




Best of Italy in 17 Days

How you'll experience Italy in 2013:



Day 0: Depart USA

Remember, you'll arrive in Europe the day after you depart the USA.



Day 1: Welcome to Italy

Meet your tour guide and group around 5 p.m. + Varenna orientation walk + Sleep in Varenna 2 nights   



Day 2: Cruising Lake Como

The day is all yours to explore the villages and waterways of Lake Como with your included ferry pass  




Day 3: Verona and the Dolomites

Travel to the Dolomites + Walking tour of Verona's medieval center + Tirolean dinner together in the Alps + Sleep in the Alpi di Siusi area 2 nights  



Day 4: Hiking the Dolomites

The day is all yours to explore the dramatic Dolomites, from an array of hikes to a walk through Europe's largest Alpine meadow + Dinner together  




Day 5: The Iceman and Venice

Travel to Venice + Stop in Bolzano to visit Ötzi the Iceman and a museum exhibit on prehistoric European life + *Vaporetto* boat ride on Grand Canal + Orientation walk of Venice + Sleep in Venice 2 nights   



Day 6: Exploring Venice

Walking tour through the backstreets of Venice + Free afternoon and evening to explore St. Mark's Basilica, the Doge's Palace, the Accademia art gallery, and more Venetian sites + Optional evening gondola ride  




Day 7: Florence and David

Travel to Florence + Renaissance walking tour of Florence + Visit to the Accademia Gallery, home of Michelangelo's *David* + Sleep in Florence 2 nights   



Day 8: Renaissance Florence

Guided tour of the Uffizi Gallery + Free afternoon and evening to explore more of Florence  




Day 9: Cinque Terre Villages

Travel to the Cinque Terre + Pesto demonstration and dinner at a local family restaurant + Sleep in Monterosso 2 nights (may be split between 2 hotels)   



Day 10: Exploring the Cinque Terre

The day is all yours to hike through the hillside vineyards, hang out on the beaches, or lounge around town  



Day 11: Pisa and Tuscany

Travel to Siena + Stops at Pisa's leaning tower and your guide's favorite hill town + Dinner at one of Siena's *contrade* + Sleep in Siena 2 nights   

Day 12: Savoring Siena



Walking tour of Siena, including a tour of the Duomo + Visit to a stained-glass artist's studio + Free afternoon to explore  

Day 13: Assisi and Wine Tasting




Travel to Umbria + Walking tour of Assisi, including the Basilica of St. Francis + Wine tasting + Dinner together + Sleep in winery *agriturismo* near Orvieto 2 nights  






Day 14: Hill Town Italy

Visit to Orvieto + Orvieto orientation tour, including visit to San Brizio Chapel + Free afternoon to explore more of Orvieto + Dinner together at our *agriturismo*  

Day 15: Ancient and Dolce Vita Rome

Travel to the Eternal City of Rome + Guided tours of the Colosseum, Roman Forum, and Pantheon + Evening walk through the heart of Rome + Sleep in Rome 2 nights   

Day 16: Vatican Rome








Guided tour of the Vatican Museum and Sistine Chapel + Visit to St. Peter's Basilica and Michelangelo's *Pietà* + Free afternoon to explore more of Vatican City + Farewell dinner together   

Day 17: Tour Over After Breakfast

Grazie e ciao!

For a more detailed narrative of this tour's daily itinerary, visit our 2013 tours website at ricksteves.com! Itinerary specifics are subject to change.

daily activity key

-  2-4 miles of walking throughout the day on mostly level terrain
-  2-6 miles of walking throughout the day with some hills and stairs
-  2-8 miles of walking throughout the day with lots of hills, stairs and uneven terrain
-  Your choice
-    Total hours on a bus, train or boat

You'll get all this:

- **An extra-small group of 20-24 people**—less than half the size of most tour groups.
- **Full-time services of a professional Rick Steves guide and local experts** who will make the fascinating history, art and culture of Italy come alive for you.
- **All tours and admissions—at no extra cost—covering at least 26 group sightseeing events** • Lake Como ferry pass • Verona walking tour • South Tyrol Museum of Archaeology (Ötzi the Iceman) • Venice walking tour • Renaissance Florence walking tour • Uffizi Gallery tour • Florence's Accademia Museum (Michelangelo's *David*) • Pesto demonstration • Cinque Terre hiking pass • Orientation for "vacation" day on Italian Riviera • Pisa visit • Hill town visit • Siena walking tour and Duomo • Siena *contrada* visit • Stained-glass demonstration • Assisi walking tour • Umbrian wine tasting • Orvieto orientation and San Brizio Chapel tour • Evening walk through Rome including Trevi Fountain • Ancient Rome walking tour • Colosseum tour • Roman Forum tour • Pantheon • St. Peter's Basilica • Vatican Museum tour • Sistine Chapel...and more.
- **All group transportation** from Varenna to Rome.
- **16 nights accommodations** in memorable, centrally-located hotels.
- **All breakfasts and half your dinners.**
- **All tips** for guides and driver.
- **Free guidebooks and more:** In our desire to make sure everyone is properly equipped for their tour, we are including the following items for free. Your packet (which will arrive via UPS at least two months before your tour's departure date) will include:
 - **Rick Steves' Italy guidebook, Italy Sightseeing Supplement and Italian phrase book:** These are your tour guidebooks. Bring them with you and keep them handy in your day pack! They will be very helpful for sightseeing options, smart eating and shopping, public transportation, etc.
 - **Moneybelt:** Everyone receives a moneybelt and each person should wear one under their clothing. For comfort, carry only the essential documents and cards: passport, travel documents, ATM/credit cards, and extra cash.
 - **Rick Steves Tours patch:** This is a souvenir for you. Some tour members like to sew them on their day pack or hat, but this is optional.
 - **Earplugs:** We may stay in a few hotels in colorful neighborhoods, where night noises abound. Bring your included earplugs along for nights when you are more interested in sleep than nocturnal culture.
 - **Hotel Directions:** We'll provide you with directions to the tour's first hotel, and helpful contact details for the first and last hotel to assist with any pre- or post-tour hotel reservations.
- **Guaranteed tour price**, locked in the moment you make your deposit.
- **Optional single supplements**—this tour has a limited number of private rooms for single travelers for an additional fee (see ricksteves.com for our most current tour and single supplement prices).
- **Tour alum discount** of \$50 for each tour you've taken prior to 2013.
- **50% discount on a consulting appointment** with our in-house experts to assist with your pre- or post-tour travel plans.
- **Flexibility** should you need to transfer, cancel or interrupt your tour (see our included Tour Cancellation/Interruption Coverage for specifics).
- **Fine print:** You are responsible for the cost of your drinks and free-time sightseeing. See our Tour Conditions Agreement for important details regarding everything listed above.

Pre Tour

Sightseeing On Your Own

If you arrive in Italy before your tour begins, visiting Milan is a logical choice as we don't spend any time there during the tour. Use *Rick Steves' Italy* guidebook to get oriented. Ride the public transportation, try out a few words of Italian and get over your jet lag with lots of fresh air and exercise.

Here are suggestions for sightseeing in Milan: Leonardo da Vinci's newly restored *Last Supper* (reserve from home; details in *Rick Steves' Italy* guidebook) and Europe's third-largest cathedral, the Duomo. Milan is about an hour by train from Varenna, our tour's departure point, making it an easy pre-tour day trip.

The tour includes a Lake Como ferry pass on Day 2, allowing you to explore the many pleasant towns, such as Menaggio and Bellagio. But if you want more time to explore or hike, you may also want to cruise the lake before the tour begins.

Transportation

Most tour members arrive a day or two before the tour begins—and those who don't, wish they had. This allows you ample time to get over jet lag and make the most of the first few days of the tour.

There is more than one way to get to and from your tour. We recommend talking to your travel agent about "open jaw" airline tickets (flying into and out of different cities). Both Milan and Rome are major transportation hubs, making additional travel before or after your tour quite easy.

Flying within Europe can be reasonable. Ask your travel agent or check Rick's list of European budget airlines. For links to helpful rail and air websites, go to ricksteves.com/plan/links and look under "Transportation."

Read *Rick's Guide to Eurail Passes* at ricksteves.com/rail and decide if your travel plans merit a railpass (or contact our Rail Department for advice at rail@ricksteves.com or 425/771-8303, ext. 214). You can get a rough idea of costs from the above guide or *Rick Steves' Italy* guidebook.

Prior to your tour departure, you will receive detailed directions on how to get from the airport to your first tour hotel, as well as contact information for your first and last hotels in case you wish to book pre- or post-tour hotel accommodations.

If you need more information about additional European travel or for specific questions about your tour, contact the Tour Department at 425/608-4217 or email tour@ricksteves.com.

Weather

Before you pack for your tour, check out specific weather information at www.weatherbase.com or www.weather.com.

Packing

While it is important to pack light, there is one item we'd like you to consider including when packing for this tour. There are some great opportunities for hikes in the Dolomites and the Cinque Terre. While hiking boots are not necessary, we recommend you bring a pair of comfortable walking shoes with soles offering good traction.