

LEISURE ITINERARY 16 ITALY

DAILY PROGRAM

DAY 1 NAPLES

Arrive at Naples airport where we will be met by our Tour Manager. Transfer by private motor coach to our Hotel . This afternoon you are free to wander, to shop, to sip your first cappuccino, whetting our appetites for what's to come. This evening we enjoy a welcome drink followed by dinner at our hotel with great local wines.

DAY 2 NAPLES – CAPRI

Naples at our stern, Capri at our bow, this morning we cross the Bay of Naples to the world's most enchanting island. The vacation spot of Roman emperors and today's movie stars, we promise you'll be equally captivated by the charms of Capri. Later this afternoon we sail back for a great dinner out with our tour guide and new friends!

DAY 3 NAPLES– POMPEI – FLORENCE

This morning we're off to Pompeii! A city perfectly preserved as it was on that fateful day 2,000 years ago, when ash and lava literally stopped life in its tracks. You'll see the tragic fossils of people attempting to escape along with their children and dogs. Back to the present day, we're off to Florence via the Highway of the Sun. As we traverse the hilly countryside to the capital of Tuscany, we're reminded of the geniuses who traveled this very path long before us : Dante, Da Vinci, Michelangelo, Galileo, Botticelli and so on. Upon arrival we'll relax with our friends for dinner and overnight at our hotel.

DAY 4 FLORENCE

Florence – the fountainhead of the Renaissance, awaits our inspection! Our full day of sightseeing includes an extensive tour of the Uffizi gallery, one of the oldest and most important art museums in the world, including Botticelli's famed Primavera and The Birth of Venus. We'll visit the majestic Cathedral built in 1296, Giotto's Bell Tower and the Baptistry with its renowned "Gates of Paradise" doors. We follow the medieval streets to the most striking square in Florence, Piazza della Signoria and external view of Santa Croce Church, Michelangelo's final resting place. Next, cameras out for a breathtaking panorama of the city atop Piazzale Michelangelo. Tonight we'll enjoy dinner at one of our favorite Florentine restaurants with great local wines.

DAY 5 FLORENCE – VENICE

This morning we're off for a day trip to Venice! New York has its Fifth 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 moorings. Your guide will show you all the sights – St. Mark's Square, the Basilica and the Bridge of Sighs. We'll enjoy a special lunch in Venice renowned for it's seafood specialties. This evening we return to Florence for dinner on your own.

DAY 6 FLORENCE – ROME

This morning we're off to Rome, with one mouthwatering stop! We'll visit a typical Tuscan winery for a tour, a tasting, and a delectable lunch. At this point, it might occur to you to desert

the tour and live out your days in Tuscany. Sorry. You're guide will be counting heads back on the coach! We'll soon check into our hotel in Rome for a relaxing night on our own.

DAY 7

ROME

This morning, it's a 5 minute drive to another country – Vatican City! With our expert local guide we'll tour the Vatican Museums, a treasure trove of ancient Greek sculptures, medieval tapestries and Renaissance paintings. Our visit culminates in the Sistine Chapel, the room where the Pope is elected. We enter in total silence, not wanting to disturb Michelangelo's famed frescoes depicting stories from the Bible and the 'End of Times.' You'll be fascinated by which of Michelangelo's contemporaries he assigned to heaven, and which to hell. Next we visit St. Peter's Basilica, by far the largest church in Christendom. We'll see Michelangelo's Pieta, sculpted when he was just 24, as well as Bernini's seven-story bronze canopy located above the main altar. Tonight we'll recount our explorations with good food, good wine and great friends back at the hotel.

DAY 8

ROME

Hail Caesar! All aboard our chariot for a panoramic tour of Imperial Rome including the Roman Forum, Largo Argentina (where Caesar was stabbed by Brutus), the Jewish Ghetto and the Circus Maximus. Then we'll enter the Colosseum, reliving the brutal entertainment of the gladiators and the lions, refereed by the Emperor himself. Tonight is our last dinner together. No tears. You'll exchange e-mails with your new friends and make plans for the future.

DAY 9

ROME APT- END OF THE TOUR

Arrivederci Italia- Breakfast at the hotel. Departure to Rome airport. While we say 'arrivederci' to Italy, we realize we're taking a little piece of it back home with us. End of the tour