



Callisto Tours'  
**CLASSIC EXPRESSIONS OF ITALY**  
**Rome – Florence – Venice**  
July 29 to August 6, 2012

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*Tentative itinerary as of 1/30/2012.  
Slight adjustments may occur due to circumstances unforeseen at this time.*

**SATURDAY. 28 JULY 2012.** Depart from your home airport and begin the adventure of a lifetime – in Italy!

**SUNDAY. 29 JULY 2012.** The grand tour begins in Rome

Upon arrival into Rome you will be met and transferred to your hotel in Piazza Barberini, a superb location overlooking the famous *Fontana del Tritone* by Bernini. The city is on your doorstep, with easy access to shops, cafes, and restaurants.

Shake off jet lag with a walking tour led by our local professional Rome specialist. Explore the labyrinth of narrow streets and beautiful wide open piazzas of central Rome. First stop is the famous Trevi Fountain, be sure to throw in a coin to ensure your return to Rome one day. A short walk through narrow cobblestone streets passes the ministries of the Italian Government and on to the Pantheon. Arguably Rome's most inspiring site, the Pantheon is the best preserved of all Roman monuments in the city. The Pantheon leads to the stunning Piazza Navona, flanked by cafes and restaurants with al fresco terraces, and whose centerpiece is Bernini's famous *Quattro Fiumi* fountain. From here head back towards the hotel along the via del Corso to the elegant Piazza di Spagna, with the Spanish Steps rising to the Trinita di Monti. A climb to the top of the steps (there is also an elevator) rewards with stunning views over the hills of Rome and the dome of St. Peter's.

Tonight celebrate the beginning of an immersion into classic Italy with dinner in a traditional Roman *trattoria*.

*Accommodations: Hotel Barocco* inclusive of a continental breakfast

D

**MONDAY. 30 JULY 2012.** Imperial Rome - Seat of the Roman Emperors

Enjoy a half-day tour which will no doubt leave you in awe as our guide shows you the heart of the Roman Empire. Visit the imposing Coliseum, commissioned by Emperor Vesapian; the stadium could accommodate up to 50,000 spectators who came to view the gladiatorial battles that lasted up to 100

days. Adjacent is the Arch of Constantine, dating from AD 315 it is a forerunner to many other Triumphal Arches around the world. Possibly even more impressive are the excavations of the vast Roman Forum where the remains of temples, streetscapes, palaces and homes have been uncovered and can now be visited up close. The atmosphere of Rome's pulsating heart, crowded with people from across the Roman Empire comes to life as our guide explains the other nearby Emperor's forums of Traiana, Augusto, and Cesare. Today's visit also includes the Palatine Hill, inhabited since the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC, archaeologists believe this to be the place where Romulus, founder of Rome, lived.

The afternoon is yours to soak up the Roman life; sit in a café watching the people pass by, strike out to explore one of Rome's unique neighborhoods, find a new museum, or put your feet up in the hotel. Spend your time as you wish.

*Accommodations: Hotel Barocco*

*B*

#### TUESDAY. 31 JULY 2012. The Vatican City – The World's Smallest State and Seat of the Holy See

After breakfast we are picked up at the hotel and transferred to the Vatican City where we have an express entry to the Vatican Museums to begin a 4 hour tour with our guide. The Vatican was created by the Lateran Treaty in 1929 and is the World's Smallest Independent State. Visit the Vatican Museums, part of the Papal Residence which is estimated to contain 1400 rooms, chapels and galleries. The Museums contain an extraordinarily rich collection of precious arts, maps, sculptures and antiquities, however the most breathtaking masterpiece is Michelangelo's frescoed ceiling in the Sistine Chapel

At the center of the Vatican, past the colorful Swiss Guard, lies the vast Basilica of St. Peter, the world's largest church. The present Cathedral is a beautiful mix of Renaissance and Baroque architecture, formed under the hands of masters such as Michelangelo. The stunning interior is an elaborate and detailed display of marble, mosaic, gilt and bronze.

*IMPORTANT TO NOTE: The Vatican requires visitors to cover upper arms and legs to below the knee*

The remainder of the day will be at your leisure to relax and further explore the Eternal City.

*Accommodations: Hotel Barocco*

*B*

#### WEDNESDAY. 1 AUGUST 2012. From Rome to the Renaissance City of Florence

A morning transfer to the railway station and a relaxed ride aboard the *Alta Velocita* non-stop through the Umbrian and Tuscan countryside during the 95 minute trip to Florence.

Luggage is portered in Rome and Florence so the trip is comfortable and carefree.

Upon arrival into Florence, while the luggage is handled by porters, we make the short walk to our hotel on the elegant Piazza Santa Maria Novella, whose centerpiece is the exquisite black and white marble Church of the same name.

Later, our local Florence expert meets our group at the hotel and introduces us to the Renaissance city with a walking tour through the heart of Florence starting with the Duomo (Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore) and the Accademia which houses the world famous "David" by Michelangelo.

*Accommodations: Hotel Santa Maria Novella, superior room inclusive of a buffet breakfast.*

*B*

THURSDAY. 2 AUGUST 2012. Florence Art - Past & Present

Begin the day with an exploration of the world's richest art city. Our private guide leads us into the heart of the old city and the San Lorenzo district where the grand Medici Chapels are located. Get an awakening of all the senses in the Mercato Centrale where Florentines go daily for the freshest produce, meat, fish, cheese, etc

Florence is a vast and beautiful monument to the Renaissance, the artistic and cultural reawakening of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Writers such as Dante, Petrarch, and Machiavelli contributed to its proud literary heritage; though it was the paintings and sculptures of artists such as Botticelli, Michelangelo, and Donatello that turned the city into one of the world's greatest artistic capitols.

Finish with a quiet moment at a local *enoteca* and enjoy a tasting of regional wine, cheese, and Tuscan specialties. At this point Italy's regional diversity begins to reveal itself; historically, geographically, politically, and gastronomically, each region of Italy is distinct.

The remainder of the day is free to spend as you wish. Entry tickets to the Academia and Uffizi Galleries are provided so that these museums can be enjoyed when you wish and the masterpieces inside can be viewed at your own pace. Only entrance tickets are provided, this is not a guided tour.

*Accommodations: Hotel Santa Maria Novella*

*B, L*

FRIDAY. 3 AUGUST 2012. Eno-gastronomic Tuscany

Enjoy the morning at leisure. Visit a museum or browse the shops or markets.

In the afternoon we make a trip to the Tuscan countryside. About 40km east of Florence lays an historic "jewel" called San Miniato whose origins date as far back as the Etruscans. Following a tour of the historic old town and the restored castle fortress of Frederick the II, visit a nearby vineyard and learn a bit about the unique grape and olive producing region. The same soil and terroir is responsible for San Miniato's award winning *Tartufo Bianco*, its famous white truffle. The real treat ahead is a tasting of these regional products that make this area famous. Of course the day's excursion wouldn't be complete without a delicious country dinner in an exquisite setting. This day will be remembered.

*Accommodations: Hotel Santa Maria Novella*

*B*

SATURDAY. 4 AUGUST 2012. Florence to La Serenissima via Modena and Padua

Bid farewell to Florence this morning as we head north into the Emilia Romagna region and the town of Modena.

First a visit to Villa San Donnino and another unique gastronomic treat: a Balsamic tasting in a rustic restaurant owned by a renowned Balsamic Vinegar producer and his family. You will be hosted on a private visit of the next-door *acetaia*, where the family's award winning balsamic vinegar is produced according to the strict local traditions. Hear the history of the vinegar making and taste the dark thick and very sweet liquid for yourselves – see how it differs from the supermarket produce! Emilia Romagna is reported to have the "best food in Italy", and a light lunch of local specialties provides an opportunity to test those reports.

Continue with your journey stopping en-route at Padua. Padua is an enchanting city with its medieval pedestrian streets and delightful market squares. Here we meet our local guide for a 2 hour walking tour of this exceptional city and its famous Scrovegni Chapel with Giotto's frescoes (1303-1305) that narrate the story of Christian salvation from the Annunciation to the Last Judgment.

From here it's just a short ride across the causeway to Venice where the road ends and your journey is completed by a cruise through the Venetian canals to your hotel, located right in the heart of the city.

*Accommodations: Ruzzini Palace in classic rooms inclusive of continental breakfast. B, L*

#### SUNDAY. 5 AUGUST 2012. Venice

Spend the morning with our Venetian expert who will meet our group at the hotel for a private three hour introductory walking tour through the heart of Venice focusing on the famous San Marco area. St. Mark's Square is not a square at all; rather it is a trapezoid whose extensive sides flare out giving it the appearance of being even more spacious. Two wings occupy the sides of the square over the arcades and are known as the old (*vecchie*) and new (*nuove*). Filled with cafés and people, it is a gracious square, once declared by Napoleon to be the "world's greatest drawing room."

The remainder of the day is at your leisure to immerse yourself in the beauty of this amazing city. Walk until your feet beg for a rest and then take a seat in a café and reflect on the history that has passed through these canals.

In the evening we share a spectacular farewell dinner in a traditional Venetian restaurant with an array of local dishes while we relive the experiences of the past 9 days.

*Accommodations: Ruzzini Palace*

*B, D*

#### MONDAY. 6 AUGUST 2012. Arrivederci Italia - Depart Venice

Our travel through the classics is complete – for now. We prepare to leave Venice and Italy knowing we will return. First by boat and then by road, transfer directly to Venice Airport for your flight home or forward to your next destination.\*

*B*





*I am thrilled to host this unique approach to the classic expressions of Italy and to introduce my guests to the friends I have made over my 20 years of traveling in Italy. I believe that everyone needs to stand in the footsteps of Michelangelo, Dante, and da Vinci or to gaze in wonder at a Bernini sculpture or the famous "David". Professional local English speaking guides lead us through the past into the present and teach us something about the contemporary day to day life in Italy. Our point of view takes on a new perspective after basking in the beauty and history found on our pursuit of Classic Italy. I look forward to welcoming you in Rome.*

*Pamela Abraham, Italy specialist*

Join this one of a kind Italian immersion. Spend 9 days and 8 nights with likeminded individuals exploring the wealth of history, art, and culture found in the multifaceted landscapes of Italy. Look at the classic Italian visions from Roman to Renaissance, the artists, explorers and traders, all the while learning about contemporary life from the locals we encounter along the way.

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The 9 day package includes:

- 8 nights' hotel accommodations with breakfast daily.
- A welcome celebration, final dinner, and country dinner are included as well as lunches and tastings.
- All transfers and guides and train tickets are included.
- Entrance fees on all guided tours as well as tickets to the Uffizi and Accademia in Florence for independent visits.
- Gratuities, portorage, and taxes are included.

(\*One airport arrival and departure transfer is included and will be arranged at a time most convenient to the group depending on flight arrangements.)

Complete package cost is \$3950 double occupancy. A deposit of \$750 is required to reserve a space. The deposit is refundable less \$100 that may be retained as a service fee.

International air not included. Inquire for best available rates.

A minimum of 8 passengers is required for trip to operate.

Full details and the Terms and Conditions are found in the Enrollment Form.

Call or email with any questions or to request more information. Space is limited so register now.



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## GENERAL INFORMATION ON ITALY

### Geography

The Republic of Italy is bordered by Slovenia, France, Switzerland and Austria.

Rome is Italy's capitol city.

### Population

The population of Italy was estimated to be 57 million in 2007 with major cities including Rome, Florence, Milan, Genoa, Naples and Palermo

### Languages

Italian is the official language; English is widely spoken in the major tourist cities

### Religion

The major religion in Italy is Roman Catholic

### Climate

Italy has a temperate climate that is generally pleasant. There are, however, regional differences in temperature that may suggest appropriate attire. (For instance, a jacket or warm sweater will be necessary at higher altitudes throughout the year, although summer temperatures can be quite warm in low-lying areas especially in the south) Snow is characteristic of late autumn, winter, and early spring, especially at higher altitudes.

### Currency

The currency is the Euro. Foreign currency can be exchanged in banks, exchange offices, travel agencies and hotels. ATM Machines are widely available.

### Power supply

220-220V, 50 Hz

Most power outlets are the Continental two-pin type.

### Water

Tap water is potable in Italy although the majority of Italians drink bottled water

### Time zone

GMT plus one hour

### Travel documentation

Each traveler must be in possession of a valid signed passport that will remain valid for at least 6 months beyond the completion of his/her trip. United States and Canadian passport holders do not require tourist visas for entry into Italy.

### Working hours

Most shops are open from 9.30 a.m. until 7.30 p.m. on weekdays and many close Sundays. It is still common practice for shops to close from 1.00pm for 1 or 2 hours. Public services operate Mondays to Fridays.

### Post and Telecommunications

Post offices are mostly open from 8.30 am to 7.30 pm, smaller offices close over the lunch period. Using a phone card one may call abroad directly from any public phone. Phone cards, together with postage stamps, can be purchased in post offices and at newsstands. Three Italian GSM networks have concluded roaming agreements with almost all GSM networks around the world (in some countries with several). Cybercafés and WiFi zones can be found in all major cities and tourist destinations however users must present I.D. to use

International country code for Italy: +39