



DAY 1

ARRIVE IN ROME, ITALY

Welcome to Rome! Arrival in Rome, private coach transfer to the reserved Hotel , check in ! Dinner in a local Restaurant, overnight.



DAY 2 PAPAL AUDIENCE – ST. PETER’S BASILICA – VATICAN MUSEUMS

This morning, attend the PAPAL AUDIENCE (subject to availability) for the chance to see the Pope and receive the Papal Blessing , then we ‘ll discover the Vatican City with a guided visit of the VATICAN MUSEUMS, a unique collection of religious and secular art that spans centuries. Explore some of the finest examples of Renaissance paintings and visit the SISTINE CHAPEL, world famous for Michelangelo’s ceiling paintings and The Last Judgment, as well as the place where the conclave takes place for the election of the popes. Then, visit ST. PETER’S BASILICA, not only an incredibly rich architectural and decorative wonder, also the place where all Catholic popes are buried. Finally, see monumental ST. PETER’S SQUARE, where the Pope prays the Angelus every Sunday in front of thousands of believers. After your time for lunch



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DAY 3 ROME – BASILICAS ROME

After breakfast meeting with the guide for the discovery of the basilicas of Rome ! visit ST. PAUL OUTSIDE THE WALLS, one of Rome’s four major Papal basilicas built by Constantine on the grave of St. Paul, beheaded by Nero around 65-67 AD. Explore the mysterious ancient CATACOMBS that run under the city. During the persecutions, the catacombs were used as places of refuge for the celebration of the Eucharist. Next, visit ST. JOHN LATERAN BASILICA and the HOLY STAIRS, brought from Jerusalem to Rome around 326 AD by St. Helena, mother of Constantine the Great. Officially, pilgrims may only ascend these 28 white marble steps on their knees. We can visit the minor basilica the church of Holy Cross in Jerusalem. One of Rome’s seven pilgrimage churches, the Church of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem was founded in 320 by St Helena, mother of the emperor Constantine, in the grounds of her Roman palace. It takes its name from the Christian relics here – including a piece of the cross on which Jesus was crucified and a nail from the crucifixion – that St Helena supposedly brought to Rome from Jerusalem. These are housed in a modern chapel to the left of the altar. Then, visit the hallowed halls of ST. MARY MAJOR BASILICA. Its beautiful treasures are of inestimable value, and represent the Church’s role as the cradle of Christian artistic civilization in Rome. For nearly sixteen centuries, St. Mary Major has held its position as a Marian shrine par excellence and has been a magnet for pilgrims from all over the world who have come to the Eternal City to experience the beauty, grandeur, and holiness of the basilica. Dinner and overnight .



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DAY 4 ROME–CASCIA–ASSISI

Depart Rome today and head north into Umbria for a stop in Cascia to explore the life of St. Rita, known as the “Saint of the Impossible.” Visit the BASILICA, see the tomb with the saint’s incorrupt body, and attend Mass. Also, visit the lower basilica, home of the Eucharistic Miracle, which is commemorated each year with the Feast of Corpus Christi. Continue to hilltop Assisi, home of St. Francis and St. Clare. Here, visit ST. MARY OF THE ANGELS BASILICA, where St. Francis consecrated St. Clare as the “Bride of Christ,” and the PORZIUNCOLA, where he founded the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor in 1209. Dinner and overnight.



DAY 5 ASSISI

After Breakfast guided walking tour of Assisi. Visit the BASILICAS OF ST. FRANCIS and ST. CLARE. See the crucifix that spoke to St. Francis, who abandoned a life of luxury for a life devoted to Christianity after the voice of God commanded him to rebuild the Christian church and live in poverty. He is the patron saint of animals and the environment. St. Clare was one of St. Francis’ first followers and founded the Order of Poor Clares, a monastic religious order for women in the Franciscan tradition. A short trip by minibus takes you to the CARCERI HERMITAGE, a peaceful oasis in the woods of Mount Subasio where St. Francis came to pray. Finally, visit the MONASTERY OF ST. DAMIAN, a Franciscan shrine built on the spot where St. Francis heard the voice of Christ, and where he wrote the Canticle of the Creatures. The convent founded by St. Clare, where she died in 1253, is still intact. Afternoon is up to you! You will have a full day to explore Assisi in complete freedom, do some souvenir shopping or simply relax.



DAY 6 ASSISI–SIENA–FLORENCE

Leave Assisi and enter Tuscany. In Siena, meet your Local Guide and learn all about St. Catherine, a saint, a mystic, a doctor of the Church, and the patroness of Italy and Europe. You’ll visit the BASILICA OF ST. DOMINIC, ST. CATHERINE’S SANCTUARY, and her HOUSE. Then, enjoy a walk through the ancient narrow lanes and visit beautiful PIAZZA DEL CAMPO. Arrive this afternoon in Florence, “Cradle of the Renaissance”. Dinner and Overnight



DAY 7 FLORENCE

After putting on some comfortable walking shoes and grabbing a cappuccino and pastry at whatever bar catches your eye, it’s time to see David!

Cappuccino Tour Operator

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Follow your Local Guide and visit the Gallery of Accademia, the Gallery is famous for the **Michelangelo sculptures** in it: **the David, the Prisoners or Slaves, the Saint Matthew**. Later, walk to **Piazza del Duomo**, the religious centre of the town, dominated by the **Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore** and its dome, by the **Baptistry and by Giotto's famous belfry**. Santa Maria del Fiore is the most important building, or seat (*cathedra*) of the bishop of the Florentine Diocese. It was given Gothic lines by **Arnolfo di Cambio** as from 1296 and completed in 1434, with a marvellous renaissance dome designed by **Filippo Brunelleschi**. It is completely covered in marble of various colours. Opposite the façade of the Duomo, stands the **Baptistry of St. John the Baptist**, a magnificent example of Romanesque architecture, with the inner vault of its dome covered with mosaics that were finished in the 13th century. After leaving the **Piazza del Duomo**, we shall thread our way through the Medieval Quarter, where we shall encounter the "tower houses" which witnessed the struggles between Guelphs and Ghibellines and the life of **Dante Alighieri** and your guide will finally escort you into the Piazza della Signoria, where the **Palazzo della Signoria** (or Palazzo Vecchio) still fulfils its function as political and administrative headquarters of the town. Piazza della Signoria is not only the political centre of Florence, but a veritable open-air museum. The original renaissance statues displayed here, as well as the Palace of the Signoria make it one of the most elegant squares in the world. Your walk will continue in the historical quarter of Santa Croce, which for over a thousand years has been famous for its leather craft and trade. The quarter derives its name from the Basilica of Santa Croce, the great thirteenth century Franciscan basilica and Pantheon of "Italian Glories", to quote **Ugo Foscolo**, with the tombs of **Machiavelli, Michelangelo, Galileo Galilei** and **Rossini**. There are very important frescoes by **Giotto** and his school and the famous **Cimabue Crucifix**. Flanking the Gothic lines of the church, enshrined within the cloisters, is the rigorous and exemplary **Pazzi Chapel**, designed by **Filippo Brunelleschi** for the Pazzi family and decorated by **Luca della Robbia**. Take the time to visit one of the closed food markets in the center of Florence. **San Lorenzo Market** is the largest and oldest one, here you'll get the chance to live the real florentine feel... you will smell, see and touch the freshest products and above all you will get to taste whatever catches your attention! You should also know that the first floor of the "Mercato Centrale" (which is another way to call San Lorenzo's market in Italian) now hosts high quality bars, restaurants, cafés where to eat, have a drink, and relax. Dinner and Overnight



DAY 8 FLORENCE-PADUA

After breakfast we will leave the magnificent city of Florence, and our private coach through the Apennine Mountains will arrive in the flat Po area. In Padua, a guided visit of the **BASILICA OF ST. ANTHONY** shows you the tomb and reliquaries of this miracle-working saint and patron of lost and stolen articles. St. Anthony is one of the Catholic church's most popular saints. He was a powerful Franciscan preacher and teacher. He was born in Lisbon in 1195 and died just outside Padua in 1231, having led a short but very intense religious life. The present Basilica is mainly the result of three rebuilding which have followed one after the other in the space of around seventy years: 1238 – 1310. At the time of St Anthony the small Church Santa Maria Mater



Domini was here, later on it became a part of the Basilica, corresponding to the Chapel of the Madonna Mora. The Monastery of the Franciscans, probably founded by St Anthony himself in 1229, was close to the small Church. After the death of St Anthony in a monastery of Clarissians in Arcella, a suburb of Padua, in 1231, his body was – according to his wish – deposited in a marble tomb and buried in the Church of Santa Maria Mater Domini. The first portion of the Basilica, a Franciscan church,

with only one nave and short apse, was started in 1238; two side aisles were added later on, up to the marvellous building we can admire today. In the historical center you will cross important commercial squares such as Piazza delle Erbe and Piazza della Frutta, large square in the Center of the City, famous for its markets, where you will admire Palazzo della Ragione, the imposing building which overlooks on one side on Piazza delle Erbe and on another side on Piazza della Frutta, anciently seat of the city's courts, today it hosts exhibitions and cultural events. Then on, one of the oldest Italian universities which hosts a famous Botanical Garden up to the very famous and ancient Caffè Pedrocchi. Dinner and Overnight

DAY 9 PADUA. EXCURSION TO VENICE

After breakfast a short drive brings you to Venice. A private boat will transfer to St. Mark's Square, or Piazza San Marco, is an absolute must for any visit to Venice. St. Mark's Square was for centuries long the political centre of the Republic of Venice, one of the powerful maritime states in the Mediterranean Sea. You will appreciate the magnificent square, enjoy the golden mosaics and wonderfully coloured marble slabs of St. Mark's Church, admire and understand the elegant and slender architectural feat of the Doge's Palace. Spend time at leisure or take an optional gondola ride. Return to Padua and join your travelling companions for a farewell dinner.



DAY 10 PADUA

Your vacation ends with breakfast this morning. (The nearest airport is Venice.)

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