



Absolute Italy Itinerary

12 Days / 11 Nights

DAY 1 – Naples Airport to Sorrento - Welcome Dinner

Upon arriving at the Naples airport, you will be met by one of our English-speaking drivers and privately transported to **Sorrento** where you will be staying at **Grand Hotel Riviera** perched high up on the cliffs, giving you spectacular views of the Bay of Naples and the Island of Capri. In the evening, you will meet your tour escort and fellow travelers at a fabulous welcome dinner at the hotel. (meals included: dinner)

DAY 2 – The Amalfi Coast

After breakfast at the hotel, you will spend the day exploring the towns of the **Amalfi Coast**, driving along the often-dizzying heights of the coastal road in the safe hands of one of our private drivers. Stops will include the town of Amalfi with its beautiful cathedral, Ravello and the stunning gardens of Villa Cimbrone, Villa Rufolo and Positano where you will have free time to enjoy the views and shopping before returning to the hotel for dinner. (meals included: breakfast and dinner)

DAY 3 – Island of Capri

After breakfast at the hotel, you will meet our English-speaking skipper, who will be taking you on a cruise around the Island of **Capri**. You will have the opportunity to go swimming, visit some of the caves (including the Blue Grotto) and to go ashore where you can enjoy lunch at your leisure. In the late afternoon, you will return to Sorrento where you will have some time to relax before dinner at the hotel. (meals included: breakfast and dinner)

DAY 4 – Pompeii and Rome by Night

After breakfast and checkout at the hotel, you will depart Sorrento for **Rome**, stopping in **Pompeii** for a private tour to marvel at this ancient, ruined city. After the tour, you will enjoy lunch and a wine-tasting in the city of Pompeii, before continuing to Naples where you will catch the high-speed train to Rome. After arriving in Rome, our driver will transport you to **Hotel Barberini** where you will have time to rest or stroll the area near the hotel. You will enjoy dinner at Otello-Concordia Restaurant, one of the best Roman *trattorias*, near the Spanish Steps. After dinner, you will enjoy a tour of Rome by Night! Evening is the perfect time to see some of the city's most popular monuments and their twinkling lights. (meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner)

DAY 5 – Rome and The Vatican

After breakfast at the hotel, you will be transported to **Vatican City** for a private guided tour of the **Vatican** that includes the Sistine Chapel and the Basilica of St. Peter's. After lunch with the group, you will have time on your own to rest or explore the wonders of Rome. (meals included: breakfast and lunch)

DAY 6 – Ancient Rome: The Colosseum & Roman Forum

After breakfast at the hotel, you will continue your journey into the ancient Roman Empire, with visits to **The Colosseum and Roman Forum**. Your private guide will help you unravel this ancient mix of structures and explain the story of their survival. Upon conclusion of the tour, you will have time on your own to explore, shop and seek out any Italian culinary delights that you desire. (meals included: breakfast)

DAY 7 – Wine Tasting in Tuscany

After breakfast and checkout at the hotel, you will depart Rome and be transported north to beautiful **Tuscany** and picturesque Orcia Valley, home to some of Italy's finest wines. At the Col D'Orcia Winery, you will enjoy a guided tour of this exclusive winery with a light lunch. In the afternoon, you will visit some of Tuscany's famous hill towns, including Pienza and Montepulciano. Your destination of the day will be Florence and the Hotel Plaza Lucchesi followed by dinner in the historical city center. (meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner)

DAY 8 – Tour of Florence

After breakfast at the hotel, an expert local guide will show you the highlights of **Florence** and explain the history of the powerful Medici family who ruled much of Tuscany during the Renaissance. Your tour will include the Accademia Gallery which is home to the statue of David. After the tour, you will have time on your own to explore the city of Florence. (meals included: breakfast)

DAY 9 – Cinque Terre

After an early breakfast, we head out for a memorable day exploring one of the world's most spectacular coastal areas, the famed Cinque Terre. We shall learn all about Cinque Terre's history and unique features like the steeply terraced cliffs bisected by a complicated system of fields and gardens hacked, chiseled, shaped and layered over the course of nearly two millennia. So marked are these artificial contours that some scholars have compared the extensive "muretti" (low stone walls) to the Great Wall of China! And all enhanced by the charming villages - Riomaggiore, founded in the 8th century by Greek settlers fleeing persecution in Byzantium, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola and Monterosso - which look onto the gleaming pristine waters of the sea. We shall lose ourselves in gorgeous scenery, hike/walk along the famous trails (including the Via dell'Amore - please see *) and explore a few of the fascinating villages traveling by boat, train and on foot. One of the highlights of this day will be a Ligurian seafood feast, with exquisite regional white wines, in a lovely seafront restaurant. And we shall learn about the area's one-of-a-kind grape harvesting techniques enjoying an exclusive leisurely hike through luxuriant seafront vineyards: nobody in sight apart from the deep blue sea, verdant vines, your group and guide. Weather and sea conditions permitting you will also admire the scenario from the water during a fabulous cruise.

(meals included: breakfast, lunch)

*The villages of Cinque Terre are not accessible by coach and a moderate amount of walking will be required today, transportation dependent on weather.

DAY 10 – Venice

After breakfast and checkout at the hotel, you will be transported to the Florence rail station to board a high-speed train to **Venice** and check-in at our hotel. In the afternoon, you will tour Venice's spectacular lagoon departing from St. Mark's Square. This tour includes the islands of Burano, Toricello and Murano, famous for their magnificent colors, lace-making and glass blowing. Enjoy dinner with the group in Venice. (meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner)

DAY 11 – Secrets of Venice

After breakfast at the hotel, you will meet your guide to explore the secrets of **Venice**. Your privately guided walking tour of Venice Island will include the Doge’s Palace and many other highlights of the city. Your afternoon will include a gondola ride followed by time on your own before a magnificent farewell dinner in the floating city. (meals included: breakfast and dinner)

DAY 12 – After breakfast at the hotel, you will be transported to the Venice Airport for your return flight home.

Tour Highlights and What's Included

Everything specified in daily itinerary above

4-star hotels in great locations

Daily Buffet Breakfast

Excellent Photo Opportunities

Full day excursion to Capri

Full-day excursion to Cinque Terre

Half-day private walking tour of Venice with expert bilingual certified guide

Personalized Services

Private Amalfi Drive excursion with expert bilingual driver

Privately guided tour of Pompeii

Reservation and ticket to the Accademia Gallery

Road Tolls

Service charges and taxes included

Skip the Line Entrance to Colosseum, Roman Forum and Palatine Hill

Privately guided tour of Vatican City with Licensed Guide

What's Not Included

Everything not clearly specified under “what’s included”

Flights to and from Italy

Food and beverages not mentioned in the program

Gratuities of any type

Hotel City Taxes, which must be paid locally

Call 1-281-402-9282 to make your reservations.

(ITINERARY SUBJECT TO CHANGE)