GRAND TOUR OF ITALY
Designed by Professor Chad Hankinson | 12 days | Italy
GRAND TOUR OF ITALY

INCLUDED ON TOUR

Round-trip flights on major carriers; Full-time Tour Director; Air-conditioned motorcoaches and internal transportation; Superior tourist-class hotels with private bathrooms; Select meals with a mix of local cuisine;

Sightseeing: Venice; Florence; Pisa; Assisi; Pompeii; Rome by Night; Vatican; Ancient Rome; Trastevere and Janiculum; Catacombs; Ostia Antica

Entrances: Glass-Blowing Factory; Doges’ Palace; Duomo; Leather-Making Demonstration; Baptistery & Cathedral, Pisa; Accademia; Winery Visit, Chianti Region; Basilica, Assisi; Pompeii Roman Ruins; Sistine Chapel; St. Peter’s Basilica; Forum Romanum; Colosseum; Catacombs, Rome; St Paul Outside the Walls; Ostia Antica

Overnight stays:
Venice (2)
Florence (2)
Assisi (1)
Sorrento Region (1)
Rome (4)

NOT INCLUDED ON TOUR

Optional excursions; Insurance coverage; Beverages and lunches; Transportation to free-time activities; Customary gratuities (for your Tour Director, bus driver and local guide); Portage; Adult supplement (if applicable); Weekend supplement; Shore excursion on cruises; Any applicable baggage-handling fee imposed by the airlines (see efcollagestudytours.com/baggage for details); Expenses caused by airline rescheduling, cancellations or delays caused by the airlines, bad weather or events beyond EF’s control; Passports, visa and reciprocity fees

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YOUR ITINERARY

Day 1: Board Your Overnight Flight to Venice!

Day 2: Venice
Arrive in Venice
Arrive in magical Venice, home of Marco Polo. Known globally for its gondoliers and glassware, Venice is also a heady mix of busy piazzas, thronging with pizzerias and cafes, as well as deserted streets, alongside canals, leading to hidden gems such as churches or local-dominated restaurants serving regional delicacies.

Guided Sightseeing of Venice (time permitting)
Begin your sightseeing of la Serenissima (the city’s nickname meaning “the most serene”) at St. Mark’s Square, “the finest drawing room in Europe,” according to Napoleon. Allegedly buried under the altar of the basilica are St. Mark’s remains, which, in the 11th century, were smuggled out of Alexandria in a barrel of salt pork to prevent a thorough search by the city’s Muslim guards. Also, see the Grand Canal and the 324-foot Campanile (Bell Tower), whose steps were originally built so that a noble could ascend on horseback. Look for the clock where two bronze figures have been striking the hour for over 500 years. Venice is also famous for its glassware-you’ll see why during a glassblowing demonstration.

Dinner is included this evening.

Day 3: Venice
Visit the Doges’ Palace
Visit the grand 14th century pink and white Doges’ Palace, from which mighty Venetian dukes once ruled. Here you’ll stroll over the Bridge of Sighs, connecting the palace and its prison. As they crossed the bridge, prisoners supposedly sighed with perfect sadness as they regarded their beautiful city for the last time. Casanova made a daring escape from this prison in 1756.

Free Afternoon in Venice
The afternoon is yours to explore wondrous Venezia. Stroll along the intertwining canals, or venture into the labyrinth of streets crammed with restaurants and shops. Alternatively, you might wish to take in the views from the Rialto Bridge. Otherwise, enjoy a truly romantic experience and ride in one of the city’s many gondolas along some of its finest canals.

Day 4: Venice | Florence
Transfer to Florence
Set deep in the heart of Tuscany is one of Italy’s jewels. The city of Florence has delighted visitors for centuries with its remarkable architecture. Whether sitting by the River Arno, strolling the beautifully housed streets or viewing the renaissance masterpieces that fill the city’s churches and museums, one can only be astonished by the feeling of true beauty.

Guided Sightseeing of Florence
Fall under the spell of the powerful Medici family on your guided tour. See Giotto’s Bell Tower and the imposing marble cathedral in the Piazza del Duomo. Stand before Ghiberti’s legendary Gates of Paradise (so dubbed by Michelangelo), and pass the classical statues of the Piazza della Signoria- here you can see where Michelangelo’s David originally stood. Later, watch local artisans at work at a local leather workshop.

Dinner is included this evening.

Day 5: Florence | Pisa
Guided Excursion to Pisa
Italy’s largest baptistery (54.86m tall and 104m in circumference), the Battistero di San Giovanni is also slightly taller than the Leaning Tower across the square. As it shares the same unstable ground as the tower, the baptistery also has a slight lean of 0.6 degrees towards the cathedral. The baptistery’s pulpit is a masterpiece carved in 1255-60 by Nicola Pisano. Begun in 1093, Pisa Cathedral (Duomo di Pisa) is a masterpiece of Romanesque architecture. Despite its proximity to the eye-catching and tourist-attracting Leaning Tower, the Duomo still dominates the monumental Piazza del Miracoli.

Visit the Academia
This simple building, located on Via Ricasoli, houses one of the world’s true masterpieces in Michelangelo’s statue of David. Elsewhere, you can see unfinished works by the great artist along with other Renaissance treasures. Make sure to visit the ‘workroom’ and learn more of the skills required to bring images out of marble.

Day 6: Florence | Chianti Region | Assisi
Transfer to Assisi via a Winery Visit in the Chianti Region
Growing under a Tuscan sun is one of the prides of Tuscany: vineyards. Today enjoy a visit to a local vineyard in the Chianti Region. You will learn about the process and careful cultivation of grapes into wine. Of course you’ll want to enjoy a sample of the famous exports as well!

Guided Sightseeing of Assisi
A local guide shows you the city, nestled between Mount Subasio and fields of olive groves, which draws millions of tourists every year with its religious significance and some of Italy’s finest early Renaissance art. At the Basilica of St. Francis, follow the life of one of Italy’s most beloved saints through Giotto’s artful frescoes. Dominating the Assisi skyline, the Basilica is actually two churches juxtaposed upon one another. Despite extensive damage by two earthquakes in the late 1990s, much of the church has been restored. Inside is the tomb of St Francis as well as frescoes depicting his life.

Dinner is included this evening.

Day 7: Assisi | Pompeii | Sorrento
Transfer to Sorrento via a Guided Sightseeing of Pompeii
Learn how wealthy Romans lived 2,000 years ago on an excursion to Pompeii, one of the richest archaeological sites in the world. When neighboring Mt. Vesuvius erupted in A.D. 79, volcanic ash completely buried the Roman resort. Now it is fully excavated, and you can see the ruins of villas, ancient temples, and Stabian Baths.

Dinner is included this evening.

Day 8: Sorrento | Rome
Free Morning in Sorrento
Italy’s Amafi Coast offers some of the most beautiful coastlines in Europe and Sorrento is where it begins. (The famed “Amafi Drive” begins in Sorrento and winds 43 miles to Salerno through cliffs and mountains for fabulous views.) It’s Italy’s favorite resort town and easily draws in tourists with its picturesque landscape and mild temperatures. Walk along the gorge in the center of town, where you’ll find the Piazza Tasso leading to smaller streets that are great for exploring; in the evenings, some are closed to cars to allow pedestrians room for their passeggiatas (walks.) Stroll through the historic quarter and chat in the 15th century Sedile Domino Square; locals can be frequently spotted conversing with neighbors under the umbrella-covered tables, as has been the practice for years.
Transfer to Rome

Welcome to Rome, the Eternal City. The city is an incredible mix of archeological gems, Roman genius, Renaissance art and religious treasure. As Italy's capital, it is also the bustling heart of this exciting country. With its fashionable shopping and café-culture, Rome really is a unique European experience.

Guided Sightseeing of Rome by Night

A beautiful city by day, Rome can be even more impressive at night! Enjoy the comfort of your coach as a guide takes you through the city and past its famed sights as the lights shine.

Pizza dinner is included this evening.

Day 9: Rome

Guided Sightseeing of the Vatican

The world’s largest dome is located in the world’s smallest country. See both as you tour St. Peter’s Basilica, erected in Vatican City on the site where the saint was martyred. Enter the basilica under the watchful eyes of the brightly dressed Swiss Guard. Inside, admire Michelangelo’s Pietà and try to find the artist’s signature (it is the only sculpture he ever signed). Then continue on to the Vatican Museum, where elaborate galleries packed with one artistic masterpiece after another lead you directly to the Sistine Chapel. Between 1508 and 1512, Michelangelo painted some of the world’s finest pictorial images on the Chapel’s ceiling. This was his first attempt at working in fresco, which he did by standing up and craning backwards from a scaffold.

Guided Sightseeing of Ancient Rome

Your guided sightseeing of ancient Rome takes you into the Forum Romanum, once the heart of the Roman Empire. You will also visit the Colosseum, where gladiators once battled for their lives in front of 50,000 spectators.

Free Time at the Spanish Steps and Trevi Fountain

Enjoy free time in Piazza di Spagna. Climb the staircase to view the city below, or take the time to wander through one of Rome’s most popular shopping areas. Alternatively, snap a moment to relax amongst the hustle and bustle of the city while enjoying a traditional Italian treat—gelato. You should also make sure to wander over to the famed Trevi Fountain and toss in a coin to ensure your return to Rome.

Day 10: Rome

Guided Walking Tour of Trastevere and Janiculum

Enjoy a stroll through this quaint area of Rome, where the buildings snuggle against each other and the smell of garlic hangs in the air from local trattorias that set up tables along the cobblestone streets. Trastevere (Latin for “across the Tiber”) is, as one would guess, just across the Tiber River and a lively nightspot for the young and hip. Check out the top of Janiculum Hill, which offers some of the best views of the city. You'll also see the memorial dedicated to those who died in the 1849 battle against the French and the water-sputting Acqua Paola, created from leftover marble from the Roman Forum. Pass the Villa Doria Pamphilj, a 1650 park, before heading to the Passegiata del Gianicolo where you'll hear cannon fire daily at noon.

Guided Excursion to the Catacombs and the Appian Way

Step back into the 11th century on this excursion to Rome’s outlying catacombs. Visit the burial chambers of popes and saints and explore some of the earliest signs of Christian worship. Then journey down the Appian Way, the most important route to the city in Roman times, to the Church of San Paolo Fuori le Mura (St. Paul Outside the Walls), the second largest church in Rome, after St. Peter’s. On the basilica’s peripheral walls hang circular portraits of each pope. There is space for only seven more portraits, and, according to legend, the world will end once the walls fill up.

Day 11: Rome

Guided Excursion to Ostia Antica

Explore the ruins of Ostia Antica, a former Roman port city on the Tiber River. Founded as a military colony in the 3rd century B.C., Ostia became a thriving center for trade and commerce. Walking down Ostia’s main street, the Decumanus Maximus, you will see the ruts gouged into the stone over time by carts going to and from the port. Pass by the remains of temples, villas and marketplaces and take some time to explore the amphitheater and see the black-and-white mosaics of the baths of Neptune.

Free Afternoon in Rome

Take an opportunity to sit on the grassy banks of the Circus Maximus and imagine what it was like to watch chariot races there. Rome also has some of the most fashionable shops to be found anywhere; a trip along the Via del Corso confirms this. If not, just find a café, order a soda and watch the noise and bustle of this fascinating city go by.

Dinner is included this evening.

Day 12: Board Return Flight Home

Transfer to the Airport for Your Return Flight

Your tour director assists with your transfer to the airport, where you’ll check in for your return flight home.

Itinerary is subject to change

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