



Turin & the Piedmont



Thursday, May 14th Individual arrivals and extensions mean the everybody is in Turin by today **Overnight: Turin**

Friday, May 15th A morning walking tour of the city center with a local guide will include a visit to the Royal Palace, with its magnificent gardens designed by Andre Le Notre (the designer of Versailles' gardens). We will also visit the church of San Lorenzo next door to the palace. The afternoon and evening are free for personal exploration, but don't miss a visit to the Palazzo dell'Accademia della Scienza. This beautiful 17th-century palace houses two museums – the Egyptian Museum, with one of the finest collection of Egyptian artifacts in Europe, and the Galleria Sabauda, housing the art collection of the House of Savoy. This

evening we gather for a welcome dinner at the hotel. **(B, D) Overnight: Turin**

Saturday, May 16th A free day in the city. Your tour guide will be available with suggestions and advice. **(B) Overnight: Turin**

Sunday, May 17th Today we take a full-day excursion out of the city. Our first stop will be the Palazzina di caccia di Stupinigi; originally built as a hunting lodge and decorated in the rococo style, it now houses a Fine Arts and Furniture Museum. We'll then continue west along the Susa valley to the beautiful medieval town of Avigliana, where we'll break for lunch, before continuing to visit the nearby Abbey of St. Michael. This imposing Benedictine Abbey commands spectacular views from the mountains to the west over the fertile plain below and was the inspiration for the setting of Umberto Eco's novel, *The Name of the Rose*. We return to Turin for dinner at a local restaurant. **(B, D) Overnight: Turin**

Monday, May 18th This morning we begin the day with a visit to the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, which houses the enigmatic Shroud of Turin. After viewing the shroud we will travel up into the hills to the east of the city to the Basilica di Superga. This beautiful chapel houses the tombs of the princes of the house of Savoy (who were also the kings of Sardinia) and commands wonderful views back over the city and surrounding plains. We return to Turin for a final free afternoon and evening. You may wish to stroll along the river through the Parco del Valentino and visit the medieval village (a recreation built for the Exhibition of 1884) or catch up on some shopping as, unfortunately, most of the museums will be closed today. The evening is free. **(B) Overnight: Turin**

Tuesday, May 19th Leaving the city today, we head south through idyllic hill-top towns, such as Pinerolo, making our first stop in the unspoiled town of Saluzzo. We'll walk up through the medieval streets to the imposing castle, and take time for lunch before continuing south to the provincial capital of Cuneo. On arrival we'll check in to our hotel and take a walking tour of the town center, with its beautiful arcaded main square, the Piazza D. Galimbarti. Dinner at a local restaurant this evening. **(B, D) Overnight: Cuneo**

Wednesday, May 20th Our day trip today takes us northeast from Cuneo through a region known as the Langhe. This is the heart of the wine country, where the great wines of northern Italy are produced – it is also the gourmet center of the region and the home of the famous white truffles, the tartufi bianchi. We'll stop for a wine tasting and an agriturismo lunch in Barolo before continuing to the ancient Roman city of Alba for a brief visit. We also make a stop to at a Royal Palace, the Castello di Racconigi before returning to Cuneo for a free evening. **(B, L) Overnight: Cuneo**

Thursday, May 21st A broad sweep through the east of the region today takes us past the spa town of Aquis Terme, and Casale Monferrato, on the River Po, before we head into the city center of Milan. After time for lunch, we'll take a backstage tour of La Scala Opera House and stop to see Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper, still in situ in the refectory of Santa Maria delle Grazie. We'll arrive at our hotel on Lake Orta in time to freshen up before dinner. **(B, D) Overnight: Orta San Giulio**

Friday, May 22nd This morning we will take a short ride across the lake to visit the Isola San Giulio and its Basilica, said to date from the 4th century. Returning to the mainland, we climb the Sacre Monte di Orta – the sacred mountain. Begun in 1590, this is a series of chapels leading up the hillside overlooking the lake, all of them filled with scenes depicting the life of St. Francis, in frescoes, paintings and life-sized terracotta statues. Erected over a period of 300 years the chapels also provide a fascinating look at the changes in architectural styles over the centuries. The rest of the afternoon will be free to explore the town of Orta San Giulio before we gather for our farewell dinner at a local restaurant **(B, D) Overnight: Orta San Giulio**

Saturday, May 23rd Morning transport back to Milan's Malpensa airport for returning flights to Dallas. **(B) Overnight: Home**

