

# VITORITALY®

Italy with Italians

## ITALY IN 1 WEEK

Venice, Florence and Rome

## DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY



From magic Venice to Florence, the cradle of Renaissance, and finally Rome, the Eternal City. A short tour at the discovery of the most famous cities in Italy, admiring the extraordinary beauty of Italy.

## TOUR SUMMARY

- Duration: 7 days + 7 nights
- Type of tour: Point to Point
- Tour starts in Venice and ends in Rome

## TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Venice, when wealthy merchants ruled the Mediterranean
- Florence, an open-air museum
- Pisa, how can it stand?
- Siena and San Gimignano, power in the Middle Ages
- Val d'Orcia, where Man and Nature blend with harmony
- Rome, walking in the shade of history
- Vatican City, Popes and power



## ITINERARY SUMMARY

DAY	ACTIVITIES INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAM
Day 1 Venice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3-hour private walking tour of Venice city centre with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u> - Admission to Saint Mark's Basilica</li> <li>- <b>Optional Admission to Palazzo Ducale</b></li> <li>- Half-hour gondola ride</li> </ul> <p><i>Overnight in Venice city centre</i></p>
Day 2 Florence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transfer by private water cab to Venice Pier + Transfer to your accommodation in Florence</li> <li>- 3-hour private walking tour of Florence city centre with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u></li> <li>- <b>Optional Admission to Galleria dell'Accademia (Michelangelo's David)</b></li> </ul> <p><i>Overnight in Florence city centre</i></p>

DAY	ACTIVITIES INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAM
Day 3 <b>Florence</b>	- Half-day excursion to Pisa – Admission to the Leaning Tower - 2-hour Tuscan Cooking Class in Florence <i>Overnight in Florence city centre</i>
Day 4 <b>Siena and San Gimignano</b>	- Full-day excursion to Siena and San Gimignano – Free time - Drop off at your accommodation in Val d’Orcia area <i>Overnight in Val d’Orcia area</i>
Day 5 <b>Val d’Orcia</b>	- Full-day excursion to Val d’Orcia area - 3-hour private walking tour of Montepulciano city centre with a <u>Sommelier Guide</u> , with tastings of Vino Nobile, Pecorino cheese and truffle - Visit of a Supertuscan Brunello di Montalcino wine cellar with tastings <i>Overnight in Val d’Orcia</i>
Day 6 <b>Rome</b>	- Transfer to your accommodation in Rome - 3-hour private walking tour of Imperial Rome with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u> - Admission to the Colosseum and Imperial Fora Archeological area <i>Overnight in Rome city centre</i>
Day 7 <b>Vatican City</b>	- 3-hour private walking tour of the Vatican City with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u> - Admission to the Vatican Museums with the Sistine Chapel - 3-hour Food Tour in Rome city centre <i>Overnight in Rome city centre</i>

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- **Accommodations in Double Room with Continental Breakfast (\*):**

- Day 1: 3\* to 5\* Hotel in Venice city centre
- Days 2 & 3: 3\* to 5\* Hotel in Florence city centre
- Day 4 & 5: 4\* to 5\* Country House in Val d’Orcia
- Day 6 & 7: 3\* to 5\* Hotel in Rome city centre

(\*) The Hotel list is available upon request

- **Transfers (\*\*):**

- Day 2: Transfer by private water cab to Venice Pier + Transfer to your accommodation in Florence
- Day 6: Transfer to your accommodation in Rome
- Day 7: Transfer from your accommodation to the location of the Food Tour and back

(\*\*) All transfers by private car (2 pax) / minivan (3 to 6 pax) / minibus (7 to 10 pax)

- **Private Guided Visits / Tours (\*\*\*) / Activities:**

- Day 1: 3-hour private walking tour of Venice city centre with an Authorised Tourist Guide – Half-hour gondola ride
- Day 2: 3-hour private walking tour of Florence city centre with an Authorised Tourist Guide – 2-hour Tuscan Cooking Class in Florence
- Day 3: Half-day excursion to Pisa
- Day 4: Full-day excursion to Siena and San Gimignano – Drop off at your accommodation in Val d’Orcia area
- Day 5: Full-day excursion to Val d’Orcia area - 3-hour private walking tour of Montepulciano city centre with a Sommelier Guide, with tastings of Vino Nobile, Pecorino cheese and truffle- Visit of a Supertuscan Brunello di Montalcino wine cellar with tastings
- Day 6: 3-hour private walking tour of Imperial Rome with an Authorised Tourist Guide
- Day 7: 3-hour private walking tour of the Vatican City with an Authorised Tourist Guide - 3-hour Food Tour in Rome city centre

(\*\*\*) All tours by private car (2 pax) / minivan (3 to 6 pax) / minibus (7 to 10 pax)

- **Admission Tickets:**

- Saint Mark’s Basilica in Venice
- Leaning Tower in Pisa
- Colosseum and Imperial Fora Archeological Area in Rome
- Vatican Museums with the Sistine Chapel in Rome

- **Full emergency assistance 24 hours/day by our Back Office**

- **List of recommended restaurants along the itinerary**

- **All taxes**

## NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

- All transfers and other services not specifically mentioned in the above program
- Meals, wine and beverages
- Porterage fees at every accommodation
- Camera or Video fees
- Tipping for local guides and drivers
- Laundry, telephone calls and other expenditures of personal nature
- Travel / Vacation insurance

## OPTIONS

- Pick up at Venice Airport /Railway Station at the start of the tour
- Accommodation in Venice the night before the start of the tour
- Admission to Palazzo Ducale in Venice
- Admission to Galleria dell'Accademia (Michelangelo's David) in Florence
- Drop off at Rome Airport /Railway Station at the end of the tour
- Other options upon request

## TOUR MAIN FEATURES

### VENICE

Welcome to the "unique" Venice, the "city on the lagoon"! You will be astonished by its beauty and charm!

You will start your visit with **Piazza San Marco** (St. Mark's Square) and the Basilica interior, a 900-year-old marvel of architecture! The church is unique in Italy for its golden Byzantine and Medieval mosaics, intricate stone and marble traceries and exuberant Middle Eastern domes. Near St. Mark's Basilica is **Palazzo Ducale**, the most impressive secular building in Venice and once the official residence of the supreme authority of Venice, the "Doge". A masterpiece of Gothic architecture, the Doge's Palace is an impressive structure composed of layers of building elements and ornamentation, from its 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>-century original foundations to the significant Renaissance and opulent Mannerist adjunctions.



Then, you may visit **Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari** (Saint Mary's of Friars), striking for its colossal size and the quality of its works of art, including masterpieces by Titian, Giovanni Bellini and Donatello, and several splendid tombs. Also, you may explore the streets and savour everyday life in an intricate maze of ancient narrow alleyways, lively squares with magnificent buildings and meandering canals, and finally, walk on the **Rialto Bridge**, Venice's busy "heart". Last but not least, you will enjoy a Gondola ride on the city's canals: a jump back in time when Venetians moved only on the water.

At lunch, you may savour Venice's finger food, the famous "cichet". There is tremendous variety, and

options include anything from simple cheese or salami to almost any kind of seafood, fried and grilled vegetables, sweet and sour sardines, creamy codfish and much more!

Rich in traditions, Venice offers a wide selection of unique artisan products. In the city of the Italian carnival, the typical **Venetian masks** are a must. The cost of the original ones is relatively high, but it is really worth it! Also, don't miss an authentic Murano glass object: each product is made and painted by hand, but be sure you buy an original product from Murano, guaranteed by a label or a signature (and the seller), not a Chinese copy!

Finally, at dinner, you will be delighted by the flavours of the regional cuisine of Veneto, boasting delicious recipes such as "Sarde in saor" (marinated sardines), Risotto with seafood, or the typical "Baccala' mantecato" to finish with a fantastic "Bussolà", the ring-shaped and cinnamon-flavoured cake! (read more about Venetian cuisine in our [BLOG](#)).

## FLORENCE

Welcome to Florence, the land of Giotto and Dante!

Despite its international fame and greatness, Florence is also a small city whose history has been interwoven with that of its passionate citizens for more than one thousand years.

In Piazza Duomo, you will be astonished by the **Duomo** with the incredible Brunelleschi's dome, a masterpiece of art and architecture whose building techniques are still covered by a veil of mystery. Beside it, Giotto's Belltower and the Baptistry, one of the oldest buildings in the city, with its famous bronze doors made by no and Ghiberti in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. In **Piazza della Signoria**, you will walk in the middle of bronze and marble masterpieces by Giambologna and Cellini inside the marvellous Loggia dei Lanzi and will admire the imposing Palazzo Vecchio, one of the symbols of Florence and still the seat of government of the city. You may also spare some time to relax, visit a typical market for shopping, stroll through the city's pedestrian streets, and cross the oldest bridge in Florence, "**Ponte Vecchio**" (Old Bridge), rich in jewellery shops.



Your itinerary may include **Galleria dell'Accademia**, hosting Michelangelo's David, the most famous sculpture in the world. The David was uncovered and shown to the Florentines on September 8, 1504, and with its height of 4 meters, the impeccable physical features and the political significance that the iconography of David had taken over the previous century left the Florentines of the time speechless and has done the same ever since with visitors from all over the world.

Florence is also the main Italian centre for the production of **high-quality leather goods**. Florentine artisans are so famous that many fashion brands have opened factories in the city or close to it due to their high skill and the continuous inspiration designers take from the town's masterpieces. The area around Piazza Santa Croce, in particular, hosts numerous leather shops and workshops.

Thanks to the tradition of Tuscan tanneries, there is no better place to find **shoes for all tastes** than Florence: from the creations, designed and produced by hand by skilled craftsmen, to the extensive collections available in stores, renewed every season. Above all, Ferragamo (also worth seeing the museum), Gucci and Prada for refinement and elegance. If you prefer a simpler style, many shops specialise in handmade shoes and sandals across the river Arno.

At lunch, you may enjoy "*Panino con Lampredotto*" in a typical Florentine market. At dinner, taste the simple yet unforgettable recipes of the Tuscan tradition, such as "*Crostini*", "*Panzanella*", and "*Pepeoso*". And remember, Florence is the home of "*Fiorentina*" steak! In case you are a vegetarian, don't worry: Tuscan cuisine offers tasty alternatives like "*Pappa al Pomodoro*" or "*Ribollita*" (read our [BLOG](#) to know more about Tuscan Cuisine).

## PISA

Pisa is famous worldwide for its "**Torre Pendente**" (Leaning Tower), but its wonderful square, **Piazza dei Miracoli**, set over an ample greenfield, hosts three other whiter-than-white masterpieces of exquisite Medieval art: the Cathedral, the Baptistery and the "Camposanto" (Graveyard). They are so unique that their creation originated a new style, "Pisan Romanesque".

This area was chosen to construct the **Duomo of Santa Maria Assunta** strictly for its centrality; founded in 1064, it was intended to celebrate the grandeur of Pisa during the Marine Republic's epoch of power. "The temple of marble white as the snow"; that's how the structure is described on the gravestone of its architect, Buschetto di Giovanni Giudice. Consisting of five naves with its transept divided into three naves, it is surmounted by a splendid dome encircled by a loggia. The Duomo's façade and exterior lateral sections feature elaborate decoration in marble (which can also be seen on its interior), mosaics, and bronze.



In front of the Cathedral stands the **Baptistry**, also in a particular version of the Romanesque style. Initiated in 1152 by Diotisalvi, the Baptistry was finally completed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century; Gothic elements were added then. Of cylindrical form and circled by arcades of columns, this structure in white marble even boasts impressive acoustics.

The **Camposanto** closes the northern end of the complex's piazza. This monumental cemetery, begun in 1278, is bordered by a marble fence and houses a cloister at its centre. Unfortunately, most frescoes that once coloured its walls were destroyed in a fire in 1944 during the battle for Pisa.

Ultimately, the true symbol of Pisa is the **Campanile**, the Leaning Tower, which completes the image of this city. Because of land sinkage beneath it, the Tower stands at a significant incline. Its construction started in 1173, but the Tower was not completed until the second half of the 1300s. In cylindrical form, the blind arcades of its lower part mutate into six floors of loggias, repeating motifs from the Duomo. Inside, a spiral staircase of 294 steps leads to the heights of one of the most famous towers in the world, where the lovely belfry and a spectacular view of the surrounding landscape await.

## SIENA AND SAN GIMIGNANO

In Siena, the city of the Palio, you will walk on the famous **Piazza del Campo**, the concave square where horses run twice a year in a dangerous race that symbolizes the city's freedom. On the days of the Palio, the whole town goes crazy; read about it in our [BLOG](#).

Indeed, you will not forget the colour of frontages and roofs, the renowned colour "Sienna", a pigment first produced during the Renaissance, that makes the city lovely and warm. And don't forget to taste the Senese sweets: "*cantucci*" (biscuits with toasted almonds), "*ricciarelli*" (soft biscuits with icing sugar), "*panforte*" (cake with fruit nuts and spices) and "*cavallucci*" (biscuits with honey, walnut, candied fruits and spices). Travellers who love dessert will be delighted!



In the afternoon, you will stroll with your head upwards along the streets of one of the most beautiful cities in Tuscany, San Gimignano, also known as the "Medieval Manhattan", thanks to its old and impressive 14 towers that dominate the town skyline. Originally, the towers were 72, and they were built by patrician families, probably to demonstrate their wealth and power. Seven of San Gimignano's towers are around Piazza del Duomo; the tallest one is **Torre Grossa**, 54 meters high, dating back to 1298.

## VAL D'ORCIA

Val d'Orcia is one of the most fascinating places in Italy, included by UNESCO in the list of World Heritage Sites. Its landscape is a part of the agricultural hinterland of Siena, redrawn and developed when it was integrated into the city-state's territory in the 14th and 15th centuries to reflect an idealized model of good governance and create an aesthetically pleasing picture. The landscape's distinctive aesthetics, flat chalk plains with almost conical hills and fortified settlements on top, inspired many artists. Their images have come to exemplify the beauty of well-managed Renaissance agricultural landscapes.



Your first stop will be in **Pienza**, “Pio’s town”: here, Pope Pius II decided to build the perfect palazzo for his papal court according to the project of an “Ideal City” drawn up by artists such as Piero della Francesca. From the loggia of the Palace, you will enjoy a breathtaking panorama of the valley. Pienza is also the area of the typical “*Pecorino di fossa*” cheese, an absolute delight to the palate!

In **Montepulciano**, our friend Francesca will lead you to discover this beautiful town full of stories, legends and thousand flavours, introducing you to the excellent products of this unique land: *olive oil*, *pecorino cheese* and *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano*.

Then, you will get to **Montalcino**, one of the prettiest hill towns in Tuscany. Around the village, rows of olive trees, precious grapevines and yellow fields create an enchanting landscape. Here, you may visit a *Brunello* winery to taste the most famous *Supertuscan* wine, probably the best Italian red!

## ROME

Here you are in Rome, where ancient history, excellent art and religious icons mix uniquely! Start from the 2,000-year-old **Colosseum**, the most famous amphitheatre in the world, and the Imperial Fora, the administrative and monumental centre of the Roman Empire. On the Palatine Hill, the majestic ruins of the Palaces of Augusto, Tiberius and Domiziano still dominate the **Circus Maximus** valley, 50-meter-high structures giving a unique view of the city.

Close to the Colosseum, inside the **Church of San Pietro in Vincoli**, you may see the famous Michelangelo sculpture of “*Moses*”. Supposedly, Michelangelo, admiring his Moses, enraptured by the so realistic shapes of the imposing statue, was struck by a violent outburst of anger and exclaimed the famous phrase “Perchè non parli?” (Why don't you speak!?)



From Piazza Venezia, you will head inside “Baroque” Rome, starting with the **Pantheon**, dedicated to worshipping every god (Pan-every Theon-divinity), now the memorial chapel of great Italian people of the past. After that, don't miss the Church of **St. Louis of the French**, famous for the

cycle of paintings of the great Caravaggio at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Then, **Piazza Navona**, the splendid oval area corresponding to the underground Domitianus' Stadium, with the gorgeous Fountain of the Four Rivers by Lorenzo Bernini in the centre of the Piazza. And finally, **Fontana di Trevi**, the city's biggest and most famous fountain, a Rome icon renowned worldwide: here, statues of travertine marble stand over the cliff and the broad basin in an epic representation of the Kingdom of the Oceans.

At the end of the day, sit down at a local “*trattoria*” or “*fiaschetteria*”, the typical home-style restaurant, to taste authentic Roman cuisine in a popular and cheerful atmosphere (for an overview of Roman cuisine, see our [BLOG](#)).

## VATICAN CITY

On the other side of River Tevere, Vatican Hill is the home of the tiny state of Vatican City. The immense **St. Peter's Basilica** dominates the extraordinary Piazza framed by the magnificent four-column-deep colonnades designed by Gian Lorenzo Bernini. The Basilica is an extraordinary casket for some of the world's most beautiful works of art, such as

Michelangelo's "La Pietà" and Bernini's "Baldacchino", along with works of the most important artists of the Renaissance, from Raphael to Canova.

Inside the **Vatican Museums**, you will be astonished by the exquisite and unique **Sistine Chapel**, the "Sancta Sanctorum" ("Holy among the Holiest" in Latin) of the Roman Catholic Church, where cardinals gather to elect the new Pope! The



Sistine Chapel takes its name from Pope Sixtus IV della Rovere (pontiff from 1471 to 1484), who had the old Cappella Magna restored between 1477 and 1480. The decoration of the walls was executed by a team of painters, Pietro Perugino, Sandro Botticelli, Domenico Ghirlandaio and Cosimo Rosselli, assisted by their respective shops.

Julius II della Rovere (pontiff from 1503 to 1513), the nephew of Sixtus IV, decided to partly alter the decoration, entrusting the work in 1508 to Michelangelo Buonarroti, who painted the Ceiling and, on the upper part of the walls, the lunettes. The nine central panels show the Stories of Genesis, from the Creation to the Fall of Man to the

Flood and the subsequent rebirth of humanity with the family of Noah. Again, towards the end of 1533, Clement VII de' Medici (pontiff from 1523 to 1534) asked Michelangelo to paint the Last Judgement on the altar wall. How could he refuse? And, in fact, he did not, but painted his vision of the Judgement, with a powerful and furious Jesus Christ.

The tour is over, but the memories of a fantastic journey will accompany you for a lifetime!

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Arrivederci for another tour with **VITOR, Visit Italy on the Road**.