



## **Italy 2023 Itinerary**

**Travel Dates: July 17 to July 26, 2023**

### **Monday, July 17**

#### **Day 1: Fly to Italy**

Meet your group at the airport and travel on an overnight flight to Venice.

### **Tuesday, July 18**

#### **Day 2: Venice**

Arrive in Venice. Meet our tour director at the airport in Venice. Settle in and then gather for lunch. After lunch, rest, and explore the city and take in the historic scenic sites.

**Enjoy a group dinner in Venice.**

### **Wednesday, July 19**

#### **Day 3: Venice**

Today we will take a guided tour of Venice with our local guide. We will learn about glass-blowing in a local craftsman's shop and watch expert craftsmen spin molten-hot wares. We will also visit the Doge's palace, a masterpiece of Gothic architecture and the heart of government during the days of the Venetian Republic. With our local guide, we will see St. Mark's Square, center of cultural importance, as well as St. Mark's Campanile, a 323-foot bell tower (completed in 1514) which was initially intended as a watchtower to sight approaching ships and protect the city from harm. On your sightseeing trip we will also see the Grand Canal, Venice's major waterway, home of the gondolas.

## **Thursday, July 20**

### **Day 4: Florence**

Today we will depart Venice for Florence, the home of the Italian Renaissance. After arriving in Florence, we will see with our local expert guide the Piazza della Signore, lined with classical statues, the Ponte Vecchio (a famous medieval bridge that connects the Arno River), the Basilica of Santa Croce, and finally the “Gates of Paradise”, one of the hallmarks of early Renaissance sculpture. This pair of bronze doors (1425-1452) was designed by Lorenzo Ghiberti and contains ten relief scenes based on the Old Testament, a stunning achievement and shows a mastery of linear perspective, one of the great achievements of art during the Renaissance era.

**Enjoy a group dinner in Florence**

## **Friday, July 21**

### **Day 5: Florence**

Visit the world-famous Renaissance art museum, the Uffizi Gallery (founded by the Medici family). This museum (completed in 1581) remains the most visited art gallery in Italy today and is home to many famous Renaissance works of art, including Botticelli's painting *The Birth of Venus*. It also contains the works of such masters as Cimabue, Giotto, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Titian, and Rembrandt. Later take some time to explore Florence on your own.

## **Saturday, July 22**

### **Day 6: Florence**

Today we will visit the Accademia, home to Michelangelo's statue of David, as well as his famous “slaves” sculptures. This museum also contains examples of Florentine gothic art, as well as a Hall of Musical Instruments. We will also explore the winding hall of busts in the museum. Later take some time to explore Florence on your own.

## **Sunday, July 23**

### **Day 7: Assisi and Rome**

Depart Florence and stop at Assisi on your way to Rome. While in Assisi, we will visit the Basilica of St. Francis where Giotto's 14<sup>th</sup> century painted frescoes illustrate the life of one of Italy's most beloved medieval saints. Upon arrival in Rome, take a self-guided tour of Rome where you can toss a coin into the world-famous Trevi Fountain, Rome's iconic landmark. We will visit the Pantheon, Rome's most famous temple built to honor all the gods. This ancient Roman temple displays the stunning achievements of Roman engineering and showcases one of the largest concrete domes ever built. Originally built as a temple to honor the Roman gods, it was later converted into a Catholic Church and today serves as the burial place of the artist Raphael as well as two kings of Italy. After visiting the Pantheon, we will continue to the grand city square known as the Piazza Navona and to the Spanish Steps, the widest staircase in Europe. **Enjoy a group dinner in Rome.**

## **Monday, July 24**

### **Day 8: Rome**

Take a guided tour of Rome. With our local guide we will visit the ruins of the ancient Roman Forum, the former heart of the Roman Empire and the spot where Julius Caesar gave many of his great political speeches. It also served as a site for triumphal processions, as well as criminal trials. We will also visit the Colosseum (built in the first century), site of the gladiator contests in the early days of the Empire. Built under emperor Vespasian, the Colosseum held as many as 50,000 spectators and in addition to gladiator contests, also served as a public arena for animal hunts and even re-enactments of naval battles from ancient Roman history. Spend some time exploring Rome on your own.

## **Tuesday, July 25**

### **Day 9: Rome**

Take a guided tour of Vatican City, the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church and official residence of the pope. With our local guide we will visit the world-famous Sistine Chapel (built

during the papacy of Pope Sixtus IV from 1473 to 1481). and experience the breathtaking frescoes of Michelangelo on the Sistine Chapel ceiling, including the famous “Creation of Adam” mural. Michelangelo spent four years painting this ceiling (1508-1512) and it contains over 300 figures taken from biblical and classical sources. We will also see Michelangelo’s painting “The Last Judgment” inside the Sistine Chapel., as well as St. Peter’s Basilica. Later spend some time exploring Rome on your own

## **Wednesday, July 26**

### **Day 10: Depart for Home**

Travel to the airport where you’ll board your flight home to Tampa.