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*College Study
Tours*

ITALY THE GRAND TOUR

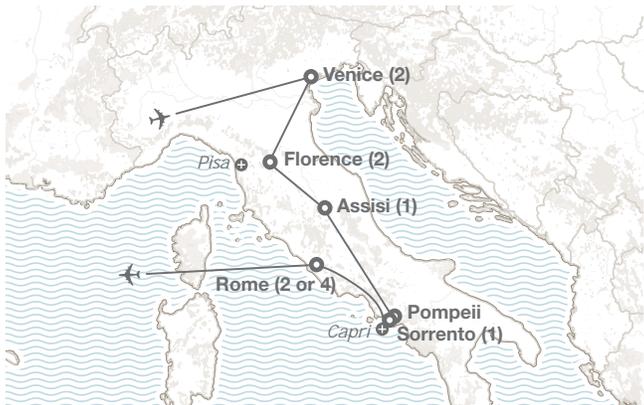


ITALY | THE GRAND TOUR

Art, history, culture, fashion, food—in one boot-shaped package—Italy seems to have it all. With the time and the Tour Director you need, why should you have to miss out on any of it?

On this top-to-bottom journey, you'll squeeze every last drop out of Italy on a whirlwind 10-day adventure, savoring the balanced, well-aged flavors of some of history's best years. You'll have to kick up the pace a bit, but the tradeoff is an unparalleled lens on the beauty and

excitement of the international leader in World Heritage Sites. Wander through the winding cobbled streets of Venice, and on to Florence where the plazas could compete with the world's best museums. Relax like an Assisiani in small-time Assisi, and like a southerner in magnificent Sorrento. Internalize the eerie quiet of ancient Pompeii, and in the city once known as Caput Mundi—Latin for “head of the world”—see clamoring traffic juxtaposed against some of the world's most timeless sites.



Day 1: Fly to Italy

Meet your group and travel on an overnight flight to Venice.

Day 2: Venice

Arrive in Venice: Welcome to Venice, the “Floating City.” Depending on your arrival time, you may have free time to settle in and explore the city on your own. Tonight, enjoy an Italian pasta dinner before turning in for the night.

Day 3: Venice

Sightseeing tour of Venice: Crisscrossed with romantic bridges and laced with history, Venice boasts some of the world’s finest art and architecture. On your sightseeing tour of the Floating City, see gondolas glide down the Grand Canal before stopping in St. Mark’s Square. Look for the golden weathervane, which resembles archangel Gabriel, atop the 323-foot Campanile (Bell Tower). Attend a glass-blowing demonstration and watch expert craftsmen spin molten-hot wares.

Doge’s Palace: At the pink-and-white Doge’s Palace, see where mighty Venetian dukes once ruled. Stroll over the Bridge of Sighs, which links the palace to a prison. As they crossed the bridge, prisoners supposedly sighed with perfect sadness as they bid their beautiful city farewell.

Days 4-5: Florence

Travel to Florence: Make your way to Florence, the birthplace of the Italian language, opera and the Renaissance.

Sightseeing tour of Florence: Florence is home to world-renowned works of art, including Michelangelo’s statue of David and Botticelli’s *The Birth of Venus*. As you explore the city, pass by classical statues at the Piazza della Signoria. You’ll also walk across the Ponte Vecchio, a medieval bridge where many of Florence’s famed leather and gold artisans keep shop.

Duomo: See the domed cap of the Santa Maria del Fiore Cathedral, better known as the Duomo, which dominates the skyline. Opposite the Duomo, look for the bronzed doors of Ghiberti’s *Gates of Paradise* at the Baptistery.

Leather-making demonstration: At a leather workshop, see resident Florentine experts perform a leather-making demonstration.

✚ **Pisa:** Join an excursion to the city of Pisa. Here, you can see one of the world’s most famous architectural blunders, the *Leaning Tower of Pisa*. Those who do not go will have free time in Florence.

Day 6: Assisi

Travel to Assisi: Travel to the town of Assisi, nestled between Mount Subasio and fields of olive groves on a hill overlooking Umbria.

Sightseeing tour of Assisi: Assisi’s religious significance and outstanding examples of early Renaissance art draw visitors from every corner of the globe. You’ll see the Basilica of St. Francis, where Giotto’s painted frescoes illustrate the life of one of Italy’s most beloved saints. Here, the remains of St. Francis are entombed in a stone crypt above one of the altars. A local guide will also show you the birthplace of St. Clare, who founded the Franciscan Order of Poor Ladies in the year 1212.

Day 7: Sorrento Region

Sightseeing tour of Pompeii: Travel to Pompeii and see how the wealthiest ancient Romans lived—the artifacts they left behind make this one of the richest archaeological sites in the world.

Travel to the Sorrento region: Continue to the Sorrento

region, where mild weather, fragrant lemon groves and the stunning Bay of Naples welcome you.

Day 8: Sorrento Region | Rome

✚ **Capri:** Take a half-day excursion to stunning Capri. Since the days of ancient Greece, Capri’s crystalline waters and breathtaking cliffs have made it a favorite resort destination. Enjoy an island cruise and visit the *Gardens of Augustus*. Those who do not go on the excursion will enjoy free time in the Sorrento region.

Travel to Rome: When you arrive in Rome, share a pizza dinner with your tour group.

Day 9: Rome

Sightseeing tour of Vatican City: On your sightseeing tour, look for the papal protectors who flank the entrance to St. Peter’s Basilica—they’re the highly trained soldiers of the Vatican City’s Pontifical Swiss Guard. Inside, pass under gilded archways before visiting the saint’s tomb. Experience the breathtaking ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. From Michelangelo’s frescos to Raphael’s tapestries, the work of the masters of the day covers nearly every inch of the Chapel with art depicting important Biblical scenes.

Sightseeing tour of Rome: No place integrates its past into the present quite like Rome. Walk through the Colosseum, the world’s most famous arena. Here, you can almost hear the stamping feet of the crowds gathered for gladiatorial combat. Nearby, explore the ruins of the Roman Forum, which mark the former heart of the Roman Empire and the spot where Julius Caesar gave many of his great political speeches.

Rome on foot: On your self-guided walking tour, visit the Pantheon, built to honor all the gods of Rome. A column of light filters in from the domed ceiling’s prominent oculus. Continue to the widest staircase in Europe, the grand Spanish Steps. Before you say “arrivederci,” toss a coin into the Trevi Fountain to ensure a return trip to the Eternal City.

Day 10: Depart for home

Transfer to the airport, where you’ll check in for your return flight home.

✚ 2-DAY TOUR EXTENSION

Days 10-11: Rome

Explore Rome: Begin your guided walking tour of Trastevere and Janiculum at the monumental fountain known as *Fontana dell’Acqua Paola*. Continue through Villa Doria Pamphili, the city’s largest public park, and see busts of famous Romans along the *Passeggiata del Gianicolo*.

Catacombs and St. Paul’s Outside the Walls Basilica:

Explore the catacombs’ underground tombs. These narrow passageways hold many important works of early Christian art. Then, admire the stately arches of St. Paul’s Outside the Walls Basilica.

Sightseeing tour of Ostia Antica: Known for its well-preserved frescos, mosaics and architecture, this famed archaeological town gives you a unique glimpse into Rome’s past.

Free time in Rome: Take the afternoon to explore Rome at your own pace.

Day 12: Depart for home

Transfer to the airport, where you’ll check in for your return flight home.

INCLUDED ON TOUR:

 Round-trip flights on major carriers

 Full-time Tour Director

 Land transportation

 Hotels with private bathrooms

 Light breakfast daily; 5 local dinners or 6 with extension

 **Sightseeing tours**
Venice; Florence; Assisi; Pompeii; Vatican City; Rome; *With extension: Trastevere and Janiculum; Catacombs and St. Paul’s; Ostia Antica*

 **Entrances**
Doge’s Palace; Glass-blowing demonstration; Duomo; Leather-making demonstration; Basilica of St. Francis; Ruins of Pompeii; Sistine Chapel; St. Peter’s Basilica; Colosseum; Roman Forum; *With extension: Catacombs; St. Paul’s Outside the Walls; Ostia Antica*

 **Optional**
Pisa; Capri

— the easiest ways to —

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