



# Italian Masterpiece!!

A Hub and Spoke Tour Featuring 6 nights in Florence and 2 nights in Rome  
*Lucca, Assisi, Pisa, Siena and Venice via High Speed Train*

Travel with us through the Tuscan countryside finding one surprise after another. We will take you in a different direction every day as you discover small churches with hidden masterpieces and charming restaurants with delicious Tuscan food. This perfect hub and spoke tour centralizes your stay in the heart of Florence allowing you to enjoy the best of Tuscany during your time here! As a very special inclusion, you'll have a day in Venice traveling via high speed train to this city of canals, narrow alleyways and unimaginable beauty! You also enjoy two wine tastings "Under the Tuscan Sun" and marvel at the beauty of Florence, San Gimignano and delightful Lucca, the unknown jewel of Tuscany. Then, off to Rome stopping along the way at Assisi! From the stunning Sistine Chapel to delightful street side cafes, this is the Rome you've dreamt of seeing!

There is nothing quite as delightful as immersing yourself in Tuscany and Rome on this Italian Masterpieces tour.

## **Day 1 - Your Journey Begins!**

You board your overnight flight for Europe. Dinner is served en route and a continental breakfast is served prior to landing.

## **Day 2 - Ah! Italy!**

Upon arrival in Italy, you'll be met by your TRIPS representative and transferred to your hotel in Florence. After unpacking, you might begin to explore the birthplace of the Renaissance. Enjoy a Welcome to Tuscany dinner tonight.

Overnight: Florence

(D)

## **Day 3 - Italy's Wine Country: Siena & San Gimignano!**

After breakfast this morning, travel to Siena. Here, your guided tour includes the famous **Piazza del Campo** the site of the most famous "palio" in all of Italy. Often described as Italy's best preserved medieval city, you'll find narrow streets and steep alleys along with a **stunning Gothic cathedral** and a bounty of early Renaissance art. Enjoy some free time and lunch on your own. Then, travel to **San Gimignano**, stopping along the way for a wine tasting in the rolling hills of Tuscany! Wild vines once grew in abundance all over the area, and today the wines of Italian Toscana are much sought after! On approach to San Gimignano, you'll be struck by the sight of **15 towers surrounding this walled hill town**. Originally an Etruscan village, the town was named after the bishop San Gimignano who is said to have saved the city from Attila the Hun. As you enjoy your guided tour through the Old City, you'll feel as though you've been plunged into the Middle Ages with a sense of what it might have been like here more than 700 years ago! Return to Florence where you'll enjoy dinner at a local restaurant.

Overnight: Florence

(B/D)

## **Day 4 - Venice: High Speed Rail!**

This morning, board a **high speed train** in Florence traveling through the countryside to Venice. Imagine yourself as Jane Hudson, played so beautifully by Katharine Hepburn in the 1955 movie, *Summertime*. Enjoying yourself as you fulfill a lifelong dream of visiting Venice! On arrival you'll transfer via **private launch to St. Mark's**. Then, set off on a two hour guided tour including **admission to Doge's Palace**. The remainder of the day is on your own to explore this wonderful city. As you wander the narrow backstreets, you'll come across delightful boutiques, neighborhood churches and charming cafes that seem to call you to relax with a prosecco as you watch Venetians going about their day. No matter how often you've seen Venice in photos and films, the real thing is more dreamlike than you can imagine! Rebound the train and return to Florence after a wonderful day.

Overnight: Florence

(B)

## **Day 5 - The Beauty of Florence!**

This morning, enjoy a **walking tour of Florence** taking in **Giotto's Belltower**, **Ghiberti's famous Gates of Paradise** and the **Brunelleschi Dome**. Also included in your tour is a **visit to the Accademia**, home to **Michelangelo's world famous statue of David**. Your tour ends in Signoria Square with its beautiful sculptures and charming sidewalk cafes. The remainder of the day is at your leisure to explore this grand city of the Renaissance. You might choose to visit the Uffizi Gallery, one of the world's famous museums. Or, spend the afternoon shopping for leather goods, a specialty here in Florence. And when hunger strikes, swipe a hunk of crusty bread across a pool of local olive oil and you'll be in heaven!

Overnight: Florence

(B/D)

## **Day 6 - Well known Pisa and Undiscovered Lucca!!**

After breakfast this morning, you'll travel to **Pisa**, where you'll see one of the most remarkable architectural structures from medieval Europe! Construction of the bell tower began in 1173 and lasted nearly 200 years and leans about 17 feet off vertical. You depart stopping along the way for a wine tasting and **light lunch in an Italian farm** and winery set in the rolling hills of Tuscany. On arrival in Lucca, you'll set out on a walking tour.

Puccini was born here in the mid-1800s and it was here, in 60BC that Caesar, Pompey and Crassus agreed to together rule Rome. Lucca is surrounded by the most intact defensive walls in all of Europe and they were designed by none other than Leonardo Da Vinci. Marvel at the Gothic era architecture and the curious sight of trees growing at the top of the medieval Palazzo Guinigi tower! Return to Florence with some time to relax before enjoying dinner at your hotel.

Overnight: Florence

(B/L/D)

#### **Day 7 - Florence Your Way!**

The museums, palaces and churches of Florence house some of the greatest artistic treasure in the world and you have the day to enjoy it your way. Florence's cathedral, the Duomo, stands tall over the city. The magnificent Renaissance dome, an architectural masterpiece, took two centuries to complete! When it's time for a meal, you can't do much better than Florentine food accompanied by a delightful Tuscan wine. For the fashionista, Florence is one of the top fashion capitals of the world. Home to Gucci and Ferragamo, you'll find many major players in the fashion industry here, so be sure there's room in your luggage for those special purchases! What a grand way to wrap up your days in the heart of Tuscany!

Overnight: Florence

(B)

#### **Day 8 - Assisi to Rome!**

After breakfast, depart Florence stopping in **Assisi, the birthplace of St. Francis of Assisi**, the patron saint of Italy. You visit the 13th century **Basilica of San Francesco d'Assisi** built after his canonization in 1228. This massive basilica is an important Christian pilgrimage site and comprises two churches and a crypt where the remains of the saint are interred. You have time for lunch on your own in Assisi before continuing on to Rome. You'll check in to your hotel with the remainder of the day at leisure. Whether you spend your time lazing in a café or throwing three coins in a fountain, you'll be experiencing La Dolce Vita, the sweet life!

Overnight: Rome

(B)

#### **Day 9 - Rome: The Vatican to The Colosseum!**

Following breakfast this morning, **you tour the Vatican Museums and St. Peter's Basilica** with your local guide. The highlight of your visit today is sure to be the **Sistine Chapel**, the masterpiece of Michelangelo. His canvas of 12,000 sq. ft. took nearly four years to complete, and the spectacular result is one that you'll never forget. You'll have a bit of time on your own for lunch before seeing Imperial Rome. **Visit the massive Colosseum** where gladiators fought and the Roman Forum around which ancient Rome was built. Rome is one of the world's most photogenic cities and after you've spent just a few hours here, you'll surely agree! Return to your hotel in time for a delightful **Farewell Dinner** in a local restaurant!

Overnight: Rome

(B/D)

#### **Day 10 - Arrivederci!!**

Breakfast is served prior to your departure for the airport and your flight back to the USA. **Memories of your "Italian Masterpiece" tour will last a lifetime!**

(B)

#### **Inclusions**

- Roundtrip airport transfers
- Round-trip international airfare to Italy (checked baggage fees not included)
- Private, deluxe motor coach throughout the itinerary with an English speaking tour escort
- Six nights 4 Star hotel accommodations in the heart of Florence
- Two nights 4 Star hotel accommodations in Rome
- Eight Italian style continental buffet breakfasts at your hotel
- Four Table d'hote 3-course dinners in Florence
- Wine, water and coffee included with all dinners
- Special TRIPS Inclusion: A private wine tasting with light lunch set amongst the rolling hills of Tuscany in an Italian farm with winery
- Farewell dinner in Rome at a local restaurant
- All sightseeing and admissions as included in the itinerary including the Colosseum, the Vatican Museum and St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and the Accademia in Florence
- A second wine tasting in beautiful Tuscany
- Trip cancellation/interruption insurance is included (medical reasons only)
- Porterage of 1 full size suitcase, per person
- All taxes and government fees
- Full day excursion to Sienna and San Gimignano
- Full excursion to Florence
- Full day excursion to Pisa and Lucca
- Full day excursion Venice by high speed train
- Excursion to Assisi and Basilica of St. Francis on route to Rome



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