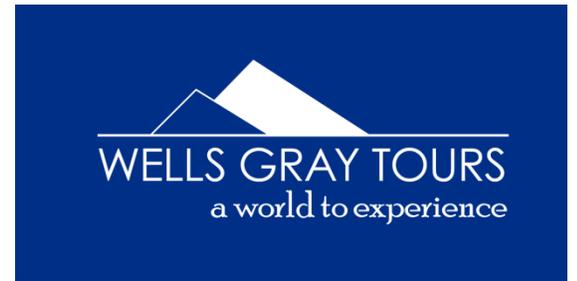




Venice canal



Tuscany cheese

A TASTE OF ITALY

October 7, 2021 – 18 Days

Featuring Milan, Venice, Florence, Tuscany, Rome & Naples

When thinking of Italy, food and wine is one of the first images to come to mind! But you can't forget the canals of Venice, the murals of the Sistine Chapel, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the buried city of Pompeii, and the idyllic countryside filled with farms, castles, and wineries. There is so much to see and experience in Italy and this tour covers many highlights of the northern half of the country. Included are the great cities of Milan, Venice, Florence, Rome, and Naples, along with the magical countryside of Tuscany. The tour features wonderful cuisine, local food products, and wine tasting. An expert bilingual guide is with you from Milan to Naples and there are local guides in many cities, so you will be well-informed.

Activity Level: 2



TOUR
25

34 Meals Included:

16 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 12 dinners

Fares per person:

\$10,920 double/twin; \$13,070 single

Please add 0.3% GST.

Early Bookers:

\$300 discount on first 8 seats; \$150 on next 4

Experience Points:

Earn 183 points on this tour.

Redeem 183 points if you book by July 5, 2021.



ITINERARY

Day 1: Thursday, October 7

Transportation is provided to the Inn at Westminster Quay overlooking the Fraser River. A get-acquainted dinner is planned. *Note:* While it may seem unnecessary to travel to Vancouver the day before your flight, ferries and flights from Victoria can shut down unexpectedly which would cause a missed international flight.

Meals included: Dinner

Accommodation: Inn at Westminster Quay

Day 2: Friday, October 8

Stroll the boardwalk along the riverfront this morning. We go to Vancouver airport at noon and our flight on Lufthansa to Frankfurt leaves at 4 pm.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Lufthansa flight

Day 3: Saturday, October 9

We change planes in Frankfurt, then continue to Milan, Italy, arriving at 2 pm. **Welcome to Italy!** Our Italian guide and driver meet us at the airport and we drive into Milan for a two-night stay.

Meals included: Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel Bianca Maria



Day 4: Sunday, October 10

The city of **Milan** is the second largest in Italy. Because of its strategic location, it has been ruled by Romans, French, Spanish, and Austrians until finally coming under rule of the Kingdom of Italy

in the late 1800s. Our walking tour of the historic city includes entry to the **Duomo di Milano**, the city's impressive gothic cathedral that took nearly six centuries to complete.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel Bianca Maria

Day 5: Monday, October 11

Heading east, the rolling hills were shaped by glacial action from the Alps to the north, so the soil is ideal for the cultivation of grapes and wine-making. We stop in **Franciacorta** for Prosecco wine tasting and lunch made with local products. Our destination is **Venice** — vivid, vibrant, and vivacious, the Queen of the Adriatic holds a mystical aura of a city of canals and palaces, and is one of the most enchanting places in the world. With canals, bridges and islands, Venice boasts of myriad magic festivals, exotic cuisine, and magnificent architecture. Called "the city of canals", Venice extends across 120 islands that are joined by 455 bridges. Its colonization dates to the 5th century when inhabitants came to these marshy islands to escape the Barbarian invasion of the Mongols. Over time, the city grew across these islands, thus making Venice the only place of its kind in the world. We board private water taxis for our transfer from the mainland to the Palazzo San Lorenzo, an intimate four-star hotel with an excellent location a few minutes walk from the famous Piazza San Marco. We stay two nights in the heart of Venice.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Palazzo San Lorenzo

Day 6: Tuesday, October 12

Venice is a city best explored by foot, so with the benefit of a local guide, we walk around the historic city. Attractions include Piazza San Marco, the Basilica, and Bell Tower. Admission is included to **Doge's Palace**, seat of the Venetian Empire and one of the main landmarks in Venice. This afternoon, we enjoy a Bacaro (wine bar) tour with two tastings.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Palazzo San Lorenzo



Day 7: Wednesday, October 13

Leaving Venice, we travel to Ferrara, an intellectual and artistic centre that attracted the greatest minds of the Italian Renaissance in the 15th and 16th centuries. Here, the concept of the 'ideal city' came to life, marking the birth of modern town planning. After a walking tour and lunch, we continue to **Bologna**, known for the oldest university in the Western world, the two landmark towers, and the porticos of the town centre.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel I Portici

Day 8: Thursday, October 14

The day is devoted to the **Parma area**, known for the culinary treasures that it has given to the world. We visit the **Parmigiano-Reggiano Cheese Factory** and the Prosciutto di Parma Museum, learning about the unique methods that create these cheeses and Parma ham. Tastings are provided, of course. Back in Bologna, we savour the cuisine that the region is known for, la cucina Bolognese.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Hotel I Portici

Day 9: Friday, October 15

Our destination today is the **Tuscany region** and the city of Florence, our base for exploring the area, and we stay four nights here. **Florence** is delightfully beautiful, a jewel of the Renaissance, and a centre for food and fashion in northern Italy. During a walking tour, a local guide shows us the

open-air museum of Piazza Della Signoria, Santa Croce which houses the tombs of Michelangelo and Galileo, and the cathedral with Giotto's bell tower and baptistery with its impressive "Gates of Paradise". All these buildings demonstrate the traditions of Florentine art and architecture from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. We also visit **Accademia**, home of Michelangelo's sculpture, *David*.



Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel Adler Cavalieri

Day 10: Saturday, October 16

We spend the morning exploring **Siena**. We walk through the vast Piazza del Campo to see the magnificent frescoes of the Palazzo Pubblico and visit the amazing zebra-striped Cathedral with marble paving and elaborate pulpit. Next, we drive through some of Tuscany's lovely cypress and olive groves while ascending to the ancient hilltop village of **San Gimignano**. In medieval times, each merchant family built its own fortress tower and residential area, and many remain standing today, giving the nickname, "town of the fine towers".



Here we experience gelato tasting. Lunch is a

treat, at a local farmhouse in the countryside. The food could not be fresher!

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel Adler Cavalieri

Day 11: Sunday, October 17

The morning is free to explore Florence on your own. The afternoon is devoted to exploring the **Chianti region**, well known for its exceptional wines. Here we are treated to an evening at Castello di Verrazzano with its extensive farms and gardens. Dinner and a tour of the wine cellars are included.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel Adler Cavalieri

Day 12: Monday, October 18

Today's excursion is to the city of **Pisa**, once an important port. Its proud and wealthy merchants dedicated some of their fortunes to build a fine cathedral and baptistery, but today it is the belltower that attracts the most attention – by leaning four metres from perpendicular. A guided walking tour shows these highlights. We are treated to a lesson in **Tuscan cooking** and rewarded with the fruits of our labour for an exquisite lunch.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Hotel Adler Cavalieri



Day 13: Tuesday, October 19

Saying farewell to Tuscany, we journey south along the road that leads to Rome. We visit the town of **Assisi**, birthplace of St. Francis, who founded the Franciscan religious order here in 1208, and St. Clare, the founder of the Poor Sisters or Poor Clares. We take a guided tour of the

Basilica of San Francesco d'Assisi, dedicated to St. Francis. Arriving in Rome, we stay three nights at the wonderful Hotel Savoy. Built in the late 1800s, it has a great location surrounded by fine shopping.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel Savoy



Day 14: Wednesday, October 20

Rome is called the Eternal City, a term coined by ancient Roman poets, and its 2,500 years of history have proven the name to be true. The birthplace of western civilization, the city remains an important cultural and political centre in the modern world. This morning, we have a guided walking tour of the **Vatican**, including entry into the Vatican Museums, St. Peter's Basilica, and the **Sistine Chapel** to admire one of Michelangelo's greatest masterpieces. The advantage of traveling in a group is being able to bypass the huge lines that form to enter!

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Hotel Savoy

Day 15: Thursday, October 21

Our locally guided tour this morning includes entrance to the **Colosseum**, the largest amphitheatre in the Roman Empire, and the **Forum**, the centre of public life in ancient Rome. Palatine Hill is one of the Seven Hills of Rome, a truly ancient part of the city, and has been called "the first nucleus of the Roman Empire." The rest of the day is free to visit your preferred attractions, and your guide can assist you with plans. Visit the Roof

Garden on the top floor of the hotel, and admire the striking view of the rooftops of the Eternal City.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel Savoy



Day 16: Friday, October 22

We journey next to **Naples**, third largest city in Italy. First settled by Greeks in the second millennium BC, Naples is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. Its historic city centre is the largest in Europe and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Neapolitan cuisine is noted for its association with pizza, which originated here, and we have lunch in a local **pizzeria**. A walking tour is included this afternoon, then we settle into our hotel for two nights.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Grand Hotel Santa Lucia

Day 17: Saturday, October 23

Mount Vesuvius dominates Naples, and its huge eruption in AD 79 buried nearby **Pompeii** under 4 to 6 metres of ash and pumice. Mostly preserved under the ash, the excavated city offers a

unique snapshot of Roman life, frozen at the moment it was buried and providing an extraordinary insight into the everyday life of its inhabitants. It was a wealthy town with fine public buildings and luxurious houses with lavish decorations, furnishings, and works of art which were the main attractions for the early excavators. Our guide interprets this remarkable story. Tonight is our farewell dinner to recap our Italian adventures, held at a farmhouse at the foot of Mount Vesuvius with local foods and Lacryma Christi wines.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Grand Hotel Santa Lucia



Day 18: Sunday, October 24

Saying farewell to Bella Italy, we depart Naples on Lufthansa, change planes in Frankfurt and arrive in Vancouver in mid-afternoon. Transportation is provided to your pickup point in Victoria.

Meals included: Breakfast



THE FLAVOURS OF ITALY

Italy is considered one of the world's most culturally and economically advanced countries with its economy ranking 8th largest in the world and 3rd in the Eurozone. As a reflection of its cultural wealth, Italy is home to the world's largest number of World Heritage Sites (55) and it is the 5th most visited country. This will be Wells Gray Tours' 4th trip to Italy since 2006.

When thinking of Italy, food and wine is one of the first images to come to mind. Then one thinks further, to the canals of Venice, the murals of the Sistine Chapel, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, and the buried city of Pompeii, as well as the eroding architecture of one of the great civilizations of mankind, the art treasures, and the rolling idyllic countryside filled with farms, castles, and wineries. There is so much to see and experience in northern Italy and this 2½ week tour covers many highlights. Included are the great cities of Milan, Venice, Florence, Rome, and Naples, along with the magical countryside of Tuscany. The tour features wonderful cuisine, sometimes with local food products, and wine-tasting from the expertise of Italian vintners.



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We are delighted to arrange another Wells Gray tour to Italy for a taste of the flavours, culture, and long history that this fascinating country has to offer.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Transportation to/from Vancouver airport
- Flight from Vancouver to Milan, Italy
- Current air transport taxes and security fees
- 16 nights of accommodation and hotel taxes
- Coach transportation in Italy for 15 days
- Bilingual Italian guide for 15 days
- Locally guided walking tour of Milan
- Duomo di Milano Cathedral
- Winery tour in Franciacorta & Prosecco tasting
- Water taxi transportation to Venice hotel
- Locally guided walking tour of Venice
- Piazza San Marco
- Basilica and Belltower
- Doge's Palace
- Venice Bacaro tour with tastings
- Locally guided walking tour of Ferrara
- Full-day excursion to Parma region
- Parmigiano-Reggiano Cheese Factory
- Prosciutto di Parma Museum
- Locally guided walking tour of Florence
- Accademia, home of Michelangelo's *David*
- Full day excursion to Siena and San Gimignano
- Gelato tasting
- Tour of Chianti region
- Wine tasting & dinner at Castello di Verrazzano
- Guided walking tour of Pisa with Leaning Tower
- Tuscany cooking lessons
- Guided walking tour of Assisi
- Basilica of San Francesco
- Guided tour of the Vatican museums
- Sistine Chapel
- St. Peter's Basilica
- Colosseum of Rome
- Roman Forum
- Guided walking tour of Naples
- Pompeii archeological excavations
- Flight from Naples to Vancouver
- Gratuities for Italian guide, local guides & driver
- Knowledgeable Wells Gray tour director
- Luggage handling at hotels
- **34 meals:** 16 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 12 dinners

TOUR NOTES

Currency & Expenses: The Euro is used in Italy and, as of January 2021, a Canadian dollar is worth about €0.65. The Euro exchange rates have been quite volatile through 2020 due to Brexit. You should order Euros from your bank 1-2 weeks before departure, or plan to use ATMs. Credit cards are accepted almost everywhere. Gratuities are included for all group meals, drivers and guides.

Fare Changes: As this tour has been planned and priced 10 months before departure, exchange fluctuations between the Canadian dollar and the Euro could affect the fare, in which case you will be notified of the increase or decrease. The flight has been priced based on current taxes and fuel prices, and the airline can make changes to these amounts anytime.

Flight is on Lufthansa from Vancouver to Milan, returning from Naples. There is a connection in Frankfurt both directions. Flight itinerary is subject to change.

Flight upgrades: Please enquire about current prices for upgrades on these flights. Premium economy and business class may be available.

Documentation: A passport is required and must be valid for three months after your flight home. A visa is not required.

Rooms for singles are often a different style or smaller size than twin rooms. Many hotels limit the number of single rooms allocated to a group. Please book early if you prefer to travel single.

Triples are not available on this tour.

Beverages: Many meals are included, but it is not common practice to include beverages with meals. Bottled water is usually served and sometimes a glass of wine, but any other beverages are probably at your expense. One complimentary bottle of water is provided per person on the coach each day.

TOUR 25 This is a Tour 25 departure, meaning the tour is limited to 25 participants, a more intimate travel experience.



Activity Level 2: Parts of this tour could be rated Activity Level 3. Due to the historic nature of some attractions, it will be necessary to climb stairs, walk on uneven surfaces, and walk up to one kilometre at a time. Rooms in some hotels may be reached by some stairs after riding the elevator. Ground floor rooms with no stairs cannot be requested. Sometimes the coach cannot drive all the way to an attraction. There are walking tours in several cities where coaches cannot drive. There are many stops during this tour and you must be able to get on and off the coach by yourself without delaying your fellow travellers. There can be longer walks in the airports while travelling to and from Italy; request a cart or wheelchair in advance or at check-in if needed. Please consider these mobility issues prior to booking this tour. The coach cannot carry a scooter. You should not book this tour if you depend on a walker. If you are not able to participate in Activity Level 2, Wells Gray Tours recommends that you bring a companion to assist you. The tour director, driver, Italian guide, and local guides have many responsibilities, so please do not expect them, or your fellow travellers, to provide ongoing assistance. If you are not capable of keeping up with the group or require frequent assistance, the tour director may stop you from participating in some activities or some days of the tour. In extreme situations, you may be required to leave the tour and travel home at your own expense; travel insurance will probably not cover you.

TOUR POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$800 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due July 5, 2021. By paying the deposit, you agree to the Terms & Conditions, Activity Level and Cancellation Policy outlined.

Discounts: Early bookers receive \$300 discount on first 8 seats and \$150 on next 4 seats for booking early with deposit. The discount is not offered after July 5, 2021.

Cancellation Policy: Up to June 4, 2021, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From June 5 to July 5, the cancellation charge is \$300 per person. From July 6 to August 5, the cancellation charge is 50% of the tour fare. From August 6 to September 3, the cancellation charge is 80% of the tour fare. After September 3, there is no refund.

Fare Changes: Changes to currency exchange rates or taxes and surcharges from airlines and other tour suppliers can occur at any time and are beyond the control of Wells Gray Tours, therefore Wells Gray Tours reserves the right to increase fares due to such changes up until the time of departure.

Travel Insurance: A Comprehensive Insurance policy is available through Wells Gray Tours and coverage is provided by Travel Guard. Policies purchased at deposit include a waiver of the pre-existing condition clause for medical and cancellation claims, otherwise policies can be purchased no later than at final payment. Please contact us for details.

Home pickups may be offered in Greater Victoria, depending on the number of people booked and coach size. Decision is made about 2 weeks before departure and you will be contacted about your pickup point and time.

Photo Credits: Adobe Stock (Venice, food page 6), Wikimedia (cheese, Duomo, *David*, Sistine Chapel, Colosseum), Pixabay (San Marco, Gelato, Leaning Tower, Pompeii, food page 5)

Experience Points: This tour earns 183 e-points. Each time you travel on a Wells Gray tour, you earn Experience Points, or e-points. One e-point equals \$1. Redeem your points on select tours or accumulate enough points to earn a free tour! Redemptions offered until July 5, 2021.

Consumer Protection BC Licences: Kamloops 178, Vernon 655, Kelowna 588, Penticton 924, Victoria 65842

VICTORIA

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Victoria, BC V8W 1E1
250-590-7889

Office Hours:

8:30 am to 4 pm
Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri
Wed 9 am to 4 pm
Closed holidays &
weekends

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8:30 am to 4:30 pm
Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri
Wed 9 am to 4:30 pm
Closed holidays &
weekends

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