

Good Morning ,

This is Patrik, I will be your program director for your upcoming Impressions of Italy: The Amalfi Coast & Tuscany

I would like to thank you on behalf of the whole Grand Circle Travel company for choosing to travel with us again. It is a privilege for us to see your appreciation for our way of delivering travel experiences, and your contribution as an Inner Circle/VIP traveler certainly helps us improving even more.) ☺

I would simply like to introduce myself and give you a few tips while packing.

Let me start with a short presentation of myself.

I am 52 years old and based in Rome. I live with my family. Micaela is my wife and Chris and Maya my two teenager kids.

Venice is the city where I was born from Italian dad and Irish mum that met in Switzerland. I grew in Sacile, a small town an hour northeast of Venice.

I have two siblings. John is in Thailand, while Paul is living in Padova in the Veneto region.

My touring around the world started just after I finished school and my military service. Either to meet family members spread out in the world, either for vacations or work.

I ended up being a flight attendant for twenty years which gave me the opportunity to discover places and people. I understood the importance of getting to see different ways of living and thinking and always loved to get into deeper connections with people.

It came to a point where I said to myself. "Now that you got to discover a bit more of the world around you, why don't you try to open the window of your experiences so that other people can get to know more about you and the areas related to you"

Experiences in leading groups dates back to Summer 2018 and last year I joined the OAT family and Grand Circle Travel from this year.

Your experiences and thoughts can be very helpful for me while we will spend these two weeks together.

In my free time I enjoy Sports, outdoor activities, sharing time with family and friends.

I also love hiking, trekking and travelling.

I will also attach a picture of me at the end of this letter so that will be easier for you to recognize me at the Hotel in Sorrento.

The trip:

We will be visiting Campania and Tuscany, two completely different regions that will allow you to have 2 trips in one, with time to learn and discover at a well-balanced pace. I will be there to give you suggestions and different options to find what pace is best for you.

During the 1st week, we will be based in Sorrento, located between Naples and the Amalfi coast. As a tour guide and as a traveler too, I discovered over the years the distinctiveness of this beautiful region named Campania, a unique scenery and landscape but logistics and transportations can be challenging. Campania with its capital city Naples is also one of the most controversial and difficult

regions in Italy. If you mix history, food, welcoming people, huge contrasts, you realize the reason why Campania needs to be discovered with new eyes.

In Tuscany (350 miles north of Campania), we have different history, different food, different dialects, same beauty. We will visit some of the most beautiful cities and towns and we will learn a lot while having fun together.

Please be aware that this tour requires walking 2-3 miles unassisted and participating in 2-3 hours of physical activities daily, including stairs. Three days of this trip may require 3-6 miles of walking and 3-6 hours of optional physical activity. It is 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.

The pacing of this adventure is 100% up to you; this is your vacation so we want you to have the choice to join any of the activities we will offer whether it's an included feature or alternative (free time) activity.

Now it's time to give you useful information for our next trip so please read carefully thanks.

Documents

We recommend you carry on you a photocopy of your documents: passport (plus visa if applicable), air itinerary, credit card or other ATM card (front and back), alternative form of ID. To the above, it is also recommended to have a copy of your Travel Protection Plan.

Medical issues & Food restrictions

Once we will meet in Sorrento at our welcome briefing, I will ask you to fill in a paper **ONLY** form, in case you have any sort of food allergies/intolerances, or if you follow a specific diet (vegetarian, gluten free, etc.) to make the necessary arrangements for our included meals.

Of course, I assure you I will keep your data confidentially and I will destroy them after the trip.

Money

As you know the local currency is Euro and Italy is still a cash-driven society. Therefore, it is good to always carry some cash with you.

You can either leave the U.S. with Euros or withdraw them at the earliest convenient ATM (once we meet in Sorrento, I will point out the nearest ATM to the hotel).

Before starting the trip, please make sure to inform your bank that you will be using your credit card for purchases and withdrawals in Italy (otherwise the bank could stop transactions overseas for fraud protection).

Packing & Weather

You are allowed one piece of checked luggage and one carry-on bag per person.

Before packing, you can check online for the 15-days forecast.

<https://www.accuweather.com/it>

Good option to check weather, never completely rely on them. Personal experience 😊😊

MAY represents one of the nicest months of the year in Italy with sunny and warm days in Campania and more likely in Tuscany as well. We could experience few rainy days therefore an umbrella and a waterproof could be worth having.

We can expect temperatures between 55 F and 70 F.

However, packing layers is still recommended to accommodate any fluctuations in temperature throughout the day. And, as always, bringing along a scarf, sunglasses, and a reusable water bottle is a great idea for staying comfortable and eco-conscious during our adventures.

Comfortable walking shoes are necessary since we will be walking a lot in cobblestone paths (Uneven walking surfaces, including unpaved paths, hills, stairs, and cobblestones).

IMPORTANT PLEASE READ:

In the rare chance of having a delayed checked luggage, we recommend preparing “smart” carry-on luggage; Change of clothes, a toothbrush, medicines (individual liquid containers are limited to 100ml each), camera equipment and your trip paperwork should all be in your carry-on.

Finally, we will be using radios (whispers) for many of our guided tours and a one earphone headsets will be provided. however, if you have a pair you prefer using, bring them along. (No Bluetooth/wireless) earphones, but old-style plug-in headset with a jack!

Hotels

Grand Circle Travel has carefully chosen our hotels based on their value, location and service. But it is fair to remind you that European standards are very different from the American ones. Spaces inside the hotel (both common and personal) are much smaller compared to the American ones, as many of our hotels in Italy are built in old historical buildings that have been renovated in modern times to create hotels. Amenities such as kettles and tissues are not common in Italian hotels, **ice machines in hotel hallways are not customary** (but you can ask for ice at the hotel and they will accommodate your request though their bar service), wi-fi is of course complimentary but it is not as fast as in the U.S.

Communications/calls

Before leaving the U.S. check with your telephone provider for calls from abroad. If not convenient, you can consider the possibility of buying a prepaid calling card, E-sim or a local SIM (but make sure that your phone is unlocked to work abroad as well). Otherwise, just make sure to have extra internet data, so you can use a Smartphone app like Skype or FaceTime or WhatsApp to call your beloved ones at home.

HEALTH and SAFETY

I will do all we can to ensure our travelers' safety and health while on our trip, but I need your help. We ask travelers to follow the best health and hygiene practices to prevent the spread of illness and by working together we can create a safer travel experience for everyone.

Do not hesitate to contact me with any question or doubt you may have.

Arrival

We provide meet & greet staff at the airport for travelers that book flights through GCT and arrive on the first day of the tour. This is done to smooth and facilitate the process of entrance for travelers.

A GCT greeter with a sign will be waiting for you AFTER you exit the baggage reclaim area and assist you to meet the driver who will take you to the hotel.

In case of lost or delayed luggage, please make sure to fill out a claim form with the airlines BEFORE leaving the baggage claim area. Claims need to be made immediately at the airport. Once a traveler exits the customs area, the airline cannot be held accountable to any loss or damage.

I see you are arriving in Sorrento a day in advance: a great choice to settle in and get over the jetlag before we start our adventure together.

I'll be present throughout the next day, day of regular arrivals, around the lobby area, waiting for you and/or your fellow travelers, and I'll be at your disposal for any questions or suggestions needed!

I guess this is it for now.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any questions or doubts you may have before the trip.

My mobile number is +39 347 27 33 300.

Calling from the U.S., you must always dial the country code, that in Italy corresponds to +39

If you have whatsapp app you can get in touch with me through the tour with that app as well. It is more immediate and can get back to you faster.

My email is patrik.tourleaderacm@gmail.com

I will try to reply as quickly as I can, however, please consider the time difference (Italy is 6 hours ahead of Washington DC) so a day may pass before I am able to get back to you.

[illegible]

Thank you for your attention and for your collaboration in sending me useful information about you.

I wish you a safe and pleasant journey to Italy and I am sure we are going to have lots of fun together!

See you soon! A presto!

Warm Regards,
PATRIK DELLA FIORENTINA

Ps: Here attached a photo of myself.

