

Itinerary

Tour : Italy's Art Capitals: 8-days in Rome, Florence & Venice

Day 1

The Canals and Palazzi of Venice

Meals: None



Location:

Venice, Veneto, Italy

Meeting Location

Venice Marco Polo Airport

Description:

When you arrive at Venice Marco Polo Airport, one of our team will be waiting to meet you and accompany you to your hotel by private boat.

Take it easy today - wandering the streets and canals to discover where each bridge leads you, is one of our favorite ways to get to know Venice and the perfect way to spend your first afternoon in the world's most romantic city.

In the evening, a local guide will meet you at your hotel for an evening boat tour, which will take you through the Grand Canal, and other smaller canals, in the peace of the evening. Along the way, your guide will talk to you about the magnificent buildings you pass, the families that once lived there and how they tie into the wonderful, rich history of *La Serenissima*.

The tour can end back at your hotel, or at a local trattoria, where, after a dinner of local specialties, you can enjoy this magical, peaceful time of day as you walk back to your hotel.

Overnight in Venice.

Day 2

The Doge's Palace & St. Mark's Basilica

Meals: B



Location: Venice, Veneto, Italy

Description: This morning a guide will meet you at your hotel and accompany you to St. Mark's Square to begin your tour. The square, famous in itself, is home to two of the city's most iconic buildings: St. Mark's Basilica and the Doge's Palace.

You may find yourselves overwhelmed as you step into the glittering Byzantine basilica, richly decorated in gold, a symbol to the world of Venice's wealth and power. Despite its splendor, for centuries the church was the private chapel of the Doge, who lived in the palace next door, not open to the public. The palace, like the basilica, is an example of the Venetian Gothic style of architecture and from here, the Republic of Venice was run. Visit the Doge's apartment and the Council chambers, decorated by some of the city's finest artists, including: Gentile da Fabriano, Pisanello, Giovanni Bellini, Pordenone and Titan.

After the tour, you'll have some free time for lunch before heading out into the lagoon for a group tour of the [Venetian Islands](#). You'll visit the islands of Murano, famed for its beautiful, colored glass (the tour will include a glass blowing demonstration), Burano, known for its lace and brightly-painted houses and Torcello, home to the city's first cathedral and oldest mosaics. The tour is available both in the morning and afternoon and departs from close to St. Mark's Square.

Evening at leisure.

Overnight in Venice.

Day 3

Florence of the Medici

Meals: B



Location: Venice, Veneto, Italy

Location 2: Florence, Tuscany, Italy

Description: After breakfast check out of the hotel. A water taxi will meet you at the hotel's private port to take you to the train station to take the high-speed train to Florence.

Once you have checked into your hotel, you will have time to find somewhere to enjoy lunch, before meeting your guide in the hotel lobby for a private tour of the city center. Still today, much of Florence is the city built in the Renaissance by the powerful Medici family. Your guide will show you the city they created and the legacy they left behind in the city's art galleries and the artists they patronized. Undoubtedly the most famous of these was the young Michelangelo Buonarroti. Considered one of the greatest artists of all time, the tour will include a visit to the Accademia Gallery to see his monumental statue of David.

Rest of the day at your leisure.

Overnight in Florence.

Day 4

The Cradle of Renaissance Art

Meals: B



Location: Florence, Tuscany, Italy

Description: After breakfast, a guide will meet you in the hotel lobby and accompany you to the Uffizi Gallery where you will have priority tickets. Home to the most extensive collection of Italian Renaissance paintings, the gallery started the private art collection of the Medici in the top floor of the building housing the offices of the city's magistrates. The magnificent collection includes works by some of Italy's greatest and most recognizable artists, such as Leonardo da Vinci, Caravaggio, Michelangelo, Botticelli and Raphael.

Following the tour, the rest of the day will be yours to explore the city on your own.

Overnight in Florence.

Day 5

Oriveto: City of the Popes

Meals: B



Location: Florence, Tuscany, Italy

Location 2: Orvieto, Umbria, Italy

Location 3: Rome, Lazio, Italy

Description: After breakfast check out of the hotel and your driver will be waiting to meet you to take you to Rome.

Before you cross into Lazio, you will stop for lunch in the charming hilltop town of Orvieto. Here since Etruscan times, Orvieto is known for its wine and beautiful cathedral, inspired by the Siense Gothic-style of Siena's *duomo*. Take time to visit the chapel of San Brizio, a true artist gem, where the frescoes of Luca Signorelli dramatically depict the Apocalypse and the Last Judgment.

After lunch, you will continue to Rome, where the driver will leave you at your hotel and you can enjoy the rest of the day at your leisure.

Overnight in Rome.

Day 6

Michelangelo & Bernini: Vatican City

Meals: B



Location: Vatican City, Rome, Lazio, Italy

Description: Your driver will meet you at your hotel after breakfast and take you to meet your guide at the walls of Vatican City, where you will have priority entrance into the Museums.

The Museums house an incredible collection of art which began with the private collection of Pope Julius II in the 16th century, when he purchased the recently discovered Laocoön. Today you will see some of the greatest examples of Roman sculpture, including the Laocoön, Belvedere Apollo, Sleeping Ariadne and the Belvedere Torso, which so inspired Michelangelo and his contemporaries. The tour will take you through the Gallery of the Maps, Gallery of the Tapestries and the personal apartments of Julius II, beautifully decorated by Raphael and including his masterpiece 'The School at Athens' which sees other Renaissance masters depicted as Greek philosophers.

The visit to the museums ends at the magnificent Sistine Chapel. You will learn about how the chapel was originally decorated and the frescoes depicting the lives of Moses and Christ on the side walls, which pre-date Michelangelo's arrival in Rome. Your guide will talk you through the Old Testament stories that grace the ceiling, the frescoes that Michelangelo had never wanted to paint and The Last Judgment on the altar wall, which was commissioned almost 30 years later when the artist was in his late 60s.

Exiting the chapel, you will come into St. Peter's Basilica. Worked on by the greatest artists of the Renaissance and Baroque eras, the church today owes much of its appearance to the Roman artist, Bernini. Discover all that he created here, including the baldachin above the papal altar, the statues of the Holy Relics and the tomb of Alexander VII, as well as the monumental square outside. Learn the building's fascinating history, from the death of St. Peter, to the basilica of Constantine that was destroyed to make way for the world's largest church, one that would take 120 years to reach completion. Throughout the building you'll see the hand of the men who worked to make it the jewel of Renaissance architecture, including the stunning *Pietà*, sculpted by the 22-year-old Michelangelo.

Following the tour, you will have the rest of the day at leisure.

Overnight in Rome.

Day 7 **Ancient Art in the World's First Museum** **Meals: B**



Location: Rome, Lazio, Italy

Description: Your driver will meet you at the hotel and bring you to meet your guide in Piazza Venezia. The tour will begin outside in the 16th century square, designed by Michelangelo to impress the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. At the heart of the square stood the monumental equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius (the original is inside the museum), which was relocated from San Giovanni where it had long been identified as Constantine.

The world's first public museum was started here in 1471, when Pope Sixtus IV, donated a collection of ancient bronze statues to the city of Rome, including the Capitoline Wolf and the lovely *Spinario* (boy with a thorn in his foot) which you will see today. Far more extensive is the collection of ancient marble sculptures, which were discovered during excavations throughout the city. Your guide will take you to see the finest examples of this ancient art which fill the beautifully frescoed apartments, including Cupid and Psyche, the Capitoline Venus, the Dying Gaul and the busts of the Roman emperors and important members of the imperial families.

Following the tour, the rest of the day will be yours to enjoy the city at your leisure.

Overnight in Rome.

Day 8

Depart Rome

Meals: B



Location: Rome, Lazio, Italy

Description: After breakfast check out of the hotel. Your private driver will meet you for the transfer to the airport in time for your flight home.