

*Full Itinerary*

## GRAND ITALIAN ADVENTURE



TALK TO OUR WELL TRAVELLED TEAM OF EXPERTS

0844 3350 197

Monday to Friday 09:00 - 18:00 GMT



### JOURNEY SNAPSHOT

**ACTIVITY LEVEL:**

Level 2

**DESTINATION:**

Grand Italian Adventure

**DURATION:**

12 days / 11 nights

**FLIGHT INFORMATION:**

Please arrange your flights to arrive at Milan Malpensa Airport [MXP], on Day 1 and return from Rome Fiumicino Airport [FCO] on Day 12

**PICKUP LOCATION:**

Milan Malpensa Airport [MXP]

## OVERVIEW

Choose your own departure date for your group.

Discover the very best of Italy from Milan to Lake Garda to Verona to Venice to Florence to Pisa and Rome!

## ITINERARY SUMMARY

**DAY 1** - Benvenuti in Italia!

**DAY 2** - Magnificent Milan and Glorious Lake Garda

**DAY 3** - Historic Verona and to Venice

**DAY 4** - Venice & its Lagoon

**DAY 5** - Beautiful Bologna

**DAY 6** - Fantastic Florence

**DAY 7** - Lovely Lucca & the Leaning Tower of Pisa

**DAY 8** - Driving the Chianti Wine Road

**DAY 9** - Discovering Ancient Rome

**DAY 10** - Into the Roman Hills

**DAY 11** - Exploring the Vatican City

**DAY 12** - Arrivederci Roma

## FULL ITINERARY

### DAY 1 - BENVENUTI IN ITALIA!

Welcome to Milan! Upon arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel. This evening we will join our fellow travellers and enjoy a welcome drink and tour presentation, followed by dinner together in a nearby restaurant.

**Included meals:** Dinner  
**Accommodation:** Milan

### DAY 2 - MAGNIFICENT MILAN AND GLORIOUS LAKE GARDA

We will depart after breakfast for a panoramic guided coach tour of Milan before heading east for Verona. Sights will include La Scala, Milan's world-renowned opera house, Castell Sforzesco and, of course, the Duomo amongst others.

En-route we will stop at the picturesque town of Desenzano del Garda, on the southern banks of Lake Garda. From here we will take the short ferry crossing to Sirmione, a historic fortified town on a small peninsula jutting into the lake. It has been a holiday location since the Roman days! After free time to explore and take lunch at leisure, we will sail back across the lake to Desenzano before we continue to Verona for an overnight stay. Dinner is at leisure in the city tonight.

**Included meals:** Breakfast  
**Accommodation:** Verona

### DAY 3 - HISTORIC VERONA AND TO VENICE

This morning we will have some free time to explore historic Verona at our own pace. It is a very easy city to walk around with plenty of shops, bars and cafes, as well as some amazing sites such as the 2,000-year-old Roman Arena which still hosts concerts to this day! There's also the famous 'Juliet's Balcony' and a host of spectacular churches.

After we have had time for a spot of lunch, we will head towards Venice, the city of canals, where we will spend the next two nights. We will be transferred from the coach to our hotel by private boat shuttle as there are no roads in central Venice. Tonight, enjoy dinner together in a local restaurant/trattoria.

**Included meals:** Breakfast & Dinner  
**Accommodation:** Venice

### DAY 4 - VENICE & ITS LAGOON

After breakfast, we will enjoy a guided walking tour of Venice, wandering its maze of lanes, canals, and passages. We'll pass by the main sights of Venice, including the Doge's Palace and the striking St. Mark's Basilica.

This afternoon, after lunch, we board a private boat that will take us out across Venice's famous lagoon to the island of Murano. Here we will visit a glass-blowing factory to see how the distinctive, coloured glass for which the area is so famous is made.

We return by boat back to Venice for an evening at leisure.

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner  
**Accommodation:** Venice

### DAY 5 - BEAUTIFUL BOLOGNA

This morning we will continue our tour south towards Tuscany, stopping en-route at the city of Bologna, Italy's culinary capital and, yes, the home of Bolognese Sauce!

On arrival, we will enjoy a guided walking tour based around Bologna's excellent food legacy. We will visit to one of the city's main fresh food markets, such as the Mercato delle Erbe or similar, before a tasting lunch of local produce at one of Bologna's excellent restaurants or trattorias, whose produce comes straight from the markets.

After lunch there'll be time at leisure to explore the city, perhaps for a visit to the colossal Basilica de San Petronio that dominates Bologna's Piazza Maggiore - the basilica which is the city's largest church and the fifth largest of its kind in the whole world. In fact, the original plans had to be scaled down after the Vatican declared that this church must not be larger than St. Peter's in Rome.

Later we continue to Montecatini Terme, a beautiful spa town located just over an hour from Florence and check in to our hotel. Dinner will be together in the hotel this evening. If time allows, why not take funicular to Montecatini Alto village for sweeping views.

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Light Lunch & Dinner

**Accommodation:** Montecatini Terme

## DAY 6 - FANTASTIC FLORENCE

We will depart after breakfast with a short walk to Montecatini's railway station and board a local train for the short journey to Florence. On arrival in Florence, we will be met by our local guide and taken on a walking tour of this historical city.

We will pass by a host of famous sites such as the

Galleria dell'Accademia (Statue of David), Uffizi Gallery, Brunelleschi's Dome, Giotto's Bell Tower, St. John's Baptistry, and the Ponte Vecchio amongst others.

After all this exercise, it's time to relax, maybe partake of a traditional gelato? The rest of the afternoon will be at leisure, before returning to our hotel by train.

Back at the hotel, dinner will be together in the hotel.

**Included meals:** Breakfast & Dinner

**Accommodation:** Montecatini Terme

## DAY 7 - LOVELY LUCCA & THE LEANING TOWER OF PISA

Following breakfast, we will board our coach for a full day tour to Pisa and Lucca. First stop today will be the historic walled town of Lucca. Its thick swathe of Renaissance walls, enclosing an almost entire medieval street plan, its palaces and houses make Lucca one of the most visitable cities in Italy. A walking tour of the historical centre, along the cobblestone streets will reveal its secrets, such as the Via Filungo and its quaint shops, as well as the 14th century cathedral Duomo of San Martino. We will also pass the Casa di Puccini, where the great opera composer Giacomo Puccini was born, now a museum.

There will be time for lunch before we board the coach again and head to nearby Pisa. We will meet our guide for a tour of the Campo dei Miracoli – the Square of Miracles, which comprises the Duomo, Baptistry and of course, the famous Leaning Tower.

There will be some free time and plenty of photo opportunities in Pisa before we return to Montecatini Terme and enjoy dinner together at our hotel.

**Included meals:** Breakfast & Dinner

**Accommodation:** Montecatini Terme

## DAY 8 - DRIVING THE CHIANTI WINE ROAD

We check out this morning as we make our way south, drive through the picturesque Tuscan countryside and into the Chianti region.

The area is famous for its excellent wine, but the scenic drives are just as good. We will follow the Chianti Wine Road, going through such lovely towns as Greve, Panzano, Castellina-in-Chianti and Siena. We will stop at a vineyard to enjoy a visit, wine tasting & light lunch. After re-boarding our coach, we will continue south to the Eternal City that is Rome. Dinner will be together this evening in a local restaurant/trattoria.

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Light Lunch and Dinner

**Accommodation:** Rome

## DAY 9 - DISCOVERING ANCIENT ROME

Today we head out in the footsteps of the Romans and discover how life was 2,000 years ago.

After breakfast, we travel the short distance from central Rome towards the Mediterranean Sea and the town of Ostia Antica.

This is one of the finest ancient Roman sites in Italy and on a par with anything to be seen in Rome itself! The beautifully preserved ruins of Ostia lie twenty miles from Rome, in the meadows between the River Tiber and the Tyrrhenian Sea. It was founded in the 4th century BC as a military colony to guard the river mouth against seaborne invasions and by the 2nd century AD, Ostia had become a flourishing commercial centre inhabited by around 100,000 people! Many of the apartments, taverns and grocery shops are still intact today and although the ruins at Ostia now sprawls over 10,000 acres, around a main street that runs for more than a mile, it is still easy to imagine the local shepherds who for centuries sheltered their animals amongst its ruins as no modern houses, roads or telephone wires are visible on the horizon.

This afternoon, we return to Rome, stopping en route for lunch at leisure. Here we will tour in the coach past some of the city's more famous

Ancient Roman sites, such as the Circus Maximus, and the Mouth of Truth before we arrive at the Colosseum, probably one of the most iconic sites in Italy. Discover the secrets of the renowned site, and about those how fought and performed there as we enter, along entrance to the Roman Forum. Dinner is at leisure this evening.

**Included meals:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** Rome

## DAY 10 - INTO THE ROMAN HILLS

Today we escape the hubbub of the city and drive the short distance out to the hills surrounding Rome. We head east with our guide to hill-side Tivoli, and the beautiful Villa D'Este. With entrance, we get chance to explore its renowned Renaissance terraced gardens and fountains. Then it's a short drive to the town of Frascati, in the heart of another of Italy's famous wine growing areas. We will have lunch in a classic 'fraschetta', or local osteria-tavern, in the centre of Frascati, with local food selections. These are characteristic restaurants, full of atmosphere, in the hills around Rome, where people can eat to their heart's content, drink as much as they like, sing a little maybe, but mostly have lots of fun! Amongst the fayre offered to guests, are various types of locally produced cured ham, salami, cheeses, and several pasta dishes. But the 'queen' of the table is undoubtedly the porchetta – a delicious spicy pork roast. And if you're a vegetarian, don't worry, there's lots of non-meat choices. And, as we can't visit a wine region without a tasting, we'll stop at a winery in the Alban Hills for a visit.

We continue ever upwards to our last stop at the lofty Castel Gandolfo, which overlooks the extinct volcano that is Lake Albano, and where the Pope has his summer residence.

We return to Rome via charming town of Marino and along the Via Appia, the historic Roman road. Dinner is at leisure

**Included meals:** Breakfast & Lunch

**Accommodation:** Rome

## DAY 11 - EXPLORING THE VATICAN CITY

Our last full day on tour will be the one we've all been waiting for – a visit to the Vatican! We head to the tiny nation state, the seat of the Catholic Church to visit the Vatican and its museums including St. Peter's Basilica and the Sistine Chapel.

The afternoon is at leisure for you to explore the city, make any last-minute souvenir purchases and enjoy a last ice cream or too, independently making your own return to the hotel. This evening, we will join together one last time for a farewell dinner.

**Included meals:** Breakfast & Dinner

**Accommodation:** Rome

## DAY 12 - ARRIVEDERCI ROMA

Sadly, our Italian Experience has come to an end and it's time to depart. Transfers to the airport will be arranged accordingly.

**Included meals:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** none

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Meet & Greet on arrival at Milan Malpensa Airport
- Accommodation as detailed in the itinerary
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- All transfers/touring and excursions in air-conditioned deluxe motor vehicles.
- All entrances/guides (English speaking) and visits as indicated in the programme.
- Porterage at all hotels including luggage assistance for the Venice boat transfers (1 piece per person)
- Tourist taxes
- Services of a Big Journey Company Tour Director throughout

## WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Flights to Milan Malpensa Airport [MXP] and return from Rome Fiumicino [FCO]
- Personal expenses
- Personal Travel & Medical Insurance
- Optional excursions/entrances
- Gratuities
- Any COVID tests or related entry & exit requirements

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Please let The Big Journey Company know prior to travelling if you have any medical needs or take any medication that we need to be made aware of to ensure that you have a safe and pleasant tour.
- Check in is after 2pm and check out is before 11am unless otherwise specified in the itinerary.
- Cancellation 90 – 0 days prior to departure cancellation fee is 100%. It is your responsibility to ensure the correct travel insurance in place to protect you against the need to cancel your holiday. Deposits are non-refundable and final payments are due 14 weeks prior to departure.
- Further terms and conditions apply and will be provided upon request or at the time of booking. The Big Journey Company reserves the right to withdraw any offer prior to accepting a reservation request. This does not affect your statutory rights. This offer is subject to availability and space is limited.

## BOOK YOUR JOURNEY

*Choose from the list of dates below*

*Call to Book*

**0844 3350 197**

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