



First Class 9 Day Package

Best of Italy

Day 1: Depart USA

Overnight flight to Italy.

Day 2: Arrive Rome

We arrive at the Rome airport and transfer our lodging for the next three nights. This afternoon we will take an afternoon tour of the Catacombs where thousands of Christians were buried in a remarkable tiered series of galleries. (D)

Day 3: Forum, Mamertine, Colosseum, Ostia Antica

We begin our walking tour at the ancient Roman Forum, where

our guide will divulge its secrets. We will visit the Arch of Titus which commemorated the sack of Jerusalem by Titus in AD 70. We will view the Mamertine Prison exterior, where tradition says the Apostle Paul was imprisoned. The Roman church would say that Peter was imprisoned here as well, but there is no imperial evidence that Peter was ever in Rome. Next, we visit the Colosseum, where thousands of people and animals perished during gladiatorial games. The Colosseum first opened in AD 80 and within 100 days of its opening, 5000 wild beasts perished here. The slaughter of both humans and animals continued for three more centuries. Historians believe the Colosseum could hold



Three Fountains



Vatican

between 40,000 and 80,000 people depending on how close the seating was. The floor has recently had a plank placed over the middle making it accessible for people to walk over the labyrinth of brick cells, ramps, and elevators used to transport animals and gladiators into the arena. Hear the stories of the games that have fascinated people for hundreds of years. We conclude our day at the ruins of Ostia Antica, which provides an excellent example of city life in classical times and the Ostian Gate, today called the Gate of St. Paul. (B)

Day 4: Vatican Museums, St. Peter's, Scala Santa, Abbey of Three Fountains, St. Paul Outside the Wall

After breakfast you will begin a full day of sightseeing. First visit Vatican City where you will see the Basilica at St. Peter, the Sistine

Chapel and the Vatican Museums with stunning works of art at every turn. After some free time for lunch, you will stop at The Abbey of the Three Fountains, the traditional site of Paul's martyrdom and the ancient street that he walked on. Next, visit the 4th century Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, the site of Paul's tomb, and the Scala Santa, where Martin Luther made his stand against the practice of indulgences. This fascinating museum houses the Steps from Pilot's Judgment Hall in Jerusalem brought to Rome by Helena, the mother of Constantine. Additional sights include the Arches of Constantine and Titus, Circus Maximus and the beautiful marble monument called the Wedding Cake.(B)

Day 5: Frescoes, Assisi, Florence

After breakfast you will say "Arrivederci Roma" and board your coach and travel through scenic Umbria to the ancient walled hillside village of Assisi. After lunch on your own, you will enjoy a guided tour of this beautiful, medieval town, which will include the Basilica San Francesco, decorated with some of the most renowned frescoes in the world. The stories of the sacrificial life of St. Francis will be an encouragement to us all. Our home for the next two evenings is in the beautiful city of Florence, the heart of charming Tuscany. (B,D)

Day 6: Beautiful Florence, Michelangelo's David

You will spend the morning enjoying a guided tour of Florence, one of the world's greatest artistic capitals, which will include the Piazza della Signoria, Duomo, Baptistry and a visit to the

Accademia Gallery, home of Michelangelo's David. A stop will also be made on the hillside overlook across the river from Florence where we will enjoy a panoramic view of the beautiful red-tiled roof cityscape. This afternoon is at your leisure to enjoy shopping, visiting more galleries or strolling on the famous Pont Vecchio, the old bridge which spans the Arno River. Remember that Florence leather shops are the best in the world and bargains on excellent quality goods are abundant. It may be the time to purchase those special Christmas gifts. (B)

Day 7: Pisa & Verona

The sightseeing this morning includes a tour of Pisa where you will visit the Baptistry, Duomo and the famous leaning tower in the Piazza dei Miracoli. This afternoon we stop in romantic Verona, medieval setting of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, with a walk through the historic center/shopping district to see the famed balcony of Juliet. Our lodging for the next two evenings will be in Venice Mestre. (B, D)

Day 8: Charming Venice

Start the morning sightseeing in style as your guide takes you by private boat along the Giudecca canal to meet your resident expert. Highlights of your walking tour are St. Mark's Square and the Byzantine splendor of St. Mark's Basilica, lavish Doges' Palace and the Bridge of Sighs. Afterwards enjoy Venice at your own pace, or join an optional gondola ride through the picturesque canal system, visit the many charming shops and take photos galore. (B)

Day 9: Home

This morning we transfer to the airport for our flight home. (B)

PRICE PER PERSON:
BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY

Please contact us at
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