

**INSIGHT VACATIONS**

*The Art of Travelling in Style*

**ITALIAN ESCAPE**







## KEY

- |                                     |                         |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>1</b> Central<br>Hotels + Nights | Cruise                  |
| <b>①</b> Scenic<br>Hotels + Nights  | Train                   |
| ● Place Visited                     | Join/Leave Options      |
| ○ Optional Place<br>Visited         | Included Flights        |
| Trip Option                         | UNESCO<br>Heritage Site |

## Day 1 | Welcome to the Eternal City of Rome



Welcome to Rome, a glorious city filled with classic antiquities, medieval buildings, Renaissance palaces and baroque churches. Transfers depart from Rome's Fiumicino Leonardo da Vinci Airport for your hotel at 09:30, 12:30 and 15:30.

Relax and settle in before joining your Travel Director at 17:30, and get to know your fellow travellers over a delicious Welcome Dinner with wine at a local restaurant.

**Meals:** Dinner with Wine

**Hotel:** Hotel Romanico Palace, Rome.

## Day 2 | Vatican City and Rome with a Local



A Local Expert leads you through the priceless art collection of the Vatican Museums, culminating beneath Michelangelo's famous ceiling in the Sistine Chapel. Your visit includes fast-track entry to the museums and a behind-the-scenes look at the Bramante Staircase. Later, continue to St. Peter's Basilica. Cross the Tiber river to enjoy ancient Rome. See the incredible Circus Maximus. Come up close and personal with the beautifully preserved Arch of Constantine, walking on the ancient pavement. Discover the history, the construction and the legends of the iconic Colosseum as you stroll around the exterior of this amazing structure.

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Hotel:** Hotel Romanico Palace, Rome.

## OPTIONAL EXPERIENCES:

**Piazas & Fountains** - With our Local Expert, let's take a "passeggiata" (stroll) to enjoy the backstreets and secrets of pedestrian Rome. Be amazed at sights such as the fascinating Pantheon and the beauty of 17th-Century fountains and beautiful Piazzas. Come and enjoy the Rome of the Romans.

Adult: 44.00 EUR

**Roman Dinner Party** - Enjoy an evening of delicious Roman cuisine with drinks and a great Italian ambiance.

Adult: .00 EUR

## Day 3 | Siena and Medieval Florence



Travel north to medieval Siena and stroll through the winding stone-paved streets to the vast Piazza del Campo, where the Palio horse race takes place amid great festivities. See the Fountain of Joy and then walk up to the hilltop cathedral, striped with marble. Continue through the cypress-clad hills and vineyards of Tuscany to Florence. Enjoy a traditional Bistecca alla Fiorentina steak dinner paired with delicious local wine, a speciality not to be missed.

**Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner with Wine

**Hotel:** Michelangelo Florence.



## Day 4 | Florence, Birthplace of the Renaissance



Explore Florence with Insight Choice. Choose to visit the Accademia Museum and see Michelangelo's David. Alternatively, wander through the market stalls on a shopping tour, enjoying all the Italian treats and finery on offer. Walk on to the multi-coloured marble cathedral, bell tower and baptistery, where Ghiberti's Gates of Paradise have been recreated in all their glory. Visit Piazza della Signoria, still the political heart of Florence and an open-air gallery of Renaissance masterpieces. Spend time gazing at statues such as Neptune as well as Hercules and Cacus, along the front of the Palazzo Vecchio. Famous for the quality of its luxury goods like gold and leather, Piazza Santa Croce is also the perfect spot to see the basilica. Later, use your free time to shop or continue exploring at your leisure.

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Hotel:** Michelangelo Florence.

## OPTIONAL EXPERIENCES:

**San Gimignano Excursion** - A wonderful excursion with our Local Expert to Tuscany's most famous hill-top town! Visit San Gimignano, considered a medieval Manhattan, due to its towers which dominate the skyline. Soak up the unique atmosphere of this ancient gem which has remained intact since the 14th century and today is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

**Adult: 40.00 EUR**

You will be offered one of the following two optional experiences depending on availability:

**Tuscan Dinner at Villa Machiavelli** - Through the Chianti hills, we'll drive past vineyards to a delightful hamlet. Our destination is the ancient stone house of Machiavelli, where the great political theorist wrote his immortal work, 'The Prince'. After a welcome drink and a visit of the villa and its wine-cellars, we'll enjoy the best of Tuscan cuisine accompanied by great music and drinks, including of course, Chianti from the Villa's own vines.

**Adult: 74.00 EUR**

**Tuscan Dinner & Cooking Demonstration** - Florence and Tuscany are renowned for their rich gastronomic heritage. Tonight we'll travel into the hills near Florence to the northernmost part of the Chianti, where a local chef will introduce you to the dishes that make Tuscan cuisine famous throughout the world. This wonderful cooking demonstration, with superb food and wine, will provide warm and genuine Tuscan hospitality.

**Adult: .00 EUR**

## Day 5 | Pisa and the Italian Lakes



Stop in Pisa to see the incredible Leaning Tower from which Galileo is said to have conducted experiments on velocity and gravity, as well as the splendid cathedral and baptistery, decorated with mosaics and designs in solid marble. Your journey continues past the marble quarries at Carrara, used since the time of Ancient Rome, through the dramatic Apennine Mountains to the fertile valley of the River Po. Continue to your lakeside resort on beautiful Lake Maggiore. As dusk falls, why not work up an appetite with a traditional evening stroll, or passeggiata as they say in Italy?

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Hotel:** Hotel Simplon, Baveno.

## OPTIONAL EXPERIENCES:

**Isola Bella** - The premier attraction of Lake Maggiore is the Borromean Islands. We'll take a private boat over to Isola Bella, the largest and most famous island, renowned for its incredible palace and stunning Botanical Gardens. Our Local Expert will take us on a guided tour of this privately-owned palace, with free time to admire the gardens. A must!

**Adult: 54.00 EUR**

*\* This optional is only able to be operated between mid-March and the end of October.*

**Dinner on Isola dei Pescatori** - This evening escape to the charming and tranquil island of Isola dei Pescatori. A short boat ride from the shores of Lake Maggiore, this fisherman's Island is inhabited year round by only 50 permanent residents. Stroll through the small piazza, surrounded by tight and winding alleys, to enjoy dinner at one of the Island's restaurants.

**Adult: .00 EUR**

## Day 6 | The Italian Lake District



Today is set aside for you to relax and enjoy all the fantastic sights of this beautiful lakeland area.

For your Dine-Around Evening, choose from a selection of hand-picked restaurants for your dining pleasure.

**Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner with Wine

**Hotel:** Hotel Simplon, Baveno.

## OPTIONAL EXPERIENCES:

**Three Lakes Experience** - See why this area has long been a favourite of film stars, writers, diplomats and royalty! Travel along Lake Maggiore towards the peaks of the Alps. The Swiss resort of Lugano nestles between the mountains and celestial blue waters - stroll along its palm and cypress lined promenade and enjoy its restaurants. Then to Lake Como, one of Italy's most spectacular lakes where a private cruise puts into perspective the stunning vistas and villas of the rich and famous. Later, time to hunt out some bargains; Como is famous for its vast array of silk shops!

**Adult: .00 EUR**

## Day 7 | To Venice With Wine Along the Way



Follow the southern fringes of the European Alps to the vineyards by the shores of Lake Iseo. Here, winemaking traditions run deep. Taste the delicious vintages produced with a master vintner at a family-owned estate. Continue to the unique city of Venice and step back in time to the 16th century.

**Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner with Wine

**Hotel:** Hotel Carlton on the Grand Canal, Venice.

## OPTIONAL EXPERIENCES:

**Magical Venice** - Venice can be Europe's most romantic city in the evening, offering dramatic landscapes with buildings that dazzle as the sun sets and the lights go on. Sit back and take it all in as private water taxis take you to the centre of it all, Piazza San Marco, where we have seats reserved outside a famous Venetian cafe, in front of a live orchestra and in view of those illuminated St Mark's sights. Our private water taxis will also take us the length of the Grand Canal, under the Rialto Bridge, seeing Venice at its most magical.

**Adult: .00 EUR**

## Day 8 | The Magic of La Serenissima



A private boat ferries you to St. Mark's Square. See the basilica, Doge's Palace and Bridge of Sighs. Join a MAKE TRAVEL MATTER® Experience during a visit to a traditional arts centre, where you can see how beautiful handcrafted glass is made by expert glassblowers, safeguarding traditional skills. Enjoy being serenaded with beautiful music on a gondola ride, gliding through the city canals in romantic awe. Spend the afternoon as you wish. As night falls, why not savour the magic of St. Mark's square with its orchestras and al-fresco cafes?

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Hotel:** Hotel Carlton on the Grand Canal, Venice.

## OPTIONAL EXPERIENCES:

**Hidden Venice** - To only experience Venice's big set pieces - St Mark's Square; the Rialto; the Grand Canal - is to miss out on a hidden world full of surprises! Join a Local Expert for a fascinating walk through some of the lesser known quarters of Venice. The back lanes and 'campi', small squares, where tourists seldom tread are full of history and great places to sample local life.

**Adult: 37.00 EUR**

**Burano Excursion & Meal** - Leave the hustle of St Mark's Square behind on a delightful private cruise around the islands of the Venetian lagoon. Alight at the island of Burano, a photographer's paradise, famous for its candy coloured houses, artisan lace makers and leaning bell tower that would give Pisa a good run for its money. Enjoy a superb meal sampling the local specialities with wine included. An excursion not to be missed!

**Adult: 82.00 EUR**

## Day 9 | Hilltop Assisi



Skirt the Venetian Lagoon and cross two of Italy's most important rivers, the Adige and Po. The scenery will then change dramatically as you drive through the wild Apennines. Your destination is the stone-built, hilltop town of Assisi, home of St. Francis. See the Church of St. Mary of the Angels before continuing up Mount Subasio. Then with our Local Expert we visit the beautiful Basilica of St. Francis.

**Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner with Wine

**Hotel:** Hotel Giotto Assisi.



## Day 10 | Sorrento on the coast



Journey along the clifftop road to the picturesque resort of Sorrento, perched upon the southern cliffs of the Bay of Naples and looking out to Mount Vesuvius. With the evening at leisure, why not try some of the local specialities during a regional dining experience?

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Hotel:** Hotel Isabella, Sorrento.

### OPTIONAL EXPERIENCES:

**Sorrento Evening** - A chance to enjoy a delicious dinner of local specialities. We arrive at one of the area's unique local restaurants for an incredible dining experience featuring some of the famous dishes of this region!

**Adult:** .00 EUR

## Day 11 | Capri, the Isle of Dreams



In the morning, cruise to Capri, known as the Isle of Dreams. In one of the island's iconic open-top taxis, head up the steep, winding roads while a symphony of cicadas sing away in the pines. With your Local Expert, explore the narrow alleyways of Capri town, browse in exclusive boutiques and wonder at the views over the Tyrrhenian Sea. Descend to the port by funicular railway and return to Sorrento for some relaxation time. Perhaps join an optional visit to Positano and the Amalfi Coast?

**Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner with Wine

**Hotel:** Hotel Isabella, Sorrento.

### OPTIONAL EXPERIENCES:

**Island Tour of Capri** - Experience the spectacular cliffs and famous turquoise waters of Capri during a relaxing cruise to the most beautiful part of the island, the southern side. View the beautiful grottoes and unique coastline before ascending to Capri town. This optional experience is weather dependent and may be replaced by a minibus tour of the Island with a visit to Anacapri and the Villa San Michele.

**Adult:** .00 EUR

**Amalfi Coast Drive & Positano Visit** - Drive along the clear blue waters and picturesque resorts of the Amalfi Coast, arguably the most glamorous and scenic stretch of coast in Europe. Minibuses wind their way down serpentine roads to the exclusive artists' paradise of Positano, clinging to the cliff face, as if about to cascade into the turquoise waters below. Spend time exploring the elegant shops, watching the artists at work, or enjoying an 'aperitivo' in a beach side cafe.

**Adult:** 66.00 EUR



## Day 12 | On to ill-fated Pompeii and Rome



Journey north to the ancient Roman city of Pompeii, eerily preserved by the eruptions of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79. Your Local Expert walks you through cobbled streets to explore some of the shops, villas and temples. Witness the colourful frescoes that were hidden for centuries. Continue beneath the striking hilltop monastery of Monte Cassino and back to Rome where your journey reaches its zenith in the evening. In the heart of The Eternal City, you are treated to a quintessential Italian experience. Fine food, wine, music and a private performance of enchanting operetta for your Celebration Dinner.

**Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner with Wine

**Hotel:** Hotel Mediterraneo, Rome.

## Day 13 | Arrivederci Roma



Bid farewell to the glories of Italy. Departure transfers arrive at Rome's Fiumicino Leonardo da Vinci Airport at 07:00 and 09:30.

**Meals:** Breakfast