



## ITALIAN MASTERPIECES

MARCH 28<sup>TH</sup> - APRIL 6<sup>TH</sup> 2019

As powerfully different as the three famous tenors, the charismatic combination of Rome-Florence-Venice reveals three archetypal faces of Italy. At once sensual, robust, and achingly artistic, these cities and their surrounding villages, steeped in medieval mystery, will stimulate your senses and enliven your perceptions, while rewarding you with glorious vistas and a tantalizing glimpse of La Dolce Vita.

From the architectural wonders of St. Peter's Square and the sublime simplicity of Michelangelo's Pieta, to the sprawling magnificence of Florence's Duomo and the dreamy timelessness of Venice floating out of the mists, here is an excursion that serves as a reminder of civilization's glorious past and present. We begin in Rome—the Eternal City—with a day spent exploring the splendors of Vatican City and the swirling madness of a vital city that flaunts its impressive Roman Forum, hulking Colosseum, and joyful Trevi Fountain. From Rome, we head north to the lovely medieval town of Assisi, and on through olive groves and vineyards to Florence, the “Capital of the Renaissance.” Here, at the heart of romantic Italy, we'll soak up treasures of the art world, views from Brunelleschi's magnificent dome, and travel to Pisa to admire its astonishing Tower—one of the wonders of the world.

Finally, as we wend our way toward Venice, we'll stop in Padua and Bologna, rich in medieval history and art. Our pilgrimage ends in Venice, a dazzling city that marries light, water, open space, and Gothic grandeur in a breathtaking amalgam—a fitting way to culminate our visit to Italy's priceless treasures.



THE COLOSSEUM



FLORENCE

THE COST OF THIS ITINERARY, PER PERSON, DOUBLE OCCUPANCY IS:

LAND ONLY (NO AIRFARE INCLUDED): **\$3980**  
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: **\$ 990**

*Airfares are available from many U.S. cities. Please call for details.*

**THE FOLLOWING SERVICES ARE INCLUDED:**

- HOTELS:** 8 nights' accommodation in first-class hotels including all hotel taxes and service charges
- COACHING:** All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary
- MEALS:** Breakfast daily, 3 dinners
- GUIDES:** DISCOVER EUROPE tour guide throughout, local guides in Venice, Florence, and Vatican City
- EXPENSES:** Portage of one large suitcase per person
- ENTRANCES:** Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary

*Please note that travel insurance is not included on this tour.  
Insurance information will be mailed on receipt of deposit.*

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**Thursday, March 28<sup>th</sup>** - Evening departure for Rome from your chosen gateway city.  
**Overnight: Plane**

**Friday, March 29<sup>th</sup>** - Morning arrival in Rome where you will be met for the transfer to our city-center hotel. After checking in, you'll have time to unpack, relax, and begin to explore your surroundings before we meet up for dinner at a traditional Italian restaurant. **(B, D) Overnight: Rome**

**Saturday, March 30<sup>th</sup>** - We begin our day with an excursion to Vatican City, walking across Bernini's architectural masterpiece, St. Peter's Square. This very small state—109 acres in the heart of Rome—contains some of the world's great art treasures, from magnificent gardens to the glories of the Vatican Museum, Michelangelo's sublime Pieta, and the Sistine Chapel. A local guide takes us through, turning this visit into a truly memorable experience. The afternoon and evening are free to pursue individual interests and to sample a wonderful local restaurant.

**(B) Overnight: Rome**

**Sunday, March 31<sup>st</sup>** - A leisurely day to explore this glorious city on your own. Stroll along the banks of the Tiber, past the Castel Sant'Angelo, linger over lunch in the heart of old Trastevere, toss a coin in the Trevi Fountain, stop for a rosy red Campari in the midst of Piazza Navona's Baroque splendor, explore the Centro Storico (historic center), pausing to savor the languid palms rising above the steps at Piazza di Spagna, or take in the upscale shops lining Via Condotti—the day will slip by before you know it. Free evening. **(B) Overnight: Rome**

**Monday, April 1<sup>st</sup>** - We leave via coach for Florence, with a stop en route at the walled city of Assisi. Indelibly linked with Saint Francis, this medieval pilgrimage town is suffused in a rosy glow—part sun, part pink limestone. Flowers and rosemary spill over ancient walls, and from the road that winds up to Assisi, the Basilica is an imposing and striking vision at all hours of the day. Continuing on to Florence, we'll check in at our hotel, with time to relax before meeting for dinner. **(B, D) Overnight: Florence**

**Tuesday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>** - Set in the heart of serenely beautiful countryside, Florence was the cradle of exceptional artistic and intellectual activity for three centuries. This morning a local guide takes us on a half-day guided tour of the city, characterized by the towering Duomo, which even today dwarfs the rest of the city, and the lovely old Ponte Vecchio spanning the Arno. The afternoon is free for individual exploration and the evening is free to dine at a local restaurant. **(B) Overnight: Florence**

**Wednesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>** - This morning, we'll take an excursion to Pisa, one of the oldest cities in Europe and world famous for its Leaning Tower and its Baptistry. We'll return to Florence for a free afternoon and evening. **(B) Overnight: Florence**

**Thursday, April 4<sup>th</sup>** - Leaving for Venice, we stop along the way in Bologna and Padua. The capital of Emilia-Romagna and one of Italy's richest cities, Bologna is riddled with arcaded streets that have remained wonderfully intact, all 21 miles of them. Padua, rich in medieval and Renaissance art, was once the most active patron city of the arts in the entire Veneto—Giotto, Uccello, Lippi, and Donatello all left their mark here, and its university, founded in 1222, counted Galileo among its professors. Continuing on to Venice, we'll check in to our hotel and join up for dinner at a Venetian restaurant. **(B, D) Overnight: Venice**



TREVI FOUNTAIN

**Friday, April 5<sup>th</sup>** - We'll begin our half-day guided tour with a visit to the Doge's Palace in glorious Piazza San Marco, "the most elegant living room in Europe," according to Napoleon. The Palazzo, a miracle of Gothic engineering, typifies a constant feature of Venetian architecture—the predominance of open space and a peculiar quality of lightness, that is in turn echoed by the surrounding water. In the afternoon you are free to wander the streets, or take a vaporetto to one of the nearby islands—Murano (glass), Burano (lace), or San Michele (the cemetery island). If you're curious about gondolas, float back to the hotel after your explorations. **(B) Overnight: Venice**

**Saturday, April 6<sup>th</sup>** - A morning transfer by water taxi takes you to the airport in Venice for your flights back to the USA. **(B)**

Key to included meals: **B** - breakfast, **L** - lunch, **D** - dinner