




OCT. 12 - OCT. 19, 2020

Mills - ITL - 10/12/2020

 Activities

Oct. 12, 2020

Day 1 - Arrival in Rome / Sorrento

Welcome to Italy! Or, "Benvenuto in Italia!" as the locals say! Meet your personal driver/guide in the arrivals hall, after going through customs and collecting your luggage, to begin your Italian adventure.

The Italian Coast awaits today as you depart for Sorrento with a 2-hour stop in Pompeii! The archaeological areas of Pompeii, Herculaneum and Torre Annunziata are just a stone's throw from the city of Naples. The ruins of the ancient Roman cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum were buried by the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 B.C., but they still offer an unparalleled window into life during this time. A peculiar characteristic of Pompeii is the florid graffiti covering the walls in just about every building; this is because when the volcanic eruption happened, Pompeii was set to carry out elections in the days ahead.

After your tour, you will arrive in Sorrento. Sorrento is a wonderful resort town that spreads over a natural terrace above the sea. The town's longstanding popularity stems from its location at the western gateway to the Amalfi. Tourism has a long history in Sorrento as well and interest in the town was first sparked by the poet Byron, who inspired a long line of holidaying literary geniuses – including Dickens, Goethe and Tolstoy – to sample the Sorrentine air.

Wander through Piazza Tasso and you'll be exposed to one of Italy's finer passeggiatas (strolls), snaking past beautiful hotels, magnificent marquetry shops and simple Campanian restaurants serving gnocchi alla sorrentina finished off with a shot of ice-cold limoncello.

This evening, the group will dine in a local restaurant enjoying some delicious cuisine and toasting your first night in Italia!



Activities**Oct. 13, 2020****Day 2 - Sorrento**

Another wonderful day in Italy! Amalfi Coast will be on your agenda today with a beautiful coastal drive that you will never forget complete with a few local experiences to make it a well-balanced touring day with your private driver and guide.

Facing the Tyrrhenian Sea, the entire area extends between the Gulf of Naples and the Gulf of Salerno. The tortuous street slips over deep gorges and runs down toward the beach and climbs up again along a sequence of breathtaking views. A picturesque interlacing of alleys and stairways overlooks the sea with all its extraordinary colors reflecting the enchanting landscape of Amalfi, the town whose name blesses the entire coast.

The scenery is unlike any other looking out over the Mediterranean and along the coastline as the road twists and turns its way towards Positano (approximately 20-minutes from Sorrento). The town is built on different levels from the main road all the way down to the sea level. You may stop here for sightseeing and to enjoy the view before continuing to Amalfi (approximately 1 hour away). You may also have free time in Amalfi to wander through the narrow streets, grab a coffee, and browse the many shops in town.

Return to Sorrento this evening for dinner! We recommend Amelia's for delicious seafood right on the water.

**Activities****Oct. 14, 2020****Day 3 - Sorrento to Florence with Orvieto**

After a delicious Italian breakfast, meet with your driver who will take you through central Italy to Florence. On the way, you will make a stop in Orvieto for a visit to the Duomo, as well as a light lunch and local wine tasting!

Orvieto is one of the most striking, memorable, and enjoyable hill towns in central Italy. It sits majestically high above the valley floor atop a big chunk of tufo volcanic stone, overlooking cypress-dotted Umbrian plains. A symbol of the city itself, the Duomo is one of the most beautiful in Italy. It's a magnificent building that brings together different architectural styles. In particular, there is a fine example and balance of Gothic and Romanesque styles.

From here, your driver will drop you in Florence, your home for the next three nights! Florence is full of stunning public squares, but with all of the hustle and bustle of the city, not many squares will give you a proper taste of the city's real cosmopolitan life. To experience this from a local's eyes, cross the river to the bohemian Piazza Santo Spirito, home to a proper street market and bars and restaurants full of locals. Pop into the church for some peace and quiet, or sit on the steps and people-watch!

This evening you will learn from the very best, as you enjoy a cooking class with some local chefs and then of course, you will get to dine on what you've created!



Activities**Oct. 15, 2020****Day 4 - Florence**

Another beautiful day in Italy!

Today you will meet your driver to depart on a full day tour to Pisa and Lucca. Upon arrival in the historical town of Pisa, renowned for its architectural masterpieces, learn of Piazza dei Miracoli with the celebrated Leaning Tower, the Baptistery, and the Cathedral. View the unrivaled masterpiece of Romanesque art constructed between the 11th and 12th centuries and other important monuments. There should also be some free time for shopping or to take pictures and lunch today is included at a local restaurant!



You will then head to the elegant and refined town of Lucca where you can enjoy a pleasant walk in town, taking you along the famous sixteen century walls. Enter the enchanting historical center where you will have the chance to admire the amazing Piazza Anfiteatro, the Torre Guinigi, the Duomo di San Martino and the famous "antique dealers' street". After some free time, you will head back to Florence for the evening at leisure!

As the sun starts to set, be sure to hike uphill to Piazzale Michelangelo for breathtaking views of the city. A wonderful spot for an aperitivo (Happy Hour) is at Le Volpi e l'Uva.

Day 5 - Florence

As the capital of Tuscany, Florence is home to many masterpieces of Renaissance art and architecture. After a delicious breakfast this morning, head over to the Accademia Gallery for skip the line entrance.

As you walk the main halls of the Accademia, you will enjoy many works by great Italian artists such as Sandro Botticelli, Domenico Ghirlandaio, Pontormo, Andrea del Sarto, Alessandro Allori and Orcagna, to name just a few of the painters. Most famous, however, are the works of Michaelangelo, including his Prisoners, his St. Matthew, and, above all, the magnificent statue of David!

Some other sites you could explore independently today are the Duomo, Ponte Vecchio, Piazza della Signoria, and, the Uffizi Gallery. The Gallery entirely occupies the first and second floors of the large building constructed between 1560 and 1580 and designed by Giorgio Vasari. It is famous worldwide for its outstanding collections of ancient sculptures and paintings (from the Middle Ages to the Modern period).

Once you have worked up an appetite from your explorations, it is time to eat like a true Florentine and seek out a traditional *trippaio* (tripe food stand), like the Oltrarno's 'l Trippaio di San Frediano. The *lampredotto* sandwich, named for its visual similarity to the lamprey eel once abundant in the Arno, is made from the fourth stomach of the cow. It is cooked in broth with herbs and tomatoes, sliced thin and placed on a broth-soaked bun with a choice of accompanying sauces. Only found in Florence, this unusual sandwich has been around for centuries. It was originally an inexpensive street food for working classes but is now enjoyed by the full spectrum of Florentines.

As evening falls, resist the temptation to dine at an early hour as is customary for tourists, and head to one of the many local bars for *aperitivo*. Starting at most places at 7pm, paying a slightly higher price for your *spritz* (aperol, white wine or prosecco, and soda) will get you a full spread of complimentary appetizers and other finger foods. On Via de' Benci, Soul Kitchen offers different specialties depending on the night of the week (barbecue, vegetarian). At nearby Gallery Cafe Art Bar on Wednesdays and Fridays you can even catch some live music by local American musician Derek James and a rotating cast of friends.



Activities**Oct. 17, 2020****Day 6 - Florence to Rome**

Enjoy another delicious breakfast this morning and meet your driver for a direct journey to Rome!

As one of Italy's most romantic and charismatic cities, Rome is an incredible combination of ancient history and modern culture. Ancient icons such as the Colosseum, Roman Forum and Pantheon recall the city's golden age as "caput mundi" (capital of the world), while monumental basilicas tell of its history as the seat of the Catholic Church. Towering over the skyline, St Peter's Basilica speaks to the ambition of Rome's Renaissance popes and the genius of its ancient architects. Throughout the rest of the city, ornate piazzas and showy fountains add a baroque flourish to the city's streets.

Visit the Piazza Navona for a delicious plate of pasta at a local trattoria, pay a visit to the Pantheon to take in the architectural marvel, or explore Trastevere across the Tiber river for great bars and boutiques!

No matter where you explore today, you are in for an amazing experience.



Activities

Oct. 18, 2020

Day 7 - Rome

Another beautiful day in Rome and your last day in Italy!

Included today is a choice between a 3-hour tour of the Vatican Museums, Sistine Chapel, and St. Peter's Basilica or the Colosseum, Roman Forum and Palatine Hill.

Should you choose the tour of the Vatican, you learn about art which has fascinated countless generations and influenced the origins of western civilizations. You will also explore the beautiful galleries of the Vatican which include the Gallery of Tapestries, hand-crafted tapestries by Pieter van Aelst's School, created from drawings by Raphael's pupils! Walk through the Gallery of Maps, which are wall-to-wall hand painted maps giving you an idea of the geographical vision behind 16th century maps. You will then be led to the masterpiece that really makes this a special experience – Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel!

Afterwards, explore the side chapels and the hidden crypts of St. Peter's Basilica and see Michelangelo's "Pietà" while learning why this is the only work he ever signed. Understand the mastery in Bernini's baldachin, and learn how Michelangelo triumphed as the only person who could crown St. Peter's Basilica with the perfect dome.

If you prefer a visit to the Colosseum, you will not be disappointed! Here, you will explore the first and second levels of the Colosseum as you hear stories and anecdotes that will amaze everyone - from the oldest history lovers to the youngest students.

After the Colosseum tour, you'll head over to the Roman Forum and Palatine Hill. Once inside, you'll explore ancient palaces, temples, markets and monuments as you walk the same streets that were once frequented by great historical figures like Julius Caesar. The ruins aren't always easy to interpret, but your guide will be on hand to help transport you back in time with their wealth of knowledge.

The rest of the day is yours to explore at your leisure! Perhaps visit Villa Borghese, one of the largest urban parks in Europe that was acquired from the famous Borghese family in 1901. It is the perfect combination of nature and Roman art and is home to a variety of interesting architectural elements, sculptures, monuments, and fountains created by various famous artists.

This evening you will enjoy a farewell dinner at a local establishment and toast to the amazing week you've had and memories you've created in Italy!

**Activities**

Oct. 19, 2020

Day 8 - Departure to the Rome Airport

It is time to say good bye to Rome! Check your flight status and head to Rome Fiumicino Airport. We hope you have safe travels home and be sure to check out our survey on the performance of this app.

Veni. Vidi. Amavi.

We came. We saw. We loved.





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