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Classic Italy by Rail

featuring Venice, Florence and Rome

Departure Date: October 21, 2024



Classic Italy by Rail



The Rialto Bridge spans the Grand Canal of Venice, Italy



The magnificent Duomo in the heart of Florence, Italy

DAY 1 Depart the USA: Depart the USA on your overnight flight to Venice, Italy.

DAY 2 Venice, Italy: Upon arrival in Venice, you'll be met by a Mayflower Cruises & Tours representative who will escort you to the canal boat for your transfer to the hotel. Flights should arrive by 3:00pm. The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure before the included welcome dinner. **Meal: D**

DAY 3 Venice: Venice is the "Jewel of the Mediterranean", a glorious cityscape with a wondrous artistic and musical heritage. The city itself boasts a marvel of engineering feats, built on 118 small islands crossed by its world-famous canals. Who can think of romance without imagining a pair of lovers floating beneath graceful bridges in a Venetian gondola? During the included walking tour, your local guide will help you discover the exotic sights that surround you as you navigate the picturesque alleyways and cross bridges over the quaint canals filled with gondolas. See the soaring domes of St. Mark's Basilica, the Doges Palace and Bridge of Sighs among other sites of this remarkable city built on water. During the afternoon at leisure, sip coffee in a small café, shop in the boutiques and watch artists at work, recreating these lovely scenes. **Meal: B**

DAY 4 Venice – Florence – Montecatini: This morning, depart Venice on a high-speed train to Florence. What a great way to travel as you watch picturesque hill towns, lush vineyards and beautiful wineries pass by. Upon arrival, walk in the footsteps of great rulers, artists and philosophers as you explore Florence, the breathtaking capital of the Italian Renaissance, on the included walking tour. The city is steeped in the achievements of great minds who found inspiration here. A visit to the famous Accademia Gallery is included where you'll get an up-close view of Michelangelo's masterpiece, *David*. Undoubtedly the world's most famous sculpture, the museum also houses five other Michelangelo sculptures - the four unfinished Prisoners

and St. Matthew - and a collection of Gothic and Renaissance paintings that were once in the Medici collections. After the tour, enjoy your free time shopping for Italian leather goods, art and crystal as lovely reminders of your journey through Italy. This afternoon, continue on to Montecatini, home for the next three nights. Dinner is included at the hotel this evening.

Meals: B, D

DAY 5 Siena: After breakfast enjoy an included excursion to Siena. This is one of Italy's most popular destinations, known for its fine cuisine, art, museums, medieval cityscape and the Palio, a horse race held twice a year in the Piazza del Campo. Your local guide will walk with you through this beautiful Tuscan town and UNESCO World Heritage Site. Discover the highlights of the city, including the Duomo of Siena, the 12th-century cathedral that serves as a splendid example of Italian Romanesque-Gothic architecture. See the Palazzo Pubblico, once City Hall, now an art museum, showcasing its famous frescoes or climb the "Torre del Mangia", the tall bell tower overlooking the Piazza del Campo. Siena is also known for its glazed terracotta pottery as well as locally produced wines and olive oil. Be sure to taste the delicious gelato and panforte, a cake made with honey and candied fruits. You'll have free time for lunch on your own and shopping for local specialties before returning to Montecatini this evening. **Meal: B**

DAY 6 Pisa: Today's adventure begins with an included excursion to Pisa, best known for the bell tower of the cathedral, the "leaning Tower of Pisa." Your local guide will explain the history of this beautiful town as you walk around the Piazza dei Miracoli and see the architecture and historic walls of this medieval city. Return to Montecatini for an afternoon at leisure. It's the perfect time to stroll through the city center or visit a spa with the curative water and healing springs for which the town is famous. **Meal: B**



Michelangelo's impressive work in the Sistine Chapel, Vatican City

DAY 7 Montecatini – Florence – Rome: Leaving the resort town of Montecatini, return to Florence by coach and board a high-speed train for the journey to Rome. With a history spanning more than 2,500 years, Rome offers a breathtaking overview of the highlights of Western civilization. From the remarkable Coliseum to the gorgeous Trevi Fountain, this bustling metropolis invites you to imagine life centuries ago as you gaze upon memorials to ancient civilizations. Upon arrival, enjoy a panoramic tour of the city and a guided visit to the Coliseum. Built between 70-80 AD, the Coliseum is considered one of the greatest works of Roman architecture and engineering, and remains the largest amphitheater in the world. The tour ends at the hotel. **Meal: B**

DAY 8 Vatican City / Rome: This morning, enjoy a guided visit to the spiritual center of the Roman Catholic Church and the smallest independent state in the world: Vatican City. During the guided visit of the Vatican Museums, walk through halls containing some of the most priceless art treasures in the world. The highlight of the visit may be the Sistine Chapel which houses the single most impressive work of art by Michelangelo. During the visit to St. Peter's Basilica, experience the magnificence of Bernini, Michelangelo, and other great artists of the Roman Renaissance and Baroque periods. Be sure to see Michelangelo's famous statue, *Pietà*, created by the artist when he was only 25-years old. The afternoon and evening are free to enjoy on your own. **Meal: B**

DAY 9 Rome: The last day in Rome is yours to enjoy as you wish. This evening join your Tour Manager and fellow travelers for a farewell dinner at the hotel. **Meals: B, D**

DAY 10 Rome / USA: As you bid "arrivederci" to Italy you'll be filled with memories of Renaissance art and architecture, rolling hills and vineyards, and all the glory of the Roman Empire. **Meal: B**



Tour Highlights

- 11 Meals: 8 breakfasts and 3 dinners
- Airport transfers on tour dates when air is provided by Mayflower Cruises & Tours
- Included walking tour of Venice with a local guide
- Ride the high-speed train from Venice to Florence
- Included walking tour of Florence with a local guide
- Visit the Accademia Gallery and see the sculpture of Michelangelo's *David*
- Three nights in Montecatini
- Included full-day excursion to Siena
- Included excursion to Pisa to see the Leaning Tower
- Ride the high-speed train from Florence to Rome
- Included city tour of Rome with a visit to the Coliseum
- Included tour to Vatican City with a visit to the Sistine Chapel and St. Peter's Basilica

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

Days 2 and 3 Hotel Cavalletto, Venice, Italy

Days 4 through 6 – Grand Hotel Tamerici and Principe, Montecatini Terme, Italy

Days 7 through 9 – Hotel Universo, Rome, Italy

