

**ITALY WITH FRIENDS TOURS**  
**"PICTURE PERFECT ITALY"**  
**September 2 - 13, 2018**

**(Itinerary is subject to change and variations with and/or without notice.)**

Day 0 - Depart USA - Saturday, September 1, 2018

Remember you will arrive in Europe the day after you depart the USA. You will need to book your air travel so that you arrive in Venice early enough to check into your hotel and be ready to meet with the group for sightseeing at 3 PM.

Day 1 - Arrival Day - Benvenuto a Venice, La Serenissima- Sunday, September 2, 2018

Welcome to Venice, known as "La Serenissima", the most serene. Many first-time visitors are often stirred deeply by this almost fantasy world unlike anything they have ever seen before. We will enjoy a walking tour through the back streets of Venice visiting the Rialto Bridge to St. Mark's Square. Napoleon referred to this square as "the most beautiful drawing room in Europe". St. Mark's Basilica and the Doge's Palace are both located on this beautiful square. Tonight, we will enjoy a welcome dinner at a restaurant along a quiet canal. (B) (D) Light

Day 2 - The Pleasure of Getting Lost in Venice - Monday, September 3, 2018

We will dive right into the historic center of what was for centuries Europe's top superpower, with a visit inside St. Mark's Basilica and its museum located on St. Mark's Square. We will then walk over the Rialto Bridge to visit the Pescheria or fish market. The open-air stalls have the catch of the day and you will see fish like you have never seen before. Find eels, scallops, and crustaceans with five-inch antennae. This is the Venice that has existed for centuries.

We will then walk to the Dorsoduro district crossing the old Accademia Bridge to see one of the last Gondola shops in Venice. We will then enjoy lunch at a lovely restaurant located on the lagoon.

The rest of the day is free for you to visit Venice's other famous sights or to get delightfully lost in the back lanes of this magical island. I am sure you will want to take that gondola ride sometime during your visit. Also, do not forget that Venice has some of the best and most unusual shopping in Italy. You may also wish to take a boat ride to one of the islands like Murano to see the glass blowing exhibits. (B) (L) Moderate

Day 3 - Verona, Shakespeare's Fair City- Tuesday, September 4, 2018

We leave Venice and travel into the Veneto region. The Veneto region is famous for many delicious wines such as Soave, Bardolino, Amarone, Valpolicella and of course the bubbly Prosecco. We will do some wine tasting in the pretty walled town of Soave.

We will then focus on the fair city of Verona. Verona is filled with wonderful sights. Some of the best ancient Roman sights north of Rome can be found here, including the "pink" marble Colosseum. Verona was the setting for the most famous love story in the English language, Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet.

After time to settle into the Hotel Firenze, you will get to feast your way around Verona on a combined "food and wine tasting/sightseeing tour". Explore the ancient history of the Roman city, and sample traditional Italian foods.

Stroll over to the impressive Arena, built in the 1st century and still in use today. Discover the balcony where Juliet stood while Romeo declared his love at the Casa di Giulietta and visit Piazza delle Erbe (Market Square) to see the site of the Forum during the Roman Republic.

Your guide will explain the history of the city and give you an introduction to the local food scene, stopping at some of the best places to sample local delicacies. You will stop at 4 different food tasting

venues, including a café to experience an authentic Italian espresso with local sweets. Learn how to make tortellini pasta and go to an historic wine shop to try local wines like Valpolicella, Lugana, and Prosecco. Finally, you will end with a light dinner. It will be the perfect introduction to this amazing city. (B) (D) Moderate

#### Day 4 - Traveling the Wine Trail Around Verona - Wednesday, September 5, 2018

Today we will spend the day exploring the lovely wine region that surrounds Verona. On the journey, your guide will explain everything you need to know about the local wines and the Valpolicella valley. Then you will stop for a quick visit to some traditional vineyards to admire the grapes.

Next, you will visit one of the beautiful wineries of the region, located in the heart of Valpolicella. There an expert sommelier will show you the wine cellar, explain the secrets of production and show you how the wine is kept. Afterwards you will sit around the table to taste some chosen wines, including the great Amarone.

After time for some beautiful pictures in the gardens and vineyards, you will head out again to visit a second cellar where you will have the opportunity to taste even more wines along with a light lunch.

Finally, before going back to Verona you will stop to take some great photos from a beautiful panoramic view of the Valpolicella valley, its vineyards and old villages. Once back in Verona, you will have the evening free to explore more of this beautiful city. (B) (L) Light.

#### Day 5 - A Traditional Home Cooking Experience in Modena - Thursday, September 6, 2018

This morning we make our way south crossing the Po River into the region of Emilia Romagna, also known as the "breadbasket of Italy." If Italy were a home, Modena would be its kitchen. Here, on the flat plains of the slow-flowing Po, lies one of the nation's great gastronomic centers, the creative force behind real balsamic vinegar, giant tortellini-stuffed with tantalizing fillings, sparkling Lambrusco wine and backstreets crammed with some of the best restaurants no one's ever heard of. The city has another equally lauded legacy: cars. The famous Ferrari museum is situated in the nearby village of Maranello.

You will have the opportunity to be a part of an authentic culinary experience in Modena. We will enter the home of Chef Gianluigi in Modena and enjoy an amazing hands-on cooking class followed by lunch with him. Gianluigi adores cooking and hosting guests. He has refined a menu of Emilia specialties, using products and raw materials from the local market. Get ready to learn some of the secrets of this region's cuisine and enjoy a meal with your new friends.

After lunch, we will travel to the medieval village of Dozza, a village known for its homes decorated in brilliantly colored, contemporary frescoes. You will have time to walk around and pay a visit to the village's famous wine exhibition at Enoteca Regionale Emilia Romagna, located in Dozza Castle, where you will find an endless selection of regional wines.

Then we will make our way back to the Modena area for our overnight. (B) (L) Light

#### Day 6 - The Amazing Food and Ferrari Tour - Friday, September 7, 2018

Today you will have the chance to learn all about the treasures of this region on your amazing Food & Ferrari Tour. You will visit boutique producers of Parmesan Cheese, Balsamic Vinegar and Prosciutto, where you can experience lovely tastings with accompanying wines and learn how these fabulous foods are made. You will visit the worldwide famous Ferrari Museum in Maranello and maybe test drive (for an extra fee) your favorite Ferrari car! At the end of the tour enjoy a delicious 6-course Italian lunch at a family-run restaurant. Your senses will be awakened and changed forever with the sights, sounds, and flavors of the day. You will even have the opportunity to buy the outstanding products you will taste directly from the producers.

Then we will head to the town of Stresa, which sits on the banks of Lake Maggiore, one of the most beautiful spots in Italy. Lake Maggiore is ringed by mountains and dotted with the Borromeo islands. Here you will have time to relax and enjoy the natural beauty that surrounds you from the wonderful

rooftop terrace of Hotel Palma. We will explore the small town of Stresa and then you will have the evening to relax in this amazing setting. (B) (L) Moderate

#### Day 7 - Enjoying the Day on Lake Maggiore - Saturday, September 8, 2018

You will have the whole day to enjoy this magical setting. Why not take a ferry ride on the lake and visit the Borromeo Islands, with a stop at Isola Bella where you find the amazing 17th century Palazzo Borromeo? You can ride a cable car up into the mountains and have amazing views over the lake and distant Alps. Tonight, we will dine like kings as we will hop a boat for Isola del Pescatori, or Fisherman's island. Here we will dine under the stars and enjoy the delicious food and wine of the Piedmont region. (B) (D) Light

#### Day 8 - Lago Como and Bellagio, the Pearl of the Lake - Sunday, September 9, 2018

Today we make an excursion to Lake Como, in the Lombardy region. Lake Como is a hazy, lazy lake lined with lovely villas, and crowned with snowcapped mountains. It has been the home to the rich and famous and a major holiday destination for centuries. We will visit the town of Como, known for its silk production. From here you can hop a ferry to visit other sites and towns on the lake. Bellagio, self-proclaimed "Pearl of the Lake" is beautiful.

We will then head west to another famous wine region of Italy, the Piemonte. We will spend two days in the lovely area and stay right in the middle of a vineyard. Our hotel is a small family run B&B and you will fall in love with the views that surround you for sure. We will enjoy dinner together in one of the nearby villages. (B) (D) Moderate

#### Day 9 - The UNESCO World Heritage Villages of La Morra and Barolo - Monday, September 10, 2018

We will spend the day exploring the villages of La Morra and Barolo. We will stop at the village of La Morra for a panoramic view of the Langhe, the hilly Piedmont region famous for its cheese, truffles, and wines. Then, we continue to visit Barolo, a small town surrounded by vineyards whose production is distinguished as one of the most well-known names in Northern Italian wine.

We will visit the Wine Museum in Barolo and take time to taste the local wines. This will definitely be a day of picture perfect vistas all around you. We will enjoy dinner together once again. (B) (D) Moderate

#### Day 10 - Milano, the Capital of the Region of Lombardy - Tuesday, September 11, 2018

Today there will be time to relax a bit and enjoy our lovely setting before we head out and make our way to the wonderful and vibrant city of Milan. We will settle into the Hotel Star located in the heart of the city. We will take an orientation walk and enjoy dinner together. (B) (D) Moderate

#### Day 11 - Marvelous Milano - Wednesday, September 12, 2018

Today will be busy as we enjoy a full day visiting Milan. We will visit the main sights on a guided tour. The Milan Duomo is one of the most ornate in Italy. You can even walk on top of the roof. The finale of the tour will be a visit to Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece, The Last Supper. There will be time for last minute shopping along the way. We will also enjoy our farewell dinner together. (B) (D) Moderate

#### Day 12 - Arrivederci Italia! - Thursday, September 13, 2018

It is time to say "arrivederci". Parting will be such sweet sorrow, but I know you will take along wonderful memories of time spent enjoying "Picture Perfect Italy" with new friends. (B)

(Included meals are designated each day with (B) for breakfast, (L) for lunch, and (D) for dinner.)

### **THE FOLLOWING IS INCLUDED IN YOUR ITALY WITH FRIENDS TOUR:**

- 11 nights' accommodation in 3-4 star, centrally located hotels with private bath or shower.
- Many meals included: 11 breakfasts (B), 4 lunches (L), 7 dinners (D).
- All ground transportation in Italy during tour. (Does not include airfare. Does not include transportation to and from the airport or train station)
- Guided sightseeing and entrance fees to select sights, wineries and museums as described in itinerary.
- Local VAT taxes and government fees, gas, highway tolls and parking fees.
- Pre-tour visit with helpful travel information.
- Plenty of memories to last a lifetime.
- Surprises along the way.

### **NOT INCLUDED IN TOUR:**

- Does not include airfare.
- Does not include transportation to and/or from the airport in Venice or Milan.
- Does not include remaining meals, alcoholic or non-alcoholic drinks at included meals.
- Does not include personal expenses such as internet use, laundry, mini-bar, or extra transportation in tour towns.
- Does not include travel insurance.
- Does not include city tax required in each hotel. Can range from 1 – 6 Euro per person per night.

### **ITALY WITH FRIENDS 2018 - LAND ONLY TOUR PRICES:**

Tour begins in Venice and ends in Milan.

Tour is for 12days/11nights.

The total cost per person is **\$3899.00** with double occupancy.

(Includes Euro exchange rate adjustment. Does not include local city hotel tax)

Traveling solo? Sadly, most hotels only have a few single rooms, so many times they provide what they term "double for single use". They do however, charge a premium for the luxury of staying alone. I am faced with this all the time. If you cannot find a partner, I will be glad to match up single travelers if at all possible. Otherwise, the single supplement for this tour is **\$900.00** extra per person.

### **PHYSICAL DEMANDS:**

Prepare for a physically demanding tour. Age is not a concern so long as you are physically fit, a very good walker at an energetic pace, and able to stand for extended periods of time and climb lots of hills and stairs. All of the above could be done in all sorts of weather and temperatures. You are required to load and unload your bags into the van, and to carry your bag to your room. This sometimes could be a short distance from the hotel. Most days our sightseeing will cover anywhere from 2-8 miles of walking, sometimes over uneven surfaces. Plan to get in shape before you head to Italy.