

DAY 1 NICE AREA - GENOVA (2 NIGHTS)

This morning we will explore the old quarter of Genova, beginning at the 12th century cloisters of **Sant' Andrea**, once the grandest convent in Genova. We continue with a stop at **San Lorenzo Duomo**, Genoa's beautiful and unique cathedral, before visiting the **Museo del Tesoro di San Lorenzo**, which houses the Roman green glass dish, which is said to have been used at the Last Supper, and a blue chalcedony plate, on which the head of John the Baptist was allegedly served up to Salome. We will have free time in the afternoon.



DAY 2 THE CINQUE TERRE

Today we will explore the **Cinque Terre**, a wild but hospitable area known as the "Five Lands," characterized by its terraced vineyards, fishing villages and beautiful beaches. Our morning begins in **Vernazza**, perhaps the most picturesque village of the Cinque Terre, which boasts a glorious maritime history. We will stroll around the village and visit the Romanesque **Church of Santa Margherita di Antiochia**, standing on a rock. The afternoon is free for you to enjoy. Some may want to walk the famous "Via dell' Amore (The Lover's Pathway)" on the way to Manarola. The area offers visitors some amazing views and has been a source of inspiration to many poets and painters over the centuries.



DAY 3 GENOVA - PISA - TUSCANY AREA

This morning we will journey to **Pisa**, where we will view the breathtaking **Piazza del Duomo**. It is known in Italian as the "Field of Miracles" for the beautiful ensemble of the Cathedral, Baptistry and the famous Leaning Tower of Pisa. Despite its sinking foundations, the tower stands as magnificently today as it did upon its completion in 1350. We will have some time to explore the grounds before we continue to Florence, the "Cradle of the Renaissance." We will stop just outside the city to explore **Piazzale Michelangelo**, which offers a splendid panoramic view of Florence's domes and towers.



DAY 4 FLORENCE

The day begins in the **Piazza della Signoria**, the political stage of Renaissance Florence and virtually an open-air museum of sculpture. We will visit the **Piazza del Duomo**, where the Cathedral, Tower and Baptistry display the traditions of Florentine art from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. We will view the massive and detailed façade of the Duomo, before viewing the Baptistry's bronze doors by Ghiberti, which Michelangelo commented were worthy to be the "Gates of Paradise." After a brief visit inside the **Duomo**, we will have the opportunity to do one of the following: ascend the **Bell Tower**, climb the narrow steps to the top of



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the **Red Dome**, or visit the spectacular interior of the **Baptistry** (*One admission included*). The day continues with a visit to the famous **Ponte Vecchio**. This famous bridge is home to numerous jewelers and local merchants. It also a nice place to enjoy some lunch or experience some of the local cuisine.

DAY 5 FLORENCE AREA - ASSISI - ROME

This morning we will travel in the Tuscan hillside to the delightful walled city of Assisi, closely associated with St. Francis, has hardly changed since the Middle Ages. Our day will begin with a visit to **St. Clare's Church**, dedicated to the founder of the Order of Poor Clares, who worked closely with St Francis. The church contains the Byzantine Crucifix that is said to have spoken to Francis and caused his conversion to the Christian faith. From the terrace of



the piazza there is a pretty view of the Umbrian countryside. At the end of the 14th century, famous masters came from Rome and Venice to Assisi to work on the **Basilica of St Francis**. The result, combining the wishes of the Saint for a simple burial place and those of a proud city that wanted to commemorate him in the grandest way possible, was the first "Double Basilica." Consisting of two superimposed churches resting on a series of immense arches, the Basilica was constructed with the lower church kept as near as possible to the saint's sober wishes, and the upper Basilica, in contrast, accomplished Gothic work, with its tall and graceful nave and Giotto's famous cycle of frescoes. After our visit of the Basilica, we will return to our coach and continue on to **Rome**. The evening is at your leisure with dinner by



your own arrangement.

DAY 6 ROME

Today we will explore the Vatican, the world's smallest independent nation, and the center of the Christian world. Our day begins with a specialist-guided tour of the **Vatican Museums**, which house one of the most impressive collections of art in the world. Our tour will include the map rooms, the tapestry rooms, and the magnificent **Raphael Rooms**, as well as the spectacular **Sistine Chapel**, highlighted by Michelangelo's ceiling and his *Last Judgement*. We continue with a visit to **St. Peter's Basilica**, the largest church in the



western world and the most important point of pilgrimage in the Catholic world. Highlights of our visit will include: *The Pieta* by Michelangelo, the tomb of St. Peter and Bernini's magnificent *Baldacchino*. After time to explore St. Peter's Square, we will continue with a walk to the **Spanish Steps**, the stairway of the Church of Trinita dei Monti, and "the sitting room" of the city. Our day concludes at the spectacular **Trevi Fountain**, where it is traditional to toss a coin into the fountain

to ensure a return to the Eternal City.

DAY 7 ROME -

Today we will explore Rome's most spectacular remains from the powerful Roman Empire, commencing with a specialist guided tour of the **Colosseum**, considered the symbol of Rome's eternity. Completed under Titus in 80 AD, over 55,000 spectators could watch the gladiatorial games. We continue with a walk through the ruins and excavations of the **Roman Forum**, featuring the remains of magnificent temples, basilicas and triumphal arches, which once formed the heart of the Empire. Our tour concludes with a brief visit to the **Mamertine Prison**, once reserved for those that posed a threat to



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the security of Rome, before viewing **Trajan's Column and Markets** and the grandiose **Vittorio Emmanuelle Monument**. Our afternoon commences in the **Piazza Navona**, built on the foundations of Domitian's Circus. This



magnificent square, designed in the 17th century by Bernini, is full of life and is highlighted by one of Rome's most spectacular fountains, the fountain of the *Four Rivers*. Our afternoon concludes with a visit to the **Pantheon**, one of the grandest and the best-preserved Roman monuments, which today houses the tombs of Raphael, Vittorio Emmanuelle II, and Queen Margherita.

DAY 8 DEPARTURE FROM ROME

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