

Italian Renaissance

9 Days / 7 Nights

YOUR DAY -BY-DAY ITINERARY

DAY 1: USA / MILAN – We depart on an international overnight to Milan, Italy. Dinner and breakfast are served on board.

DAY 2: MILAN / PADUA – Upon arrival in Milan, we'll be greeted by our tour guide, and next board our deluxe motorcoach for a half day sightseeing tour of this charming international metropolis. The city is home to some of Italy's finest artistic masterpieces. We stop at the famous Piazza del Duomo and visit the Metropolitan Cathedral-Basilica of the Nativity of Saint Mary, frequently referred to as Duomo, the third largest gothic church in Europe with 3,400 statues and over 700 figures decorating the site. We continue to Santa Maria delle Grazie, the stunning church and home to Dominican convent, and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The site contains a mural of Leonardo da Vinci's The Last Supper. We also see the Teatro alla Scala, the world-renowned opera house built between 1775 and 1788. Partially destroyed during the Second World War, it was successfully rebuilt. We continue to Padua. Dinner and overnight in Padua. (B/D)

DAY 3: PADUA / VENICE / PADUA – After breakfast we travel to Venice and begin our half day sightseeing tour of Venice, the magical city consisting of 118 islands connected by lagoons and bridges. Venice is home to many palaces, bell towers and domes dominating the skyline. We visit the St. Mark's Square, the St. Mark's Basilica and see the Doge's Palace, the Grand Canal, the Rialto Bridge, the Bridge of Sighs, and the Columns of San Marco and San Todaro. The afternoon at leisure to explore the city on your own before return to Padua. Dinner and overnight in Padua. (B/D)

DAY 4: PADUA / PISA / FLORENCE - Today after breakfast we visit the Basilica of St. Anthony of Padua and head for Pisa. Upon arrival, we view the legendary Leaning Tower and see the UNESCO World Heritage Site, the famous Piazza dei Miracoli, home to Pisa Cathedral, Pisa Baptistry, Campanile, and Monumental Cemetery. We continue to Florence to immerse ourselves in a truly astounding collection of Renaissance art and architecture. Upon arrival in Florence, we have some time at leisure. Dinner and overnight in Florence. (B/D)

DAY 5: FLORENCE – The morning tour takes us to the Historical Center. We see the Piazza San Giovanni, home to the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, the Baptistry of San Giovanni with the "Gates of Paradise", and the Giotto bell tower. The tour continues to the Piazza Signoria, Palazzo Vecchio, and the Santa Croce Church. Finally, we visit the Galleria dell' Accademia to see the famous statue of David by Michelangelo. Afternoon at leisure to pursue your personal interests. Dinner and overnight in Florence. (B/D)

DAY 6: FLORENCE / ASSISI / ROME – Today after breakfast we depart for Assisi as we experience Tuscany and Umbria two of Italy's most scenic regions. We arrive in the Valley of Assisi where we visit the Basilica of St Mary of the Angels where St. Francis spent most of his life. Here we visit the Chapel, Porziuncola, the rose bush, and the cave where he retired for prayer. We travel up to the quaint hilltop, birthplace of St Francis that still retains something of the atmosphere of the early 1200s, the period when St. Francis began his ministry. We visit St. Francis's huge 13th-century Basilica built over his crypt containing many of the saint's possessions and a series of frescoes depicting his life. Continue to the Church of St. Clare to see the saint's incorrupt body. The foundress of the Order of Poor Clares followed the teachings of St Francis by living a life of poverty and humility. We may kneel before the San Damiano Cross from which Jesus spoke to St. Francis asking him to rebuild His church. We continue to Rome. Dinner and overnight in Rome. (B/D)

DAY 7: ROME – This morning, we experience a very special privately guided tour of the priceless collection of art and



treasures found in the Sistine Chapel and the Vatican Museum. You will be amazed by the beautiful wall frescoes created by Michelangelo, Perugino and Botticelli. The unique ceiling of the Sistine Chapel is surely one of Michelangelo's greatest achievements. Continue to St. Peter's Basilica, the largest church in the Christian world, built over his tomb. Then proceed to see the Castel Saint's Angelo, the Piazza Spagna, the Trevi Fountain, the Piazza Navona, the Piazza Venezia, the Roman Forum, the Colosseum, the Arch of Constantine, and the Circus Maximus. Then back to our hotel to get ready to dinner at a popular Roman local restaurant. Dinner and overnight in Rome. (B/D)

DAY 8: ROME – We begin our tour at St. Paul Outside the Walls, the grand basilica built over St. Paul's tomb. Admire the peaceful cloister and reflect at the Apostle's resting place. We continue to Tre Fontane Abbey, the traditional site of Paul's martyrdom, where three springs mark the place his head struck the ground after beheading. Later, we visit the Mamertine Prison, near the Roman Forum, where Paul was held before trial. The somber underground cell offers a powerful connection to his final days. Next, we stop at San Paolo alla Regola, built over the house where Paul lived under house arrest and likely wrote several of his epistles. Our tour concludes at St. John Lateran, Rome's cathedral, a symbol of the Church built on the foundation of apostles like Paul, fitting place for reflection and prayer. Dinner and overnight in Rome. (B/D)

DAY 9: ROME / USA – After breakfast we transfer to Fiumicino airport for our flight back home arriving the same day. (B)

* (B, L, D) = Breakfast, Lunch Dinner