

Travel Experience Designed Especially for St. Mary's Episcopal School Alumnae



The Best of Italy October 7 - October 15, 2017

ITINERARY OVERVIEW

- DAY 1 DEPARTURE FROM ATLANTA
- DAY 2 ARRIVE VENICE (2 NIGHTS)
- DAY 3 VENICE
- DAY 4 VENICE - RAVENNA - SAN MARINO (1 NIGHT)
- DAY 5 SAN MARINO - FLORENCE - LUCCA (2 NIGHTS)
- DAY 6 FLORENCE & LUCCA
- DAY 7 LUCCA - SAN GIMIGNANO - SIENA - ROME (2 NIGHTS)
- DAY 8 ROME
- DAY 9 DEPARTURE FROM ROME

ITINERARY

Italy calls to people in a unique way. The rich and colorful culture melts into a warm atmosphere filled with light and life. Ancient traditions combine with a spiritual pride expressed in the art and food that epitomize what we have come to know as La Bella Vita. There is something about this country that stirs the soul as much as it educates the mind. From Roman ruins to the richness of the Renaissance, from the ruins of war to the peace of country life, experience the world in a new way in beautiful Italy.

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|  Educational Tour/Visit |  Cultural Experience |  Festival/Performance/Workshop | Tour Services |
|  Recreational Activity |  LEAP Enrichment |  Match/Training Session |      |



DAY 1 Saturday, 07 October 2017

-  Relax and enjoy our scheduled flight from Atlanta to Venice, Italy

DAY 2 Sunday, 08 October 2017

-  Our 24-hour Tour Director will meet us at the airport and remain with us until our final airport departure.
-  We will have use of a private coach and driver, while touring for the next seven days.
- Our base for the next two nights will be Venice, where breakfast will be provided at the hotel.
-  Venice is one of the few cities in the world that can truly be described as unique. It was known as the gateway to the Orient, and during the Middle Ages became one of the most powerful city-states in the Mediterranean. Built on a series of islands connected by bridges and canals, Venice has survived all odds to become the intriguing and iconic city it is today.
-  The vaporetto is Venice's version of public transport, as no cars are allowed in this city on the water. While in Venice, we will each have a vaporetto pass for transportation and sightseeing.
-  Take a Gondola Ride along the canals of Venice for a truly once-in-a-lifetime experience.

DAY 3 Monday, 09 October 2017

During the course of our tour we will gain from the knowledge and insight of five half-day local guides while we are here in Italy.

-  Take a vaporetto ride along the Grand Canal past Venice's beautiful palaces and cathedrals. We will also see the Rialto Bridge, the oldest and most famous of the bridges that span the Grand Canal.
-  Stroll through the St. Mark's Square. Bordered by Venice's greatest historic buildings, St. Mark's Square is the main focal point of the city and the center of its water transportation system, as well as the most popular place for people watching and picture taking. Visit St. Mark's Basilica, featuring interior walls encrusted with spectacular gold mosaics. Our visit will also include an ascent to the Galleries to see the original bronze horses that once adorned the facade, as well as a stunning view of St. Mark's Square.
-  Tour the Doge's Palace, former residence of the rulers of Venice. We will explore the ornate and grandiose rooms of the palace, including the Grand Council chamber, featuring Tintoretto's Paradise, said to be the world's largest oil painting. We will walk across the famous Bridge of Sighs to the cells where Casanova was once imprisoned.
-  We will have time today to enjoy and explore Venice at our own leisure.
-  This evening a four course dinner will be provided in the Westin Hotel Europa & Regina.



DAY 4 Tuesday, 10 October 2017

-  Today we will travel from Venice to San Marino. En route, we will stop in Ravenna.
-  With ancient streets and peaceful piazzas, there is so much more to the town of Ravenna than the superb Byzantine mosaics for which it is famous. The city rose to power in the 1st century BC and was eventually made capital of the Western Empire. Although this power has waned, the city is still of vital importance to the arts and archaeology.
-  Discover the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, a 5th century chapel that contains exceptional mosaics dating from antiquity. Translucent panels bring the mosaics alive in all their grace and harmony, vivid with peacock blue, moss green, Roman gold, eggplant, and burnt orange. Visit the octagonal-domed Museum and Basilica of San Vitale, which dates from the mid-6th century. The mosaics inside, among the most celebrated in the western world, are done in brilliant greens and golds.
-  The tiny nation of San Marino is Europe's oldest republic, founded in the 4th century on the slopes of Monte Titano. Only seven miles across at its widest point, San Marino is dotted with small towns. However, it is the walled capital of San Marino that is the real draw, with its historic buildings and lovely views.
-  Ascend to the top of Monte Titano to visit the Historic Center of San Marino. The city center dates back to the 13th century and the foundation of San Marino as a city-state. We will see the Palazzo Pubblico as well as the neoclassical basilica surrounded by fortifications and ancient city walls. From the top of Monte Titano we will be able to visit two of the three towers represented on San Marino's national flag. A trek to the very top of this UNESCO World Heritage site offers unbeatable views of the Adriatic Coast and the surrounding areas.
-  We will have time to enjoy and explore San Marino at our own leisure.
-  Our base for the next night will be in San Marino, where breakfast will be provided.

DAY 5 Wednesday, 11 October 2017

-  We continue on our journey from San Marino to Lucca. En route, we will stop and visit Florence.
-  Florence is so deeply connected to the Renaissance movement in art and literature that it is often called the "Cradle of the Renaissance." A walk through the peaceful piazzas reveals the architecture and sculpture that have made this beautiful city one of the world's greatest artistic capitals.
- During the course of our tour we will gain from the knowledge and insight of one full-day local guide while we are here in Florence.
-  Enjoy the Piazza del Duomo, where the cathedral, tower, and baptistery exhibit the traditions of Florentine art from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. We will observe the massive and detailed facade of the Duomo before viewing the baptistery's bronze doors, designed by Ghiberti and which Michelangelo commented were worthy to be the "Gates of Paradise." After a brief visit inside the Duomo, we will have the opportunity to do one of the following: ascend the Bell Tower; climb the narrow steps to the top of the Red Dome; or visit the spectacular interior of the Baptistery. (One admission included).
-  Experience the Uffizi Museum, one of Italy's finest art museums, containing one of the most famous collections of paintings and sculptures in the world. Exhibitions include works by most of the acclaimed Italian artists, as well as German, Dutch, and Flemish masters. Of particular note are European paintings from the 13th to 18th centuries, which include works by da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Botticelli, Rembrandt, and Rubens.
-  Stroll along the Ponte Vecchio, the oldest of Florence's six bridges and one of the best-loved sites of Florence. Lined with numerous shops, visitors often do not realize they are on a bridge until they reach the center arches that look out over the Arno.
- Lucca's peaceful narrow lanes wind among medieval buildings, churches, tiny piazzas, and Roman ruins, taking visitors on a true journey through the town's long history. Founded as a Roman colony in 180 BC, the city center was shut off from traffic in the 17th century, making it a pleasant place to wander and explore.
-  Our base for the next two nights will be Lucca, where breakfast will be provided at the hotel.



DAY 6 Thursday, 12 October 2017

-  Return to Florence today to visit the Accademia Gallery, where we will view Michelangelo's statuary masterpiece, David, and Boticelli's Madonna and Child.
-  Today we will have the opportunity to spend some time shopping at one of Italy's famed leather markets.
-  Take a Walking Tour through the old town to view the Renaissance and Gothic palaces, and the Piazza del Anfiteatro, where the amphitheater once stood.
-  Visit San Martino, Lucca's magnificent cathedral, and admire the magnificent green and white marble facade, as well as the Romanesque and Gothic interior.
-  We will also have free time in Lucca today to enjoy and explore Lucca at our own leisure.



DAY 7 Friday, 13 October 2017

-  Today we will travel from Lucca to Rome. En route, we will stop in San Gimignano and Siena.
-  The striking skyline of San Gimignano is one of the most familiar views of Tuscany. The town is noted for its thirteen towers, built by various noble families in the 12th and 13th centuries, which dominate the scene and impart a unique character to this idyllic location.
-  Once a capital to rival Florence, Siena is Italy's prettiest medieval town, and still possesses the grandeur of the age when it was at its peak.
-  Visit the Duomo, highlighted by distinctive striped marble columns. Our visit will include the beautiful Piccolomini Library, designed to house the cathedral's collection of illuminated manuscripts. The magnificent room features an unrivaled ceiling and large frescoes depicting important events in the life of Pope Pius II.
-  Stroll through the narrow and winding streets of Siena to the Piazza del Campo, a vast and lively square in the heart of the city.
-  Known to many as the "Eternal City", Rome is the capital of Italy, with an uninterrupted history spanning two and a half thousand years. As one of the founding cities of western civilisation, Rome is filled with incredible historical sites. It is a city with many faces, encompassing medieval, renaissance, and modern. To define Rome is an impossible task, but to enjoy Rome is a wondrous experience. For the next two evenings we will enjoy the convenience of our centrally-located Rome hotel, where daily breakfast will be included.



DAY 8 Saturday, 14 October 2017

-  Enjoy a guided tour, through the spectacular remains of the Roman Empire. The Colosseum, considered to be the greatest symbol of Ancient Rome's power and glory, was completed under Titus in 80 A.D. The Colosseum could hold 55,000 spectators, on a par with many of today's modern sports stadiums. Among the sights included is the Arch of Constantine, a triumphal arch finished in 315 A.D., commemorating the victory of Constantine I over Maxentius in the year 312 A.D. We will also tour the ruins and excavations of the Roman Forum, which features the remains of magnificent temples, basilicas, and triumphal arches that once formed the heart of the Empire.
-  Experience a specialist-guided tour of the Vatican City, including the Museums, home to one of the world's most impressive collections of art. Our tour includes the map tapestry rooms, the magnificent Raphael Rooms, and the spectacular Sistine Chapel, highlighted by Michelangelo's ceiling and his Last Judgment. We will continue into St. Peter's Square to visit St. Peter's Basilica, the largest church in the western world and the centre of Catholicism. Highlights of our visit include Michelangelo's Pieta and Bernini's magnificent Baldacchino over the high altar.
-  This evening we will dine near the spectacular Trevi Fountain where it is traditional to toss a coin into the fountain to ensure a safe return to The Eternal City. Spend time at Rome's meeting place, the Piazza di Spagna, home of the famous Spanish Steps. The piazza and steps are both named in reference to a 16th century Spanish ambassador who lived here. English poet John Keats lived and died in the house to the right of the steps, which is now a memorial.



DAY 9 Sunday, 15 October 2017

-  Our rewarding and enjoyable tour comes to an end as our Tour Director accompanies us to the airport on our final day.

TOTAL PER PERSON TOUR COST BASED ON NUMBER OF FULL-PAYING PARTICIPANTS

St. Mary's Episcopal School Alumnae (Subject to final airfare confirmation)	Full Paying Participants	Price In USD	*With Early Discount
This proposal is valid until Thursday, 08 October 2015 and this tour cannot be operated in its present format with fewer than 10 participants.	25	5,628	5,228
	20	5,749	5,349
	16	6,199	5,799
* Early Enrollment Discount of \$400 if enrolled by 10/07/2015.			
Tour Prices Guaranteed at Time of Enrollment!			
Our Price Guarantee: Once you have accepted this proposal, the dates have been confirmed and WorldStrides online registration portal (or equivalent paperwork) has been made available for your group's tour, the prices shown for the relevant group size level(s) will not change, regardless of any subsequent rate fluctuations (for example, on visits to attractions, airline fuel/taxes or currency movements on overseas programs).			

What is Included:

- Round trip airfare with a major carrier on scheduled flights and guaranteed dates
- All airport taxes and fuel surcharges (which will not change after time of enrollment for any participant)
- Accommodation in four and five star hotels in twin or triple rooms with private facilities guaranteed throughout
- A filling breakfast everyday to get the day started well throughout your touring program
- A hearty dinner reflecting local cuisine on days 3 and 8 (usually in local restaurants in capital cities)
- A full-time WorldStrides International Discovery programs Tour Director to accompany your group 24 hours a day from arrival to departure
- The expertise and perspective of local guides during your tour
- All excursions, cultural activities and (several pre-booked) admissions as per your itinerary
- Once overseas, transportation by private coach for airport transfers and touring, except in Venice and Rome, where public transport is used (and the cost included) for group sightseeing
- Basic health insurance while on tour (including medical treatment on tour up to \$7,500) and \$50,000 of coverage for emergency evacuation and repatriation

This Does Not Include:

- Lunches, dinners (except days 3 & 8) or beverages (except wine, coffee, and tea at dinner on Day 3) with meals
- Visas (if required)
- Tips and gratuities for the guide and driver
- Any fees that might be imposed by the airlines at the airport for checked baggage
- Travel insurance - We offer and always recommend our Trip Mate travel insurance policy to all participants. This comprehensive policy includes health, property and cancellation coverage at a cost of \$199