

Picturebook Italy - 'La Dolce Vita'

10 Nights / 11 Days



New Vistas Tours

Italy is a treasure trove of experiences – its landscapes, its architecture, its history, its cuisine and its people, who perhaps speak the most beautiful language on Earth. This tour could be considered a journey through 'Classic Italy' - it's designed to 'cherry-pick' some of the best that Italy has to offer, combining two iconic regions – Tuscany and the Neapolitan Riviera with Rome, once the seat of one of the mightiest empires in history. We plan to immerse ourselves deeply and return with treasured memories – it is impossible to visit Italy and remain unmoved.

Day 1: After your arrival in Italy, meet your guide—who stays with you throughout—and transfer to our hotel in **Montecatini Terme** where accommodation is arranged for four nights on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis. This evening we have dinner together.

Day 2: **Florence** is our destination today, peerless home of the Renaissance. We journey there by train to enjoy another aspect! Upon arrival, we have a walking tour with a specialist local guide which allows us to begin to grasp the staggering beauty and importance of this great city. Awestruck and perhaps inspired, we have some free time at leisure for lunch and shopping. At the end of the afternoon, we return to our hotel in Montecatini Terme for dinner.

Day 3: This morning we travel to **Siena**, another of the great Tuscan gems. We stroll together into the historic centre, to the famous vast piazza known as 'Il Campo' site of the famous equestrian event - the 'Palio' - that takes place every year. We allow free time to visit the Cathedral, one of the greatest in all of Italy - built between 1136 and 1382 - and also the Piccolomini library if we wish. After time for lunch, further visits and for shopping, we journey to **Volterra** for a visit there before returning to our welcoming hotel in Montecatini Terme for dinner and the rest of the evening at leisure. Today we also enjoy a vineyard tour with a tasting of wine and local cheeses in the Chianti region.

Day 4: Our first visit for today needs no introduction—**Pisa**, home of the World famous tower that is a little ‘gravity-challenged’! We take time to absorb the atmosphere, visit the cathedral, tower and baptistry and perhaps, one of the oldest botanic gardens in the World—all within a few minutes walk from one another. Later we depart for **Lucca**, where we have time for further visits and lunch at the last of our Tuscan gems. According to availability there may be the option of taking a cycle ride here—payable locally. Finally, we return to our hotel in Montecatini Terme for our last dinner here and an evening to pack up ready for the next stage of our great adventure!

Day 5: This morning we depart Montecatini in the direction of **Rome**. During our journey we make a visit to the spectacular hill town of **Orvieto** - accessed by funicular. Here on high, we make time to admire the views and to visit one of Italy’s most beautiful cathedrals. We continue to **Rome** where we check into our hotel for two nights on a bed and breakfast basis. The evening and dinner are at leisure—an opportunity to savour the sights of this most historic of World cities and some of it’s cuisine too!

Day 6: This morning we visit the **Vatican Museum, Sistine Chapel** and **St. Peter’s Basilica** with included entrance. Following our visit here, we continue to a full guided city tour of **Rome** with a local guide, including all the main sights in order that we return to our hotel at the end of the afternoon with a full appreciation of this truly remarkable city. Dinner is at leisure again this evening.

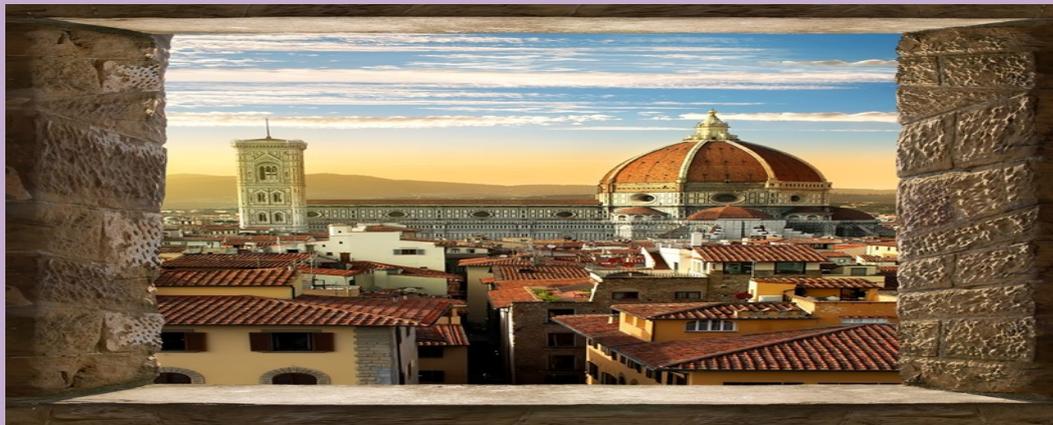
Day 7: We depart Rome this morning for the short journey to the nearby Emperor’s retreat of **Tivoli**. Here we have included visits to two spectacular settings—**Villa Adriana** and **Villa d’Este**. After lunch here, we depart for **Sorrento** and the **Neapolitan Riviera**, our home for the next four nights on a dinner, bed and breakfast basis.

Day 8: No visit to the Neapolitan Riviera would be complete without including the ‘**Amalfi Drive**’, the ‘Costiera Amalfitana’. During our journey along this gorgeous coastline, we make a stop at the celebrated belvedere at **Positano**. Next we continue to **Amalfi** itself to visit the cathedral and cloisters and a stroll, perhaps partaking of some of the World’s best ‘gelato’ whilst we wander. Today we also make a visit to **Ravello** for more captivating views over the azure ocean in this corner of Europe that truly has ‘an embarrassment of riches’.

Day 9: Today is set aside for the island of **Capri**, a highlight that will live in your memory forever. We have a hydrofoil boat journey, port transfers and island transport all included so that we can make the very most of our visit. We leave time to wander through the delightful maze of streets and squares and perhaps shop for a few little trinkets before returning to Sorrento for an evening at leisure.

Day 10: Following breakfast this morning we make a visit to **Pompeii**, the Roman town buried under volcanic ash due to the eruption of Vesuvius in 79AD, creating a kind of time capsule of Roman life. In some buildings, paintings and sculptures have survived. We have a guided tour with listening headsets to maximise the experience. Later we return to Sorrento for a last afternoon and evening at leisure in preparation for our homeward journey.

Day 11: This morning we check out of our hotel as today we commence our journeys homeward. You may however plan to stay on, or journey to another part of Italy to continue your discoveries. Transfers to Naples airport are included.



WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- ◆ Private, executive-standard coaching throughout as per itinerary (not days 2 & 9)
- ◆ 8 nights dinner, bed and breakfast accommodation (including a half bottle of house wine, water and coffee, and one candle-lit dinner in Montecatini Terme) and 2 nights bed and breakfast accommodation—all in 4* hotels
- ◆ Return 2nd class train tickets from Montecatini Terme to Florence (journey approx. one hour each way—this makes for a more seamless experience)
- ◆ Entrance fees to all mentioned attractions, **plus: Florence** – Museum, Cathedral, Brunelleschi's Dome and Giotto's Bell Tower tickets. Basilica di Santa Croce tickets; **Pisa**—tickets to visit the leaning tower; **Rome** –Vatican Museums, Sistine Chapel and St. Peter's Basilica with tickets and headsets
- ◆ Guided tours of Florence (morning), Rome (full day) and Pompeii (3 hours) with local guides (tickets and headsets at Pompeii)
- ◆ Return funicular tickets at Orvieto
- ◆ Full day excursion to Capri including hydrofoil boat, island transport and return Sorrento port transfers
- ◆ Services of your Tour Manager throughout
- ◆ Hotel portorage, in and out—one bag per person at each hotel
- ◆ Mini train to/from coach park to the centre of Pisa

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED:

- ◆ Flights
- ◆ Insurance—you should arrange this before departure
- ◆ City tax—this is payable directly at the hotel
- ◆ Optional cycle ride in Lucca—subject to availability
- ◆ Gratuities