



# Backroads of Northern Italy

**Tuesday, September 29th.** Departure from your chosen US gateway city. **Overnight: Plane**

**Wednesday, September 30th.** Your morning arrival at Rome Airport will be met for the transfer to our hotel in Perugia. We'll stop en route for lunch in Orvieto and arrive at our hotel with time to unpack and rest up from the overnight flight. **Overnight: Perugia**

**Thursday, October 1st.** A day exploring Perugia, the capital of the region of Umbria. Perugia is an ancient city dating back to the Etruscan era and home to one of the first universities in the world. Our walking tour will show us the Palazzo del Priori, including the national Gallery of Umbrian Art and the chapel of San Severo, with a wonderful fresco by Raphael. The afternoon will be free for individual exploration. **(B) Overnight: Perugia**

**Friday, October 2nd.** Today we'll take a full day excursion to Assisi and Gubbio. Our first stop will be the distinctly medieval-looking town of Gubbio, nestling on the lower slopes of Mount Ingino. The approach to the town is dominated by the remains of its Roman Theatre. We'll then drive through the spectacular scenery of the Apennine Mountains to St Francis' town of Assisi. It is a short drive from here back to our hotel in Perugia. **(B) Overnight: Perugia.** Alternatively - departure from your chosen US gateway city. **Overnight: Plane**

**Saturday, October 3rd.** A beautiful drive this morning takes us north across the Apennines into the region of Emilia-Romagna. We'll make a brief stop in Faenza, home of the International Museum of Ceramics and noted for its manufacture of Majolica, before arriving early afternoon in Bologna. On arrival there will be an arrival briefing where you will meet up with the other members of your travelling party just arrived from the US. **(B) Overnight: Bologna.**

Alternatively - your morning arrival in Milan will be met for the transfer to our hotel in Bologna. After time to unpack and rest up from the overnight flight, there will be an arrival briefing where you will meet up with the other members of your travelling party. **Overnight: Bologna**

**Sunday, October 4th.** A day to explore Bologna. David will lead a walking tour of the city center which will include visits to the Basilica of San Petronio, the min church of the city, dominating the Piazza Maggiore, and the Sanctuary of Madonna di San Lucca with its fabulous views over the historical city center. The afternoon and evening are free. **(B) Overnight: Bologna**

**Monday, October 5th.** Today you can choose to take a class at the renowned Bologna Cooking School (remember spaghetti Bolognese does not exist in Bologna!) or alternatively, for those who don't want to cook, David will organize a day trip to Ferrara by train. Ferrara is a walled city just 30 miles from Bologna that has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage site. **(B) Overnight: Bologna**

**Tuesday, October 6th.** This morning we leave on a day trip to Ravenna. A very important city since Roman times, Ravenna was actually the capital of the Western Roman Empire from 402 until 476 AD and is known for its wonderfully preserved mosaics. Our tour will include: San Vitale, the National Museum of Antiquities, the tomb of Galla Placidia, Dante's tomb and the Mausoleum of Theodoric. Free evening. **(B) Overnight: Bologna**

**Wednesday, October 7th.** We leave Bologna this morning for nearby Modena, an ancient city that is now known as the "Capital of Engines," as it is home to the headquarters of Ferrari, Lamborghini, Pagani and Maserati. It is also the home of Balsamic vinegar. From here, we continue this afternoon to Asolo, a city known as the "Pearl of the Province of Treviso" and the "City of a Hundred Horizons," because of its beautiful mountain settings. After checking into our hotel, the evening is free. **(B) Overnight: Asolo**

**Thursday, October 8th.** A day trip to Treviso today. Treviso is a walled city known as the home of Prosecco sparkling wine and the quintessential Italian dessert, Tiramisu – a wonderful combination! Our tour of the city center will include the church of San Francesco with its incredible medieval frescos. We return to our hotel where the evening is free. **(B) Overnight: Asolo**

**Friday, October 9th.** Running from Padua to Venice the Naviglio Brenta (a part of the Brenta River) became known as the Brenta Riviera because of the many fabulous villas and palaces built along its banks during the 16th century. We'll take a short cruise and visit 2 of the palaces – the Villa Pisani and the Villa Foscari before returning to our hotel for a free evening. **(B) Overnight: Asolo**

**Saturday, October 10th.** Leaving Asolo this morning, our first stop is the city of Verona. Another UNESCO World Heritage Site, Verona was the setting for 3 of Shakespeare's plays: Two Gentlemen of Verona, Romeo & Juliet and The Taming of the Shrew. Our walking tour will show us the Roman amphitheatre (now used as a venue for opera performances), Juliet's balcony and the fabulous doors of the Basilica of San Zeno Maggiore. Later this afternoon we continue up the west coast of Lake Garda to our lakeside hotel in Gardone Riviera. **(B) Overnight: Gardone Riviera**

**Sunday, October 11th.** Our first visit today will be to Vittoriale degli Italiani, the enormous estate of Gabriele D'Annunzio, the Italian writer, politician and hero of the First World War. After his disagreements with the government over their associations with German fascists, they gave D'Annunzio huge sums of money to remain in Gardone and live a lavish life style on his estate, just to keep him away from politics. This afternoon we'll visit the Heller Garden, also in Gardone. Begun as a botanical garden by the Austrian dentist, Arturo Hruska, it was bought in 1988 by the artist Andre Heller and now includes some wonderful modern works of art and sculpture in the setting of a gorgeous garden. **(B) Overnight: Gardone Riviera**

**Monday, October 12th.** From Gardone Riviera we drive to Bergamo. We'll park in the lower city and take the funicular railway up to the Citta Alta (the upper city). This is the historic center of the city and is still surrounded by its massive city walls, built in the Venetian era. Bergamo's Citta Alta is one of the most expensive places to live in Italy. Continuing on past Lake Como we cross over the border into Switzerland to Lugano. **(B) Overnight: Lugano**

**Tuesday, October 13th.** From Lugano we take a day trip into the heart of Ticino (the Italian speaking part of Switzerland). We'll pass through Bellinzona to Locarno where we take the funicular railway up to the sanctuary of Madonna del Sasso. The sanctuary was founded following a vision of the Virgin Mary experienced by the Franciscan monk Brother Bartolomeo d'Ivrea in 1480 and offers spectacular views over the surrounding area. **(B) Overnight: Lugano**

**Wednesday, October 14th.** Today is a free day in Lugano to enjoy the hotel facilities and perhaps do a little shopping. **(B) Overnight: Lugano**

**Thursday, October 15th.** Morning transfers to Milan Airport for returning flights to the U.S. **(B) Overnight: Home**