

## Northern Italy, Florence and Tuscany

Written by

Wednesday, 15 June 2011 07:52 - Last Updated Friday, 29 July 2011 11:33

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### **Day 1 - Fri. □ Arrive Malpensa Airport**

### **Day 2 - Sat. MILAN – City sightseeing**

09:00 AM English speaking licensed guide with air-conditioned minibus and driver will meet at the hotel for 4 hours city sightseeing.

01:00 PM End city sightseeing.

### **Day 3 - Sun.MILAN – Day excursion to Lake Como**

08:00 AM English speaking driver/guide will meet at Hotel Grand Milan with private 8 seats air-conditioned vehicle for touring to Lake Como. Drive via Lecco and Varenna

10:30 AM depart by ferry (15 min.) to Bellagio. Bellagio is one of the most beautiful points on Lake Como. Not only is it an interesting old town, but it is splendidly sited on a promontory overlooking the three arms of the lake.

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NOTE changes: 11:00 AM Visit to the park/garden of Villa Melsi. Walk around in the garden, visit the family church and the museum.

02:05 PM Depart by ferry to Cadenabbia and continue by car to Lugano.

Lunch at a nice restaurant prior to visiting Lugano in the early afternoon.

Return to Milan driving along the Lago Maggiore to Locarno, Ascona, and Pallanza.

Return to Hotel Grand Milan for overnight stay.

### **Day 4 – Mon. MILAN – Day excursion to Genova, S. Margherita and Portofino**

08:00 AM Departure for a day tour to “the Riviera de Levante”. The shoreline of this part of Italy is the most popular Riviera on the peninsula. It is also the most beautiful. Away from the glamour of the bigger ports, there are hidden villages. Genova, on the other hand, is Liguria’s biggest city, though its old center still has the flavor of a small seaport.

Continue to Santa Margherita Ligure for a 10:15 AM departure by boat to San Fruttuoso and a visit to the abbey. It is a very secluded spot.

The surrounding countryside and religious buildings were given to the state by the Doria family to whom they had belonged for centuries as a way of protecting them from developers. The abbey itself was founded in 711. Depart from San Fruttuoso to Portofino for a short visit. Arrive San Margherita around 1 PM. Lunch at Beppe Achilli restaurant.

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03:00 PM Depart for Genova and visit the old town center.

08:00 PM Estimated arrival time at your hotel in Milan.

### **Day 5 - Tue. MILAN – LAKE GARDA – TREVISO**

Early breakfast prior to 08:00 AM departure for the tour of the Lago di Garda.

Around 10:00 AM arrive Sirmione. This important resort has been well known since the beginning of the century as a spa. It is said to be particularly effective in the treatment of respiratory disorders. Here you'll find the magnificent Castello Scaligero, built by the Della Scala family.

11:00 AM A visit of Lazise prior to continuing to Malcesine. Go by cable car (20 min. one way) to Monte Baldo, which has spectacular views over the lake and surrounding mountains.

Lunch at restaurant Vecchia in Malcesine.

Continue touring, and around 5 PM arrive Verona for a short guided visit of the city.

08:00 PM Estimated arrival at Treviso and Villa Abbazia for overnight stay. Treviso is a bright, busy provincial capital. There is plenty to see, although the town suffered much damage during World War II.

### **Day 6 - Wed. VENICE – Day excursion**

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Breakfast prior to 8 AM departure for Venice. Venice is one of the great “art cities” of Italy, and its churches and galleries are still crammed with magnificent paintings.

NOTE changes: 10:00 AM Enjoy a public sightseeing tour to the lagoon’s island Murano, known for its exceptional glasswork which can be found all over the town. Continue to Burano where lace-making is as famous as glass-blowing is to Murano. All over the island you will find exquisite examples of it for sale. Final stop is Torcello. All that remains of this once great city, the first settlement in the lagoon in the 5th century AD, and once a serious rival to Venice itself, are two beautiful churches

01:30 PM Lunch at the fine restaurant Anice Stellato in Venice prior to attend a walking tour to Ponte di Rialto, Palazzo Ducale and Piazza San Marco with the Basilica di San Marco, the chief glory of Venice, which was built after the original burned down in 976.

End your sightseeing with a gondola tour on Canal Grande. Drive back to Villa Abbazia in Treviso for overnight stay.

Estimated arrival around 08:00 PM.

### **Day 7 - Thur. DOLOMITES – Day excursion**

Embark another day of excitement. 08:00 AM departure from the hotel for a day excursion to the Dolomites. Drive to the city of Trento, encircled by rocky peaks and valleys. Austrian and Italian influences meet here. This agricultural and industrial center stands at an important crossroads with the converging of routes from the Brenner Pass, Brescia and Venice. You’ll visit Bassano del Grappa, a pottery town which also produces brandy (grappa), and built on the banks of the Brenta River. The town is attractive with narrow streets lined by painted houses and the squares bordered by arcades.

Lunch at restaurant Doc & le Tirebouchon in Trento prior to continuing to Madonna Di Campiglio for afternoon touring. Return to Villa Abbazia in Treviso for overnight stay.

### **Day 8 – Fri. TREVISO – FLORENCE / PISA**

08:00 AM departure from your hotel. Today you will drive along the Adriatic Coast via Ferrara to Ravenna. This is the most important place in Italy for mosaics of the Byzantine era (5th and 6th century). Mosaic splendor fills Ravenna's Mausoleum of Galla Placidia. Even if you don't see anything else of the town of Ravenna but the mosaics, you will not go away disappointed.

Continue touring to Bologna. At 1:30 PM you'll have lunch in restaurant Silverio prior to a short guided tour of the town center.

Arrive Florence in the late afternoon for check in and overnight stay at Hotel Villa Cora.

Florence is Tuscany's capital and the undisputed center of the Renaissance. From the art in the Uffizi Gallery to the numerous notable churches and palaces and the antique shops, markets and restaurants, Florence's reputation rests on the fact that it can offer everything that is best about Italy.

### **Day 9 - Sat. FLORENCE – City sightseeing**

A relaxing morning and breakfast prior to an 11:00 AM departure for a private guided city sightseeing in Florence visiting highlights of the city.

01:00 PM Lunch at restaurant Donnini. After lunch visiting Galleria Uffizi and Galleria dell'Accademia.

At 06:00 PM your driver/guide will meet you at the hotel again for an evening tour of Pisa. A short sightseeing tour followed by dinner in Taverna Kostas. Pisa contains some of the most magnificent buildings in Italy. Everyone knows about the Leaning Tower where Galileo

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conducted his experiments on the velocity of falling bodies, which, together with the cathedral, baptistery and the cemetery known as the Campo Santo (Holy Field) make up the Campo dei Miracoli (Field of Miracles) in the heart of Pisa.

10:00 PM estimated return to your hotel in Florence.

### **Day 10 - Sun. TUSCANY – Day excursion**

Breakfast prior to a 9 o'clock departure for a day excursion to Tuscany, sightseeing and visiting the wineries.

11:00 AM Visit the winery Casala Falchini, located in S. Gimignano, prior to a guided sightseeing of the town.

01:00 PM Lunch in restaurant La Mandragola.

In the afternoon, drive to Badia a Passignano. Attend a private visit of the abbey with the fine "Cenacolo" by Ghirlandaio and the antique kitchen. Continue to Castle of Montefioralle and Greve, all along the wine-road of the Chianti hills.

07:00 PM Estimated return time at your hotel in Florence.

### **Day 11 - Mon. FLORENCE / TUSCANY – ROME**

Today's journey will bring you to Rome.

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08:00 AM Your driver/guide will meet at the hotel for departure to Arezzo. Visit the town center and have time for shopping.

Arezzo is the birthplace of the poet Petrarch, another Tuscany city with a medieval air about it. Piazza Grande is its most magnificent square, lined with an assortment of medieval houses, some of which are attached to castellated towers.

NOTE changes: Lunch prior to continuing to Umbria, another picturesque region of Italy, rich in vineyards, olive trees and famous hilltop villages across the valley. The region is dotted with charming medieval towns, and, most famous of all, Assisi. The magical town of Saint Francis is still surrounded by the ancient walls, spread on the green slopes of Mount Subasio with its colorful houses of pink stone, narrow streets, flower-decked balconies, noble palaces, all providing beautiful views for memorable pictures. The most famous site to visit is Saint Francis' Basilica with its early Renaissance masterpieces by Giotto and Cimabue. Enjoy browsing in the old town and maybe have time for some shopping in the little stores and in the artisan shops.

Around 6:00 PM arrive Rome and Hotel dei Mellini for overnight stay.