

THE GRAND EVENT

THE BEST THAT ITALY HAS TO OFFER

DEPART MARCH 22nd, 2020,

RETURN APRIL 2nd, 2020



11 days, 10 nights

HIGHLIGHTS

You've arrived in the capital of this great nation, where the sun always shines and the natives always have a warm embrace for their friends from America!

It goes without saying that every tour event in one's life needs a component that's both iconic and unforgettable. Europe has several destinations that fit the bill, and your Grand Event will start with a true nonpareil, Rome. In addition to the Eternal City, you'll discover Florence, Milan, Siena and Venice. From the Coliseum to the Grand Canal... and a whole lot in between!

Upon arrival in Rome you will be greeted at the airport by one of your tour leaders from Conservative Tours who'll help you with your suitcases and lead you to our motor coach for the short ride into the Eternal City and beyond.

- Imperial Rome: The Coliseum, The Roman Forum, Palatine Hill, The Imperial Forum.
- The Arch of Constantine, Circus Maximus, Aventine Hill.
- Via Veneto and "La Dolce Vita!"
- The Vatican—The Museum and Art Galleries, Round Hall, The Hall of the Greek Cross, The Tomb of St. Helen and St. Constance. The Gallery of the Chandeliers, the Tapestries and the Geographical Maps.
- The Sistine Chapel, the Basilica and the Papal Catacombs.
- Piazza Navona at night.
- Florence. Need we say more. It's Florence. For its size, many visitors will tell you it's the most beautiful city in the world!

- Michelangelo's David. Giotto's Bell Tower, Ghiberti's Doors of Paradise, (The Divine Comedy from Dante.)
- Wine tasting at the famous [Castello di Oliveto](#).
- Learn to cook with a private lesson for our group from an Italian chef.
- World class Italian cuisine accompanied by three tenors, a night to remember at one of Rome's best restaurants.
- Historic and artistic tour of the stunning and unequalled city of Venice. The costumes. The pageantry. The peppermint sticks. Gondolas at sunset. Rialto Bridge. Saint Mark's Square and the Basilica. The Murano glassworks industry—the way it's been done for hundreds of years. Doge's Palace and Piombi Prison and the Bridge of Sighs.
- Tour the factory and see authentic Balsamic Vinegar made from scratch.
- Visit the city of Siena with its basilica dedicated to St Catherine (her relic skull is on display); known for each summer's running in the *contrada* (city wards) who vie for championship of the famous *il Palio* horse race.
- Experience fabulous Milan – the center of the world's fashion and design.
- San Gimignano—The Medieval Manhattan—you'll see why!

AT CONSERVATIVE TOURS WE LOVE TO DINE!

- One of my favorites in Rome: Piccola Cuccagna just off Piazza Navona. The best grilled eggplant on the planet! You'll be amazed at what Massimo does with vegetables – a meal in themselves!
- My favorite seafood restaurant in Rome is on Via di Ripetta near Piazza del Popolo. One of my favorite Trattorias in Florence is Trattoria Marione. Talk about cozy! Italy is a food lover's paradise and we intend to discover it all!

The hillside views overlooking Florence are a sight to behold, but if you find the time try to visit one of the best restaurants in Florence with a view to match: it's called Omero.

ITINERARY

You've arrived in the capital of this great nation, where the sun always shines and the natives always have a warm embrace for their friends from America!

• ROME

As soon as we arrive we'll be greeted by our Rome based, professional Italian tour leader, who will assist us with our luggage and supervise our private motor coach transfer to the hotel in the heart of the capital, and one of its most desirable neighborhoods. You will have the remainder of the day at leisure to begin your discovery of the capital of the Roman Empire and the seat of Christianity.

Dinner this evening at one of our favorite local restaurants.



Fabulous Pantheon, site of the Oculus and the burial place of Raphael

After dinner we'll enjoy a narrated tour of **Rome By Night**.

IMPERIAL ROME

There are so many sites for your eyes to feast upon all over this stunningly beautiful country, and we're going to start at an iconic one: The **Coliseum**. With any luck, the lions won't be there to greet us but in case they are we recommend to all our guests the purchase of a spray can at the entrance of "Roman Coliseum Instant Lion Repellant."

The Romans were great builders and everywhere they went and conquered they built monuments to themselves and their culture (and asserted their architectural prowess.) Both inside and out, you'll marvel at the symmetry and beauty of the construction! How did they do it, particularly the arches? What holds it all together? You'll find out from our Roman expert, Paolo.

In the comfort of our private motor coach we'll visit the other ancient ruins of Rome featuring the Roman Forum, the Palatine Hill, and the Imperial Forum. We're not done yet on this our first day in the eternal capital; we'll continue on to the Arch of Constantine, Circus Maximus and the Aventine Hill.

LA DOLCE VITA

We've reserved a little free time this afternoon to explore Rome on your own, at your pace. Perhaps you'll head straight for the famous Trevi Fountain – don't forget to throw your coins in to ensure your return to Rome! You may be tempted by a genuine Roman gelato or perhaps an after-dinner drink in one of the many inviting cafes.



St Peter's Square, Vatican City

• VATICAN

The next day we'll rendezvous with our Roman guide to visit the Vatican Museum and Art Galleries, the Round Hall, the Hall of the Greek Cross, the Tomb of St. Helen and St. Constance, the Gallery of

the Chandeliers, the Galleries of the Tapestries and Geographical Maps. Once again, we'll be led by one of Italy's most knowledgeable Roman guides.

Finally, we'll visit the Sistine Chapel, famed for Michelangelo's frescoes, recently restored to their original colors. We will conclude our tour of the Vatican with a visit to the Basilica, where we'll see the Papal catacombs.

• POMPEII

The next day is an unscheduled day in Rome. We have added an optional day trip just for this group in our private motor coach to the **Lost City of Pompeii!**

• ORVIETO: MEDIEVAL EUROPE

After breakfast together the next morning, we'll depart Rome and head north towards Florence. We will stop, en route, in the fascinating town of Orvieto, situated on the flat summit of a large volcanic butte. Make sure your camera is in working order!!! The precise location of the city is among the most dramatic in Europe, rising above the almost-vertical faces of tuff cliffs that are completed by defensive walls built of the same stone. The façade of the Cathedral is one of the most beautiful works of art you will ever see—mosaics to rival St. Peter's!!!

This looks like a Medieval painting but amazingly it is a photograph of today's Florence (Firenze) Italy



• FLORENCE

Looking for the unusual? You can find the Renaissance painting referred to as “UFO Madonna” in the Florence town hall. (The “UFO” is over Madonna’s shoulder and is acknowledged by figures in the painting.)



It’s on to what many consider the crown jewel of Italy, Florence. You will have the rest of the afternoon and evening to start your exploration of Florence, the Birthplace of the Renaissance. Our hotel’s location is ideally suited for strolling comfortably in this beautiful city. Be sure to visit RIVOIRE at Piazza della Signoria for the world’s best cup of hot chocolate!

After breakfast at our hotel in Florence we’ll meet our local Florentine expert guide, Letitia, and set out on a pleasant walking tour to visit the Accademia to see Michelangelo’s David. Continue our visit to the Duomo – highlighted by Brunelleschi’s magnificent dome, Giotto’s Bell Tower and the ancient Baptistery with Ghiberti’s *Doors of Paradise* (The Divine Comedy from Dante).

Dinner this evening together.

• SAN GIMIGNANO

The next day we begin an early drive through the region of Chianti to San Gimignano, perched on a hilltop and noted for its famous towers, often referred to as the “The Medieval Manhattan.” Step through the gates of San Gimignano and be immediately transported to a time when the size of a family’s tower determined its place in society. You will be immersed in the medieval character that is the essence of this town.

We next visit Siena, a city from the six hundreds (as in 600 AD) with charming streets and a summer tradition of horse racing in the town square! We may not be in town when the *Il Palio* is running but the city’s wards will no doubt be flying their proud colors year round.

We've scheduled a local factory visit to see authentic Balsamic Vinegar made from scratch. You'll be amazed how one grade of the product can be added to ice cream for a truly unique dessert topping.

- **THE CASTLE**

Next we're off to a Tuscan Castle/Winery, called [Castello di Oliveto](#). You will conclude the afternoon with a private cooking class held at the end of the visit to the winery. Dinner this evening will be prepared by you after learning from a true Italian chef. Our host at the Castello, Luisa, awaits us as always and you can tell from the photos what a joy it is at the castle in Tuscany!

The next morning we head across the wooded Apennine Hills towards Venice.



Burano, one of Venice's many islands

- **VENICE**

There are many beautiful sites to see in Europe, but just a handful command the iconic status of Venice. If you haven't yet had the good fortune to visit Venice all you need to know is that the picture perfect city of Bruges in Belgium is referred to as "The Venice of the North." Venice is so captivating on so many levels that it's often the focal point of an entire vacation. The city itself is

comprised of more than 100 islands; but, as always with Conservative Tours, we'll start our tour in the most beautiful quarter and heart of each destination city and that's where we remain.



RELATED
VIDEOS

The epicenter of this jewel of a city is Saint Mark's Square where the imposing Basilica is located. Visit the Murano glass works! Our walking tour of Venice is romantic and leisurely paced and our expert local guide will share her secrets of her hometown with you. Catrina is a font of knowledge and you'll appreciate her expertise! And the mosaic that depicts how the Venetians retrieved the skeletal remains of St. Mark from the Egyptians—wait until you hear that story!!!

WE'LL VISIT THE GOLDEN BASILICA OF SAN MARCO, THE BRIDGE OF SIGHS AND OF COURSE DOGE'S PALACE AND ITS PORTA DELLA CARTA. IT'S RARE THAT WE ENCOURAGE OUR GUESTS TO GO TO PRISON BUT THE PIOMBI PRISON IS WELL WORTH YOUR MOMENTARY INCARCERATION!

You've heard of "Carnevale" in Venice and you've seen the costumes. No such dress code tonight as we gather to dine and say fare well and celebrate all that is Venice!

- **MILAN**

The next morning we'll leave Venice and head west towards pristine Milan. We'll enjoy a private, guided tour of the fashion and business capital of Italy, Milan. Milan is many things to many people.....and an eternal rival to the Eternal City of Rome. Milan is powerful - the headquarters of many of Italy's most prominent multinational firms. For most connoisseurs Milan is the uncontested world capital of fashion. Note the elegant attire of both men and women as we stroll the friendly passageways of the *Vittorio Emanuel Gallery* in the warm Spring sunshine. We'll show favor to the beautiful side of this stunning city a stone's throw from the majestic Alps.



Fabulous Milano Shopping

From the comfort of your deluxe motor coach we embark on an orientation tour of some of the most famous landmarks of Milan, including the *Sforzesco Castle*, the aforementioned Vittorio Emanuel Gallery, Piazza Duomo – famous for the Gothic Cathedral – and of course La Scala Opera House. Enjoy a farewell to Italia dinner at one of our favorite Milanese restaurants.

The next morning we'll head out early as a group and celebrate on our flight back to America all we've discovered in this beautiful country and all the new friends we've met on this Conservative Tour!

PRICING

Tour Price: \$4189.00 **Deposit:** \$ 500.00

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Outbound **Non-stop** flight from Philadelphia to Rome and home from Milan.
 - **American Airlines Flight 718 Departs PHL 6:25pm**
 - **Depart Milan AA207 9:20am to Miami to PHL at 10:33pm**
- Airport transfer from FCO in Rome to the Eternal City.
- Airport transfer from hotel in Milan to Malpensa Airport.
- Expert commentary throughout the tour event by our friendly and talented tour leader from Italy
- Five dinners, most with wine included—and it's very good wine!!! I'll introduce you to the best Italian red I've ever had—and it's affordable should you want to bring home a bottle.
- Breakfast daily in the comfort of your first class hotel.
- Four nights in a centrally located, first class hotel in Rome.
- Three nights in Tuscany (Montecatini).
- Two nights in a hotel next to the main island of Venice.
- One night hotel in Milan.
- **COMPREHENSIVE GROUP TRAVEL INSURANCE POLICY FROM TRAVEL INSURED INTERNATIONAL.**
- Tour the factory and see authentic Balsamic Vinegar made from scratch.
- Expert English-speaking professional full-time tour leader for the entire event.
- Cooking lesson with an authentic Italian chef in a hilltop castle. As **Rush** might say, this particular event is more fun than a person has a right to have in one life.
- **All** entrance fees as per the itinerary. **All** deluxe motor coach transportation.

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Optional day trip to **The Lost City of Pompeii**
- Government air tax.

TOUR DATES

DEPART: MARCH 22ND, 2020

RETURN APRIL 2ND, 2020

11 DAYS, 10 NIGHTS

- **4 NIGHTS ROME**
- **3 NIGHTS IN THE HEART OF TUSCANY**
- **2 NIGHTS NEXT TO THE MAIN ISLAND OF VENICE**
- **1 NIGHT MILAN**

TOUR NOTES

At Conservative Tours we love to dine. Some suggestions while in the Eternal City:

- One of my favorites in Rome: Piccola Cuccagna just off Piazza Navona. The best grilled eggplant on the planet! You'll be amazed at what Massimo does with vegetables- a meal in themselves!
- My favorite seafood restaurant in Rome is on Via di Ripetta near Piazza del Popolo. One of my favorite Trattorias in Florence is Trattoria Marione. Talk about cozy! Italy is a food lover's paradise and we intend to discover it all!
- If you find the time visit one of the best restaurants in Florence with a view to match: it's on the other side of the river and it's called Omero.

ACT NOW TO EXPERIENCE THE VERY BEST THAT ITALY HAS TO OFFER WITH THIS 2020 GRAND EVENT FIRST CLASS EXCURSION.

CONTACT TRAVEL CHAMPS TOURS 800-464-4002 FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO RESERVE YOUR PLACE ON THIS WONDERFUL TRIP!

