



Bell' Italia

Exploring Florence, Rome & Sorrento

June 17 - 26, 2011

What better way to captivate and stimulate your senses than a journey deep into the heart of romantic Italy? We begin our adventure with four days in Florence, the "Capital of the Renaissance," admiring the achievements of this enlightened age, where there suddenly seemed to be no limit to human endeavor in the fields of art, science and philosophy.

From the consummate artistry of Florence to the beauty of the small towns nestled in the heart of the breathtaking Tuscan countryside, you'll experience a wonderful balance of guided days and free time to explore on your own from our base in the heart of the city.

The Sorrento Peninsula and the Amalfi Coast have long been a playground for the rich and famous, and with very good reason. The mountains tumble down into the azure waters of the Tyrrhenian Sea providing breathtaking views around every bend in the road. The Island of Capri glistens like a jewel set in the Bay of Naples; it is small wonder that Roman emperors made this their "home away from Rome." You may have been here before, but if you have, the chances are you'll be keen to return

We end our journey in Rome, known as the "Eternal City." Probably no other city in the world has seen quite as much raw history pass through its gates as has Rome, from the ancient legend of Romulus and Remus to the capital of one of Europe's leading powers. Rome may not be eternal but it does seem to have been there forever!

Join Discover Europe this June, for a breathtaking journey through the wonders of Italy's culture capitals and stunning countryside.



The Copy of David in the Piazza della Signoria



Brunelleschi's Dome in Florence

The cost of this itinerary, per person, double occupancy is:

Washington, Dulles departure:	\$3260
Land only (no airfare included):	\$2360
Single supplement:	\$550

The following services are included:

- Airfare:** Round trip air from Washington Dulles to Florence, returning from Rome. All airport taxes and customs charges included.
- Hotels:** 8 nights accommodation in superior tourist class hotels. All hotel taxes and service charges included.
- Coaching:** All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary.
- Meals:** Breakfast daily, 3 dinners.
- Guides:** Fully qualified Discover Europe tour guide throughout. Local guides for half-days in Florence, Venice & Rome.
- Trains:** First class rail passes to cover all train journeys.
- Ferries:** Round trip ferry tickets from Sorrento to Capri.
- Entrances:** Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary.
- Insurance:** Complete travel insurance incl. cancellation coverage.





Friday, June 17th. Evening departure from Washington, Dulles aboard Air France's overnight flight to Paris. **Overnight: Plane**

Saturday, June 18th. Transfer at Paris, Charles de Gaulle Airport this morning to your onward flight to Florence. Your arrival will be met by your guide for the short ride into the city center. After checking in there will be time to unpack, relax and begin exploring. Dinner is included in Florence this evening. **(D)** **Overnight: Florence**

Sunday, June 19th. This morning a local guide will lead a brief walking tour to give you an overview of Florence's highlights - the Duomo, the Campanile, the Baptistery, the Palazzo Vecchio, the Loggia dei Lanzi, the Uffizi, the Ponte Vecchio - to allow maximum time in this glorious city for individual exploration. The afternoon is yours and your courier will have plenty of suggestions to make the most of your brief time in this extraordinary artistic city. The evening is free to search out a special restaurant. **(B)** **Overnight: Florence**

Monday, June 20th. Today we take a train trip to Venice. Venice stands apart from the rest of Italy, a fairy-tale city floating on the sea (and sometimes well beneath it!), fiercely independent and a constant thorn in the side of successive empires. The "Most Serene Republic" can be dazzling, seductive, irritating, dirty, expensive, but never, never disappointing or boring. On arrival, a walking tour with a local guide places Venice in its historical context as we visit St Mark's Basilica to observe the Byzantine influence. The remainder of the day is free; you may wish to visit Venice's cathedral to art, the Accademia, or take an excursion to the island of Torcello and the Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta, with the finest mosaics in Venice, or, if you've had your fill of churches, visit the glassblowers on Murano. We return by train to Florence this evening. **(B)** **Overnight: Florence**

Tuesday, June 21st. Our journey today takes us into the heart of Tuscany and the dreamy landscapes that most powerfully evoke romantic Italy. We'll stop in Siena for lunch and a walking tour of this beautiful medieval city built around the lovely Piazza del Campo. Siena's Duomo is one of the most dramatic in Italy with its striking black and white marble pillars and façade. The inlaid marble floor, featuring Biblical scenes, is an architectural and artistic treasure. Before leaving Siena we'll visit the house of St. Catherine, patron saint of Siena. It was she who persuaded Gregory XI to return the seat of the papacy to Rome after 67 years of exile in Avignon. A late-afternoon return to Florence. **(B)** **Overnight: Florence**



Sorrento, on the Bay of Naples

Wednesday, June 22nd. This morning we board the train south, arriving in Naples in just over 3 hours. We will be met in Naples for the short drive to our hotel in Sorrento. The afternoon is free to explore this beautiful town sparkling on the Bay of Naples. Free evening. **(B)** **Overnight: Sorrento**

Thursday, June 23rd. Today, an excursion to the island of Capri, one of the legendary beauty spots of the Mediterranean. We'll board a ferry for the 45-minute ride across the Bay of Naples, land at the Marina Grande. Weather and tides permitting, we travel by local boat to the Blue Grotto, a cave bathed in an iridescent blue light. There will be free time to explore Marina Grande and to walk up the cobbled narrow street to Capri, the island's main town. Here there are spectacular views out over the bay towards the mainland and Mount Vesuvius. We return by boat to Sorrento for dinner. **(B, D)** **Overnight: Sorrento**

Friday, June 24th. This morning we will visit the ancient site of Pompeii with a local guide. An afternoon train ride brings us to Rome, the Eternal City. After checking in to our hotel there will be time to unpack, relax and begin exploring the neighborhood. The evening is free to sample a local restaurant. **(B)** **Overnight: Rome**



Rome - the Colosseum at Night

Saturday, June 25th. This morning starts with a tour of the city highlights with a local guide. We'll see the Colosseum, the Forum, Castel Sant' Angelo and St. Peter's before we cross the river into Trastevere, where we'll drive up to the Gianicolo (the Janiculum) for a fabulous view over the whole city. The afternoon is free to pursue your own individual interests, and your escort will have many ideas and suggestions, advice and directions. You may want to walk up the Spanish Steps to the church of the Santissima Trinita dei Monti and on into the Pincio, a beautiful park laid out in 1908-14. We gather again this evening for a farewell dinner. **(B, D)** **Overnight: Rome**

Sunday, June 26th. Morning transport to Rome airport for returning flights to Washington Dulles. **(B)** **Overnight: Home**

Key to included meals: B - breakfast, L - lunch, D - dinner