

All Italian Shrines

Tour 103

14 Days

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Rome (Papal Audience with Holy Father) • Monte Cassino • San Giovanni Rotondo (Padre Pio) • Monte Sant'Angelo (St. Michael) • Lanciano (Eucharistic Miracle) • Loreto (Holy House) • Assisi (St. Francis) • Gubbio • La Verna • Siena
Florence • Padua (St. Anthony) • Venice



St. Peter's Square & Basilica, Vatican City

YOUR TRIP INCLUDES

- Round-trip airfare from your desired Airport
- book without airfare (land only option)
- All airport taxes & fuel surcharges
- Centrally located hotels: (or similar)
- 3 nights: Le Meridien Visconti, Rome
- 2 nights: Centro di Spiritualita Padre Pio, San Giovanni Rotondo
- 3 nights: Giotto, Assisi
- 2 nights: Machiavelli Palace, Florence
- 2 nights: Biri, Padua
- Breakfast and Dinner daily
- Wine with dinners
- Transportation by air-conditioned motor coach
- Assistance of a professional local guide(s)
- Transfers as per itinerary
- Sightseeing and admissions fees as per itinerary
- Catholic Priest available for Spiritual Direction and
- Mass daily & Spiritual activities
- Luggage handling (1 piece per person)
- Flight bag & portfolio of all travel documents

NOT INCLUDED:

Lunches, Tips to your guide & driver.

OPTIONAL Travel Insurance

Providing you coverage for both pre-existing conditions and those that may arise during your trip, including medical and dental emergencies, loss of luggage, trip delay, and so much more.

SUPPLEMENTAL CANCELLATION PROTECTION

A Cancellation Waiver - allowing you to cancel your trip and receive a refund anytime - up until 24 hours prior to departure. The "Waiver" expires once you are within 24 hours of departure.

ABOUT YOUR TRIP

Take in Rome (with its iconic sites, fountains, and four Major Basilicas), and attend the Papal Audience with the Holy Father. Walk in the footsteps of St. Padre Pio and St. Francis of Assisi. Not to mention time to view the Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano. From Assisi, you will make your way to Florence - recognized as

the “Cradle of the Renaissance”. Visit the marvelous Churches, buildings, and museums that make it so unique, as well as the historical relics and artistic masterpieces by the greatest masters! And to finish with Venice - the “City Paved in Water”, famous for its Basilica, palazzi, ancient bridges, monuments, and piazza's!

About Rome

Rome has been one of the most powerful and influential cities throughout history, along with being home to the Roman Catholic Church, the Pope, and the site of the Vatican City. First built in 337, St. Peter's Basilica lies over the tomb of St. Peter and contained within, is a vast array of the most beautiful artwork ever assembled, reflecting the immensity, beauty, vastness, majesty, and glory of God.

Day 1: Depart for Rome

Make your way to your local airport, where you will board your overnight flight(s). Your meals will be served on board.

Day 2: Arrival in Rome

Welcome to Rome, also known as, “The Eternal City.” Upon arrival at Rome airport, collect your luggage in the baggage claim area, and continue to the Arrivals Hall, where you will be greeted by a tour escort and/or driver. You will make your way to the bus and transfer to your hotel. Following check-in, you will have free time to unpack and relax, or explore Rome on your own. Your tour escort may suggest places to visit. Later in the afternoon, your group will meet in the hotel lobby for a “Meet and Greet” with your fellow pilgrims and depart for Mass. Following Mass, you will attend a welcome dinner. After dinner, you will have the opportunity to walk to St. Peter's Square as a group, for the Rosary (optional).

Day 3: Rome: Papal Audience - Basilica of St. John the Lateran - Holy Steps - Basilica of St. Mary Major

After a nice breakfast at your hotel, your first sightseeing day in Rome starts! The tour begins with the Papal Audience in St. Peter's Square! The Audience is celebrated each Wednesday by His Holiness, Pope Francis (pending the papal schedule). Following the Audience, there will be free time for lunch, or to shop, or to mail a postcard from the Vatican Post Office. This afternoon, you will visit the oldest of the four major basilicas in Rome, and the home to the relics of Peter and Paul, the Basilica of St. John the Lateran. This Basilica is where Pope Francis was installed as Bishop of Rome, and where he officiates as the Bishop of Rome. Next, you will cross the street to visit the Holy Staircase. Tradition states that this staircase is from Pontius Pilate's palace of Jerusalem during the time of Jesus. It is also said this Staircase was

brought to Rome by St. Helen in the 4th century. If time permits, you may climb the steps on your knees, in memory of Christ's agonizing Passion. To conclude your day, you will proceed to the Basilica of St. Mary Major. This Basilica contains a relic from the Manger of the Infant Jesus. Return to the hotel for dinner and an overnight.

*The Scala Santa is currently under restoration. Thus, the Vatican has displayed an image replicating the stairs in front of the entrance where you will walk in. There are several staircases just to the side of the Scala Santa that you may ascend on your knees. You will still be able to receive the same graces and indulgences by going up any of the alternative stairs.

Day 4: Rome: St. Peter's Basilica - Vatican Museum - Trevi Fountain - Appian Way - Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls - Catacombs

This morning, you will enjoy an early breakfast before making your way to the largest Christendom Church, St. Peter's Basilica. This Basilica was built on the site where St. Peter, the first Pope and Bishop of Rome, was martyred. Also, it was Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, who was the first Pontiff to visit the necropolis since extensive archaeological excavations were conducted at the ancient site decades ago. It is here that you will view Michelangelo's Pieta. This stunning marble sculpture depicts the Virgin Mary holding Christ after His crucifixion, death, and removal off the cross before being placed in the tomb. Continue to proceed to the Vatican Museums. At the world-renowned museum, you will see the most impressive of edifices, galleries, and awe-inspiring relics. Additionally, you will observe the Tapestry Gallery, Raphael Rooms, Sistine Chapel, and Michelangelo's Masterpiece, the restored mural of the Last Judgment. The final stop on your Vatican tour is at the tomb of Saint John Paul II. Afterward, you will be transferred to the Fontana di Trevi (Trevi Fountain), where you may enjoy some free time on your own for lunch. Continue on your short journey down the Appian Way, the earliest road of Ancient Rome. This road leads to the Domino Quo Vadis Chapel, the Baths of Caracalla, the Arch of Drusus, the Tomb of Cecilia Metella, and the catacombs of St. Callixtus. The day concludes with a visit to the Basilica of St. Paul, outside the walls. Originally founded by Emperor Constantine in the 4th Century, this Basilica is the burial places of Saint Paul the Apostle. Next, make your way to a local restaurant for dinner. Following dinner, feel free to explore the streets of Rome, or return to the hotel for an overnight.

Day 5: Rome - Monte Cassino - San Giovanni Rotondo

Following breakfast, you will board your bus to enjoy the scenic route to Monte Cassino. Passing through the Roman countryside that is known for its villas and

vineyards. During the bus ride, your tour escort will share interesting information regarding the spiritual, historical, and cultural aspects of Italy. Monte Cassino, the principle monastery of the Benedictine Order, was founded by Saint Benedict around 530 A.D. Following the tour, there will be an opportunity to visit the gift shop, before you board the bus to continue toward San Giovanni Rotondo, the hometown of Saint Padre Pio. Upon arrival in San Giovanni Rotondo, you will check-in, enjoy dinner in a restaurant, and overnight.

Day 6: San Giovanni Rotondo (View Incorrupt Body of St. Padre Pio) - Monte Sant' Angelo

This morning, after breakfast, you will visit the Old Church. After Mass, you will tour the sanctuary, it is here you will view the crucifix, in front of which St. Pio received the stigmata. Visit the confessional from where St. Pio spent an innumerable amount of hours listening to confessions. Next, you will board the bus and travel along the beautiful Gargano Peninsula to the Grotto of St. Michael the Archangel, a shrine consecrated by St. Michael. At this grotto, St. Michael appeared to a Bishop to assure him that his diocese would not be annihilated as he feared. Following the visit to the grotto, enjoy free time. On the way back to San Giovanni Rotondo, view breathtaking views of the ocean and surrounding countryside. Upon arrival, you will have time for devotion and reflection. Dinner and an overnight in San Giovanni Rotondo.

*Candlelight Procession - Between May and October attend the weekly Candlelight Procession at the Sanctuary of St. Pio after dinner, at 9:00 PM. These processions are lit by candlelight, and are guided by the Most Holy Rosary. Following this prayerful experience, you will return to your hotel for a restful overnight.

Day 7: San Giovanni Rotondo - Lanciano - Loreto - Assisi

After breakfast, you will head to Lanciano. Upon arrival in Lanciano, celebrate Mass at the Church of St. Longinus. This Church is the site of the Eucharistic Miracle that occurred in the eighth century. At the time of the Miracle, there was a Basilian monk who struggled with the belief in the real presence of The Lord Jesus in the Eucharist. During the time of Mass, the monk, with doubt in his voice, said the "Words of Consecration" and the bread turned into living flesh, and the wine transformed into live blood. There will be some free time to explore Lanciano, before continuing toward the Adriatic coast to the great Marian shrine of Loreto to visit the Holy House of Nazareth, and the beautiful Madonna of Loreto. More than 50 Pope's have made a pilgrimage to the house transported by angels to this hill in central Italy, in 1294. Tradition has it that this is the house in which Mary first prayed the Magnificat, in which Jesus grew

to manhood, and in which the Holy Family lived. Continue on to Assisi, the hometown of St. Francis. Upon arrival in Assisi, you will enjoy dinner, before retiring to your room for a restful night's sleep.

Day 8: Assisi (The Life of a Saint, that inspired a Holy Father)

Enjoy an early breakfast, followed by a full day of touring the hometown of St. Francis. St. Francis is the "Patron Saint of Animals and the Environment." Additionally, he is responsible for founding the Franciscan Order, and the inspiration for our Holy Father, Pope Francis. He chose his name in admiration of the Saint of Nature, and Servant to the Poor. Known for being a humble man himself, Pope Francis spent most of his life denying the luxuries of life. He preferred to live in simplicity and humility, while giving up all other worldly possessions, just as St. Francis did. As you visit the birthplace of St. Francis, you will become captivated as the atmosphere has not changed since St. Francis began his ministry, in the early 13th-century. You will start your tour at the St. Francis Basilica, visit his tomb of St. Francis, and have the opportunity to view a series of frescoes depicting his life, along with a few of the saint's possessions. From there, you will continue on a walking tour through this picturesque town, including the birthplace of St. Francis, and end with a tour of the Church that honors St. Clare, the foundress of the Poor Clare Sisters. This Saint followed the teachings of St. Francis very closely by also living a life of poverty and humility. Enjoy some free time on your own - you may take this time for additional prayer, shop in the many gift shops or enjoy a nice lunch. After lunch, you will board the bus, which will take you outside of the walls of Assisi, to the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels. This is where St. Francis spent most of life. This Basilica is made up of two structures, both of which you will visit. The first structure, is the "Porziuncola", which is where St. Francis founded his order of the Friar Minor (Franciscans). The second, is the "Capella del Transito", which is the place of St. Francis' death. During your time here, you will have the opportunity to visit the beautiful Rose Garden where St. Francis and other friars lived, as well as the cave where the Saint retired to pray. Return to the hotel for dinner and an overnight.

Day 9: Assisi - Gubbio - La Verna - Assisi

After breakfast, you will drive through the beautiful Umbrian mountains to Gubbio. Enjoy this medieval town with a visit of St. Francis Church, where you will be celebrating Mass. After Mass, visit a town that seems painted onto the hill, a succession of backdrops against which towers and houses stand out, all embraced by walls. The town had been freed by St. Francis from a terrible and fierce wolf who afflicted it. After lunch on your own, continue to La

Verna, the place where St. Francis, over the years, had been seven times, the last time in 1224 where he received the stigmata. Here you will be able to pray in the Chapel of the Stigmata, the Basilica and the Chapel of Saint Mary of the Angels. You will also be able to admire the beautiful artworks of Andrea della Robbia. Return to Assisi for dinner and your last overnight.

Day 10: Assisi - Siena - Florence

Breakfast, followed by a scenic drive to the Tuscan city of Siena. This medieval city is the birthplace of St. Catherine “Doctor of the Church”, and the Apostle of Italy, St. Bernardine. Visit of the Basilica of St. Catherine (which is also known as the Basilica of St. Domenico). St. Catherine passed a large part of her life inside the walls of this Basilica. It is here you will also view the incorrupt head of St. Catherine. After, visit the Shrine of St. Catherine, which occupies the site of her family home. Enjoy your walking tour through the Siena including a visit to its Cathedral (Duomo di Siena). Conclude at one of Italy’s finest squares, the Piazza Del Campo, where you will be given free time to spend at your own leisure. There are a number of restaurants surrounding the square to have lunch, as well as shops for gifts and souvenirs. Continue on to Florence. Upon arrival in Florence, you will notice immediately that it is the land for art lovers. Some of the most world renowned artists are from Florence such as, Dante, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Botticelli, Donatello, and many others. For the remainder of the afternoon, you will have the opportunity to explore the streets of Florence at leisure. In the evening gather for dinner, followed by an overnight.

Day 11: Florence

In Florence, your day begins with breakfast, followed by a guided tour. The tour starts at the Church of the Holy Cross, the Santa Croce, where many nobles are buried, such as Michelangelo, Galileo, and Machiavelli. Continue to walk by Piazza Signorina, Palazzo Vecchio, Uffizi, Ponte Vecchio, and Republic Square to the Santa Maria del Fiore. This Cathedral is an iconic piece of architecture of the city of Florence. It was designed by Filippo Brunelleschi in the 13th century. Next, a visit to L’Accademia, the well-known art gallery. At this gallery, you will have the opportunity to view the work from artists such as Botticelli, Ghirlandaio, Pontormo and the ever famous sculpture by Michelangelo, David. This afternoon you will have time to explore Florence on your own. Return to hotel for dinner and an overnight.

Day 12: Florence - Padua

Following breakfast at your hotel, board the motor coach for your transfer to Padua. This Northern Italian city honors the “Patron Saint of Lost Things and Causes”, St. Anthony. You will begin a sightseeing tour of the city, including a view of one of the oldest Universities in Italy, the University of Padua, as well as the Basilica of Santa Giustina, the “Patron Saint of Padua.” The tour will conclude at the Basilica of St. Anthony, where you will have the opportunity to visit his tomb. Return to the hotel for dinner and an overnight.

Day 13: Padua - Venice (Full Day Excursion)

Today, you will have early breakfast and then board your bus to depart to the magical city of Venice. After Mass, enjoy a tour of the “city paved with water!” Your walking tour includes a visit to St. Mark’s Square, the largest square in the city and the site of many government buildings; the Golden Basilica of San Marco, known for the great mosaics that depict the Old and New Testament of the Bible; the Bridge of Sigh, a bridge that will bring eternal love to those who drift below it. You will also have the chance to view the Doges’ Palace (Duke’s Palace), which served as the seat of the Government for the Republic of Venice for centuries. Return to Padua for dinner and an overnight.

Day 14: Return Home

After an early breakfast and heartfelt farewells, transfer to Venice airport for return flights home.