. Continue along the Amalfi Coast on route to **Sorrento**, one of the loveliest Italian Resorts, high above the **Bay of Naples**, with a view of towering **Vesuvius**. This splendid surrounding is the ideal place for singing “**Torna a Sorrento**” and **dancing the “Tarantella”**. **BD**

Day 12

Morning excursion to the “**Island of Capri**” - the Pearl of the Gulf of Naples. Enjoy an informative tour of the island, including Capri and Anacapri. Remainder of the day at leisure to soak in the magnificent beauty of this famous island. Perhaps let a hydrofoil whisk you away to the romantic **Blue Grotto** or take time to enjoy the quaint shops or just enjoy a **café latte** and watch the “beautiful people” go by. Whatever you do this afternoon, you will be mesmerized by the beauty of this romantic place. **BD**

Day 13

Morning excursion to the excavation sites of the city of **Pompeii**, buried in 79 AD under the ashes of erupting **Mt.Vesuvius**. Your special Farewell Dinner tonight at a wonderful local restaurant with wine and music. **BD**

Day 14

Leisurely morning transfer to **Rome** hotel for overnight . Lunch stop on route (on your own). Remainder of day at your leisure. **BD**

Day 15

Early morning **departure** for the **Rome Airport** for our return flight home with fond memories of Bella Italia and our many new friends. **Arrivederci for now**, but we know you will... **Come back to Sorrento!!** **B**