



RAVENNA & THE VENETO

SEPTEMBER 21ST - 30TH, 2023

A Regional Discovery of the Veneto

Designed by Fiona Bennett, art history expert, resident of the Marche region in Italy for nearly 30 years, and long-time Discover Europe tour guide. This exquisite tour will highlight the picturesque towns and villages of the Veneto and highlight the connections that the region has with Asia Minor and the artistic and cultural influences that have been absorbed over the centuries.

We begin in the intriguing mix of fantasy and reality that is Venice – the Serene Republic. Perhaps the most charming, poetic, and romantic city in the world, Venice has a staggering array of art on display in its museums and was, at one time, a major seafaring power in the Eastern Mediterranean with outposts and colonies throughout Greece and the islands. We'll spend time exploring the islands in the Venice Lagoon as well as the city itself, before moving on to the surrounding region, where we make our base in the medieval city of Mantova.

Finally, we come to rest in Ravenna – a city that has seen more than its fair share of turmoil over the centuries. After the fall of Rome and the movement of the Empire's capital to Constantinople, Ravenna played an important role in trying to reestablish Roman control over the Italian peninsula. The Roman general, Belisarius, captured Ravenna in 540 CE, temporarily defeating the Goths and extending the rule of the eastern Empire throughout Italy.

Another strong connection with the east was formed when the Bishop of Ravenna seceded from the Papal authority in Rome and aligned himself with the Patriarchy in Constantinople in the late 7th century, setting the stage for the grand schism between the catholic and orthodox churches that was to come some 300 years later.

This fall why not join Discover Europe's Fiona Bennett for a visit to a vineyard, a stroll through the quiet back streets of Venice, or an ancient village in search of the perfect gelato. Here is an opportunity to sample the rich cuisine of the north and toast the beauty of the Veneto region.



VERONA



VENICE - THE GRAND CANAL

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

LAND ONLY (NO AIRFARE INCLUDED): **\$4180**
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: **\$ 990**

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

THE FOLLOWING SERVICES ARE INCLUDED:

- HOTELS:** 8 nights' accommodation at a first class hotel, including all hotel taxes and service charges
- COACHING:** All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary
- MEALS:** Breakfast daily, 1 lunch, and 6 dinners (1 with a cooking class)
- EXPENSES:** Portage of one large suitcase per person
- ENTRANCES:** Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary
- GUIDES:** Discover Europe tour guide, Fiona Bennett, throughout

Please note that travel insurance is not included on this tour. Insurance information will be e-mailed to each registrant upon receipt of deposit.

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 21ST - Departure from your chosen US gateway city. **OVERNIGHT: PLANE**

Friday, September 22nd - Your arrival in Venice will be met for the transfer to our hotel on the main island. If our rooms are not available for immediate check-in, there will be time to find lunch and begin exploring the neighborhood. This afternoon you will have a chance to unpack and rest up from the overnight flight before gathering this evening for a reception at the hotel before dinner. **(D) OVERNIGHT: VENICE**

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23RD - Venice stands apart from the rest of Italy, a fairy-tale city floating on the sea (and sometimes well beneath it!), fiercely independent, and a constant thorn in the side of successive empires. The “Most Serene Republic” can be dazzling, seductive, irritating, dirty, expensive, but never, disappointing, or boring. A morning walking tour with a local guide places Venice in its historical context. The remainder of the day is free; you may wish to visit Venice’s cathedral to art, the Academia, or tour the Doge’s Palace. Whatever your plans, Venice is a treasure trove of wonders to explore. This evening we will gather again for a private tour of “After Hours Venice,” which takes us into St Mark’s Cathedral after the crowds have dispersed. **(B) OVERNIGHT: VENICE**

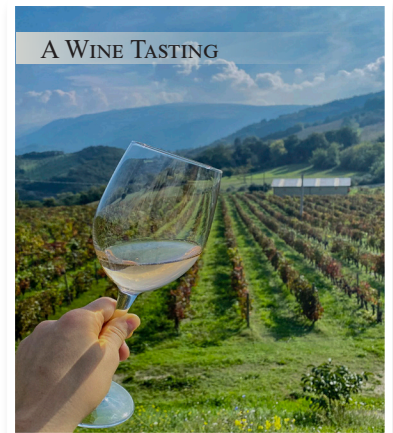
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24TH - This morning we take an excursion to the island of Torcello, where we’ll visit the Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta, built in the Ravenna style with the finest mosaics in Venice. Next, we head over to Burano, famous for its lacemaking. We’ll have lunch here (included) and then visit the island of Murano, known for its glassblowing. The rest of the afternoon and evening are free. **(B, L) OVERNIGHT: VENICE**

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25TH - Leaving Venice, we head inland, stopping at Padua to visit the Scrovegni chapel with its beautifully restored Giotto frescoes. We continue to our hotel in the romantic city of Mantova, home to the Gonzaga family and the birthplace of the poet Virgil. Mantova is also the town to which Romeo was banished. After checking in we will visit the Palazzo del Tè, designed and painted with extravagant frescoes by Giulio Romano. Dinner will be at the hotel this evening. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: MANTOVA**

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26TH - Our excursion today celebrates the genius of the architect Andrea Palladio. We will stop to visit Villa Maser at Asolo, one of Palladio’s most elegant villas, with murals by Veronese. Our drive this afternoon takes us through gentle rolling hillsides, covered in vines, to Vicenza, where we will visit La Rotonda, considered to be one of the finest examples of Palladio’s work. We will also visit the oldest surviving wooden theatre, Teatro Olimpico, designed by Palladio in 1579. We return to Mantova for dinner in a local restaurant. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: MANTOVA**

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27TH - Our excursion this morning to delightful Verona begins with a walking tour of the city centre with a local guide who will show us the Scaligeri tombs, the Piazza Signoria, Piazza Erbe and ends at the Amphitheater. There will be time for lunch, before we return to Mantova, via a stop at a local winery for a tasting of the superb regional wines. On our return, we will visit the Palazzo Ducale, with its famous frescoes by Mantegna, before we gather to take a traditional Italian cooking class. This evening we get to eat the fruits of our labours! **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: MANTOVA**

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28TH - After breakfast, we head for the Brenta canal, and the many elegant Villas built alongside for the rich aristocrats wishing to escape the summer heat in Venice. We will stop at Stra to see the Villa Pisani with its Tiepolo frescoes. We continue to the mysterious Po delta which once hid the Abbey of Pomposa in its marshy embrace. Now it is easier to find the Abbey which dates from the 7-8th century. Guido D’Arezzo who invented the modern musical scale was a monk here (995-1050). An hour’s drive south along the Adriatic Coast brings us to the city of Ravenna. On arrival, we will begin our exploration of the city with a visit to Sant’ Apollinaire Nuovo, a 6th-century church with mosaics of the martyrs and the virgins. After checking into our hotel, we will repair to a local fish restaurant. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: RAVENNA**



FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29TH - The highlights of our tour of Ravenna today will be visits to the Cathedral of S. Vitale and the tiny, jewel-like Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, the Baptistery of the Arians, and the Neonian Baptistery. The rest of the day is free, but you may also like to visit Dante’s Tomb and the small museum associated with it. This evening we will gather for our farewell dinner. **(B, D) OVERNIGHT: RAVENNA**

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30TH - Morning transfers to Bologna Airport (1 hour from Ravenna) for returning flights to the US. **(B) OVERNIGHT: HOME**

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