



# Incredible Indian Tours Incredible Italy

**trip-validity:** 1/1/12—31/12/12

From the romantic photogenic ambience of Venice to the picturesque seaside town of Sorrento and the glorious Amalfi Coast, we visit the well known and the more remote gems of Italy. The serene and charming Lago Maggiore in the Lakes District; the sophisticated fashion capital of Italy, Milan; the sensational Cinque Terre, the architectural and natural beauty of Tuscany, untouched yet amazing Umbria, the phenomenal beauty, history and myths of Rome, both modern and ancient.

Italy is a country with one of the oldest and most fascinating histories on earth. Add to the mix a seriously energetic love of life, awesome food and wine, oh and did I mention the coffee?; Your trip around Italy will bring you countless incredible experiences and is sure to leave you with a lifetime of fabulous memories.



## highlights

- o be astounded by the beauty and charm of **watery Venice**
- o enjoy the beautiful **lake-side town and islands** of Stresa and Lago Maggiore
- o get **fashionable** in the shops and boutiques of Milan
- o hike the **spectacular** Cinque Terre
- o be amazed at Lucca's **Piazas and Churches**
- o experience the **Museum City** of Florence
- o explore the birthplace of St Francis of **Assisi**
- o be left breathless by the history and sites of **modern and ancient Rome**
- o discover the charm of the **resort town** Sorrento
- o find out what is so remarkable about the stunning **Amalfi Coast**.

### itinerary disclaimer

The itinerary attached is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly during the tour. Occasionally itineraries need to change as we travel to allow for on the ground problems with transportation, booking issues and travelers desires.

## itinerary (24 nights/25 days)

### Days 1-2 Venice

We meet at 6pm for a short tour briefing before heading out for dinner (not included).

Venice is as romantic and picturesque as any image, and far more magical in person. The intrigue and ambience of a time gone by, with its myriad Canals, (the streets of Venice), Bridges, Rio's and small 'Campi' or squares is evoked when wandering through it's labyrinth lanes. Venice waits to capture you and lose you in its heart. We take a walking tour covering the famous Rialto bridge to St Marks Square and the Doges Palace down to the Accademia Gallery on the Grand Canal.

The rest of your time in Venice is free to explore the sights, take a Gondola ride, explore a museum or climb the Campanile in St Marks Basilica. Perhaps you'd prefer to just while the afternoon away sipping a glass of Vino Bianco as you sit admiring a view of the Piazza, or a Campi overlooking a canal or charming bridge.



Venice

### Days 3-5 Stresa

We take a train trip today North West to the Lakes District and to Stresa, situated on the charmingly picturesque Lago Maggiore, the 2nd largest lake in Italy, overlooking the Borromean Islands. Once a small fishing hamlet, in the 17th century, Stresa made its mark on the map when it became the home to Borromean and Visconti families, and later a summer holiday resort for Italian royalty and nobility. Now a lakeside holiday town and a ski resort, Stresa was once home, if only for a convalescence period, of the writer Hemingway.



Stresa

We visit the wonderfully kitsch and quirky Palace situated on Isola Bella, the residence of Charles III with its truly splendid gardens and views, worthy of being part of a Star Wars movie. Charles Dickens wrote, after visiting in 1844, "For however fanciful and fantastic the Isola Bella may be, and is, it still is beautiful." Enjoy lunch on the neighboring island, the fishing village of Isola Pescatori, and on day 5, why not take the cable car ride up to the top of Mount Mottorone, for wonderful walks and awesome views of the Lakes and Alps.

### Day 6 Milan

A short journey today to Milan, where you can spend the afternoon exploring the city centre, museums, the incredible cathedral and Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II or hit the boutiques of some of Europe's most elite fashion houses. Meeting up with any passengers joining the tour here, we hit the town for a fabulously stylish evening.

### Days 7-8 Monterosso

On the morning of day 7, before heading to the railway station to train south to Liguria and the Cinque Terre, we visit Church of Santa Maria Delle Grazie to view one of the most famous artworks in existence, Leonardo Di Vinci's 'The Last Supper', a fresco covering a wall in the refectory of the Church.

Famous for Pesto and the lemony liqueur Limoncello, the Cinque Terre, or 5 lands, is a stunning series of villages hugging the cliffs overlooking the ocean on the west coast of Italy. Reaching Monterosso al Mare mid-afternoon the rest of the day is free to relax in this charming beachside town enjoying the water, or a beachside café.

On Day 8, take the opportunity to hike the Cinque Terre by catching a local train to Riomaggiore where you can walk the 'Via Dell'Amore' or 'Lovers Walk' to Manarola, and onwards if you wish all the way back to Monterosso. Perhaps you'd prefer to take the local train from one village to the next, or even get around by boat. Each town is blessed with a unique ambience with hilltop views or quaint beaches and all have a plethora of fabulous cafes and bars to while away the day watching the world pass by over a glass or 3 of vino.



Vernazza on the Cinque Terre

### Days 9-12 Lucca



Palazzo Pfanner - Lucca

We have 4 fabulous nights in Lucca, one of the three power cities of Tuscany, along with Florence and Pisa. Famous for its intact Renaissance-era city walls, Lucca was once a Roman colony. With a street layout being evidence of a Roman street plan, and the remains of the amphitheatre forming the Piazza dell'Anfiteatro, Lucca's history is ancient and fascinating.

Now a beautiful town with a unique history and charm, we stay in apartments in Lucca, allowing us to have a real taste of how life is lived by the Tuscan locals. While we're in Lucca we visit a hillside winery for lunch, take a cooking class, wander the piazzas and elegant streets, shop for delicacies in the local deli's and hire bicycles to explore the town and it's ancient walls (used for a number of years in the 20th century for racing cars, but these days as a pedestrian promenade).

Lucca is also famous for being the birthplace of Puccini, and you can visit the home he grew up in, and maybe even catch a Puccini opera, performed regularly each week in Lucca.

Additionally, our time here in Lucca coincides with the annual Summer Festival. Attracting such big name acts in recent years as Elton John, Joe Cocker, Liza Minnelli and James Blunt, we should have the opportunity to catch one if not two great acts.

### Days 13-14 Florence

We travel the short distance to Florence where we spend two days in this sensational city, an outdoor (and indoor) museum of some of the most famous and impressive renaissance art in the world. We visit the Uffizi Gallery, with works on display of Botticelli, Giotto, Cimabue, Michelangelo and Raffaello to name just a few. A large part of the collection contains works from between the 12th and 17th Centuries.

We also take time to visit the Accademia, home to Michelangelo's David, as well as the Duomo and the cities beautiful Piazzas and Churches.

Wander across the Ponte Vecchio, the bridge of jewellers crossing the picturesque Arno river and take in the city views from the Piazzale Michelangelo. Enjoy a Florentine Bistecca and Chianti in one of Florence's famous restaurants or sample a Gelato by the banks of the river.



Florence

### Days 15-16 Assisi

An ancient Roman town converted to Christianity in 238AD, Assisi, a small town of just 3000 inhabitants, in the Umbria region of Italy was also the birthplace of St Francis in 1182. Today, a major pilgrimage site, Assisi is situated spectacularly on the terraces of Monte Subasio. Roman ruins have been discovered around the area, but the town is more famous for its Basilica of San Francesco d'Assisi, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Hit by two devastating earthquakes in September 1997, massive damage was caused to many historical sites, but the Basilica di San Francesco reopened less than 2 years later.

We spend two nights here in Assisi to get a feel for the Umbrian town and countryside. In addition to exploring the town and Basilica, perhaps take an early morning hike to the Eremo della Carceri, the hermitage St Francis would retreat to for peace and meditation.



Assisi

### Days 17-19 Rome



Trevi Fountain - Rome

We journey south by train to Rome.

One of the great cities of the world, Rome's history spans over 2500 years. From the founding of Rome by the twins Romulus and Remus, to the ruins of the great Roman Empire at the Roman Forum, to the underground Catacombs, the Churches, the Pantheon, the Coliseum, and of course Vatican City, Rome is simply an incredible city which will amaze and astound you.

We take a walking tour visiting the Colloseum, and the Roman Forum, through to the Pantheon, Spanish Steps, Trevi Fountain and Piazza Navona.

On day 19, you have the opportunity to visit Vatican City and the remarkable museum. Worth a visit if only to see Michelangelo's ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, The Vatican City Museum has one of the most opulent and rich collections in the world.

Make the most of your free time as there is so much to discover in Rome, from the Palatine Hills, to the boutiques on Via Condotti, from Villa Borghese to the Pizzerias of Trastevere, from the Catacombes to the markets in Campo dei Fiori.

Group members not continuing on to the Amalfi Coast will be having their final night with us tonight.

### Days 20-23 Sorrento

Taking a train south to Sorrento, we spend the next few days enjoying the wonders of the glorious Amalfi Coast. The Amalfi Coast is one of the playgrounds of Europe's holiday makers and has a class and charm that you will fall in love with. A 50km stretch of breathtaking coastline, the Amalfi coast encompasses the towns of Positano, Amalfi, Ravello and Salerno. Basing ourselves in Sorrento, we have time to explore not only the Amalfi towns, but we are oh so close to the fabled Isle of Capri, and the wonders of Pompeii.

We will spend a day in Pompeii, exploring the incredible ruins of the city buried by the 79AD eruption of nearby Mt Vesuvius. Unearthing of the ruins was only started in the mid 18th century, and work is still ongoing, although most of the ancient city has now been uncovered.

The Isle of Capri is worthy of every epithet with it's stunning views, charming villages, and superb sights, including the ruins of ancient Roman Villas and the sea caves, most famous being the Blue Grotto. We spend a day exploring this small island just a few kilometers off the coast of Sorrento.



Capri

### Days 24-25 Rome

We depart Sorrento on day 24, returning to Rome for one last afternoon/evening to enjoy the sights, sounds, tastes and experiences of this great city.

There are no organized activities on day 25. You are free to leave at any time.

# general tour information - includes Venice/Lakes & Amalfi Add-ons

## group size

12 maximum

## days

25 days 24 nights

## starts in

Venice

## and finishes in

Rome

## price includes

Arrival and departure transfers

All accommodation as specified

All transportation between overnight stops and to and from included sightseeing

Entrance fees for all sites listed as part of the itinerary

Meals as specified

## price does not include

Meals other than those listed

Drinks, meal tips, laundry and other items of a personal nature

International flights and visas

## accommodation

Hotels (20 nights), Apartments (4 nights)

This tour uses a variety of accommodation. From smaller family run guesthouses to private apartments to a monastery to hotels, we experience a wide range of accommodation styles. Hotel rooms are generally twin share with private bathrooms. Our apartments in Lucca are generally 2 and 3 bedroom'd with share bathrooms. Although most rooms will be air-conditioned, some may be fan-cooled.

## single supplement

If you are a single traveller and do not wish to share accommodation, but would like to *guarantee* your own room throughout the tour (not always available in Lucca) a single supplement will be payable. Please note that often, you might be the only single traveler of the same sex, therefore automatically getting a room to yourself. If you wish to take up the single supplement option, please contact us for more information.

## transport

We will be travelling by train throughout this tour. Trenitalia, Italy's national Rail System is efficient and covers virtually all towns and cities. For some journeys, we may take local buses or taxis.

## activities included

The following is a list of included activities on this trip. Other activities are optional and will be at your own expense.

Walking Tour - Venice

Isola Bella Palace Museum, Boat Ride - Stresa

The Last Supper - Milan

Cinque Terre train pass - Monterosso

Walking Tour, Winery visit, Bike Hire, Cooking Class - Lucca

Walking Tour, Uffizi Gallery, Accademia Gallery - Florence

Walking Tour - Assisi

Walking Tour, Colloseum - Rome

Pompeii, Isle of Capri, Positano visit - Amalfi Coast

## meal inclusions

20 Breakfasts, 1 Dinner

## meals

Traveling with Incredible Indian Tours we ensure that you will experience a vast array of the gustatory treats available in Italy. Generally, meals are not included in the trip price when there is a choice of eating options. This allows you to choose where, and what to eat. More often than not however we eat together as a group. Your leader will offer suggestions for favourite restaurants throughout the trip.

## money exchange

As at Dec 2011

AUD1 = 0.76 EUR

CAD1 = 0.74 EUR

GBP1 = 1.18 EUR

NZD1 = 0.58 EUR

USD1 = 0.75 EUR

There are many ATM machines (which accept both Cirrus/Maestro debit cards and Visa and MasterCard) throughout Italy. This is a safe and convenient way to access money, however we suggest that you bring some money as cash/travellers cheques in case there are times that ATMs are not available. The easiest currencies to exchange are USD or GBP, however AUD and other major currencies are no problem in general. Only bring Thomas Cook or Amex Travellers cheques.

## spending money

Although entrance fees to specified sites are included in the tour price, there are additional sights that you may like to visit.

Spending money requirements will differ from one person to the next. You will need to take into consideration your spending habits when allowing for drinks, shopping, and optional activities.

It is recommended you allow enough money for the following:

Meals – AUD1500 (or equivalent)

Optional Activities – AUD250 (or equivalent)

Money for drinks, shopping and incidentals.

Tips - you may wish to tip hotel staff, local guides and others. Allow AUD100 (or equivalent)

## physical rating



You may need to carry your bag/pack up and down railway station and hotel stairs, and if any of our hotels are situated close to the railway station, we generally walk rather than take taxis. There will be plenty of walking around towns or sites, which due to the warm to hot weather in Italy at this time of year will make general sightseeing a little more strenuous.

## culture shock rating



Conditions in Italy are not always as comfortable as in other countries. You may need to occasionally deal with a squat toilet, cold showers or power failure.

## travel insurance

Travel Insurance is highly recommended whilst traveling to Italy and is compulsory for any group tour with Incredible Indian Tours.

## visas

Many foreign nationals do not require a visa to enter Italy, although nationals of some countries are required to obtain a visa in advance.

For information, or assistance with obtaining a visa, check out the following websites.

[http://www.esteri.it/visti/home\\_eng.asp](http://www.esteri.it/visti/home_eng.asp)

## health

We recommend that you consult your doctor for current medical travel information about before departure. Your leader will be carrying a basic first aid kit, but we suggest you bring along your own as well as any personal medical requirements .

The following websites have up-to-date information about health requirements.

<http://www.travelvax.com.au/>

<http://www.travelhealth.co.uk/>

## communications

Internet cafes are commonplace throughout Italy, and many hotels have Wifi access. Costs vary from as little as €1 to as much as €10 per hour. You can also purchase a local prepaid sim card (for unlocked cell phones) and data sticks (for mobile internet on your laptop) easily and inexpensively in Italy. You may need extra passport photos for this as well as photocopies of your photo page from your passport.

## your group leader / tour escort

Your group leader / tour escort is there to organise and streamline your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. Whilst they are not a guide per se, they will share their local knowledge, give you suggestions for your free time and manage the day to day running of the tour. They will introduce you to their local friends and recommend great local restaurants and experiences. They will have a broad general knowledge of Italy, so do feel free to tap into their wisdom. At some sites, local guides may be hired where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting.

## responsible travel

We believe strongly in responsible travel. This includes being respectful to the local culture (ie dressing appropriately, and learning a few basic cultural do's and don'ts), being mindful of the environment, and leaving a positive image behind. Remember we are ambassadors for our country.

## joining hotel

TBA  
Venice

## joining instructions

Our tour starts at 6pm on day 1 in Venice. Please ensure you have arrived in time to get to the hotel and check in before we meet up.

## arriving early

Located in the heart of Venice, just 20 meters from the famous La Fenice Theatre, the hotel is only 200 meters far from Piazza San Marco, and is a short walk through the charming alleys of Venice to the beautiful Grand Canal.

Hotel Ateneo  
Calle Minelli - San Marco 3673  
30124 – Venezia  
[www.ateneo.it/eng/index.html](http://www.ateneo.it/eng/index.html)

## early arrival information

If you are arriving earlier than day 1, extra accommodation in Venice is available at AUDTBA Single/Double (or equivalent) per night per room. Please notify us as early as possible if you require extra accommodation as hotels in Venice can to be booked up well in advance.

## finishing hotel

Hotel Europa  
Via Varese, 26-00185 Roma  
Tel. 06 4462096  
<http://www.hoteleuroparome.com/>

## staying on

If you are staying on in Rome after the tour, extra accommodation at Hotel Europa is available at AUDTBA Single/Double (or equivalent) per night per room.

## what to take

We will be on the move a lot, so try to pack as lightly as possible. The smaller your bag the better, as we will be using public transport that may have limited storage space. In addition, you will find that your bag probably needs space to expand for all that shopping!

## laundry

Laundromats will be available in most towns we stay. The apartments in Lucca will be equipped with washing machines.

## weather

The weather during our journey should be great. Daytime temperatures will be warm to hot, in the range 25-35°C. Night time temperatures will be comfortable. Rain is not very likely at this time of year, but sun is, so sunblock and a hat are essentials.

## checklist

Travel documents: passport, travel insurance (don't forget your emergency insurance contact details), air tickets.  
Photocopy of above documents  
Day pack  
Health vaccinations/medication  
First aid kit  
Money: ATM card (widely available and easy to access); credit cards (widely accepted in big cities); cash and travellers cheques (for emergencies)  
Money pouch  
Alarm clock and torch/flashlight  
Mosquito repellent  
Ear plugs can be very useful if you are a light sleeper  
Lock for your back pack or bag

We recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt to store your passport, air tickets, credit cards and cash. Avoid bringing valuable jewellery with you. Some hotels we use have safety deposit boxes.

Updated on: 26 December 2011.