



# Grand Tour of Italy

15 days | 17 days with Rome extension

From wandering through medieval piazzas, to basking in postcard-worthy views of Naples and sampling antipasti in Umbria, a tour of Italy is a feast for the eyes—and your taste buds. Our enchanting two-week tour will guide you through the iconic cities you've been dreaming of, including Florence, Rome, and Venice, as well as the smaller treasures of Lake Como, Assisi, and Sorrento. Add a can't-miss excursion and venture to Tuscan hill towns or the island jewel of Capri or use your downtime to experience the Italian art of dolce far niente—the sweetness of doing nothing. Not ready to leave? We wouldn't want to, either. Take advantage of our two-day Rome extension—and take your time.



## Your tour package includes

- 13 nights in handpicked hotels
- 13 breakfasts
- 6 dinners with beer or wine
- 7 sightseeing tours
- Expert Tour Director & local guides
- Private deluxe motor coach

## Included highlights

- Villa Carlotta
- Roman Theater of Verona
- St. Mark's Basilica
- Florence Duomo
- Assisi's basilicas
- Pompeii ruins
- Colosseum
- Roman Forum

## Tour pace

On this guided tour, you'll walk for at least 2 hours daily across moderately uneven terrain, including paved roads and cobblestone streets, with some hills and stairs.

## Group size

15–38

# Grand Tour of Italy

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## Overnight Flight → 1 night

### Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to Milan today.

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## Lake Como Region → 2 nights

### Day 2: Arrival in Milan & transfer to Lake Como Region

*Included meals: welcome dinner*

Take a deep respiro, or breath—you're in Italy! After arriving in Milan, you'll transfer to your hotel in the Lake Como region. Relax and unpack before meeting your Tour Director and fellow travelers for a welcome dinner served with beer or wine.

### Day 3: Villa Carlotta visit

*Included meals: breakfast*

Start the day with a visit to Villa Carlotta, a lush botanical garden and art museum with striking, sparkling views of Lake Como. Built at the end of the 17th century by the marquises Clerici of Milan, it boasts fragrant rose gardens, splashy azalea bushes, and a pair of citrus-rimmed tunnels that date to the first occupants of the villa.

Afterward, you can choose to return to your hotel and unwind, or do some solo exploration. Alternatively, take to the glittering waters of Lake Como by adding a scenic cruise to your itinerary. You'll float by some of Italy's most sumptuous residences and gardens, and stop in the village of Bellagio for good measure.

*Please note: From November through March, an ascent by funicular to the village of Brunate will replace the visit to Villa Carlotta—another breathtaking way to take in a panoramic view of Lake Como and the Alps*

+ Lake Como Cruise & Bellagio

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## Venice → 2 nights

### Day 4: Venice via Verona

*Included meals: breakfast, dinner*

It's easy to fall in love in, and with, Verona and its maze of ancient Romanesque, Gothic, and

Byzantine architecture tucked into the bends of the Adige River. No wonder it served as the backdrop for *Romeo and Juliet*. Join your Tour Director for a walk through this UNESCO-recognized city center.

- Imagine your own “Oh, Romeo, Romeo” moment with a visit to Casa di Giulietta, site of the famous balcony built in honor of Shakespeare's tale of the ill-fated lovers.
- Soak in the history in the oldest square in Verona, Piazza delle Erbe, then enjoy some free time to explore the less crowded Gothic architecture of Piazza Dante—named for Italian poet Dante Alighieri of *The Divine Comedy* fame.
- Marvel at the grandeur of the 2,000-year-old Verona Arena, still in use today, whose pink and white stones have stood witness to gladiator shows, opera productions, and modern concerts.
- Enjoy free time to explore Verona on your own.

Continue to Venice where you'll wind down the day with your fellow travelers over an included dinner served with beer or wine.

### Day 5: Sightseeing tour of Venice

*Included meals: breakfast*

Surrender to the beauty of Venice's labyrinthine canals, elegant bridges, and ornate Gothic and Renaissance architecture. Close your eyes and let the sound of lapping water and the passing gondolas soothe you, but not for too long—there's so much to see! You'll meet up with your local guide and explore the heart of Venice on foot and by vaporetto, or water taxi.

- Feel the energy of St. Mark's Square, with its thriving cafes and sumptuous buildings, and marvel at St. Mark's Basilica.
- See the Bridge of Sighs, named after the suggestion that prisoners would sigh at their final view of their beloved Venice through the window before being taken down to their cells in the New Prisons.
- Watch a Murano glass blowing demonstration where artisans keep the Venetian glasswork tradition alive. Observe as they skillfully use the distinctive millefiori technique—where intricate patterns are created by fusing together tiny glass rods.

Spend a free afternoon exploring Venice's canals or add an excursion.

*Please note: On some departures travelers may enter St. Mark's Basilica after the sightseeing tour based on ticket time availability.*

+ Gondola Ride: Venice Canal Cruise

+ Private Gondola Ride: Canal Cruise for Two

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## Florence → 3 nights

### Day 6: Florence via Ferrara

*Included meals: breakfast, dinner*

Sulla strada per Firenze (that's Italian for “on the way to Florence”), stop in Ferrara, a city center wrapped in defensive walls and surrounded by agricultural land. You'll immerse yourself in the Renaissance splendor of the city center as you wander along its cobblestone streets. Take in the majestic Este Castle—watch out for the moats—and the Palazzo dei Diamanti, named for the 8,000 pink and white diamond-shaped blocks that cover its facade.

End the day in Florence and linger with your fellow travelers over an included dinner, served with beer or wine.

### Day 7: Sightseeing tour of Florence

*Included meals: breakfast*

Florence was the beating heart of the Renaissance period and is the final resting place of luminaries such as Galileo, Michelangelo, and Machiavelli.

- Admire the architectural masterpiece of Florence Cathedral (Duomo) with its iconic dome, complemented by the Gothic beauty of Giotto's Campanile—a freestanding bell tower adorned with colorful marble panels and detailed relief work.
- Wander across the iconic Ponte Vecchio, a medieval bridge lined with charming shops, offering stunning views of the Arno River.
- Explore the renowned Basilica of Santa Croce, a 13th-century Franciscan church containing magnificent frescoes depicting the life of St. Francis and the tombs of Michelangelo and Niccolò Machiavelli.

Enjoy free time in Florence or add an excursion.

+ Accademia Gallery

### Day 8: Free day in Florence

*Included meals: breakfast*

The day is yours! Enjoy a free day in Florence or add an excursion to the Tuscan hill towns. Need inspiration for your day in town? Escape the crowds and wander through the Boboli Gardens, located behind the grand Pitti Palace. Explore the extensive greenery, hidden pathways, and stunning sculptures in this peaceful oasis. Dive into the vibrant Mercato di Sant'Ambrogio, serving locals for more than 100 years. Smaller than its more famous counterpart, the Mercato Centrale, you'll get an intimate and authentic appreciation for how Florentines live. Browse through market stalls bursting with fresh produce, regional delicacies, and traditional wares. Join the locals for a coffee or a bite to eat at the market's lively cafes.

+ San Gimignano: Medieval Sights & Tuscan Flavors

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## Assisi → 2 nights

### Day 9: Transfer to Assisi and sightseeing tour

*Included meals: breakfast, dinner*

The route from Florence to Assisi takes you through the picturesque landscapes of central Italy. As you leave Florence behind, you'll journey through rolling hills, vineyards, and idyllic Tuscan countryside dotted with cypress trees and quaint farmhouses.

- Visit the Basilica of San Francesco d'Assisi and admire the stunning frescoes by renowned artists, including Giotto, depicting the life of Saint Francis.
- Take in the serene and spiritual hilltop sights before ending the night with the included cena—dinner—served with beer or wine.

*Please note: The Basilica of San Francesco d'Assisi is closed on Sundays for worship.*

### Day 10: Free day in Assisi

*Included meals: breakfast*

You'll be so glad that you have more time in Assisi. Take time to lose yourself in the medieval streets of Assisi's historic center, characterized by stone buildings, piazzas, and alleyways. Discover local artisan shops, cozy cafés, and hidden corners you'll treasure. Looking for more guided exploration? Join the optional excursion to Perugia, brimming with Renaissance art and architecture, where you'll enjoy an expert-led tour, Umbrian cuisine, and a visit to a cave wine cellar—with a tasting, of course.

+ Perugia: City Highlights & Wine Tasting

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## Sorrento Peninsula → 2 nights

### Day 11: Sorrento Peninsula via Pompeii

*Included meals: breakfast, dinner*

On our way to the Sorrento peninsula, stop in Pompeii. Step into an ancient city frozen in time, where excavated ruins unveil the daily life and tragedy of a bygone civilization. Marvel at the well-preserved streets, houses, and public buildings that offer a glimpse into the life of ancient Romans.

Continue to the Sorrento peninsula and sit down for an included dinner served with beer or wine.

### Day 12: Free day on the Sorrento Peninsula

*Included meals: breakfast*

With the Sorrento peninsula as your stomping ground for the day, add an optional excursion to the resort island of Capri. Or, use this free day to journey to nearby Positano or Amalfi on your own for a hike up narrow, colorful streets or scenic coastal trails. Al fresco dining with a cliffside view is a must.

+ Capri: A Day on the Iconic Island

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## Rome → 2 nights

### Day 13: Transfer to Rome & sightseeing tour

*Included meals: breakfast*

Step into Rome, a living tapestry of contradictions where ancient ruins coexist with a vibrant, modern spirit. Lose yourself in a chaotic symphony of honking Vespas, busy markets, and secret alleyways.

- Immerse yourself in the grandeur of Imperial Rome, where history unfolds around every corner.
- Experience the awe-inspiring Colosseum, the monumental amphitheater that echoes with the roar of ancient spectacles where you can walk in the footsteps of gladiators and feel the weight of history.
- Traverse the evocative ruins of the Forum, once the pulsating heart of Roman life. Imagine the echoes of parades and gripping trials as you explore the remnants of this ancient marketplace.
- See Palatine Hill, one of the oldest parts of the city and said to be the birthplace of Rome itself.

### Day 14: Free day in Rome

*Included meals: breakfast, farewell dinner*

On your free day in Rome, you can discover the hidden gem of Trastevere, a bohemian and mostly car-free neighborhood filled with narrow

streets and delectable trattorias. Need a moment of respite? Visit the picturesque Aventine Hill, home to the peaceful Giardino degli Aranci (Orange Garden) and the famous keyhole view of St. Peter's Basilica—which you can visit by adding the guided tour of Vatican City to your day. Here, you'll also experience the grandeur and serene beauty of the Vatican Museum, as well as the Sistine Chapel's venerated ceiling fresco. The day is yours to seize. Finally, join your group at tonight's farewell dinner, served with beer or wine. You'll be treated to a multi-course traditional Italian meal and a hearty helping of live traditional entertainment.

+ Iconic Sights: Vatican City

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## Flight Home

### Day 15: Departure

*Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)*

Transfer to the airport for your flight home or *resta ancora un po'*—Italian for stay a little longer—to relish more of Rome's unforgettable sites.

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## + Rome extension

Rome wasn't built in a day and, if you ask us, it wasn't meant to be enjoyed in a day either. We know you'll want more time in the Eternal City. Whether you play time-traveler while hopping between historic sites or live out your best take on Roman Holiday, it's in your hands, and we're here to help. Ask your Tour Director for their favorite ways to savor the city—like their secret spot for pasta carbonara—and get going!

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## Rome → 2 nights

### Day 15: Free day in Rome

*Included meals: breakfast*

Use your free day in Rome to enjoy the city at your own pace. Be sure to ask your Tour Director for recommendations—there's more to Rome than meets the eye, including beneath the city. Did you know that you can descend into eerie underground chambers adorned with bones and skeletal remains in a unique display of artistic macabre at the Capuchin Crypt, also known as the Bone Chapel? And when in Rome, do as the Romans do and bring a refillable water bottle to top off at any of the city's nasoni—cast-iron water fountains.

Don't feel like making decisions? Add a guided walking tour through Rome where you can delight in the lushness of the Trevi Fountain and the Piazza Navona. How could this day get any better? Add a pasta-making class where you can end the evening dining on your own creation!

- + Pasta-Making Class & Dinner
- + Walking Tour of Rome's Iconic Sights

#### **Day 16: Free day in Rome**

*Included meals: breakfast*

It's your final full day in Rome. You won't want to skip the guided tour of St. Paul's Basilica—one of Rome's four major papal basilicas.

Prefer to spend the day on your own? Whether you want to take it easy over a morning cappuccino or take in the beauty of the Galleria Borghese's art collection, the day belongs to you.

Celebrate your trip and raise your glass for a farewell drink with your fellow group members on your last night in Rome.

- + Ancient Rome: St. Paul's Basilica & the Catacombs
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## **Flight Home**

#### **Day 17: Departure**

*Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)*

Transfer to the airport for your flight home.

Arrivederci e a presto—goodbye and see you soon.

# Customize your experience

Customize your tour by adding excursion options. Excursions offered on the same day will occur at different times, so there's no need to choose. Save \$10 when you book your excursion up to three days before your tour departs.\* Excursions requiring advance reservation only list this discounted price. Call or go online to customize your tour: [goaheadtours.com/MIT](https://goaheadtours.com/MIT) | 1-800-597-0350

## Day 3: Lake Como Cruise & Bellagio

\$105/\$115\* (5 hours, departs in the evening with dinner)

Hop aboard a scenic cruise of Lake Como to soak in some of Italy's most beautiful estates and gardens. Float past charming lakeside towns to Bellagio, a village whose scenery has inspired poets and young lovers for centuries. You'll have time to take in Bellagio's classic beauty before heading to a local restaurant, where you'll sample cuisine from a carefully chosen menu. Please note: Your included meal may be lunch or dinner as departure time varies by season. This excursion is weather-dependent.

## Day 5: Gondola Ride: Venice Canal Cruise

\$89/\$99\* (25 minutes, departure time varies)

More than 100 canals crisscross Venice, and boarding a sleek, black gondola to explore them has become a time-honored tradition. On this memorable excursion, join your fellow travelers for a tour through the canals of Venice, with a gondolier deftly guiding your boat along. Please note: This excursion runs as weather permits, and travelers should feel comfortable getting into and out of the gondolas. A private, two-person gondola ride is available for an additional cost.

## Day 5: Private Gondola Ride: Canal Cruise for Two

\$165/\$175\* (25 minutes, departure time varies)

More than 100 canals crisscross Venice, and boarding a sleek, black gondola to explore them has become a time-honored tradition. On this memorable excursion, you'll enjoy a private gondola cruise for two through the canals of Venice, with a gondolier deftly guiding your boat along.

Please note: This excursion requires two passengers. Cost is per person, and each traveler must book the excursion. Travelers should also feel comfortable getting into and out of the gondolas. This excursion runs as weather permits.

## Day 7: Accademia Gallery

\$65 (2 hours, departure time varies)

Home to Michelangelo's masterpiece David, the Accademia Gallery is one of the most famous museums in Florence. Skip the ticket lines, and join a local guide on a tour of the museum as you learn about Renaissance art history and view a variety of pieces, including the marble statue of David. This excursion requires advance reservation and must be booked at least 70 days prior to departure.

## Day 8: San Gimignano: Medieval Sights & Tuscan Flavors

\$115/\$125\* (6 hours, departs in the morning, lunch included)

Travel through the beautiful Tuscan countryside to discover the medieval village of San Gimignano. During the Renaissance, the rival Guelph and Ghibelline political factions flexed their muscles by constructing tall towers throughout San Gimignano; fourteen of

those towers survive today. Later, visit a local winery for a taste of the area's wines and a sampling of olive oil and balsamic vinegar that you simply won't find anywhere else. Then, enjoy lasagna during a light lunch.

## Day 10: Perugia: City Highlights & Wine Tasting

\$115/\$125\* (6 hours, departs in the morning, lunch included)

Discover Perugia on a guided tour. While the city is the capital of the Umbria region, it still maintains a charming feel thanks to its rich collection of Renaissance art and sweeping countryside views. You'll see Perugia Cathedral, Palazzo dei Priori, Fontana Maggiore, and the shops of Corso Vannucci. Enter the Collegio del Cambio, home to the historic exchange guild. The building dates back to the 13th century and you'll step inside to view famous, well-preserved frescoes by Renaissance painter Pietro Perugino. Then, head to the Rocca Paolina fortress for a lunch of typical Umbrian cuisine that incorporates seasonally fresh ingredients. Warm, hearty foods like lentil soup will be served in the fall and winter. Whereas summer will bring fresh, bright pasta dishes. You'll also visit a cave wine cellar to enjoy a tasting of three wines—a local white, red, and Vin Santo, or dessert wine.

## Day 12: Capri: A Day on the Iconic Island

\$125/\$135\* (8 hours, departs in the morning)

Travel by ferry to the fabled isle of Capri, a beloved resort since the days of the Roman Republic. Weather permitting, you'll enjoy a boat ride around the island. Later, you'll enjoy free time to discover why everyone from Roman emperors to Sophia Loren has spent their vacations in Capri. If the weather prohibits a boat ride, you'll travel to the village of Anacapri, which offers stunning views of the surrounding scenery.

Please note: This excursion is weather-dependent. Travelers prone to seasickness should take the proper precautions.

## Day 14: Iconic Sights: Vatican City

\$125 (3.5 hours, departure time varies)

This guided tour takes you inside Vatican City—a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the most sacred places in Christendom. This independent city-state within Rome serves as the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church and is home to the Pope. Upon arrival, turn on your pre-distributed headset and dive into the Vatican's rich history with your local guide. First, visit the Vatican Museums, which are more than 500 years old and house many of the world's most important Classical- and Renaissance-era sculptures. Next, step inside the Sistine Chapel, whose frescoed ceiling is arguably Michelangelo's greatest masterpiece. Finally, pay a visit to the enormous St. Peter's Basilica, the epicenter of the Roman Catholic faith. The artists who have contributed to its glory are some of the best Italy has ever known: Bramante, Peruzzi, Raphael, and Michelangelo. Masterpieces await at every turn, from Bernini's magnificent bronze canopy to Michelangelo's

Pietà.

Please note: Should this excursion fall on a Sunday, it'll be moved to another day of the tour. Backpacks aren't allowed in the Vatican, and shorts and sleeveless shirts are strictly prohibited. Due to closures of certain entrances and pathways, wait times may extend to several hours during busy travel months. This excursion requires advance reservation and must be booked at least 70 days prior to departure.

## Extension excursion options

### Day 15: Pasta-Making Class & Dinner

\$119/\$129\* (4 hours, departs in the evening, dinner included)

In this hands-on cooking class led by an experienced Italian chef, you'll learn to make pasta—perhaps pillowy ravioli or castellane, a ridged shell pasta that's rolled into a long, oval shape—using traditional techniques you can keep on practicing when you get back home. Then, sit down for dinner and enjoy the dishes you've prepared, along with wine.

### Day 15: Walking Tour of Rome's Iconic Sights

\$85/\$95\* (3 hours, departs in the morning)

Set out for a stroll through central Rome with a local expert. From the Spanish Steps, where Bernini's Baroque-style fountain has stood since the 1600s, head to the intricately carved Trevi Fountain. (Don't forget to toss in a coin and wish for a return trip to Rome!) Enjoy a gelato tasting before entering the Pantheon, the best-preserved ancient Roman temple. Your walking tour ends at Piazza Navona, the city's most famous square, where you'll view Bernini's stunning the Fountain of the Four Rivers. Please note: Comfortable shoes are recommended, as this excursion involves a moderate amount of walking on cobblestone streets. Entrance is not guaranteed to the Pantheon depending on the day of the week and public holidays.

### Day 16: Ancient Rome: St. Paul's Basilica & the Catacombs

\$89/\$99\* (4 hours, departure time varies)

Descend into Rome's ancient catacombs, where early Christians buried saints and popes alongside commoners. A local guide will lead you through the burial chambers before your visit to St. Paul's Basilica, one of the four most important basilicas of Rome. Originally founded by Constantine the Great, the Basilica also houses the tomb of St. Paul. Please note: Shorts and sleeveless shirts are not permitted within the Basilica. Also, this excursion involves extensive walking and may be challenging for claustrophobic travelers.

\*Optional excursions may be purchased up to three days prior to departure or while on tour. Pre-purchased optional excursions cannot be canceled within three days prior to departure or while on tour. Select optional excursions require advance booking and cannot be purchased or canceled after the advanced reservation deadline. GAT accepts payment by cash, Visa or MasterCard for optional excursions purchased on tour. Additional fees may apply for optional excursions purchased on tour. Excursions require a minimum number of participants to operate. Details and prices are subject to change. Due to seasonal hours of operation and availability, some excursions may not operate. If this occurs, you will be refunded any payments made for that excursion post-tour. Learn more at [goaheadtours.com/terms](https://goaheadtours.com/terms)