



GRAND CIRCLE TRAVEL®

Impressions of Italy:

The Amalfi Coast & Tuscany

2025

16-Day Land Tour

EXTEND YOUR TRIP

PRE-TRIP

Rome, Italy

POST-TRIP

Venice, Italy

Your Day-to-Day Itinerary

GRAND CIRCLE TRAVEL

Grand Circle Travel, founded in 1958 to serve the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP), is the leader in international travel and discovery for Americans over age 50. Grand Circle vacations have been recommended by *The New York Times*, *Conde Nast Traveler*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Travel + Leisure*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel*, and others. But our most impressive reviews come from our travelers. More than two million people have traveled with us, and the overwhelming majority say they'd gladly do so again.

LAND TOUR

During your Grand Circle vacation, you'll have reliable assistance available at all times from an on-site local Grand Circle Travel Program Director throughout your trip. He or she is fluent in English and can give you an inside perspective on your destinations. You will also be supported along the way by local tour guides, who lead you expertly through particular sites and cities.

Many Program Directors are graduates of professional education programs for travel guides. In addition, they receive specialized training directly from Grand Circle, based on what we've learned from past travelers about how to make the trip most enjoyable. Your Program Director offers both a deep knowledge of the region and a commitment to make this a very pleasant, informative, and rewarding travel experience for you.

He or she will provide sightseeing trips, handle all travel details, reserve optional tours you choose to take, oversee your Discovery Series events, and provide any other assistance you may need.

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » Choose to purchase **Grand Circle's** **airfare**, and your airport transfers, government taxes, fees, and airline fuel surcharges are included. Or, make your own air arrangements
- » **14 nights accommodation**
- » **28 meals:** 14 breakfasts, 6 lunches, and 8 dinners (including 1 Home-Hosted Dinner)
- » **16 included features:** 7 guided tours and 9 exclusive Discovery Series events: *History of Campania* • Home-Hosted Dinner • *Sorrentine Farm Experience* • *Italy & the Camorra* conversation • Vineyard experience • *Art of the Renaissance* conversation • Italian immigration conversation • Chianti cooking lesson • Olive oil mill visit
- » Exclusive services of a local **Grand Circle Program Director** (assigned to no more than 42 travelers)
- » **Gratuities** on your main trip for local guides and motorcoach drivers
- » **Personal headset** for all included and optional tours on your main trip
- » Private motorcoach land travel
- » Baggage handling for 1 piece of luggage per person, including tips
- » **5% Frequent Traveler Credit toward your next trip**

WHAT THIS TRIP IS LIKE

GROUP SIZE

- » A maximum of 42 travelers, led by a local Grand Circle Program Director

PACING

- » 2 locations in 15 days

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- » Walk 2–3 miles unassisted and participate in 2–3 hours of physical activities daily, including stairs
- » Three days of this trip may require 3–4 miles of walking and 3–6 hours of optional physical activity
- » Not accessible for travelers using wheelchairs or scooters

- » Travelers using walkers, crutches, or other mobility aids must travel with a companion who can assist them
- » We reserve the right for Program Directors to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience

TERRAIN & TRANSPORTATION

- » Uneven walking surfaces, including unpaved paths, hills, stairs, and cobblestones
- » Travel by 45-seat motorcoach, and public transportation that requires ability to stand up and hold handles while vehicle is in motion
- » Public transportation including bus, train, boat, and funicular

CLIMATE

- » Daytime temperatures typically range from 35-95°F all year round
- » May-August are the warmest months—temperatures in July and August may reach up to 105°F with high humidity
- » November-April weather can be unpredictable and change quickly within a short period of time, including snow in southern Tuscany from December-February

Impressions of Italy: The Amalfi Coast & Tuscany

YOUR DETAILED ITINERARY

BEGIN YOUR TRIP WITH AN OPTIONAL PRE-TRIP EXTENSION

4 nights in *Rome, Italy*

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Day 2 Arrive in Rome, Italy

Day 3 Explore Rome

Day 4 Rome • Optional pizza & gelato making lesson

Day 5 Rome • Optional Roman Ghetto & Trastevere tour

Day 6 Rome • Visit local farm • Transfer overland to Sorrento

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Depart the U.S. this evening for Naples, Italy.

Day 2 Arrive in Naples, Italy • Sorrento

- Destination: Sorrento
- Accommodations: Grand Hotel Cesare Augusto or similar

Morning/Afternoon: You'll arrive in Naples at some time today, depending on your specific flight arrangements. You'll be greeted at the airport by a Grand Circle representative who will assist you to your hotel in Sorrento, where you'll be joined by your Program Director, who can lead you on an orientation walk through the neighborhood surrounding your hotel, if you wish.

Dinner: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 3 Explore Sorrento • School visit • *History of Campania* conversation

- Destination: Sorrento
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Grand Hotel Cesare Augusto or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Join your Program Director and fellow travelers—including those who chose our *Rome, Italy* pre-trip extension—for an orientation briefing, and then set out for a discovery walk of Sorrento. With its romantic location on the cliffs over the Bay of Naples, Sorrento has long been the subject of songs and legends. It was here that the mythical sirens, with the beauty of their sweet singing, lured sailors to shipwreck on the rocks.

You'll see some of the sights of the city with your Program Director, such as the cathedral, Piazza Sant'Antonino, the Public Gardens, the town's quaint little alleys, and its main square, Piazza Tasso. Amble along Corso Italia, the town's main pedestrian thoroughfare, lined with picturesque shops offering food and handcrafts.

Then, you'll have the chance to visit children at a local school (in session between January–May and October–December), supported by Grand Circle Foundation. Meet the local *bambini* in their classroom, and see firsthand how your travel dollars have been put to use to provide new tools and technology to teach the children vital scientific skills. You'll also have the chance to speak with the school's faculty about the Italian education system.

Lunch: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Afternoon: Spend the afternoon at leisure exploring Sorrento on your own. Before dinner, join a local expert for an **Exclusive Discovery Series** conversation about the *History of Campania*, getting an overview of the epic stories that this region of Italy has been the setting to. Campania has been the home of civilization since before the days of the Romans, and many ruins and archaeological sites still dot the landscape today—most famously, Pompeii, in the shadow of Mount Vesuvius. Modern dramas have played out here as well, including the rise of fascism, Nazi occupation, and Allied liberation during World War II.

Dinner: Get to know your new travel companions better over an included Welcome Dinner at the hotel.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 4 Sorrento • Visit Herculaneum • Home-Hosted Dinner

- Destination: Sorrento
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Grand Hotel Cesare Augusto or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Discover one of the region's most impressive archaeological sites during an included morning tour of Herculaneum—a UNESCO World Heritage Site—a Roman town buried by Vesuvian ash in the same eruption that destroyed Pompeii in AD 79. It wasn't found again until 1709 when it was accidentally discovered by local workers. With the help of a local guide, you'll explore Herculaneum's well-preserved ruins, which some claim are even more impressive than those of Pompeii.

This wealthy Roman village was buried three days after Pompeii, and the ruins that were left behind were hidden beneath 50 feet of ash and mud, preserving a treasure trove of architecture, mosaics, and even papyrus scripts that would allow scholars to shed new light on Roman life. Although Herculaneum's residents had more time to flee than the unlucky souls of Pompeii, the first intact Roman skeletons in history were excavated here. The majority of the remains that were found are believed to have belonged to laborers and slaves.

You'll have about 20 minutes to further explore the ruins independently after your tour, and then return to Sorrento.

Lunch: On your own in Sorrento—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Afternoon: Free for your own discoveries—ask your Program Director for recommendations. Perhaps you will choose to walk down to the

port of Marina Grande—a picturesque, hidden harbor community which has retained much of its charms due to its secluded location.

Dinner: This evening, enjoy a special Home-Hosted Dinner with a local family. Throughout this **Exclusive Discovery Series** event, you'll become acquainted with Italian social life as you break bread with a family in their home and taste a meal from an authentic Italian kitchen. Traditional cuisine here often incorporates the freshest seasonal ingredients from the nearby markets.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 5 Sorrento • Sorrentine Farm Experience • Optional Lemony Sorrento tour

- Destination: Sorrento
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Grand Hotel Cesare Augusto or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Learn more about rural Italy during an **Exclusive Discovery Series Sorrentine Farm Experience**. Head into the countryside to visit a local dairy farm, which has been owned and managed by the same family and handful of master cheesemakers for generations. The dairy's products, crafted with love and care, with a focus on sustainability and community preservation, are prized by travelers and locals alike.

Enjoy the opportunity to get to know your hosts and learn about life as a farmer in Italy, as well as the traditional techniques that they use to produce their high-quality goods.

Lunch: Have a farm-fresh “tasting” lunch at the estate, where you'll sample local produce, olive oil, several varieties of cheese, and a glass of wine.

Afternoon: Return to your Sorrento hotel in the mid-afternoon, where the rest of the day is yours to spend at leisure—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Or, discover the secrets of Sorrento's lemons and limoncello during an Optional Tour to a lemon farm and orchard. You'll meet Osvaldo, the owner of the picturesque farm and orchard, and learn about what goes into his fruit production when he takes you to his “lemon laboratory” to show how lemons are washed, peeled, and prepared for use in Limoncello liqueur, gelato, sorbet, and even pastries. After, dine on a terrace overlooking the Gulf of Sorrento, and enjoy a three-course dinner including specialties like lemon Risotto, seabass with lemon gravy, and the regional specialty *Delizia al Limone*. And of course, you'll toast to the day's adventures with a glass of Limoncello.

Dinner: If you've opted to join our optional tour, you'll enjoy an included dinner at the end of your lemon farm visit. Otherwise, dinner is on your own; ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 6 Sorrento • Explore Naples • Italy & the Camorra conversation

- Destination: Sorrento
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Grand Hotel Cesare Augusto or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Ride to Naples, a UNESCO World Heritage Site situated in the heart of the Campania region, and one of the world's most beautiful seaports. Naples is dramatically situated between the Mediterranean Sea and the looming bulk of Mount Vesuvius. This colorful and vibrant city epitomizes Italy's national character: cheerful but chaotic. Naples is a city of great contrasts, aware of a heritage that springs from diverse cultural influences: Ancient Greek and Roman, Norman, French, Spanish, and, of course, Italian.

Here, you'll join a local guide for a tour of this dynamic city, weaving through the network of *vicos*—little alleyways—that lend Naples much of its character. You'll also get to know its famously friendly people, renowned for their ability to make you feel like a close friend just after meeting them. The author Johann Wolfgang von Goethe famously summarized the experience of visiting this city with the quote, "See Naples and die"—meaning that after visiting, one's life would be complete. You can decide for yourself if his praise is accurate as you explore.

Your expert local guide will also offer a glimpse into a controversial aspect of local culture during an **Exclusive Discovery Series** conversation about *Italy & the Camorra*. You'll learn about this crime syndicate and their impact on Campania from a local expert with first-hand experience about the mafia's influence on the region, and about how the organization has changed in modern times.

Lunch: Included at a local restaurant in the city.

Afternoon: Enjoy some leisure time exploring Naples on your own. On the drive back to Sorrento, you'll have the option to stop and independently visit Naples' Archaeological Museum, or to continue on with your Program Director back to the hotel. One of Europe's most valuable repositories of ancient artifacts,

notable exhibits in the Museum include the priceless Farnese collection of ancient Roman statuary and the many colorful treasures removed from long-buried Pompeii, Stabia, and Herculaneum. Afterwards, if you've stayed at the Museum, you'll take local transportation back to your hotel on your own.

Dinner: On your own in Sorrento—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 7 Sorrento • Explore Amalfi Coast

- Destination: Sorrento
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Grand Hotel Cesare Augusto or similar

Activity Note: The Amalfi Coast ferry is subject to the weather, and will be closed during inclement conditions. If the ferry is unavailable, you will instead set off on a motorcoach drive to Scala, the oldest village on the Amalfi Coast.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Depart for a tour of the beautiful *Costiera Amalfitana* (Amalfi Coast), sure to be a highlight of your stay in Sorrento.

On this leisurely tour, discover what is perhaps Italy's most beautiful coastline—a UNESCO World Heritage Site richly imbued with centuries-old charm. You'll enjoy a panoramic drive along the coast, traveling toward the colorful seaside town of Amalfi, romantically situated at the mouth of a deep gorge.

Then, set off on a boat ride along the ruggedly stunning shoreline, decorated by colorful fishing boats, wondrous rock formations, and villages whose buildings happily cling to the cliffs and seem to tumble toward the sea.

Lunch: On your own in Amalfi—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Afternoon: Return to Sorrento.

Dinner: Enjoy a light dinner at the hotel.

Evening: Continue making independent discoveries this evening.

Day 8 Sorrento • Optional Pompeii tour

- Destination: Sorrento
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Grand Hotel Cesare Augusto or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Spend a full day exploring Sorrento at leisure. Or, join our optional half-day tour to the infamous ruins of Pompeii, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. You'll depart for the ruins in the morning, traveling along the scenic Sorrentine peninsula, taking in dramatic views of the countryside, cliffs, and the sea along the way. Totally buried by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79 and not rediscovered until the 17th century, Pompeii's antiquities offer you an unparalleled view of everyday Roman life.

In the company of a local expert, walk in the footsteps of the Romans over ancient cobbles and pavement, spending a few hours at some of the most significant sites to learn how its people lived, built their homes, and conducted business.

Lunch: Our optional tour includes a farm-fresh lunch at an *agriturismo* farmhouse in the countryside outside Pompeii. Otherwise, lunch is on your own in Sorrento—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Afternoon: Your optional tour ends, and you return to Sorrento early this afternoon, where you'll have the rest of the day to spend at leisure. Your Program Director can recommend free time activities.

Dinner: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 9 Sorrento • Vineyard experience • Montecatini

- Destination: Montecatini
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Ercolini e Savi or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Bid farewell to Sorrento this morning and begin your 350-mile journey to Tuscany, your next destination.

Along the way you'll stop at a winery in Frascati, a small, family-owned vineyard for an **Exclusive Discovery Series** event. Enjoy a memorable people-to-people experience as you meet the owners, and learn about their proud wine-making tradition, which has been kept in the family for generations.

The property is ideally suited for wine production; its mineral-rich soils produce high-quality vintages, and the ancient tuff caverns beneath the land are a natural storage area for the precious wines as they age to perfection.

Lunch: Enjoy an included lunch at the winery, with musical accompaniment from a group of performers, who will treat you to an afternoon of classic Roman tunes.

Afternoon: Your ride continues as you make your way north to Montecatini, where you'll arrive in the early evening. You'll check in to your accommodations and have a little time to unwind from your journey before dinner.

Dinner: Included at the hotel.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 10 Explore Montecatini • *Art of the Renaissance conversation*

- Destination: Montecatini
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Ercolini e Savi or similar

Activity Note: The interior of Tettuccio Spa is not available during the months of November and December. The Montecatini Alto funicular only operates between the months of April and October. For the remainder of the year, a motorcoach transfer is available instead.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Explore Montecatini's elegant and beautifully preserved Art Nouveau spa district, including a visit to Tettuccio Spa. Unlike spas that offer clients a soak in their curative waters, Tettuccio Spa is known for its drinkable mineral waters—claiming to treat a range of ailments. As one of Europe's eleven "Great Spa Towns," Montecatini is recognized as part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Next, travel by funicular (when available) to Montecatini Alto, the original settlement of today's Montecatini. The wonderfully preserved medieval village is situated high above the "new" town, and offers spectacular views.

Lunch: On your own in Montecatini Alto—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Afternoon: Ride the funicular again to descend back down into the main part of town.

You'll have a few hours to relax or explore on your own before an **Exclusive Discovery Series** *Art of the Renaissance* conversation. Join a local expert to learn about how Tuscany was at the vanguard of a cultural movement that would change the world.

Dinner: Included at a local restaurant.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 11 Montecatini • *Optional Siena tour*

- Destination: Montecatini
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Ercolini e Savi or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today you can join a full day optional tour to the medieval walled city of Siena, a UNESCO World Heritage Site built on three ridges and dominating the land between the valleys of Arbia and Elsa. Siena was a rich and powerful city during the Middle Ages, and from the twelfth century into the 16th century, its banking activities and trade in wool and textiles placed it in direct rivalry with Florence. Its influence decreased after that time, as it spent much of its energies in defense against foreign conquerors.

Today's Siena still retains the air of the Tuscan Middle Ages. The 334-foot slender Italianate tower of the Town Hall soars from the rim of the Piazza del Campo, an inclined, central square that is one of the most beautiful in all of Italy. Surrounding this square are numerous lovely palaces dating from the twelfth to 16th centuries. Here, and throughout the city, are some of the most splendid examples of Gothic architecture in Italy.

On an included walking tour this morning, you'll wander up and down Siena's cobbled lanes, passing medieval red-brick palaces decorated by elegant Gothic frames in white marble. You'll wind your way on a three-mile route through the city, also passing the palace of Monte dei Paschi di Siena—Europe's oldest bank, founded in 1472.

Awaiting you at the highest part of the city is the splendid cathedral. As you visit the interior, note the colorful frescoes in the Piccolomini Library, painted by Pietro Perugino, the mentor of Raphael.

If you choose not to join today's optional tour, the day is yours to spend in Montecatini as you please—your Program Director can offer suggestions for discovery based on your interests.

Lunch: Our optional tour includes lunch at a local restaurant in Siena. Otherwise, lunch is on your own in Montecatini—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Afternoon: Optional tour travelers will have some free time to explore Siena independently before returning to Montecatini, where the rest of the afternoon is at leisure for all travelers.

Dinner: Included at a local restaurant.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 12 Montecatini • Explore Florence

- Destination: Montecatini
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Ercolini e Savi or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Explore legendary Florence today, a UNESCO World Heritage Site set on the banks of the Arno River. Florence came into its own as a commercial and cultural center during the 13th century, when merchants and tradesmen organized guilds that commissioned works of art to adorn their churches and palaces. It was this revival of interest in art and architecture that gave birth to the Italian Renaissance, an amazing outburst between the 14th and 16th centuries that completely changed the face of this Tuscan town. The names of the great artists of Florence define the Renaissance—Dante, Boccaccio, Fra Angelico, Donatello, Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, and Michelangelo.

Begin your exploration of Florence with a morning walking tour of the city, which includes the glorious square of the Duomo, where you can marvel at the marble façade of the cathedral and its remarkable octagonal dome, designed by Brunelleschi, one of the most magnificent structures of Renaissance Florence. While there, you'll also view the Gates of Paradise, impressive bronze doors that intricately depict scenes from the Bible. Continue on to the Piazza Signoria, the political center of Renaissance Florence.

Lunch: A light lunch will be included, featuring the opportunity to try a local delicacy: *lampredotto*, a popular street food sandwich made of tripe (the edible lining of cow intestine) slow-cooked in a broth of onions, tomato, and other ingredients until it has the texture of tender roast beef, served on crunchy bread.

Afternoon: Free for your own discoveries—ask your Program Director for recommendations. You may wish to visit one of the many fine Florentine leather showrooms. The art of Florentine leather tanning has been passed down through many generations to the tanners of today. Although machinery has changed with improvements in modern technology, many of the old dyeing techniques have remained virtually unchanged.

Dinner: Return to Montecatini, where dinner is on your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 13 Montecatini • Optional Pisa tour • Italian immigration conversation

- Destination: Montecatini
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Ercolini e Savi or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Enjoy a day of leisure today, making independent discoveries in Montecatini or simply unwinding at your hotel.

Or, join us on an optional tour to the city of Pisa, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that is famous for so much more than its iconic Leaning Tower. You'll explore the *Piazza dei Miracoli* (the Square of Miracles)—decorated by the stunning marble architecture of its Cathedral, the Baptistery (with its marvelous echo), and, yes, the Leaning Tower.

You'll stand beneath this famous tower, which brings to mind one of civilization's most illustrious names—Galileo Galilei, the genius who helped to found modern science. At the square's Cathedral, you can still view the lamp that inspired Galileo's theory of the pendulum.

He used the vantage point of the top of Pisa's celebrated Leaning Tower to demonstrate principles of speed and velocity.

After your tour, you'll have some free time to explore Pisa independently.

Lunch: Included with the cost of our optional tour at a local restaurant in Pisa. Otherwise, lunch is on your own in Montecatini—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Afternoon: Your optional tour ends, and you'll return to Montecatini, where you'll have a free afternoon for your own discoveries—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Before dinner, take part in an **Exclusive Discovery Series** conversation about immigration in Italy. You'll learn from a local expert about how migrating population patterns are changing the face of the country, and how it affects contemporary politics.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 14 Montecatini • Lucca • Olive oil mill visit

- Destination: Montecatini
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Ercolini e Savi or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Set off for a guided tour of Lucca, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Nestled in a verdant valley, this gem of Tuscany features ancient architecture and customs that have withstood the tests of time. This can be seen most readily in the well-preserved city walls which have surrounded the city since the 17th century, when they successfully defended

against the advances of Florence during the rise of the Medici—they encompass a wide expanse of red terra-cotta roofed homes, and the eye-catching Case-Torri or “Tower Houses” of wealthy families.

You’ll see the walls up close during your tour, which also takes you through Lucca’s charming piazzas, including Piazza dell’Anfiteatro, where a ring of medieval buildings outline the site of the city’s former amphitheater, which was used to hold thousands of spectators for gladiator games. Enjoy the laid-back pace of the city as you explore, and break bread with the locals during a visit to a local establishment. Following your tour, you’ll have a little time to amble around the city independently.

Next, head out into the pastoral landscape to learn more about a famous Italian culinary staple during an **Exclusive Discovery Series** visit to an olive oil mill. Here, you’ll learn about the production process that creates this famous export, and discover the various ways it can be used in cuisine.

Lunch: Experience the flavor of extra-virgin olive oil firsthand during a Farewell Lunch at the mill.

Afternoon: Return to Montecatini for a final afternoon at leisure. Your Program Director can offer recommendations on how to spend it.

Dinner: On your own. Your Program Director can recommend a restaurant.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 15 Montecatini • Chianti cooking lesson

- Destination: Montecatini
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Ercolini e Savi or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Head out into the Chianti countryside this morning, bound for Villa Il Leccio, a picturesque *agriturismo* estate built in the 18th century on the site of a medieval stone hill tower. Here, you’ll enjoy an **Exclusive Discovery Series** event as your host—a member of the family that has owned the villa for nine generations—leads you through a hands-on Italian cooking lesson, revealing the secrets behind preparing authentic Tuscan cuisine.

Lunch: Taste the fruits of your labor as you dine on your culinary creations during an included lunch at the estate.

Afternoon: Return to your hotel in Montecatini, where the rest of the day is free for your own discoveries—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Early that evening, join your fellow travelers and reminisce about what you’ve discovered during your journey over an included Farewell Drink and appetizers.

Dinner: Enjoy an included dinner with your fellow travelers.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 16 Montecatini • Return to U.S.

- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel. For early morning airport transfers, a boxed breakfast will be made available.

Morning: Transfer to the airport for your flight home. Or, begin your post-trip extension in *Venice, Italy*.

END YOUR TRIP WITH AN OPTIONAL POST-TRIP EXTENSION

4 nights in *Venice, Italy*

Day 1 Overland transfer to Venice • Explore Ferrara

Day 2 Explore Venice • Optional noble Venetian *palazzo* tour

Day 3 Venice • Visit Burano Island

Day 4 Explore Venice

Day 5 Venice • Return to U.S.

OPTIONAL TOURS

During your trip you will be able to book optional tours directly with your Program Director. He or she will ask you to confirm the payment for these tours by filling out a payment form. Optional tours can only be purchased with a credit or debit card. We accept Visa, MasterCard, and Discover credit cards. We also accept Visa and MasterCard debit cards, but it must be a debit card that allows you to sign for purchases. We do not accept American Express.

In order to correctly process these charges, there can be a delay of 2–3 months from the date of your return for the charges to be posted to your account. Therefore we ask that you use a card that will not expire in the 2–3 months following your return.

Please note: *Optional tour prices include gratuities for local guides and motorcoach drivers, are listed in U.S. dollar estimates determined at the time of publication, and are subject to change. Optional tours may vary.*

Lemony Sorrento

(Day 5 \$130 per person)

Discover the secrets of Sorrento's lemons and limoncello during a visit to a lemon farm and orchard. You'll meet Osvaldo, the owner of the picturesque farm and orchard, and learn about what goes into his fruit production when he takes you to his "lemon laboratory" to show how lemons are washed, peeled, and prepared for use in Limoncello liqueur, gelato, sorbet, and even pastries. After, dine on a terrace overlooking the Gulf of Sorrento, and enjoy a three-course dinner including specialties like lemon Risotto, seabass with lemon gravy, and the regional specialty *Delizia al Limone*. And of course, you'll toast to the day's adventures with a glass of Limoncello.

lived, built homes, and conducted business.

Then, enjoy an included lunch at an *agriturismo* farmhouse in the countryside.

Siena

(Day 11 \$130 per person)

Discover the medieval walled city of Siena, Florence's great historical rival, on this full-day optional tour. Laid out over the slopes of three steep hills, Siena offers its visitors a rich tapestry of churches, monuments, and other historical sites. See the Duomo—Siena's main cathedral—and its famous square, the Piazza del Campo, during a walking tour before lunch at a local restaurant. You'll also have time to make your own discoveries before returning to Montecatini in time for dinner.

Pompeii

(Day 8 \$150 per person)

Totally buried by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79, and not re-discovered until the 17th century, Pompeii's antiquities offer an unparalleled view of Roman life. Accompanied by an expert guide, you'll explore Pompeii's most significant sites and learn how its people

Pisa

(Day 13 \$170 per person)

Discover the city of Pisa on this optional tour. Explore the Piazza dei Miracoli (the Square of Miracles), which includes the stunning marble architecture of its Cathedral, the Baptistery (with its marvelous echo), and, of course, the Leaning Tower. At the square's Cathedral, you

can still view the lamp that inspired Galileo Galilei's theory of the pendulum. He used the vantage point of the top of Pisa's celebrated Leaning Tower to demonstrate principles of speed and velocity.

This tour also features an included lunch at a local restaurant.

Please note: Admission to the interior of the Leaning Tower is not included on this tour.

PRE-TRIP

Rome, Italy

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » **Accommodations** for 4 nights
- » **6 meals:** 4 breakfasts, 1 lunch, and 1 dinner
- » **1 included tour:** Rome
- » **Exclusive Discovery Series event:** Olive oil mill visit
- » **Gratuities** for local guides and motorcoach drivers on your extension and all optional tours
- » Exclusive services of a local Grand Circle Program Director
- » All transfers

PRE-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

From its marbled piazzas and ancient ruins, to the countless masterpieces displayed in museums, there may be no other city that has as many legendary expressions of beauty and history as Rome. We think you'll agree with us that, when you travel to Italy, a visit to the "Eternal City" is an opportunity not to be missed.

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Depart the U.S. this evening for Rome, Italy.

Day 2 Arrive in Rome, Italy

- Destination: Rome
- Accommodations: NH Giustiniano or similar

Activity Note: 2025 will be a Holy Year in Rome, as the city celebrates the 2025 Jubilee from December 24, 2024, through January 6, 2026. This event, which occurs only once every 25 years, draws millions of pilgrims to this holy city. While this affords travelers a rare opportunity to witness a special celebration, you should also be prepared for larger than usual crowds that may affect your included activities. We also strongly recommend that you reserve any independent visits to museums or attractions in advance.

Morning/Afternoon: You'll arrive in Rome today, the time depending on your specific flight arrangements. Upon arrival, you'll be met at the airport and assisted to your hotel. Then embark on an orientation walk to get you acquainted with your new neighborhood.

Lunch: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Dinner: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 3 Explore Rome

- Destination: Rome
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: NH Giustiniano or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: After a welcome briefing with your fellow travelers and Program Director, you will discover the city of Rome, whose historic center is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and museum *en plein air*, on a walking tour. First you'll trace back one of the oldest families tied to the Papacy through its gardens, and see how popes changed the layout of the city in the 15th and 16th centuries—from Piazza del Popolo to the Spanish Steps.

Discover the glamour of the world's best fashion designers as you stroll Via Condotti and Via Frattina, then walk to the the best preserved Roman temple through the alleys of the old city. Your walking tour will conclude at the Piazza Navona where you will experience quintessential Baroque artists. Once the stadium of Emperor Domitian, Piazza Navona was where Romans came to watch *agones* (games).

Today, it is common to see street performers here, providing entertainment for the many visitors from around the world. The piazza is one of Rome's most impressive Baroque squares, featuring architecture by Borromini and sculptures by Bernini, including the impressive Fountain of the Four Rivers.

Lunch: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Afternoon: Free for your own discoveries—ask your Program Director for recommendations. You may wish to toss a coin in *Fontana di Trevi* (the Trevi Fountain) to ensure you return to the Eternal City someday.

Dinner: Join your fellow travelers for an included dinner at a local restaurant.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 4 Rome • Optional pizza & gelato making lesson

- Destination: Rome
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: NH Giustiniano or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Explore Rome on your own today.

Lunch: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Afternoon: Continue making independent discoveries in Rome. Or, join an optional tour to a local cooking school for an introductory lesson to creating two classic Italian dishes: pizza and gelato. In the company of a master *pizzaiolo*, you'll learn the secrets behind preparing Roman-style pizza, typified by its smaller, crunchier crust, and topped with your preferred selection of fresh ingredients.

While your creation is in the oven, you'll gain insight into the process of making gelato, and learn about its similarities to—and important differences from—traditional ice cream.

Dinner: Travelers on today's optional tour will conclude their cooking lesson by sharing dinner together, with your handmade dishes at the center of your meal. Otherwise, dinner is on your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 5 Rome • Optional Roman Ghetto & Trastevere tour

- Destination: Rome
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: NH Giustiniano or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Enjoy another day in Rome to make your own discoveries—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Lunch: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Afternoon: Spend the afternoon at leisure, or join an optional tour of the Ghetto and Trastevere, taking in the sites of these unique neighborhoods this afternoon.

First you'll explore the Roman Ghetto, which has been home to Rome's Jewish community for nearly 2,000 years. Then cross the Tiber River over an ancient Roman bridge to discover Trastevere—a charming neighborhood favored by modern-day and ancient artists alike.

Dinner: Our optional tour includes dinner in Trastevere. Otherwise, dinner is on your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 6 Rome • Visit local farm • Transfer overland to Sorrento

- Destination: Sorrento
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Begin the ride to the cliffside town of Sorrento. On the way, you'll stop for an **Exclusive Discovery Series** visit to a local farm. Here, you'll learn about a few of the crops that are grown here, and gain insight into how they're processed and prepared to create the fresh, delicious cuisine that Italy is known for.

Lunch: Savor an included light lunch at the farm, featuring locally-grown ingredients.

Afternoon: Continue traveling to Sorrento, arriving late this afternoon, where you'll check in to your hotel. You'll join your Program Director for an orientation walk of the neighborhood, and begin your *Impressions of Italy: The Amalfi Coast & Tuscany* vacation.

OPTIONAL TOURS

Pizza & gelato making lesson

(Day 4 \$190 per person)

Drive to a local cooking school for an introductory lesson to creating two classic Italian dishes: pizza and gelato. In the company of a master *pizzaiolo*, you'll learn the secrets behind preparing Roman-style pizza, typified by its smaller, crunchier crust, and topped with your preferred selection of fresh ingredients.

While your creation is in the oven, you'll gain insight into the process of making gelato, and learn about its similarities to—and important differences from—traditional ice

cream. Conclude your lesson by sharing dinner together, with your handmade dishes at the center of your meal.

Roman Ghetto & Trastevere

(Day 5 \$160 per person)

Spend half a day exploring two Roman neighborhoods this afternoon: the Roman Ghetto, a Jewish ghetto established in 1555 by Papal bull, and Trastevere. The Jewish Roman community has lived in this area for almost 2,000 years, and a strong sense of pride, solidarity, and cultural tradition is evident

throughout the neighborhood. Then head to Tiber Island to visit the oldest working hospital in Rome, crossing over two different bridges that date back to ancient Rome. Walk to the other side of the Tiber River over an ancient Roman bridge to discover Trastevere—with its charming, narrow cobbled streets. Enjoy free time to explore on your own before dinner at a local restaurant—included in the cost of your optional tour.

POST-TRIP

Venice, Italy

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » **Accommodations** for 4 nights
- » **5 meals:** 4 breakfasts and 1 dinner
- » **3 included tours:** Ferrara, Venice, Burano
- » **Gratuities** for local guides and motorcoach drivers on your extension and all optional tours
- » Exclusive services of a local Grand Circle Program Director
- » All transfers

POST-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

Continue your travel in Italy by exploring Venice, an architectural masterpiece famous for its canals and numerous bridges. Venice instills in visitors an indelible fascination, from the elegance of the Piazza San Marco to the grandeur of the Basilica. Walking its streets or floating along in one of its gondolas, the sights you encounter cast a spell that is unforgettable.

Day 1 Overland transfer to Venice • Explore Ferrara

- Destination: Venice
- Accommodations: BW Premier Collection CHC Continental or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Depart Montecatini today, stopping on your way to Venice in the medieval walled city of Ferrara, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. A local guide will take you on a walking tour of this elegant Renaissance art town, after which you'll have time for independent exploration.

Lunch: On your own in Ferrara—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Afternoon: Arrive in Venice—another UNESCO World Heritage Site—this afternoon, where you'll check into your hotel then join your fellow travelers for an orientation walk of the neighborhood.

Dinner: On your own—your Program Director can offer suggestions on where to dine.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 2 Explore Venice • Optional noble Venetian *palazzo* tour

- Destination: Venice
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: BW Premier Collection CHC Continental or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Embark on a walking tour of romantic Venice, visiting the famous Piazza San Marco (St. Mark's Square), the center of the city. This square was the heartbeat of the *Serenissima* ("Serene Republic") in the heyday of Venice's glory as a seafaring republic, and the city's major attractions are centered here. It is one of the most beautiful and most photographed squares in all of Europe. Dominated by the lovely St. Mark's Basilica, the spacious square is surrounded with outdoor cafés, and is the perfect place to do a little people-watching Italian-style while sipping a cappuccino.

Ornate St. Mark's Basilica is so richly embellished that it looks like it could have been moved intact from Istanbul. Though the domed church is a conglomerate of many architectural styles, its main influence is Byzantine. Its façade is adorned with marble and mosaics that depict the life of Christ and St. Mark (whose body was smuggled into Venice in a pork barrel, to confound Muslim officials who would refuse to search anything that touched pork). Outside the basilica is the *campanile* (bell tower), which was rebuilt after it collapsed in 1902. It is now open should you want to ascend for a good view of the six cupolas of the church.

During your included city tour, you'll also view the Bridge of Sighs, which links the Doges' Palace with the cellblocks that housed prisoners condemned by Venice's Council of Ten. The "sighs" in the bridge's name stemmed from the sad laments of the numerous victims led across it to certain torture and possible death.

Lunch: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Afternoon: Enjoy the afternoon to make your own discoveries. You can choose to remain longer to enjoy St. Mark's Square, perhaps exploring some of the little alleys that radiate from it. Perhaps you'll get a taste for everyday

Venetian life by pausing for some light snacks and a glass of wine at a local *bacari*, a typical Venetian coffee shop.

Or, join us for an optional tour to noble Venetian *palazzo*, a splendorous estate located on the city's Grand Canal. You'll reach the palace by public ferry, where you'll be greeted by a member of the family that has resided in this *palazzo* for generations. Together, you'll wander the palace's elaborate halls and hear about its grand history, as well as the challenges of maintaining such an expensive home on Venice's wet, unsteady foundations. Your conversation continues over prosecco and traditional Venetian canapés, offering you a firsthand opportunity to learn about the daily life of Venice's upper crust.

After the conclusion of your optional tour, you'll return to the hotel by ferry.

Dinner: Enjoy dinner on your own in Venice—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 3 Venice • Visit Burano Island

- Destination: Venice
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: BW Premier Collection CHC Continental or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Spend the day visiting the Venetian fishing island of Burano by traveling across Venice Lagoon by *vaporetto* (public water bus). Upon your arrival, enjoy a walking tour of this colorful fishing village.

You'll also visit a traditional lace maker. The bobbin-style lace, which locals call *tombolo*, is a tradition that dates back to 1493 and has been carried on by fishermen's wives as a means of earning a small income while their husbands are away at sea. Then, enjoy free time to amble among the narrow streets and canals of Burano, where every house is painted a lively color to make them recognizable for the fishermen as they sail home.

Lunch: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Afternoon: Free for your own discoveries—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Dinner: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 4 Explore Venice

- Destination: Venice
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: BW Premier Collection CHC Continental or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: If you like, you may join your Program Director after breakfast this morning on an elective walking tour of "Hidden Venice," seeing parts of the city most visitors pass by.

Or, spend a full day to pursue your own interests in Venice. You can revisit a favorite site in more depth or continue to find new treasures. You have time to stroll through the halls of the Academia Gallery, housing a remarkable collection of paintings—masterpieces from the 14th to 18th centuries. You may want to visit the Peggy Guggenheim Museum, housed in an

old, 17th-century Customs House. Here is the eclectic private collection of works owned by Peggy Guggenheim, who lived in a Venetian palazzo for 30 years until her death in 1979.

Lunch: On your own—ask your Program Director for local restaurant recommendations.

Afternoon: Free for your own discoveries—ask your Program Director for recommendations. Maybe you'll take a *vaporetto* ride to the Island of Lido, containing Venice's premier beach resort, for a swim in the Adriatic.

Dinner: Gather together with your fellow travelers for a Farewell Dinner.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish—ask your Program Director for recommendations.

Day 5 Venice • Return to U.S.

- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Transfer to the airport for your flight home.

OPTIONAL TOUR

Noble Venetian *palazzo*

(Day 2 \$170 per person)

Discover a noble Venetian *palazzo*, a splendorous estate located on the city's Grand Canal. You'll reach the palace by public ferry, where you'll be greeted by a member of the family that has resided in this *palazzo* for generations. Together, you'll wander the palace's elaborate halls and hear about its grand history, as well as the challenges of maintaining such an expensive home on Venice's wet, unsteady foundations. Your conversation continues over prosecco and traditional Venetian canapés, offering you a firsthand opportunity to learn about the daily life of Venice's upper crust.