



Venice canal



Tuscany cheese

A TASTE OF ITALY

October 7, 2022 – 19 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 Venice with its canals, Rialto Bridge and Piazza San Marco; the Leaning Tower of Pisa, Accademia with Michelangelo's sculpture of *David*, the landmarks of Rome with its Colosseum, Forum, and the Sistine Chapel murals; the buried city of Pompeii, and the idyllic countryside in Tuscany 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 such as the great cities of Milan, Venice, Florence, Rome, and Naples. The tour features wonderful cuisine, local food products, and wine tasting. An expert bilingual guide is with you in Italy and there are local guides in many cities, so you will be well-informed.

Activity Level: 3



TOUR
25

34 Meals Included:

16 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 12 dinners

Fares per person:

\$10,545 double/twin; \$12,770 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, 2022.

Departure from: Victoria



ITINERARY

Day 1: Friday, October 7

An afternoon transfer is provided to New Westminster and we stay overnight at the Inn at the Quay overlooking the Fraser River. A get-acquainted dinner is an opportunity to meet your fellow travellers. **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 the Quay

Day 2: Saturday, 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: Sunday, October 9

We change planes in Frankfurt, then continue to Milan. **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



Duomo di Milano

Day 4: Monday, 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 by 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: Tuesday, 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 Hotel Giorgione. This intimate 4-star hotel is in a 14th century building that maintains the charms of Venetian traditions and is only a few minutes walk from famous **Piazza San Marco** and Rialto Bridge.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel Giorgione

Day 6: Wednesday, 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: Hotel Giorgione



Day 7: Thursday, 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: Zanhotel Tre Vecchi

Day 8: Friday, 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: Zanhotel Tre Vecchi

Day 9: Saturday, 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. **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 famed sculpture, *David*.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel Diplomat

Day 10: Sunday, 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 Diplomat

Day 11: Monday, 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 Diplomat

Day 12: Tuesday, 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 is followed by a lesson in **Tuscan cooking** and rewarded with the fruits of our labour for an exquisite lunch.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Hotel Diplomat



Day 13: Wednesday, October 19

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 next to fine shopping.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel Savoy

Day 14: Thursday, 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: Friday, 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 explore 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: Saturday, 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: Sunday, 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: Monday, October 24

Saying farewell to Bella Italy, we depart Naples on Lufthansa, change planes in Frankfurt, and arrive in Vancouver in mid-afternoon.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation: Fairmont YVR

Day 19: Tuesday, October 25

We travel home to Victoria.

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.

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
- Airline luggage fee for 1 suitcase per person
- 17 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



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 2 km 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 and some last 2 or 3 hours at a gentle pace with stops for commentary. 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. Seeing everything in this itinerary requires active participation. Prior to Wells Gray accepting your booking, you will be required to sign a declaration that you are able to travel on an Activity Level 3 tour. 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.



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

TOUR NOTES

Currency & Expenses: The Euro is used in Italy and, as of December 2021, a Canadian dollar is worth about €0.69. The Euro exchange rates have been quite volatile through 2021 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.

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: 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 POLICIES

Payments: A deposit of \$800 per person is requested at the time of booking and the balance is due July 5, 2022. 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, 2022.

Cancellation Policy: Up to June 3, 2022, your tour payments will be refunded less an administrative charge of \$100 per person. From June 4 to July 5, the cancellation charge is \$300 per person. From July 6 to August 5, the cancellation charge is 50% of tour fare. From August 6 to September 1, the cancellation charge is 80% of tour fare. After September 1, 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.

Food Allergies: You must notify us no later than at final payment if you have a food allergy. This tour goes to some places where restaurants may not be able to satisfy all food allergies. For some allergies, please consider bringing your own snacks or food items so you are not dependent on what restaurants are able to serve.

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 5), Wikimedia (cheese, Duomo, 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, 2022.

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

VICTORIA

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A TASTE OF ITALY — October 7, 2022

This tour is rated "Activity Level 3" by the tour planners at Wells Gray Tours. This rating is the highest activity level assigned to a tour, meaning that there is a lot of activity which could include one or more of (but is not limited to) the following:

- You can walk 3 kilometres in 1 hour.
- You can walk on uneven sidewalks and cobblestone streets.
- You can climb a flight of stairs to your hotel room.
- You can participate in a guided walking tour for 2-3 hours and stand for extended periods listening to commentary.
- You can carry or wheel your own luggage in airports to the coach.

Since a few people who are not capable of doing the above activities can hold up the entire group, Wells Gray Tours expects everybody booking a tour with "Activity Level 3" to be reasonably fit. You must be able to participate in activities without the assistance of the tour director, driver or other travellers.

Please read the following and sign acknowledging that these statements are true. The tour deposit will be due after you have signed this statement.

- I want to travel on a Wells Gray tour with a rating of "Activity Level 3".
- I have read the brochure with the full itinerary and description of the activities that are typical on this tour.
- I understand that this is the highest activity level that a Wells Gray tour can be rated.
- I am confident that I can participate in tour activities at this level and I will not hold up or delay the other members of the tour.
- I do not require the use of a wheelchair or a walker.

If my physical condition changes between booking and departure date such that I can no longer do this level of activity, I will notify the Wells Gray office or agent. The specified penalties will apply for cancelling and travel insurance may cover this.

If I am not capable of keeping up with the group or I require frequent assistance, I understand that the Wells Gray tour director has the right to not allow me to participate in some activities or some days of the tour. In extreme situations, I acknowledge that I may be required to leave the tour and travel home at my own expense, and that travel insurance will probably not cover me.

This statement has been implemented by Wells Gray Tours to maintain high quality itineraries, accurate timing, and the enjoyment of all tour participants. Each person booking this tour must sign this statement. Thank you for your understanding.

Signature_____ Name _____ Date_____