



## TOUR LEISURE ITALY 4

**Day 1 – DEPART** – Today we depart with our flight to Italy aboard a wide-bodied jet.

**DAY 2 - ROME/BOLSENA/SIENA** - Following morning arrival in Rome we travel north through the Italian countryside to beautiful lakeside town of Bolsena. We will celebrate Mass in one of the lakeside villages in the area. We then board a boat in Rocca Farnese for our scenic tour along the shores of Lake Bolsena. We disembark in Bolsena which is known for a miracle said to have occurred in the Basilica of Santa Cristina in 1263, when a Bohemian priest, in doubt about the doctrine of Transubstantiation, reported bleeding from the host he had consecrated at Mass. The Orvieto Cathedral which we will visit later in our pilgrimage was eventually built to commemorate the miracle and house the Corporal of Bolsena in a reliquary made by Sienese goldsmith Ugolino di Vieri in 1337–1338. A famed fresco by Raphael and his school in the Vatican Stanze depicts the event. Following our included lunch we visit the Church of Santa Christina and finally, we continue north arriving in the magnificent city of Siena, which invites us to stroll through its Gothic streets. Dinner is on our own

**Day 3 – SIENA** - This morning, after we celebrate Mass at San Domenico Church commemorating St. Catherine, we take a pleasant stroll along the medieval center of town to the famous Piazza del Campo. This shell shaped square is the dramatic setting for the annual Palio bareback horserace. The piazza's focal point is the Palazzo Pubblico, the public palace, which dates back to 1250. We continue uphill to visit the monumental Cathedral dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Discover on this tour the places visited by St. Catherine of Siena, patron saint of Italy, co-patron saint of Europe, and Doctor of the Church. Following Mass at the Basilica of San Domenico We meet your guide and inside the Basilica we admire the relics of the Saint's finger and head. We will discover the inner greatness of this small but great Sienese woman, who fought to bring peace to all of Europe. From here we move on to visit the house-sanctuary, where Catherine was born and lived for most of her life. We will see where her bedroom was and the remains of her family's kitchen. We then descend to Fontebranda, the oldest fountain in Siena, and climb the highest hill to visit the Duomo with its wonderful works of art. Leaving the Duomo we descend the stairs that lead to the baptistry and there we hear some more stories about the life of St. Catherine, the tour will end in the beautiful Piazza del Campo, with the famous Palazzo Pubblico that had just been completed at the time of St. Catherine. We have free time for lunch on our own and browsing before returning to our hotel. Dinner at restaurant in Siena.

**Day 4 – MONTEPULCIANO/PIENZA** - Drive to Montepulciano, the “Pearl of Renaissance”. We begin with Mass at the Dominican Monastery which was home of St. Agnes of Montepulciano. We also visit the temple church of “San Biagio” and walk to the “Piazza Grande” and visit the cathedral, town hall and some noble palaces. We also visit the Cellar Ercolani, where we can enjoy pecorino cheese and Vino Nobile di Montepulciano. We make our way from there to lunch at La Terazza del Chiostrro in Pienza (for al fresco lunch on their terrace) After lunch we tour Pienza, the Renaissance town of Pope Pius II, visiting the cathedral and the courtyard of the Pope's palace, view over Orcia Valley to Mount Amiata. Return to Siena and our hotel. Dinner is on our own.

---



**Day 5 – SAN GIMIGNANO** – This morning, we drive to San Gimignano the nearby medieval town famous for its tower houses built as symbols of the resident's wealth and power. The town is so precious that **UNESCO** has declared it a "**World Heritage Site.**" Walking through the Old City means plunging into the Middle Ages and getting a taste of what the city must have been like more than seven hundred years ago. We celebrate Mass at the St. Fina chapel today. Afterwards, we visit the nearby hospital with the relic of her bed. She was a saint who died at 15 years old after having been confined to this "bed" (wood panel) for 5 years of illness. We enjoy lunch here in San Gimignano at Le Terrazze restaurant upstairs by the windows for our group. Return to our Siena and our hotel for overnight. Dinner is on our own.

**Day 6 – FLORENCE** -This morning, drive to Florence where we begin with a drive to the "Piazzale Michelangelo" for a panoramic view of spectacular city. Continue to the city where we celebrate Mass at the Basilica of San Marco. Afterwards, we meet our guide and begin our tour with a visit to the convent of San Marco and the wonderful Fra Angelico frescoes. We then continue to the Duomo, the heart of the city, here we admire the cupola by Brunelleschi, completed in 1240, its campanile by Giotto. Once outside we view the Baptistery's with its incomparable bronze doors by Ghiberti. Afterwards, we set out to the Piazza della Signoria, dominated by the Palazzo Vecchio and its embattlement crowned tower. Across from the Palace, we visit the Loggia dei Lanzi with the statues of the Perseus by Cellini; Giambologna's the "Rape of the Sabines" and "Hercules." Free time for lunch on our own and some time for shopping or personal adventure. We conclude with a visit to the Basilica of Santa Croce. Among the most famous interred here, lie Galileo, Rossini, Michelangelo and Machiavelli. and then Return to hotel in Siena. Dinner at restaurant

**Day 7 – AREZZO** – This morning we depart Siena for a short ride to Arezzo, an ancient capital of Etruria and a small medieval jewel. Upon arrival our sightseeing will include the Cathedral [where you'll also find the 14th-century tomb of Pope Gregory X], the Church of Santa Maria della Pieve, Piazza Grande, The Church of St Francis with the famous fresco's by Piero della Francesca and Giorgio Vasari's birth place. We celebrate Mass at the Church of Saint Dominic here. Following our included lunch here in Arezzo we return to Siena and our hotel here and enjoy dinner in the city on our own.

**Day 8 – BOLOGNA** – This morning, we drive due north to Bologna, one of the culinary capitals of Italy. Situated on the southern edge of the Po plain, Bologna, the capital of Emilia-Romagna, has many medieval towers, churches and long arcaded streets lined by sumptuous 14c to 17c palaces. With one of the oldest universities in Europe, one can imagine the political and cultural importance of this once independent city. Following Mass at the tomb of St. Dominic at the 13c St. Dominic's church with statues by Michelangelo and its celebrated arch by the sculptor Niccolo da Bari, we will see the Neptune Fountain, Town Hall and leaning towers. We will enjoy a wonderful Bologna lunch in the city. After our visits and free time, we return Siena and our hotel for overnight. Dinner on our own.

---



**Day 9 – CHIANTI REGION** – This morning we depart and the first town we meet is Radda in Chianti, where there is a wonderful view of the surroundings. Going on you arrive in Greve in Chianti, that can be considered Chianti's gates. Etruscans lived here, where the great Giovanni da Verrazzano was born, as celebrated by the big statue in the main square. Piazza Matteotti with its particular shape and restaurants and shops is the main attraction. The Church of Santa Croce displays important artworks by Florentine artists such as Andrea Della Robbia and deserve being visited. Visit the Wine Museum that offers over 100 types of wine for tasting. We will visit the Castello di Verrazzano for a pleasant wine tasting before we Return to Siena for our restaurant dinner and overnight.

**Day 10 – SIENA/ORVIETO/ROME** - Today we depart Siena for Rome. On route, we stop at Orvieto for a visit and Mass at the breathtaking Cathedral, which is known as the jewel of Italian architecture. Inside the Cathedral is the Chapel of the Corporal, which houses the chalice cloth involved in the Eucharistic Miracle, which occurred in nearby Bolsena. In the 13th century a pilgrim priest named Peter of Prague was celebrating Mass at the crypt of St. Christina. He was having a faith crisis concerning the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and while speaking the words of the consecration, blood started to drip from the consecrated Host. Subsequently Pope Urban instituted The Feast of Corpus Christi. Following included luncheon here, we return to Rome for overnight. We will enjoy a rooftop reception on the hotel's rooftop including prosecco and some appetizers. Dinner is on our own.

**DAY 11 - ROME** – This morning, we enjoy a walking tour of Rome's sites including a visit the Spanish Steps, Trevi Fountain, and Italian designer shops along the via Condotti. We celebrate Mass at Santa Maria Sopra Minerva.

Following lunch on our own, this afternoon we visit by bus one of Rome's major basilicas, St. John Lateran, the nearby Holy Stairs and the Basilica of the Holy Cross in Jerusalem. We continue for dinner at Hostaria Costanza.

**DAY 12 - VATICAN CITY/ROME** - This morning, we make our way to St. Peter's for an audience with Pope Francis if he is in residence. Following lunch at Ristorante Scarpone we celebrate Mass at Santa Sabina and afterwards we have walking tour of some more of Rome's highlights passing the Roman Fora, the Arch of Constantine, the Coliseum, and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. If possible, we stop by the Café Greco for a coffee on our own. and return to our hotel. Dinner.

**DAY 13 – VATICAN CITY/ROME** - Following morning Mass at St. Peter's, (See note below) pilgrims will have chosen one of two options. Either we spend this morning seeing the treasures of the Vatican Museum with the special "Art and Faith Tour" offered by the nuns of the Missionaries of Divine Revelation. We marvel at Michelangelo's restored frescoes in the Sistine Chapel. Continue to St. Peter's Basilica to view the "Pieta". The balance of the group will have chosen a special tour of the excavations beneath the Vatican where the body of St. Peter was found. Known as the Scavi tour we will visit in small groups of twelve and when not below, we enjoy shopping in this area. Following lunch on our own, this afternoon we will be free for shopping, personal adventure and rest. Dinner and overnight at the hotel

**Day 14 – DEPARTURE DAY** This morning we transfer to the airport for our return flight to home.

---