



EUROPE - ITALY - 11N/12D



ITINERARY

Itinerary:

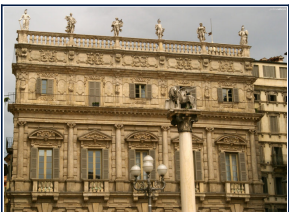
Day 1 : Milan, sightseeing and attractions

Make a beeline for Leonardo's damaged, yet still moving Last Supper in the church of Santa Maria delle Grazie. Visit the Brera museum, home to masterpieces by Mantegna, Raphael, and Piero della Francesca. Don't miss the exquisite Duomo in all its Gothic splendour.



Day 2&3 : Lake Como, sightseeing and attractions

Take one day simply to explore the villages and waterways of romantic Lake Como, including the elegant town of Bellagio. The lake is shaped like an upside-down letter Y, and has a twisty shoreline that is scattered with villages including Bellagio. Lombard kings once took refuge from invaders on Isola Comancina, the sole island in this beguiling 146 sq km body of water. Bellagio is one of the prettiest towns in Italy, with meandering cobblestone streets and romantic lakeside restaurants. Ferry to pristine villages nestled along the lakeshore to visit lush gardens and elegant villas.



Day 4 : Verona, sightseeing and attractions

Arrive in Verona and take a walking tour of the town's medieval centre, including the bustling Piazza Erbe market square and the ornate Scaligeri tombs. Free time for lunch, to see 'Juliet's balcony', and to marvel at the Roman Arena - today a popular opera venue. Drive high up into Italy's Dolomite Alps, where the locals speak German first and Italian second. Then head to your hotel for a hearty Tirolean dinner.





Day 5 : Venice, sightseeing and attractions

Enjoy a historical walking tour of Venice, with a modern Venetian's eye view, through the backstreets and along the canals and learn all about the city's remarkable past. Hang out in the gracefully spacious Piazza San Marco before visiting the Basilica, with its shimmering mosaics. Bask in the Bellinis and other Venetian masterpieces at the marvelous Galleria dell' Accademia.



Day 6&7 : Cinque Terre, sightseeing and attractions

Follow coastal trails and discover villages clustered on windswept cliffs and perched above beautiful coastlines. There are five villages - Monterosso al Mare, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manrola and Riomaggiore, and they are all part of a Unesco World Heritage Site. Take the Cinque Terre Coastal Trail from Riomaggiore to Monterosso and enjoy spectacular views. The trails connect each village and give wonderful views of the National Park and the Ligurian Sea. Hike and swim by day and sample the fresh seafood and local delicacies by night. Hop on a boat to Palmaria Island in the Gulf of La Spezia and Portovenere, the pretty town at the end of the Cinque Terre Peninsula. Take an guided excursion within the park, try diving in the Puntamesco Marine Reserve, cruise by traditional boat, or take a trip to Portofino for a walk to the beautiful nearby San Frutuoso Sanctuary.



Day 8 : Florence - Pisa, sightseeing and attractions

Florence (Firenze in Italian), was founded in the 1st Century B.C., and personifies all that is beautiful in Italian civilization. It is the capital of the region of Tuscany, with a population of approximately half a million people. The fathers of Italian painting, Cimabue and Giotto lived here, along with innumerable other prominent artists. It is the birthplace of the Italian language (thanks to Dante Alighieri) and of Europe's richest cultural period, Start with a drive up to Piazzale Michelangelo to admire wonderful panoramic views of Florence. Next, take a walking tour of the cathedral (exterior) in the old city centre, including Giotto's bell tower, the Baptistry with its bronze doors and the famous cupola by Brunelleschi. A short walk brings you to the Accademia Gallery that houses the statue of David by Michelangelo. No tour to Tuscany is complete without a visit to Pisa and the Field of Miracles to see the famous leaning tower.

Day 9 : Tuscany wine tasting

Head off on a wine tour in to Tuscany and taste some of the famous wines from this region, including Chianti and Montepulciano. Stop first at Greve in Chianti country and sample the region's wine at any of the terrific 'enoteche' (wine shops) lining Greve's oddly shaped Piazza Matteotti. Drive the Strada Chiantigiana, the beautiful roadway winding through the heart of the region, and stop in at Castello de Brolio, a centuries-old castle and vineyard.

Day 10&11 : Rome, sightseeing and attractions

Arrive in the bustling Italian capital, Rome. This city exudes history, from its Catacombs that entombed early Christians, to the Colosseum where gladiators battled to the death, and on up to Palatine Hill -the traditional site of Rome's founding. Located near the centre of the Italian peninsula on the Tiber River, it is both the capital of the Latium region and the country as a whole. Nicknamed the Eternal City, it is also home to the Pope, whose residence, Vatican City, is a sovereign state within the city of Rome. The city is enthralling, with perhaps more to see than any other place in the world. Eating in Italy is deeply embedded in the country's culture, and dining in Rome consists of many courses, and can sometimes seem to last forever! In addition to the many and legendary cultural attractions, the city offers a vibrant nightlife - a fitting final destination on our journey through the best of France and Italy. Enjoy a true taste of Italy with a traditional Roman meal.

Day 12 : Depart