

# 13 DAYS - ITALIAN CIRCLE

## The dazzling scenery of Cinque Terre, Italy

### ITINERARY

#### Day 1: Rome

Welcome to Rome! If you arrive early enough, head into the city to see what Rome has to offer. An ancient city that has seen the rise and fall of entire empires, there is no shortage of historical real estate to feast your eyes on. Not to mention designer shopping and brilliant food. Meet up with your tour leader at our hotel in the afternoon, and prepare for the tour of a lifetime! Tonight, you'll meet the rest of the tour group at our included welcome dinner. Dinner.

#### Day 2: Rome

Today, we'll take a guided walking tour of the city, stopping off at the landmarks that have made Rome a perennial favourite with travellers all over the world. See Ancient Roman architecture, medieval buildings, Renaissance artworks and more remnants of Rome's illustrious past as capital of this incredible country. Highlights today include the Spanish Steps, the Pantheon, Piazza Navona and the Roman Forum. And let's not forget Trevi Fountain – legend has it that if you drop a coin into the fountain, you'll return again one day. In your free time this afternoon, why not visit the Coliseum, probably Rome's most recognisable landmark, and the centre of Roman social life. See where countless gladiators, martyrs, wild animals and other unfortunate souls did battle in the name of entertainment. Breakfast.

#### Day 3: Rome - Sorrento

Leaving Rome, we'll head to Sorrento peninsula via Pompeii. As it's our first day on the coach, take the time to get to know your fellow travel companions, and listen out for tips on Italy from your tour leader. On our way to the coastal region of Sorrento, you will see Mount Vesuvius and we will stop at Pompeii to explore the ruins of this ancient Roman town, destroyed in 79AD in a catastrophic volcanic eruption. Preserved since ancient times under meters of ash and pumice, it offers superb insights into life (and death) in the ancient Roman Empire.

As we leave Pompeii behind, you will have the option to visit the beautiful Amalfi coast, with some free time to explore the town of Amalfi. Upon arrival on the Sorrento peninsula we have a two night stay. Amongst other things, this area is famous for limoncello (a sweet lemon liqueur), and this is the perfect way to finish off your meal. Breakfast, dinner

#### Day 4: Sorrento free day

A gorgeous old town hugging the coastline, the Sorrento peninsula is our base for the day. Explore the towns in your own time, and seek out little shops producing lace-work, ceramics and specialising in marquetry (the art and craft of



applying pieces of veneer to create incredible artwork). Alternatively, choose our optional excursion to the famous Isle of Capri. Capri has charmed everyone from Roman emperors to modern showbiz elites. Try it for yourself and enjoy the smooth mix of cafés, rugged coastline, ancient Roman ruins and stylish piazzas.

Breakfast.

**Day 5: Sorrento - Assisi**

Today, we depart the coast and head north to Assisi, stopping en route in Cassino. Famed for the site of the Abbey of Monte Cassino, along with its rolling green hills, vineyards and rivers, the city was also the scene of fierce fighting in World War II, which left the town almost completely destroyed. After a comfort stop here, we continue on to the region of Umbria and the medieval town of Assisi, whose most famous son, St Francis, was born here in 1181. A charming town and the most popular pilgrimage site in Italy, you will enjoy the ancient churches and basilicas – many of them are just as St Francis would have seen them almost one thousand years ago!

Breakfast, dinner

**Day 6: Assisi - Venice**

Leaving the churches and basilicas behind, we head to Venice, stopping off for a comfort stop in Europe's third-smallest state – San Marino. Claiming to be the oldest surviving sovereign state in the world, San Marino was founded by Saint Marinus on the 3rd of September 301, and is now one of the most popular day-trip destinations for visitors to the area. Situated on a hilltop, you will witness stunning views of the surrounding countryside and the Adriatic sea. You will have ample time to explore and to shop.

Once we've had a look around, we're off to the canals of Venice! Here we'll take an orientation walking tour with your tour leader, including the Rialto Bridge and St Marks Square. Sample some of the city's culinary delights and marvel at this incredible city – which features more artistic masterpieces per square kilometre than any other place on earth!

Breakfast.

**Day 7: Venice free day**

Take the time to explore today on your free day in Venice. Get a classic Venetian view from the famous Rialto Bridge, board a gondola and see Venice the way it should be seen, try Venetian cuisine, visit museums & art galleries and get the full Venetian experience! Alternatively you can simply relax and soak up the sun on the sandy beaches at Jesolo or Lido. There's also St Marks Square, The Bridge of Sighs and the Doge's Palace to see – plus any number of culinary delights to sample, too!

Breakfast.

**Day 8: Venice - Verona - Italian Lake District**

First up today, we'll stop off in 'fair Verona' to catch a glimpse of Juliet's balcony, where Romeo supposedly wooed Juliet in Shakespeare's classic 'Romeo & Juliet.' Beset by family feuds, drama and romance since its founding in Roman times, Verona has its share of stories to tell. Look out for the 2000 year old arena and the ancient city gates. Later, we head to the Italian Lakes – and you'll find out just why famous writers like DH Lawrence and Hemingway were so inspired by this region of Italy. Peek at palatial lakeside villas, and revel in the pleasant mix of luxury and rural charm.

Breakfast, dinner

**Day 9: Italian Lake District - La Spezia**

Leaving the beautiful Italian Lakes, we head to the Cinque Terre region. Made up of five picturesque Italian towns, Cinque Terre features hiking routes and trains running

regularly along the coastline between the towns of Monterosso, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola and Riomaggiore. With cars and motorcycles banned from the towns, you'll have a wonderful time exploring the towns by train or by foot. Each town has its own unique charm – we are certain you will fall in love with each and every one! As you explore, why not taste local wines along with local produce such as pesto, freshly-caught fish and sweet lemons? Unforgettable!

Breakfast.

**Day 10: La Spezia - Florence - Tuscany**

On our way to Florence, we stop off at the famous town of Pisa to get a few shots of its distinctive Leaning Tower. Now over 800 years old, it's a classic sight in Italy and well worth a visit. Bragging rights are all yours! On arrival in Florence, we take a guided walking tour of the city, exploring many of the most famous sites and gaining local insight from our guide. Sights to see in Florence include Ponte Vecchio, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence Cathedral, the Basilica of Santa Croce and of course Michelangelo's David. A cultural and political focal point during the Renaissance, Florence is endowed with a huge variety of important buildings and famous artworks. After exploring, it's off to our accommodation in the Tuscan hills, in the ancient spa town of Montecatini Terme. Later, you are free to search for that perfect restaurant or ask your tour leader for recommendations.

**Day 11: Tuscany - Rome**

Today, we enjoy a Tuscan highlights driving tour, winding our way through one of the world's most picturesque countryside landscapes. We also stop off in the medieval town of San Gimignano with its amazing towers, to sample local wines and enjoy Antipasto (a selection of cheese, cured meats, bread and olives). This afternoon, we stop at the town of UNESCO World Heritage town of Siena – featuring largely gothic artistic remnants, as opposed to the Renaissance flourishes of Florence, for a true Tuscan experience. We then return home to Rome to round things off with a celebratory dinner.

Breakfast, dinner

**Day 12: Free day in Rome**

Today you will have a free day in Rome. When in Italy, it would be a sin not to do some shopping, have a nice lunch and... do some more shopping. You can enjoy the whole day shopping in one of countless boutiques and department stalls in the centre of Rome or if you are after bargains visit one of outlet malls on the outskirts of Rome. You could also take one of our optional tours.

Breakfast

**Day 13: Rome**

After breakfast, our tour concludes, and it's time to say your goodbyes. Private transfer will take you from your hotel to the airport. In case you have an afternoon or late evening flight you can continue with your last-minute shopping or gallery and museum hopping. Arrivederci Italia!

Breakfast. Private airport transfer.



### WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 12 night's accommodation in twin rooms. Single travellers have the option to pay a single supplement to ensure a private room.
- 12 breakfasts, 1 Anitpasta in Tuscany and 5 dinners.
- 14 Included Experiences, (including guided walks, orientation walks, driving tours of certain regions.)
- Modern air conditioned coach with reclining seats, TV for showing DVDs, and toilet.
- Private return airport transfer on the first and the last day.
- Free Wi-Fi in hotels
- Services of your tour leader from day 1 till day 11, who will be on hand with advice and tips and ensure that you get the most from your trip.
- All taxes and fees
- Any public transport used as part of the tour (excludes free days and arrival and departure days).
- A complimentary memorable gift of your once in a lifetime trip.

### ACCOMMODATION

#### ROME

Club House Roma  
 Christophoro Colombo  
 Hotel American Palace  
 Park Hotel Ginevra

#### SORRENTO

Hotel Giosue A Mare

Hotel Oriente  
 Hotel Moon Valle  
 Hotel Mary  
 Hotel La Residenza

#### ASSISI

Hotel Casa Leonori  
 Hotel Domus Pacis

#### ITALIAN LAKE DISTRICT

Hotel Stazione  
 Hotel Lovere Resort & Spa  
 Hotel Continental

#### VENICE

Hotel Centrale  
 Hotel Residence Elite  
 NH Venezia Congress Center  
 Hotel San Guiliano  
 Hotel Venezia

#### TUSCANY

Hotel Massimo D'Azeglio  
 Hotel Autopark  
 Hotel Raffaello

#### CINQUE TERRE REGION

Hotel Firenze  
 Hotel Astoria  
 Hotel Corallo