

Exploring Italy

Siena – Florence – San Gimignano – Cinque Terre – Rapallo – Nice – Monaco – Monte Carlo

20 days/19 nights

Price includes:

- Selected 4 star hotels
- Breakfast and dinners as per itinerary
- Air-conditioned coach

Price excludes:

- Air fare and taxes
- Passport and visa fees
- Travel insurance
- Single supplement
- Entrance fees to castles and museums
- Optional tours

Highlights

Florence

Florence was built around 200BC and is situated on the banks of the Arno River. Set in the heart of Florence is the Duomo or Cathedral, which dominates the city with its enormous dome. The Cathedral Works Museum houses items removed for protection from the exteriors of the Duomo, notably the Ghiberti panels from the baptistery doors.

Ligurian Coast

From the top of Italy's boot, the slender region of Liguria stretches westward to meet the border with France. This long stretch of coastline encompasses the important port of Genoa, the cliffside villages of Cinque Terre and the elegant promenades of the Italian Riviera. The maritime Alps, which meet the sea in Liguria, reach up to 2,600 metres in height, making the region's terrain steep and dramatically breathtaking.

Day 1 – Rome

Independent arrival at your hotel in Rome. Welcome drinks at 6.00pm. Overnight stay in Rome.

Day 2 – Rome

A day at your leisure to explore this "Eternal City". Visit the Pantheon, Castello San Angelo, St Peter's Square, Sistine Chapel, the Vatican Museums, Trevi Fountain and the Spanish Steps. Overnight stay in Rome. (B)

Day 3 – Rome – Lake Trasimeno – Assisi – Siena

After breakfast depart for Siena via Lake Trasimeno, the fourth largest lake in Italy, then continue to the beautiful and tranquil town of Assisi. St. Francis was born in Assisi in 1182 and renounced his father's wealth in his late teens to pursue a life of chasity and poverty, later founding the Order of the Franciscans. St. Francis' Basilica comprises of two churches, one was built after the saint's death in 1228 and then two years later work began on the upper church. The upper church contains Giotto's sequence of 28 frescoes depicting the life of St. Francis. Dinner and overnight stay in Siena. (B & D)

Day 4 – Siena – Montepulciano – Siena

After breakfast depart for Montepulciano. This medieval town is set atop a narrow ridge of volcanic rock. As you enter the Porta al Prato you will see the 18th century Chiesa di San Berbardo and the nearby Palazzo Avignonesi. Piazza Michelozzo features Michelozzo's Chiesa di Sant'Agostino and a medieval tower house, topped by the town clock and the bizarre figure of Pulcinella (Punch of "Punch and Judy" fame). Dinner and overnight stay in Siena. (B & D)

Day 5 – Siena – San Gimignano – Florence

After breakfast depart for San Gimignano. From a distance, the towers of San Gimignano dominate the Vald'Elsa, a rich landscape of wheat fields, olive groves and vineyards. The towers, symbols of the power and wealth of the city's medieval families, once numbered as many as 72. Today only 13 remain, but the city still carries the name 'San Gimignano delle belle Torri' (of the fine towers). A walk through the ancient roads and the piazzas will take you back to old times. Overnight stay in Florence. (B)



Day 6 – Florence

A day at your leisure or join us on a walking tour of this most famous city. Florence is the home of Dante, Machiavelli, Michelangelo and the Medici family. The city is almost overwhelming in its wealth of art, culture and history. Overnight stay in Florence. (B)

Day 7 – Florence

A day at your leisure to explore this city of high fashion and quality antiques. Leather goods, shoes and clothing abound and bargains can be found at the markets or at the many shops that Florence has to offer. For the food lovers, there is a wide variety of wines, food and ice cream. Overnight stay in Florence. (B)

Day 8 – Florence – Pisa – Rapallo

After breakfast depart for Rapallo, stopping on the way for a visit to the famous Leaning Tower of Pisa, which was originally constructed to house the church bells. Building commenced in 1173 and even before the third storey was completed, the tower started to tilt. By 1350 when completed, the tower was leaning 1.4 metres and by 1995 it was leaning 5.4 metres. The Duomo, one of the finest Pisan-Romanesque buildings in Tuscany, together with the circular

Baptistry and the Leaning Tower, are in Pisa's Campo dei Miracoli (Field of Miracles). Continue on to Rapallo for an overnight stay. (B & D)

Day 9 – Rapallo – Cinque Terre – Rapallo

After breakfast depart by train for Cinque Terre (five villages). These tiny towns with their colourful houses, narrow streets and miniature squares are something to admire. The five towns are Riomaggiore, Manarola, Corniglia, Vernazza and Monterosso. Overnight stay in Rapallo. (B)

Day 10 – Rapallo

A day at your leisure to explore the beautiful town of Rapallo. Take a walk along the esplanade to the 16th century castle jutting into the harbour or to the 16th century Santuario di Montellegro above the village. Overnight stay in Rapallo. (B)

Day 11 – Rapallo – Santa Margherita – Portofino – Nice

After breakfast depart for Nice, stopping on the way at Santa Margherita, which is well known for its beautiful beaches, surrounding cliffs, orange blossoms and

lace. Continue on to the playground of the rich and famous, the village of Portofino, with its picturesque harbour, luxury shops and villas, then on to Nice for an overnight stay. (B)

Day 12 – Nice

After breakfast a full day at your leisure to explore Nice, the unofficial capital of the French Riviera. The city of Nice was founded around 350BC by the Greek seafarers who had settled in Marseille. With its 19 museums and galleries and 32 classified historical monuments, it is rich in architectural and cultural heritage. Take a stroll along the famous Promenade des Anglais which runs along the sea front or wander through the narrow streets of the old town. Overnight stay in Nice. (B)

Day 13 – Nice – Monaco – Monte Carlo – Nice

Today take a journey along the Riviera to the renowned towns of Monaco and Monte Carlo. Located on the Cote d'Azur, Monte Carlo is at the centre of the tiny principality of Monaco. The official languages are French and Monegasque, although English and Italian are spoken. The casino, a luxurious white palace, is one of the town's most famous sights.





Please note that you will need to adhere to a formal dress code in order to enter some of the gaming rooms. Monaco is chiefly famous for its royalty, the Grimaldi Family, who have ruled the country since the 13th century. Return to Nice for an overnight stay. (B)

Day 14 – Nice – Lake Maggiore – Baveno

After breakfast depart for Lake Maggiore, the second and the most famous of the Italian lakes. Lake Maggiore is best known for its enchanting islands “the Isole Borromeo” named after the noble Borromeo family, the islands’ proprietors since the 15th century. Dinner and overnight stay in Baveno. (B)

Day 15 – Baveno – Lake Orta – Baveno

All day excursion to the medieval town of Orta San Giulio which lies on Lake Orta’s eastern shore, facing the small island of San Giulio. The town is a network of narrow streets, old houses and historical buildings. The town is centred around an open square with restaurants and cafes, facing the lake and the island of San Giulio. Optional boat trip to the island of San Giulio. Overnight stay in Baveno. (B & D)

Day 16 – Baveno

A day at your leisure or alternatively you can take an optional tour to the Borromean Islands. The four islands, Isola Bella, Pescatori, Madre and San Giovanni, form the lake’s most beautiful corner. The Palazzo Borromeo on Isola Bella was built in the 17th century for the Borromeo family. The palace contains works by Giovanni Tiepolo and Van Dyck, as well as Flemish tapestries and sculptures by Canova. The gardens are magnificent and contain plants from around the world. Overnight stay in Baveno. (B & D)

Day 17 – Baveno – Stresa – Lake Como

After breakfast depart for Lake Como with a stop at Stresa, the main town on the west shore. Set in a landscape of rugged hillsides and mountains, many topping 2000 metres, is Lake Como. The western side of the lake is in fact two distinct areas, separated by the shallow Val Menaggio between the head of Lago di Lugano (Lake Lugano), partly in Switzerland and the shore of Lago di Como at Menaggio. Overnight stay in Lake Como. (B)

Day 18 – Lake Como – Bellagio – Lake Como

After breakfast depart for Bellagio, considered the “pearl” of the lake. Bellagio occupies a magnificent site on a promontory, dividing Lake Lecco from the southern arm of Lake Como. The splendid lakeside gardens of Villa Serbelloni and Villa Melzi are some of the main sights of Bellagio. Overnight stay in Lake Como. (B)

Day 19 – Lake Como

A day at your leisure to explore the town of Como, visit Piazza Cavour, the impressive cathedral, or at the heart of Como’s Old Town, Piazza San Fedele and Porta Vittoria. If you go to the top of the Baradello Tower, you will have a magnificent view of the entire lake. Overnight stay in Lake Como. (B)

Day 20 – Lake Como – Milan Airport

After breakfast, transfer by coach to Milan Airport.

End of Tour

. . . A place overflowing with everything that makes for ease, for plenty, for beauty, for interest and good example . . .

Henry James Italian Hours (1909)

