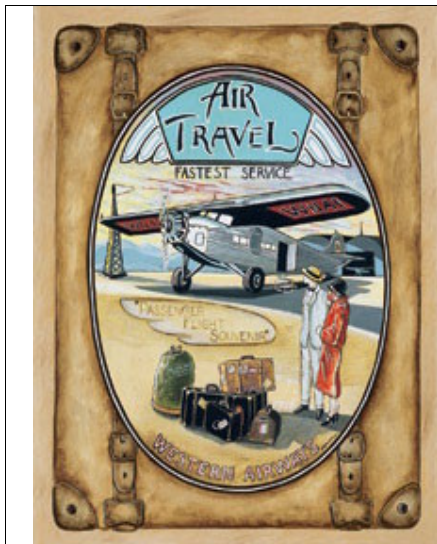




Viva La cultura Italiana
In cooperation



Evening departure from the United States .
Cross the Atlantic and awake with Venice in your eyes.



postaprioritaria
Priority Mail



Arrive at Venice's Marco Polo Airport – private transfer is awaiting you at the exit of the arrivals. The hostess will have a sign showing your name and accompany you to the car. A short drive and you will reach the docks boarding your private water taxi.
Boat transfer to the Hotel A la Commedia. Check into Hotel and the rest of the day free program.



New York has 5th Avenue, Paris its Champs Elysees, but Venice tops them all with its Grand Canal – the great water road filled with gondolas, motorboats and peppermint stick boat moorings!

Canal Grande seen from the Accademia bridge

Dinner suggestions :
Fiaschetteria Toscana
La Zucca
Il Covo
Corte Sconta
Da Fiore
Da Ivo

Liase directly with the hotel receptionist for these restaurants and their reservations or other suggestions..





Breakfast at the hotel after which a full day free program in Venice :

Discover Venice in a Single Day

Is it possible to understand Venice in only one day? That is the goal of this walking tour that uncovers twelve centuries of Venice's glorious history. The starting point is St. Mark's Square. Praised by Napoleon as the most beautiful drawing room in Europe, this spacious square is the only one in Venice to merit the title "piazza." Its graceful Renaissance arches shelter some of the cities' most elegant shops and historic cafes.



At the piazza's eastern end rises the St. Mark's Basilica with its multitude of marble pillars and five white domes. Begun by Greek architects in 1063 to house the relics of the patron saint St. Mark the Evangelist, the church is a treasure-chest of mosaic decoration both inside and out. We will climb to the gallery level to admire these glittering, golden mosaics at close range and to see the four ancient gilt-bronze horses stolen from Constantinople in 1204 to grace the basilica's facade.



A short walk takes us to the lively neighborhood around the Rialto Bridge. On the opposite side of the Grand Canal is the fish market, displaying all the rich bounty of the Adriatic Sea and nearby is the Franciscan church of Santa Maria dei Frari with precious altarpieces by Titian and Giovanni Bellini. The tour of the Frari will be followed by lunch in a characteristic Venetian bacaro, or wine bar. In the afternoon we will visit the world-famous Accademia Gallery where the enigmatic “Tempest” by the Renaissance painter Giorgione is displayed along with other masterpieces by Tintoretto, Veronese, and Tiepolo. The day concludes at sunset in an outdoor cafe along the Zattere; here the imposing line-up of Palladian churches across the channel provides a romantic backdrop against which to enjoy a relaxing drink or gelato. Overnight at Hotel A La Commedia

Venice / Florence Via First Class Rail – Our First Class train departs for Florence at about 10 am arriving at about 12:55 pm. In Florence you’ll be staying at the Grand Hotel Baglioni – a short taxi drive will take you to Hotel.

The Florentines are unique lot! A Genovese could persuade Isabella to finance the expedition to the Americas but it took a Florentine by the name of Amerigo Vespucci to get the country named after himself!



Ponte Vecchio

And another name from Florence now spans from Brooklyn to Staten Island in the sweeping from of the Verrazano Bridge Why? He was the first to discover the Hudson River!

Florence – the fountainhead of the Renaissance – city of Dante, Boccaccio, Botticelli and Leonardo da Vinci. Today’s encompasses the Academy of Fine Arts (where handsome “David” stands), Ponte

Vecchio, Piazza della Signoria and the breathtaking view from Piazzale Michelangelo(?); then Giotto's Belfry, and Duomo, and the Baptistery with its renowned "Gate of Paradise".

Overnight at Grand Hotel Baglioni

Dinner suggestion :

Da Giovanni

Cibreo

Il Latini

La Giostra

Sostanza

Antica Osteria del Caffè Italiano

Omero (up the hill of Piazzale

Michelangelo – typical Florentine with countryside view)

Taverna del Bronzino

Liase directly with the hotel receptionist for these restaurants or other suggestions.



Florence

Breakfast at the hotel and soon, departure for :

In the morning at 9.30 am meet your guide in the lobby of the hotel and depart for your half day visit of Florence :We can set up the tour as you wish to include a museum entrance (Uffizi or Academy) But to include both we would need to do a full day tour. I would suggest an introduction to the history of Florence and a brief description of the main monuments and churches in the heart of town – to end at the Uffizi and visit the masterpieces of the Medici family's collection.

Lunch on your own – for something light accompanied by local wines try Cantinetta da **Verrazzano** the Greve in Chianti winery's lunch and wine bar which was the native home of the navigator – a small shop with tables and different light dishes , cheese and sandwiches , salads etc. If you like, we can book Academy tickets (so you can view the beautiful masterpiece The David, by Michelangelo) for the late afternoon so you avoid the crowds and you can visit on your own without the guide.



The David

After the guided tour you may want to have a look at the shops (shopping is very good in Florence “shopper’s paradise”) and the markets – especially the market of San Lorenzo where you find all kind of local products, countless little shops laden with jewelry of Florentine gold and silver, exquisite leather goods, chic fashion houses and everyone’s favorite – the straw market..

Overnight at Hotel Baglioni

Chianti Wine tour

Today you are off to countryside South of Florence to enjoy a full day dedicated to Chianti wine country and wineries .

The driver will meet you at the hotel in the morning around 9,15 am – and will accompany you to Greve in Chianti where you will meet your guide Monika Iris. She is a very special person as she presents Chianti through the more unknown backdoors. In fact you will meet the heart of Chianti production and wineries, how the wine is made and have a typical lunch accompanied by wines. In the afternoon a brief visit to one of the Chianti villages such as Greve, Radda, Castellina – to view the local piazza and shops.

In the late afternoon the driver will accompany you back to Florence and to your hotel.

Overnight at Grand Hotel Baglioni

Siena – Hotel Athena

In the morning the driver will meet you at the hotel and transfer to Siena- Hotel Athena.

This is a good 4 star hotel situated in town.

On the way to Siena – the driver will detour to stop in San Gimignano so you can have a brief visit on your own and try the best gelato in Italy in the main square (try the saffron flavor typical of San Gimignano).

On reaching Siena in the afternoon – you will check into the hotel. The guide will meet you at the hotel at 4 pm to start your tour of the city.

The tour will include some of the following:

Duomo and its beautiful floors , as well as the Piccolomini Chapel

(famous Pope from this area during the 1400’s) and ending up in the *Piazza del Campo* (where the famous *Palio* horse race takes place).

You will walk through the uphill/downhill narrow streets of Siena, each part of a so called “*Contrada*” which have their own symbol and take part in the race. The *Palio* takes place on July 2nd and August 16th every year. The horses are brought into the Duomo where they receive a blessing before the race. You will see the colourful flags all around town and especially in *Piazza del Campo* where the vendors expose them.

Dinner suggestions in Siena:

Antica Trattoria Papei

Da Nello

Il Mangia



Top of the Torre del Mangia, the bell tower of the Palazzo Pubblico. The tower was completed in 1348 and is made of brick topped by a belfry of white travertine marble.



Aerial view (left) and Country view of the walled town.

Monteriggioni





PIAZZA DEL CAMPO

SAIN GIMIGNANO famous all over the world for its medieval towers.

When you'll arrive in **SAN GIMIGNANO** and walk through the ancient gates, you'll think the time had stopped many centuries ago.



San Gimignano: La Città delle Belle Torri

San Gimignano: a beautiful place to visit, with wonderful wines!

Just a few miles down the road fom Siena lies enchanting **SAN GIMIGNANO**, known around the world for its thirteen medieval towers. In San Gimignano, every street leads to 15 towers.

On a hilltop in the heart of Tuscany stands a majestic medieval walled town, its profile bristling with tall towers. Standing astride the pilgrims route from Northern Europe to Rome it prospered in the thirteenth century. **SAN GIMIGNANO** has retained all its old streets, its walls, gates, palaces, strongholds and thirteen towers. Dante came here in 1300 and the room in the Town Museum named after him is decorated with unique frescos of his age.

This is one of the most spectacular cities in Italy. It is a city of towers (only about 17 now, but there were once 72!). It has a quiet majesty about it sitting on the top of a hill with a 360 degree view into the surrounding valleys.

SAN GIMIGNANO is only about an hour or so West from where we were staying in Chianti. It has the same kinds of narrow alleys as in Florence and Cortona but with incredible sloping streets that follow the contour of the hill.



SAN GIMIGNANO and the medieval streets ...



Sorrento

In the Morning your driver will pick you up at Hotel Athena and transfer to the rail station in Florence.

You will take the fast Eurostar train to Naples.

On arrival you will find the driver waiting to accompany you to Sorrento and the Hotel Bellevue Syrene.

Sea view rooms.

Check in and rest of the day on your own to discover Sorrento.





Aerial View Of Castel Nuovo, Or Maschio Angioino, And Glass Atrium Of Galleria Umberto, Naples

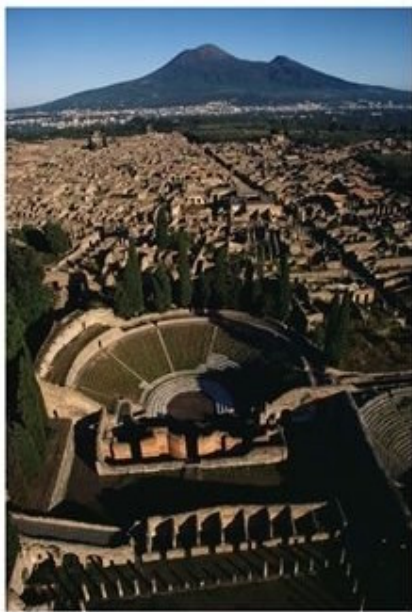
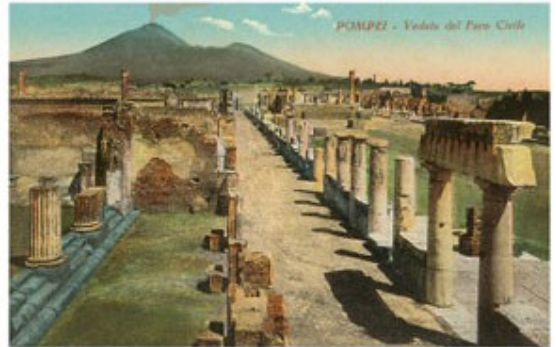


Pompei – After breakfast your driver will meet you at the hotel and transfer to Pompei Where your guide will be waiting for you to introduce you to this amazing Roman city.

After tour the driver can accompany you to lunch after which return to Sorrento .



Temple of Jove in Pompeii



View over Pompeii toward Mount Vesuvius



lonelyplanetimages.com



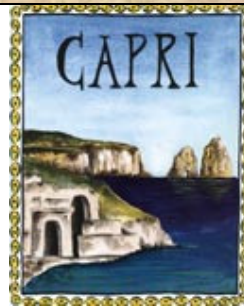
Capri – After breakfast at the hotel – driver will accompany you to the docks in Sorrento and you will take the hydrofoil to Capri. Once you reach the island Achille will meet you (he is a local, speaks English) and will introduce you to Capri – If you wish we can organise a tour of the island by boat with Achille. Lunch stop at La Fontellina – on the sea rocks. Some free time to visit the Piazzetta and pick up a few souvenirs down in Marina Grande before boarding the Aliscafo in the late afternoon to return to Sorrento.

On arrival in Sorrento – your driver will be waiting to accompany you back to the hotel.

Overnight at the Bellevue Syrene



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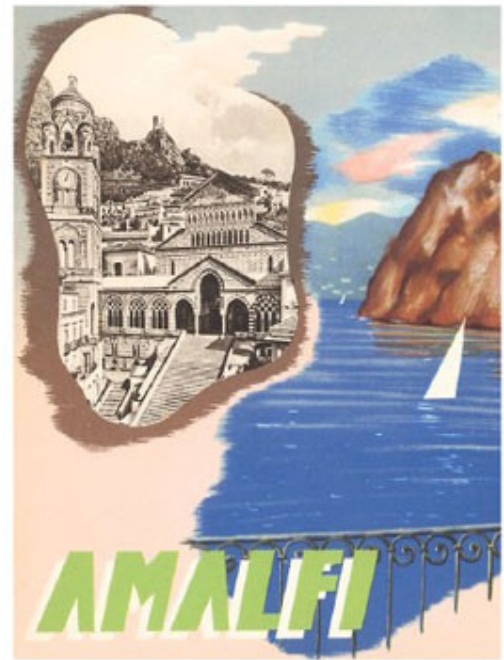
View from above of Amalfi Coast and Positano



Ravello

Amalfi Coast - After breakfast at the hotel meet the guide and driver and depart for full day tour of the Amalfi Coast. The Tour will include stop in Positano and for lunch we suggest to reach the village of Furore – with spectacular view over the entire coast. Ravello and Amalfi – where the guide will continue the tour and leave some time for shopping and pictures.
Return to Sorrento.

Overnight at Hotel Bellevue Syrene



Sorrento/Driver to Naples/ First Class Train to Rome.

It's off to Rome by First Class train departing about 11am, arriving 13 pm. Transfer to Hotel Rose Garden – check in and free afternoon.

You can take a first exploring walk in Rome.

Overnight at Hotel Rose Garden Palace.



You are in the Eternal City...one of the greatest centers of Western civilization and the first truly cosmopolitan city on earth! Follow your own spirit Rome can be anything you want it to be. For strollers - Via Veneto, for people watchers – a table at Doney's, for millionaires – the shops on Via Condotti, for art lovers – the “finds” on Via Margutta. Enjoy dinner with wine at a fine Roman restaurant.



Dinner suggestion (and near the hotel):
Il Giardino di Albino – Via Zucchelli 29
tel. 06 4885202
Ciampini – Via Trinità dei Monti
tel. 06 6785678
La Scala - Via S. Isidoro
tel. 06 4819264
Trattoria San Teodoro
Alle Colline Emiliane
Gigetto
Vecchia Roma

Liase directly with the hotel receptionist
for these restaurants or other.



Rome – ½ day tour of Rome: Classical Rome

In the morning meet guide at the hotel and depart for half day tour of Rome. This will concentrate on Classical Rome : Colisseum, Forum , Pantheon.



ARA PACIS

The Vatican palaces and St. Peter's were a true "factory" of Renaissance art. In the Vatican the two highest artists of the period, Raphael and Michelangelo, shared the same experience and compared their conception of art. The sweet natured and charmingly polite Raphael worked next door to the gloomy, laconic and self-absorbed Michelangelo. Both men carried out some of the most significant art works of all times: the frescoes in the private apartment of Pope Julius II, decorated by Raphael between 1508 and 1520; those on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, achieved by Michelangelo between 1508 and 1512, and the Last Judgment. The tour inside the Vatican Museums - one of the world's most important art collections - and in St. Peter's Basilica, will expose those treasures and many others.

Overnight at Hotel Rose Garden

Rome – ½ day tour of Rome: Christian Rome



After breakfast at the hotel full day to visit Rome.

In the morning we suggest to discover the piazzas of Rome and the shops on your own. From your hotel you can easily reach the Piazza di Spagna (Spanish Steps area) and the many shopping streets that lead from here- possible reach the lovely Piazza Navona with its impressive fountains .

You will meet your guide at the entrance of the Vatican Museums at 1,30 pm to visit the incredible masterpiece of the Sistine Chapel By Michelangelo followed by a visit of the Basilica of Saint Peter's.

This is the best time to visit to avoid the many groups that crowd the museums in the morning.

Some more notes on Rome:

In the year 27 BC Augustus became Rome's first emperor. In his memoirs he wrote: "I found a city of stone and bricks; now I leave it to you of marble." In the following century the Empire expanded to become an enormous state and Rome, its capital, grew to become a metropolis of 1.5 million people. Today, monumental ruins and imposing buildings remain to reveal not only the glorious past of the "Eternal City", but also its political, religious, and social organization. Starting from the Pantheon, in the middle of the so called Campo Marzio (the Field of Mars), the tour will take you through the most evocative monuments of classical antiquity: the Pantheon itself, the most impressive and best preserved Roman building, covered by the biggest cupola ever built by the Romans, recalled as a "celestial vault" by the historian Dion Cassius; the Capitol, where a terrace overlooking the Palatine and Roman Forum will offer one of the most magnificent views in Rome; the Imperial Forums and the Colosseum.

Overnight at Hotel Rose Garden

Rome – Chicago

After breakfast at the hotel departure for FCO airport to catch return flight.

The driver will meet you at the hotel at the set time and transfer to the Airport.

This morning we flyt home with photographs, happy memories and new found friends. We do hope you return soon ... By the way ...For now, a very warm arrivederci..!

*“Travel is an open door to unexplored reality
which is like a dream” (Guy de
Maupassant)*



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