

Overseas Adventure Travel®

THE LEADER IN PERSONALIZED SMALL GROUP ADVENTURES SINCE 1978

Your O.A.T. Adventure Travel Planning Guide®



Tuscany & Umbria

2025

Overseas Adventure Travel®

347 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210

Dear Traveler,

I am thrilled that you are considering exploring the world with O.A.T. There are so many wonderful destinations to discover, and the itinerary described inside is a perfect way to fulfill a travel dream.

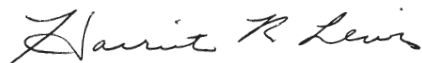
When you join us, you will slip seamlessly into local life as you explore off the beaten path in your small group. Like all our itineraries, this one is designed to give you an intimate understanding of your destination, not just a superficial view. You will get to know community leaders and try your hand at local trades during your *A Day in the Life* experience, share traditional fare and lively conversation during a Home-Hosted Visit, discuss the Controversial Topics impacting everyday life, and visit sites supported by Grand Circle Foundation. And if you choose to travel solo, you will enjoy all these cultural experiences at an unmatched value, with our FREE Single Supplements—just one of the reasons we continue to be the leader in solo travel.

To ensure you experience the true culture and feel supported every step of the way, we provide the services of a local Trip Experience Leader from the beginning of your adventure to the end. Along with introducing you to the history and culture of their homeland, these friendly experts will gladly help you out with any special requests to make your trip even more special. You can also rely on the seasoned team at our regional office, who are ready to help 24/7 in case any unexpected circumstances arise.

Plus, you can put your own personal stamp on your trip, like the **87% of our travelers who personalize their experience**. Perhaps you will choose to see more of your destination by adding an optional trip extension to your itinerary. You can also arrive a few days early to explore independently and get acclimated, customize your air itinerary, and more.

I hope you find this Travel Planning Guide helpful. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact one of our Travel Counselors at **1-800-955-1925**.

Warm regards,



Harriet R. Lewis

Chair

Overseas Adventure Travel

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Montepulciano

Tuscany & Umbria: Rustic Beauty in the Italian Heartland

Small Group Adventure

Italy: Lucca, Chianti region, Pienza, Spoleto, Rome

Small groups of no more than 16 travelers, guaranteed

15 days starting from \$4,295

including international airfare

Single Supplement: **FREE**

For departure dates & prices, visit www.oattravel.com/bta2025pricing

From the grape-laden vines of Chianti to the olive groves blanketing the hills of Trevi, Italy's Tuscany and Umbria regions are ripe for discovery. Travel along the narrow lanes of small towns, marvel at medieval fortresses, and stroll between elegant cypress trees. Immerse yourself in this rustic, romantic part of Italy, and enjoy a way of life as timeless as the rolling vineyards warming under the Tuscan sun.

IT'S INCLUDED

- 13 nights accommodations
- International airfare, airport transfers, government taxes, fees, and airline fuel surcharges unless you choose to make your own air arrangements
- All land transportation
- 29 meals—13 breakfasts, 8 lunches, and 8 dinners (Including 1 Home-Hosted Lunch)
- 23 small group activities
- Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader
- Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters
- 5% Frequent Traveler Credit toward your next adventure

Prices are accurate as of the date of this publishing and are subject to change.

Tuscany & Umbria: Rustic Beauty in the Italian Heartland



ITINERARY SUMMARY

DAYS	DESTINATION
1	Fly to Lucca, Italy
2-4	Lucca
5-7	Chianti region
8-10	Pienza
11-13	Spoletto
14	Rome
15	Return to U.S.

PERSONALIZE YOUR ADVENTURE

OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS
 History and Culinary Delights of Bologna & Parma, Italy
 PRE-TRIP: 6 nights from **\$2,195**

Rome: Ancient Sites & Hidden City Gems
 POST-TRIP: 4 nights from **\$1,695**

ARRIVE EARLY
 We recommend that you relax after a long flight or explore more in depth before your trip. Prices shown include accommodations and private airport transfer.

- Arrive early in **Bologna** before your Bologna & Parma pre-trip extension from **\$310** per room, per night
- Arrive early in **Lucca** before your main adventure from **\$280** per room, per night

WHAT TO EXPECT

①②**③**④⑤ Moderate

Pacing: 5 locations in 14 days with one 1-night stay

Physical requirements: Travel on some rugged paths and many cobblestoned streets on foot, as well as over bumpy, narrow rural roads by bus; the ability to climb steep stairs and walk up and downhill is also required in several locations in hill towns and the countryside

Flight time: Travel time will be 11-18 hours and will most likely have one to three connections

View all physical requirements at www.oattravel.com/bta

ITALY: THE O.A.T. DIFFERENCE

Unbeatable Value: Travel at the lowest price and per diems in the industry.

People-to-People Experiences: Enjoy our **A Day in the Life** in the Chianti Valley on a family-owned goat farm, where you'll learn to make homemade cheese. And visit with a local family in Marina di Carrara for a **Home-Hosted Lunch** to learn what it's like living in the shadow of marble quarries while savoring a home-cooked meal of regional cuisine.

O.A.T. Exclusives: Learn from local truffle hunters in Spoleto why truffles are some of the most costly ingredients in the world and discuss common criticisms of the industry.

Tuscany & Umbria: Rustic Beauty in the Italian Heartland

YOUR DETAILED ITINERARY

BEGIN YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL PRE-TRIP EXTENSION

6 nights in *History and Culinary Delights of Bologna & Parma, Italy*

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Day 2 Arrive in Bologna, Italy

Day 3 Explore Bologna

Day 4 Bologna • Optional *Ravenna's Magnificent Mosaics* tour

Day 5 Transfer to Parma

Day 6 Explore Parma

Day 7 Parma • Po River Experience

Day 8 Transfer to Lucca • Travel through the Apennines • Join main trip

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Afternoon/Evening: You depart today on your overnight flight from the U.S. to Florence, Italy.

Day 2 Arrive in Lucca, Italy

- Destination: Lucca
- Accommodations: Hotel San Luca Palace or similar

Afternoon: You'll arrive at the airport in Florence sometime this afternoon and transfer to your hotel in Lucca.

Depending on your arrival time at the hotel, you will also be offered a drink by our Trip Experience Leader and may meet up with some of the other members of your group—including the travelers who took our optional *History and Culinary Delights of Bologna & Parma, Italy* pre-trip extension and those who arrived early in Lucca before the main adventure. You

may also wish to take a brief walk led by your Trip Experience Leader around the hotel and surrounding area.

Dinner: On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader will be happy to share their recommendations, if you'd like, or you might want to sample some traditional pizza from a nearby bakery, savoring your slice as you wander the city.

Evening: Your evening is on your own—you are free to rest in your room after your flight to prepare for tomorrow's discoveries or reach out to your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations on things to do in the area.

Day 3 Explore Lucca

- Destination: Lucca
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel San Luca Palace or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Join your fellow travelers in the hotel lobby to meet with our Trip Experience Leader for a Welcome Briefing.

Then, we'll set off to explore Lucca, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, on a roughly 2-hour walking tour led by a local guide. Remarkably well preserved, Lucca's narrow streets look much like they did when the ancient Romans established the town in about 180 BC. And the thick walls that encircled Lucca during the Renaissance era stand strong today. Completely intact, they once hosted car races and now serve as a pedestrian walkway. Lucca's quaint center is enclosed by these walls, and brick ramparts from the 15th and 16th centuries preside over the streets. As we explore, we'll find quiet, tree-lined squares and ancient churches with ornate facades of green, gray, and white marble. Our stroll also takes us by the Duomo di San Martino, or St. Martin's Cathedral, which was originally built in 1063.

Lunch: On your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations on restaurants in the area.

Afternoon: You have the afternoon free to explore Lucca on your own, perhaps to take a pleasant walk along the city walls.

Dinner: We'll enjoy a Welcome Dinner at a local restaurant. Our meal will feature traditional Italian cuisine and we'll toast to the discoveries we'll be making in Tuscany and Umbria.

Evening: You are free to return to your room to rest before your explorations tomorrow. Or, if you'd prefer, take in the charms of Lucca by night on an evening stroll or venture out to a bar or a quiet café.

Day 4 Lucca • Excursion to Carrara Marble Quarries • Conversation about the health, economic, and environmental impacts of marble production • Home-Hosted Lunch

- Destination: Lucca
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Hotel San Luca Palace or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll begin the day with a drive to Carrara. Situated along the Carrione River, Carrara is a town that was originally built by the ancient Romans to house workers in the nearby quarries.

We'll head up the winding mountain slopes of the Apuan Alps for an adventurous visit to the famous Carrara marble quarries, where the block of white marble used by Michelangelo to sculpt his *David* came from. Some 15,000 tons of marble are still extracted daily from the mountains. We'll have a chance to walk around the grounds and even get to enter inside the marble caves for a behind-the-scenes look at the extraction process. If the day is clear, you may be able to enjoy scenic views of the surrounding mountains and the town below from the quarry.

After our 1-hour walking tour, we'll walk to a nearby shelter that is adjacent to the quarries. There, we'll meet with Marco Bernacca, a former quarry worker, to learn about some of the impacts of this practice. In the United States—and throughout the world—Carrara marble is considered the gold standard in luxury. But as we'll find out, the process of

producing the marble is far from luxurious, and the riches it garners have not made their way back to the town. As a former quarry worker and Carrara resident, Marco will be able to share a deeply personal account of the industry.

After our discussion concludes, we'll take a quick drive to the seaside town of Marina di Carrara, where we'll split into even smaller groups for lunch in the home of a local family.

Lunch: Enjoy a **Home-Hosted Lunch** in Marina di Carrara. Get to know your hosts and learn what it's like living in the shadow of the quarries while savoring a home-cooked meal of regional cuisine. Our meal will consist of seasonal dishes that include a pasta or soup and meat or fish, depending on the days of the week (families here commonly enjoy fish on Tuesdays and Fridays). This will be a great opportunity to ask them about life in Carrara, any customs they practice, and more.

Afternoon: We'll return to Lucca by the later afternoon, and the remainder of your day is free to relax or explore independently.

Dinner: On your own. You're free to dine at the hotel or at a local restaurant in Lucca.

Evening: Free for your own discoveries. You might opt to settle in at a local bar to people watch.

Day 5 Lucca • Visit Florence • Chianti region

- Destination: Chianti region
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Villa Il Leccio or similar

Activity Note: If you are departing the U.S. on a Thursday, our visit to Florence is on a Monday, when most national museums are closed, including the Accademia and Uffizi Gallery.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today we set out to explore Florence. Florence, of course, is the birthplace of the Renaissance, and we'll begin our discoveries of this iconic Italian destination at the Piazzale Michelangelo, where we'll enjoy sweeping vistas of the city. After taking in the panoramic views, we'll begin a walking tour led by a local guide into Florence's core—a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Our urban hike toward the city center will take us through Piazza Santo Spirito, a charming historic square frequented by artists and bohemians. Florentines refer to the neighborhood as "Oltrarno," or "the other side of the Arno River," and we'll be sure to look for opportunities to mingle with the locals while passing through. We'll also have an opportunity to admire Ponte Vecchio, the everlasting symbol of Florence. Erected during Roman times, the current Ponte Vecchio, or Old Bridge, has stood since about 1350. All of the goldsmiths and jewelry shops on the bridge are nothing new—they've been a feature of Ponte Vecchio since the 13th century.

Lunch: On your own in Florence. With everything from casual *trattorie*, gourmet sandwich shops, and street food stalls to Michelin-starred restaurants, the Tuscan capital has dining options to satisfy any appetite.

Afternoon: There's no better way to see Florence than a stroll through its cobblestoned streets, and you'll have a few hours to explore the treasure-filled city at your own pace. You could check out the Duomo, head to the Mercato della Paglia and the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore with its famous dome designed by Brunelleschi, or perhaps visit the Church of San Lorenzo with the Medici Chapels. Or if there's a special museum you had in mind, your Trip Experience Leader will be happy to point you in the right direction.

We'll regroup later in the afternoon and drive into the Chianti countryside, where we'll spend the next three nights.

Dinner: In the hotel's restaurant.

Evening: Your evening is on your own—you are free to rest in your room, visit the lounge, or perhaps take an evening stroll in the surrounding woodlands.

Day 6 *A Day in the Life* in the Chianti Valley

- Destination: Chianti region
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Villa Il Leccio or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll drive into the countryside to experience *A Day in the Life* of the Chianti Valley. Situated between the provinces of Florence and Siena, Chianti has long been revered as the heart and soul of Old Tuscany—known, of course, for its world-class wine production, a masterful tradition dating back to the 13th century. In addition to its distinguished viticulture, Chianti is rich in gastronomic heritage, home to some of the most iconic and universally loved specialties. From expertly cured meats to sharp, melt-in-the-mouth cheeses and hearty, wholesome breads, the people of Chianti pride themselves in carrying on ancient culinary practices that work in tandem with the natural environment to achieve unmatched quality and sustainability. During our discoveries today, we'll learn about many of these practices and come to understand why the rolling hills of Tuscany, dotted with dense vineyards, Cypress forests, and medieval villages, make for some of the finest cuisine you'll find just about anywhere.

We'll drive to a farm just outside of Greve or Tavernelle, where we'll be greeted by a community representative and perhaps some of the farm helpers. Then, tour the farm and see the livestock, which we may find either resting peacefully in the barn or roaming the undulating fields freely. Don't be surprised if the animals approach you seeking attention and a warm touch.

After meeting the animals, we'll make our way to the fruit and vegetable garden for a brief introduction to local cultivation methods. We'll learn how they channel the earth—without the use of pesticides or chemicals—to yield healthy, sizeable, and plentiful harvests. We'll also have a chance to observe the various types of produce that grow here. From there, we'll head to the farmhouse to enjoy the hands-on activity of cheese-making. Of course, we'll make some form of goat cheese, whether a mild or more pungent variety. This process includes acidification, the separation of curds and whey, salting, shaping, and ripening (which can take days, weeks, or months). At the end of our tutorial, we'll sample some cheeses to get an idea of how the finished product will taste—products which we'll enjoy more of during our farm-fresh lunch.

Lunch: We'll sit down with our hosts to enjoy fresh, organic fare sourced from the farm, a spread that will naturally include a variety of goat cheeses and vegetables.

Afternoon: We'll bid farewell to our hosts, and then you'll have the option to either return to the hotel or join your Trip Experience Leader in a 1.5 mile-hike through the Chianti Valley, concluding at our hotel.

Dinner: At the hotel's restaurant.

Evening: Your evening is on your own—you can enjoy a nature walk, relax in the lounge, or reach out to your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations on things to do in the area.

Day 7 Chianti countryside • Olive oil mill visit • Cooking class and farmhouse lunch

- Destination: Chianti region
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Villa Il Leccio or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Our day begins with a visit to an olive-oil mill in the Chianti countryside. This region of Tuscany produces some of finest extra virgin olive oil in the world, and our drive through rolling, vineyard carpeted hills will take us to an olive-oil producer whose groves have been in the same family for more than 150 years. At the mill, an oil maker will show us where the olives are pressed each November and December to release their precious oil. Then during an olive-oil tasting, our small group will learn about different varietals and how to distinguish between the spicy notes and other characteristics of this staple of Tuscan cooking.

Then, we'll take a short drive to a local *agriturismo* (farmhouse), where we'll enjoy a hands-on cooking lesson led by the *agriturismo*'s cook that will reveal the secrets to making traditional home-made pasta—the kind native Tuscans learned in the kitchens of their mothers and grandmothers.

Lunch: We'll dine on the delicious Tuscan cuisine that we've helped to prepare.

Afternoon: We'll return to our hotel by the late afternoon, and you'll have some free time. You may choose to relax in your room, enjoy the villa amenities, or explore the idyllic wooded hills of Chianti that surround our villa on our own.

Dinner: At the hotel.

Evening: On your own—you can enjoy the amenities or begin packing for tomorrow's transfer to Pienza.

Day 8 Transfer to Pienza • Explore Siena

- Destination: Pienza
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Piccolo Hotel La Valle or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll drive to the nearby city of Pienza, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Along the way, we'll stop for a visit in Siena, home to Tuscany's most celebrated festival, the annual Palio horse race; as well as one of Italy's most notable cathedrals.

A walking tour led by a local guide will be like stepping back in time to discover the *palazzi*, *piazze*, and churches scattered throughout Siena's Old Town, also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Siena's streets are paved with cobblestones, and the city is built over five hills, making for a challenging—yet rewarding—stroll. We'll also learn about Siena's unique districting system. Siena's 17 districts, or *contrade*, were originally divided by the city's buildings and their owners at the time, rather than by roads or other geographical markers. Each is named after an animal or symbol, and we'll explore one of these districts today where we may interact with the residents to get a glimpse into the local culture.

Lunch: On your own in Siena. The city's main square, the famous Piazza del Campo, is lined with a variety of *pizzerie* and *trattorie* that should satisfy any palate.

Afternoon: After some free time to explore Siena on your own, we'll regroup and continue our drive to Pienza.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: On your own—you can enjoy the hotel amenities or relax on the veranda to take in the sweeping views of the Tuscan hills.

Day 9 Visit Etruscan Museum • Explore Montepulciano

- Destination: Pienza
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Piccolo Hotel La Valle or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Our day begins with a drive to the Etruscan Museum. The Etruscans were an ancient people who lived on the Italian peninsula long before the Romans arrived. Because no literature survives from the Etruscan period, the history of their civilization is shrouded in mystery; all that is left of them are the artifacts—like weapons, cooking implements, and building tools—that archaeologists have been able to find. These artifacts have been collected and are now on display at the Etruscan Museum.

When we arrive there this morning, we'll be greeted by one of the museum's archaeologists and given a welcome talk on the history of the Etruscans in the local Chianciano community. One of the archaeologists will then lead us in a hands-on activity using clay to further our understanding of the Etruscan civilization. You'll also have some time to explore the four floors of the museum—which is housed in a converted 19th-century granary barn—on your own.

Then, we'll drive to nearby Montepulciano, a medieval hilltop town in the Tuscan countryside. Before exploring the streets of Montepulciano, we'll stop briefly to admire the façade of San Biagio, a masterpiece of Renaissance architecture that stands at the foot of a hill leading up to town, with a brief tour led by our Trip Experience Leader. Built between 1518 and 1548, the domed sanctuary was designed by Antonio da Sangallo the Elder, an illustrious architect from Florence. Then we'll walk through the city center and onto Via San Gallo, a historic street outlined with brick and stone buildings.

Lunch: At the historic Fattoria della Talosa winery, which dates back to the year 1500. Our lunch includes a tasting of a trio of Tuscan wines and a tour of the property.

Afternoon: You'll have some free time to wander through the elegant squares and hidden corners of Montepulciano on your own. We'll head back to Pienza in the mid-afternoon, and the rest of your day is free.

Dinner: On your own—you can ask your Trip Experience Leader for local dining options. Perhaps you may choose to venture down the road to taste some regional specialties.

Evening: Free to explore Pienza on your own—you may wish to visit a local café or retire to your room to prepare for tomorrow's discoveries.

Day 10 Pienza • Optional Pitigliano & Sovana tour

- Destination: Pienza
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Piccolo Hotel La Valle or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: The entire day is free to explore Pienza independently, with lunch and dinner on your own. You may stay at the hotel to relax and reflect, spend some time exploring the surrounding hills of the Val d'Orcia—whose landscapes are a UNESCO World Heritage Site—or soak up more of the 15th-century splendor of the town named for Pope Pius II, who was born here.

Or, you may join a full-day optional tour to Pitigliano & Sovana. Drive to the hilltop town of Pitigliano, which was originally settled by the Etruscans and is surrounded by gorges on three sides. Pitigliano was also once home to a thriving Jewish population that settled there in the early part of the 16th century—it was even known as *La Piccola Gerusalemme* (or Little Jerusalem). Upon our arrival, we'll explore Pitigliano's Jewish heritage on a walking tour, followed by some free time to wander the labyrinth of streets and *piazze* of the historic district on your own.

Lunch: Those who took the optional tour will enjoy lunch at a local restaurant in Pitigliano. Lunch will be on your own for those who didn't take the optional tour.

Afternoon: Optional tour participants will drive to the ancient Etruscan necropolis of Sovana, where we'll hike through the woods of this ancient burial site. After walking along sunken roads carved into the volcanic rock and contemplating the mysteries of the Etruscans, we'll return to Pienza.

Dinner: On your own—you can ask your Trip Experience Leader for local dining options.

Evening: Free to explore Pienza on your own—or you may wish to begin packing for tomorrow's transfer to Spoleto.

Day 11 Pienza • Explore Perugia • Chocolate-making experience • Transfer to Spoleto

- Destination: Spoleto
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel Clitunno or similar

Activity Note: On some departures, we will stay in one of the nearby towns of Spello, Trevi, or Montefalco instead of in Spoleto. All included activities will remain the same, but the Optional Umbrian Folk Music Tour on Day 12 will not be offered for travelers staying in Spello.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today, we bid farewell to Tuscany and turn our eyes toward Umbria. Considered “the green heart of Italy,” Umbria is rich with agriculture, olive oil making, and verdant forests. Our first stop is to the Perugia Piazzale Partigiani, in Perugia. We'll take one of the town's escalators up to Corso Vannucci, a mostly pedestrian thoroughfare lined with prominent buildings, museums, a cathedral, and more. Umbria's capital, Perugia, is a hilltop town of medieval walls, cobbled alleys, elegant piazzas, and even some Etruscan remains. Despite its ancient history, it is Umbria's largest and most cosmopolitan city, featuring a sizeable international student population and all the modern luxuries one could imagine. Still, the historic center of the town is remarkably well-preserved, from the towering basilicas to the Gothic *palazzi* (mansions) and Renaissance frescoes by the likes of Perugino and Raphael.

Our discoveries will conclude at Cafè Turan, a former goldsmith workshop turned eatery and chocolaterie. The cafè is owned by a pair of sisters who opened the shop with the help of their mother, a pastry shop owner. Upon arrival, we'll get an introduction to the business before heading into the kitchen to try our hand at chocolate-making. From preparing the cacao

beans to tempering the chocolate and forming it into bars, bon-bons, and more, we'll get to see firsthand the multi-step process that goes into creating the sisters' confections. Be sure to notice the restored frescoes that don the walls of the café.

Lunch: We'll enjoy an *aperitivo*-style lunch with our Trip Experience Leader at a local café/bar in Perugia. "*Aperitivo*" is a cherished Italian custom featuring small plates of appetizers and traditional Italian snacks—these often include cheeses, cured meats, olives, pasta, and more.

Afternoon: You'll have some free time to explore the historic streets of Perugia. Perhaps you've saved room for dessert: Along with its famous Perugina Baci chocolates, Perugia is also noted for its unusual and delicious flavors of gelato, like honey and walnuts, fresh strawberry with ginger, and more.

Then we'll regroup and drive to Spoleto, where we'll check into our hotel and receive our room assignments. You'll have some free time to relax before dinner. Check with your Trip Experience Leader for suggestions.

Dinner: At the hotel's restaurant, featuring typical Umbrian cuisine. Often called *cucina povera*, or peasant cooking, due to its rustic nature and use of fresh, simple ingredients, the region of Umbria is also renowned for its gold-green olive oil, rich red wines, diverse grains, and *salumi* (cured meats).

Evening: Free to relax at the bar or retire to your room. Or, you may wish to take an evening stroll through the ancient streets of Spoleto.

Day 12 Explore Spoleto • Optional Umbrian Folk Music tour

- Destination: Spoleto
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Hotel Clitunno or similar

Activity note: The Umbrian folk music optional tour will not be offered for departures staying in Spello.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll meet our local guide at the hotel to begin a walking tour of Spoleto, a walled hill town framed by the towering Apennine Mountains. Inhabited since prehistoric times, it's full of history, as we'll discover during our 2-hour walking tour led by a local guide. We'll begin our discoveries by admiring Il Ponte delle Torri, a 774-foot-long medieval bridge (actually, an aqueduct built on ancient Roman foundations) that runs over a scenic wooded gorge. Then, we'll visit the Duomo di Spoleto, an eleventh-century cathedral made from salvaged Roman stones.

Lunch: At a local *trattoria*.

Afternoon: The rest of the day is free for your own discoveries—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations. Or, you may wish to join the optional Umbrian folk music tour.

Those joining the tour will drive to Spello, an ancient town located in east central Umbria. Settled in ancient times by the Umbri people, Spello became a Roman colony in the 1st century BC. Constantine the Great once dubbed it, "*Flavia Constans*," according to a document preserved in the local communal palace. The highlight for many will be a visit to *La Cappella Baglioni*, a chapel renowned for its early 16th-century Renaissance frescoes. Then, we'll meet some of the musicians. Over some appetizers and wine, we'll enjoy about a performance of traditional Umbrian folk tunes.

Dinner: On your own this evening if you do not join the optional tour. Ask your Trip Experience leader for some local dishes to try. You may choose to seek out *pasta alla norcina*, a popular Umbrian meal featuring strangozzi pasta, pork sausage, rich cream sauce, and likely local mushrooms.

Those on the optional tour will enjoy dinner at a local restaurant in Spello.

Evening: You're free to explore Spoleto by night. You might choose to gather with your fellow travelers at the hotel or a local bar for a nightcap. Those who joined the optional tour will return to the hotel later this evening.

Day 13 Spoleto • Truffle hunting experience • Conversation about truffles with local hunters

- Destination: Spoleto
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel Clitunno or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll board our bus and drive to an Umbrian mountain village in the heart of the Apennines.

Traditional Italian ways of life have endured for generations in these mountain villages, and locals here still grow crops, tend sheep, and gather truffles and mushrooms from the surrounding natural birch forests. Upon arrival, we'll enjoy a short coffee and tea break, during which we'll get acquainted with the local hunters. During this time, we'll discuss the prized commodity of truffles—their exclusivity, the exploitation of truffle hunters, as well as Eastern Europe's contentious involvement in the industry.

After this conversation, we'll embark on our search for truffles alongside local hunters and their dogs, who will guide us in this intricate hunting process.

Lunch: We'll enjoy a picnic lunch of local specialties.

Afternoon: We'll say *arrivederci* to our host and head back to Spoleto. You'll have the remainder of the day free to do as you'd like. You might join your Trip Experience Leader on an optional discovery walk.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: You're free to explore Spoleto by night. You might choose to gather with your fellow travelers at the hotel or a local bar for a nightcap.

Day 14 Umbria • Transfer to Rome • Trastevere district

- Destination: Rome
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: River Palace Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll check out of our hotel and drive to Rome, stopping along the way to stretch our legs.

When we arrive in the "Eternal City," we'll meet our local guide and begin a 1-hour walking tour through the Trastevere district, a young and bohemian area of the city. While we walk its cobbled streets, we'll enjoy views of colorful buildings, ivy dripping into alleyways, and iconic architecture. Throughout our discoveries, we'll have a chance to meet some of the local residents who call this vibrant area home.

Lunch: At a local *trattoria*.

Afternoon: We'll check into our hotel and you'll have a few hours of free time. Perhaps you may venture out to admire the iconic Colosseum in all its ancient splendor.

Later, our small group will regroup and make our way to a local restaurant, where we'll enjoy a Farewell Drink before dinner.

Dinner: We'll toast to our memories of our Italy during a Farewell Dinner at a local restaurant.

Evening: Enjoy a free evening to explore Rome, or refresh in your room before your journey home.

Day 15 Rome • Return to U.S. or begin post-trip extension

- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel. A boxed breakfast will be available for travelers with early departures.

Morning: Transfer to the airport and catch your return flight home. Or begin your optional *Rome: Ancient Sites & Hidden City Gems* post-trip extension.

END YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL POST-TRIP EXTENSION

4 nights in *Rome: Ancient Sites & Hidden City Gems*

Day 1 Hike the Appian Way • Explore Rome's Catacombs

Day 2 Explore the Coliseum & Roman Forum

Day 3 Rome • *Optional Rome's Great Beauty* tour

Day 4 Rome

Day 5 Rome • Return to U.S.

OPTIONAL TOURS

During your trip you will be able to book optional tours directly with your Trip Experience Leader. He or she will ask you to confirm the payment for these tours by filling out a payment form. Optional tours can only be purchased with a credit or debit card. We accept Visa, MasterCard, and Discover credit cards. We also accept Visa and MasterCard debit cards, but it must be a debit card that allows you to sign for purchases.

In order to correctly process these charges, there can be a delay of 2–3 months from the date of your return for the charges to be posted to your account. Therefore we ask that you use a card that will not expire in the 2–3 months following your return.

Please note: *Optional tour prices are listed in U.S. dollar estimates determined at the time of publication and are subject to change. Optional tours may vary.*

Pitigliano & Sovana

(Day 10 \$170 per person)

Jews began settling in Pitigliano in the 15th century, and the population increased when they sought refuge here after being expelled from the Papal State in Rome during the counter-reformation persecutions. During World War II, all the town's Jews escaped the Nazis with the aid of their mostly Catholic neighbors, a rare feat in that era. A walking tour will reveal Pitigliano's rich Jewish heritage. After lunch at a local restaurant, we'll then set off for the ancient Etruscan necropolis of Sovana, where we'll hike through the woods of this ancient burial site.

Our discoveries will conclude in the musician's home, where we'll revel in the mellifluous sounds of traditional Umbrian folk tunes. Then, we'll enjoy dinner at a nearby restaurant.

Umbrian Folk Music

(Day 12 \$130 per person)

Venture to Spello, an ancient town located in east central Umbria, where your experience begins with a guided walk led by a local musician and your Trip Experience Leader. This walk will take you through the old walled town, with a stop at renowned chapel *La Cappella Baglioni*, and offer sweeping views of Perugia, situated at the bottom of the ridge.

PRE-TRIP

History and Culinary Delights of Bologna & Parma, Italy

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » 3 nights accommodation
- » 11 meals—6 breakfasts, 3 lunches, and 2 dinners
- » 8 small group activities
- » Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader
- » Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters
- » All transfers

PRE-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

Bologna beckons travelers with its red-brick palazzi and culinary treasures ... and Parma is home to cobbled lanes and similar rich traditions of food and wine. Explore them both and discover true gems of northern Italy.

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Depart the U.S. today on your international flight to Bologna.

Day 2 Arrive in Bologna, Italy

- Destination: Bologna
- Accommodations: Hotel Porta San Mamolo or similar

Afternoon: Upon arrival in Bologna, an O.A.T. representative will greet you and assist with your transfer to the hotel. After checking in, you have the option to join your Trip Experience Leader for an orientation walk of the surrounding area.

Later, join your fellow travelers—including those who arrived early in Bologna before their pre-trip extension—and Trip Experience Leader at the hotel for a Welcome Drink and briefing. This is your first chance to get to know each other before your adventure begins.

Dinner: On your own. Feel free to ask your Trip Experience Leader for the best place around your hotel to sample authentic Italian cuisine.

Evening: Free. Perhaps you'll visit a bar for a few sips of your favorite Italian libation.

Day 3 Explore Bologna

- Destination: Bologna
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel Porta San Mamolo or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We set out on a walking tour of Bologna, a UNESCO-protected city noted for its medieval towers and long, columned porticoes. We'll take in some of this grand architecture as we explore the city center this morning, accompanied by a local guide, on a tour that will last about two hours. We'll also visit the University of Bologna. Dating back to 1088, it enjoys the distinction as the first higher learning institute of the Western world. The

university's students—from Italy and around the globe—bring a healthy dose of culture and energy to the ancient city, and you will have the opportunity to observe what college life is like in Italy.

Lunch: On your own. Feel free to ask your Trip Experience Leader for the best places to find unique pasta dishes or a rich glass of wine.

Afternoon: Enjoy an afternoon free for your own discoveries. Perhaps you'll visit the magnificent hilltop Sanctuary of the Madonna di San Luca. Or, visit Piazza Santo Stefano, where you can stroll through the elegant porticoes that surround the square.

Dinner: Share a Welcome Dinner with your fellow travelers and Trip Experience Leader at a local restaurant.

Evening: The rest of your evening is free. Perhaps stop by a local café for a cup of bold coffee or a spot of gelato.

Day 4 Bologna • Optional Ravenna's Magnificent Mosaics tour

- Destination: Bologna
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hotel Porta San Mamolo or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: You have the option to spend a free day exploring Bologna, or join us on an optional tour: *Ravenna's Magnificent Mosaics*. This full-day adventure brings us to the town of Ravenna, seat of the Western Roman Empire in the fifth century and later the westernmost outpost of the Byzantine Empire. Ravenna is recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site for its complex of early Christian mosaics and monuments.

Those taking the optional tour take a train to Ravenna. Upon arrival, we'll embark on a 2.5-hour guided tour of the city led by a local, beginning at Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, built in the fifth century as a Gothic baptistery, and continuing to the 1,400-year-old Basilica di San Vitale. The Basilica hosts a unique series of mosaics representing scenes from the Old Testament, as well as depictions of the Byzantine emperor Justinian. The centuries-old structure served as the inspiration for the Hagia Sophia, built just a few years later in Constantinople (now Istanbul).

Lunch: On your own for those spending the day in Bologna, and included at a local restaurant for those on the optional tour in Ravenna.

Afternoon: If you opted for a free day in Bologna, you may choose to seek out an iconic city site. Those on the optional tour will visit the Tomba di Dante, where the famous Italian poet Dante Alighieri is buried. You'll then have some free time in Ravenna before returning to Bologna by train.

Dinner: On your own in Bologna. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for restaurant recommendations.

Evening: Free to spend as you wish. You might wander down to the Piazza Maggiore to grab a drink and do some people watching.

Day 5 Transfer to Parma

- Destination: Parma
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Grand Hotel de la Ville or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We leave early for Parma this morning, with a few stops along the way to get a taste of the region's rich culinary traditions. First, we'll stop at a cheese farm, where

fragrant Parmesan cheese is made, to learn about the cheese-making process from one of the artisans there and taste some for ourselves.

Then, we'll drive to *acetaia*, or vinegar producer, near Modena to learn how balsamic vinegar is made. We'll learn the tradition behind the fine, aged condiment—produced in the surrounding areas since the Middle Ages—and its importance to the people in this region. The word *balsamico* stems from the Latin “balsam-like,” meaning it has curative powers. We will then taste the many varieties of this sweet, yet strong, staple of Italian cuisine.

Lunch: We'll sit down to a light lunch at the *acetaia*.

Afternoon: We'll continue the last leg of our drive to Parma. After checking into our hotel, the rest of the afternoon is free for you to settle into your room or explore your new surroundings as you wish. Perhaps you'll take a preliminary stroll to admire the city's Romanesque architecture.

Dinner: On your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for local dining options.

Evening: Free to spend as your wish.

Day 6 Explore Parma

- Destination: Parma
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Grand Hotel de la Ville or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Our day begins with a 3-hour walking tour along the quaint streets of Parma. We will meet our local guide at the Piazza Garibaldi and proceed to visit the Palazzo della Pilotta, a historic building complex that has seen the influence of several architects and boasts notable features such as Italy's first “imperial”

staircase. Then, we'll pass by the Teatro Regio, a sprawling, historic opera house, and Piazza Duomo, where we will see the cathedral and baptistery.

Lunch: On your own. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations, or seek out a quaint bakery or local restaurant.

Afternoon: Enjoy your afternoon as you wish. Perhaps you may pay a visit to the Arturo Toscanini House Museum to learn of the successful Parma-born musician's life and legacy.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: Free for your own discoveries. You might seek out some late-night *gelato* in this culinary city.

Day 7 Parma • Po River Experience

- Destination: Parma
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Grand Hotel de la Ville or similar

Activity Note: Our Po River cruise is weather dependent. When river conditions are not suitable for a boat ride (including departures in March, November, and December), the river cruise portion of our day will be replaced by a visit to the medieval village of Soragna. We will still visit a local producer of *culatello* Parma ham, while the picnic lunch at Giarola Island will be replaced by a light lunch at a local venue.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll drive to Polesine Parmense to embark on a cruise along the Po River. We'll float by rustic towns and miles of scenic countryside, stopping to explore along the way. We'll also visit a *salumificio* that produces traditional *culatello* Parma ham, perhaps getting the chance to sample the local delicacy.

Lunch: We'll enjoy a picnic lunch on Giarola Island.

Afternoon: We'll continue our river cruise, returning to our hotel in the late afternoon.

Dinner: On your own this evening. Perhaps you may seek out a dish featuring the regional *Borgatoro* mushroom.

Evening: Free to spend as you wish. You might choose to further explore Parma by night, or relax in your room before joining the base trip tomorrow.

Day 8 Transfer to Lucca • Travel through the Apennines • Join main trip

- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today, we bid *ciao* to Parma and drive to Lucca to begin our main adventure. We'll travel through the Lunigiana valley and the Apennine Mountains, enjoying scenery of verdant rolling hills and winding rivers along the way. To break up our drive, we'll stop in Pontremoli, a medieval town in the Lunigiana valley dominated by a restored hilltop castle. We'll enjoy a quick walking tour of its compact town squares led by a local guide, followed by some free time to explore the medieval streets on your own. We'll then drive to a nearby *testaroli* maker, and learn about this unusual regional pasta made from egg-free dough.

Lunch: At the pasta maker's workshop.

Afternoon: We'll continue our drive to Lucca, where we'll begin our *Tuscany & Umbria: Rustic Beauty in the Italian Heartland* adventure.

OPTIONAL TOUR

Ravenna's Magnificent Mosaics

(Day 4 \$160 per person)

Explore the town of Ravenna, seat of the Western Roman Empire in the fifth century and later the westernmost outpost of the Byzantine Empire. Ravenna is recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site for its pristine variety of early Christian mosaics and monuments. We take a walking tour, beginning at Sant'Apollinare, built in the fifth century as a Gothic baptistery, and continuing to the 1,400-year-old Basilica di San Vitale. The Basilica hosts a unique series of mosaics representing scenes from the Old Testament, as well as depictions of the Byzantine emperor Justinian. The centuries-old structure served as the inspiration for the Hagia Sophia, built just a few years later in Constantinople (now

Istanbul). We'll have lunch at a restaurant in the ancient city, after which we'll stop by Dante's Tomb and visit a mosaic workshop.

POST-TRIP

Rome: Ancient Sites & Hidden City Gems

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » 4 nights accommodation
- » 8 meals—4 breakfasts, 2 lunches, and 2 dinners
- » 5 small group activities
- » Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader
- » Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters
- » All transfers

POST-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

From atop the ancient Roman walls to the martyred saints buried in catacombs far beneath the city, Rome delights on many levels. Discover the rich, unparalleled history of the Eternal City, along with the vibrant culture of the modern Italian capital.

Day 1 Hike the Appian Way • Explore Rome's Catacombs

- Destination: Rome
- Included Meals: Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: River Palace Hotel or similar

Activity Note: In 2025, Rome will welcome pilgrims from all over the world to celebrate the Jubilee Year of the Catholic Church. Please be aware that this event may impact your itinerary, in which case your Trip Experience Leader will plan alternate activities.

Morning: Today, we take a two-mile hike along Rome's ancient Appian Way. Originally constructed in the fourth century BC, this was the widest and longest road of its time, and we'll walk along its well-preserved 2,000-year-old cobblestones.

Then, we'll visit the ancient catacombs that lie beneath the UNESCO-protected city. These ancient burial places, many of which feature

elaborate tunnel systems, contain frescoes and sculptures as remarkable as the history of the catacombs themselves: Many believe this is where persecuted Christians were secretly buried.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: You have the afternoon free. Your Trip Experience Leader will invite you to join him or her in a 1 hour and 15-minute discovery walk through various districts of the Old City to seek out some of Rome's lesser known landmarks. Or, you may wish to strike out on your own, perhaps to take a leisurely stroll by Circus Maximus. Once the largest stadium in ancient Rome, chariot races were held here for almost a millennium.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: You have the freedom to enjoy your evening as you wish. perhaps you might venture to the iconic Trevi Fountain to admire it lit up at night.

Day 2 Explore the Coliseum & Roman Forum

- Destination: Rome
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: River Palace Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today's discoveries in the Eternal City begin with a 2-mile hike through the ruins of the Roman Forum and the Coliseum. A local guide will help bring this ancient history to life for us. Hinting at its former glory, the Coliseum remains the greatest architectural vestige from Imperial Rome. It was here in this massive structure, capable of holding 80,000 people, that the fabled and bloody gladiatorial combats took place. In the Middle Ages, the structure was used as a fortress and later sustained damage from several earthquakes. Then, we'll walk to the Roman Forum.

The ancient Roman Forum was Rome's political and commercial center when the city was at the height of its power. It was constructed over some 900 years with various emperors adding and extending temples, monuments, and buildings. Here, the emperors, Roman senators, and consuls met to plan and pass laws that governed Rome—and it remains one of the most powerful monuments to the grandeur of ancient Rome.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: Free for you to make your own discoveries. You might consider a stroll through the Tridente, one of Rome's most lively and picturesque neighborhoods. You can also explore one of Rome's most impressive squares, Piazza del Popolo, the plaza centered by the 120-foot-tall obelisk brought by Augustus from ancient Egypt.

Dinner: On your own. Perhaps you'll seek out *cacio e pepe*, the classic Roman dish made from thick spaghetti in a cheese-and-black pepper sauce.

Evening: Free. Complement your morning's discoveries with a nighttime stroll through the Italian capital to see some of the city's iconic structures lit up at night.

Day 3 Rome • Optional Rome's Great Beauty tour

- Destination: Rome
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: River Palace Hotel

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Today, enjoy more time to explore Rome at your own pace. You might walk along Via del Corso, an almost mile-long stretch of palaces and shops, or spend time in the beautiful gardens of the Villa Borghese. Or stroll the Campo dei Fiori and explore, a popular outdoor market.

Or, perhaps you'll join our optional *Rome's Great Beauty*. Travelers who elect to participate will meet a local guide in the Piazza del Quirinale. You'll spend the morning visiting Trevi Fountain; the underground archaeological site of *La Città dell'Acqua* ("The City of Water"); the Pantheon, ancient Rome's best preserved building; and Piazza Navona, the gorgeous square centered by Bernini's ornate fountain, Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi.

Lunch: On your own. If they are in season, you might like to try out *carciofi alla romana*, Roman-style crispy artichokes.

Afternoon: Free for your own discoveries. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for ideas on how to spend an ideal afternoon in the Eternal City.

Dinner: On your own, whenever you'd like. Perhaps you'll venture to the Jewish quarter to sample another take on classic Italian fare.

Evening: Continue exploring Rome on your own, or catch up with your fellow travelers over a nightcap in the hotel bar.

Day 4 Rome

- Destination: Rome
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: River Palace Hotel or similar

Activity Note: On some departures, your visit to the Vatican may be affected by the 40th celebration of the Jubilee Year, a Catholic tradition that honors forgiveness and spiritual renewal. You may participate in local Jubilee events around the city if the Vatican tour is affected.

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Enjoy the day to make your own discoveries in Rome. Perhaps you'll decide to tour the Vatican Museums and the Sistine Chapel. Started in 1506 by Pope Julius II, the Vatican Museums contain one of the finest art collections in the world. Although it's impossible to see all of the vast collection, you can find many of the priceless treasures acquired by the church over centuries. Following the grand corridors of the museum,

continue to the awe-inspiring Sistine Chapel, which contains the world's most famous frescoes on its ceiling and one of its walls. Inside, you can admire Michelangelo's most famous and dramatic masterpieces, including *The Creation* and *The Last Judgment*, both of which have been recently restored to fully reveal their majestic glory.

Lunch: On your own, whenever you'd like. Pizza and pasta options abound in this culinary capital.

Afternoon: Continue making your own discoveries in Rome.

Dinner: At a local restaurant. During this Farewell Dinner, toast your discoveries in Rome and the memories you made during your Italy and Tuscany travel experience.

Evening: There's time for one more *gelato* before bed. Not ready to leave Rome? Consider making a visit to the Trevi Fountain—legend has it that if you throw a coin in the fountain, you are guaranteed to return to the city.

Day 5 Rome • Return to U.S.

- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel. A boxed breakfast will be available for travelers with early departures.

Morning: Transfer to the airport and catch your return flight home.

OPTIONAL TOUR

Rome's Great Beauty

(Day 3 \$105 per person)

This half-day walking tour highlighting the great beauty of Rome's hidden treasures begins at Piazza del Quirinale, a square situated atop the highest of Rome's seven hills where the

Presidential Palace is located. From there, we'll stroll down to the Trevi Fountain to toss a coin into the famed landmark before heading to La Città dell'Acqua ("The City of Water"). Located underneath the nearby Trevi Cinema, the archaeological site is home to a 4th-century

Roman mansion and a Hadrian-era cistern that was part of an aqueduct supplying water to ancient Rome. Then, we'll stop at Gelateria Della Palma for a refreshing gelato or a cappuccino, before visiting the Pantheon, ancient Rome's best preserved building, which was completed during the reign of Hadrian. Our final destination is Piazza Navona, the gorgeous square whose centerpiece is Bernini's Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi, an ornate fountain with representations of the rivers Nile, Ganges, Danube, and Plate. Travelers may then return to the hotel or remain in the square for lunch on their own before the rest of the day at leisure in Rome.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Your Passport

- Must be in good condition
- Must be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- Must have the required number of blank pages (details below)
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable

Need to Renew Your Passport?

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit the U.S. Department of State’s official website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport or renewing your existing passport. The U.S. Department of State allows for passport renewal by mail or, for applicable citizens, renewal online. We advise you review the process and requirements for online passport renewal on the official website.

You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

Recommended Blank Pages

Please confirm that your passport has enough blank pages for this vacation.

- **Main trip:** You will need 3 blank passport pages.
- **Pre-trip extension to Bologna:** No additional passport pages needed.
- **Post-trip extension to Rome:** No additional passport pages needed.

Visa Required

We’ll be sending you information with detailed instructions, application forms, and fees about 100 days prior to your departure. In the meantime, we’re providing the information below as a guideline on what to expect. This info is for U.S. citizens only. All visas and fees are subject to change.

- **Europe (Italy):** Starting in 2025, U.S. citizens will be required to fill out an online European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) visa-waiver to enter countries in the European Union. There is no confirmed start date for the ETIAS at the time of printing. The ETIAS will be valid for 3 years.

Traveling Without a U.S. Passport?

If you are not a U.S. citizen, or if your passport is from any country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate, embassy, or a visa services company about visa requirements. We recommend the services of PVS International, a national visa service located in Washington D.C.; they can be reached at **1-800-556-9990** or **www.pvsinternational.org**.

Traveling With a Minor?

Some governments may require certain documentation for minors to enter and depart the country or to obtain a visa (if applicable). For further detail on the required documentation, please contact your local embassy or consulate.

Emergency Photocopies of Key Documents

We recommend you carry color photocopies of key documents including the photo page of your passport plus any applicable visas, air itinerary, credit cards (front and back), and an alternative form of ID. Add emergency phone numbers like your credit card company and the number for your travel protection plan. Store copies separate from the originals.

If you plan to email this information to yourself, please keep in mind that email is not always secure; consider using password protection or encryption. Also email is not always available worldwide. As an alternative, you could load these documents onto a flash drive instead, which can do double-duty as a place to backup photos during your trip.

Overseas Taxes & Fees

This tour may have taxes and fees that cannot be included in your airline ticket price because you are required to pay them in person onsite. All taxes are subject to change without notice and can be paid in cash (either U.S. or local currency). If applicable, you will receive a list of these fees with your Final Documents.

RIGORS, VACCINES & GENERAL HEALTH

Is This Adventure Right for You?

Please review the information below prior to departing on this adventure. We reserve the right for our Trip Experience Leaders to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their condition would adversely affect the health, safety, or enjoyment of themselves or of other travelers.

PACING

- 5 locations in 14 days with one 1-night stay

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Not appropriate for travelers using wheelchairs, walkers, or other mobility aids
- You must be able to walk 3–5 miles unassisted and participate in 6–8 hours of physical activities each day
- Agility and balance are required when boarding 4-wheel drive vehicles. Some vehicles are high off the ground and you will be required to step into them unassisted
- We reserve the right for Trip Experience Leaders to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience
- You may encounter animals on this trip. We make every effort to keep these encounters safe, however animals may behave unpredictably or dangerously at times. Please use caution when interacting with animals on this trip: Keep a safe distance, stay alert, and respect the animals

CLIMATE

- Daytime temperatures range from 35–95°F with high levels of humidity, especially from May to September
- Tuscany and Umbria share a typical Mediterranean climate, with hot, dry summers and warm, rainy winters, with occasional snowfall
- Strong winds occur in March and October–December

TERRAIN & TRANSPORTATION

- Travel and hike on some rugged paths, rolling hills, and many cobblestoned streets on foot, as well as over bumpy, narrow rural roads by bus
- Travel by 19-passenger coach

FLIGHT INFORMATION

- Travel time will be 11–18 hours with at least one connection of 2–3 hours

ACCOMMODATIONS & FACILITIES

- Hotel rooms are smaller than those in the U.S.

Steps to Take Before Your Trip

Before you leave on this adventure, we recommend the following:

- Check with the CDC for their recommendations for the countries you'll be visiting. You can contact them online at **www.cdc.gov/travel** or by phone at **1-800-232-4636**.
- Have a medical checkup with your doctor at least 6 weeks before your trip.
- Pick up any necessary medications, both prescription and over-the-counter.
- Have a dental and/or eye checkup. (Recommended, but less urgent)

No Vaccines Required

Recommended Vaccines

At the time of writing there were no required vaccines for this trip. The CDC recommends that all travelers be up to date on their routine vaccinations and on basic travel vaccines like Hepatitis A and Typhoid, but these are suggestions only. However, this could change in future so we encourage you to check with the CDC yourself before meeting with your doctor.

Medication Suggestions

- An antibiotic medication for gastrointestinal illness

Traveling with Medications

- **Pack medications in your carry-on bag** to avoid loss and to have them handy.
- **Keep medicines in their original, labeled containers** for a quicker security screen at the airport and a better experience if you get stopped by customs while overseas.
- **Bring copies of your prescriptions**, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name to be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications.

We recommend checking with the State Department for medication restrictions by country: **travel.state.gov** (Go to "Find International Travel Information", select "Country Information", then enter the country into the search bar; if you don't see any medications specifically mentioned under the "Health" section, then you can presume major U.S. brands should be OK).

Staying Healthy on Your Trip

Jet Lag Tips

- Start your trip well-rested.

- Begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave or switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane.
- Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying
- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don't push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.

Allergies

If you have any serious allergies or dietary restrictions, we advise you to notify us at least 30 days prior to your departure. Please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**, and we will communicate them to our regional office. Every effort will be made to accommodate you.

Water

- Tap water in the region is safe to drink, but is processed differently than in the U.S. so it can still upset your stomach or feel “heavy”. If so, we suggest drinking bottle water instead.
- Bottled water is readily available and inexpensive. (Bottled water is not included in the price of your tour.)
- When in doubt about the water, salads, or ice, just ask the restaurant or your Trip Experience Leader.
- It is OK to brush your teeth or wash fruit with tap water.

Food

- The food in Italy shouldn't cause any health problems—salads, fruit, and dairy products are all fine.
- Be careful with food that has been cooked and left to go cold, which might happen in some self-service places.

MONEY MATTERS: LOCAL CURRENCY & TIPPING GUIDELINES

Top Three Tips

- **Carry a mix of different types of payments**, such as local currency, an ATM card, and a credit card.
- **Traveler's checks are not recommended.** They can be difficult to exchange and the commission fee for cashing them is quite high. It's more practical to view them as a last resort in the event of a special situation.
- **You will not be able to pay with U.S. dollars on this trip;** you will need euros instead.

Local Currency

For current exchange rates, please refer to an online converter tool like www.xe.com/currencyconverter, your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper.

Euro Countries: European Euro (€)

How to Exchange Money

If you want to exchange money before your trip, you can usually do so through your bank or at an exchange office. Your departure airport in the U.S., a travel agent, or an AAA office are also possible outlets. Or you can wait and change money on the trip instead—but it might be helpful to arrive with some local currency in case you run into a bank holiday or an “out of order” ATM.

On your trip, the easiest way to obtain local currency is to withdraw funds from a local ATM. The ATM will give you local money and your bank at home will convert that into U.S. dollars.

You may be able to exchange cash at some hotels, large post offices, and money exchange offices, however they do not typically offer good exchange rates and can be difficult to find. To exchange cash, you'll usually need your passport and bills in good condition (not worn, torn, or dirty). New bills (post 2014) are best.

Please note that many banks in Europe will only exchange money for their own customers. Never exchange money on the street. All exchange methods involve fees, which may be built into the conversion rate; ask beforehand.

ATMs

When using the ATM, keep in mind that it may only accept cards from local banks, and may not allow cash advances on credit cards; you might need to try more than one ATM or more than one card.

Many banks charge a fee of \$1–\$10 each time you use a foreign ATM. Others may charge you a percentage of the amount you withdraw. We recommend that you check with your bank before you depart.

Lastly, don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's PIN number (many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their keys—they only display numbers.)

In most countries, ATMs are widely available in major cities. If you are in a rural location, it will likely be harder to find an ATM.

Credit & Debit Cards

While traveling, most countries and major cities will accept credit cards. Even if you don't plan on using a credit card during your trip, we still suggest that you bring one or two as a backup, especially if you are planning a large purchase (artwork, jewelry). We also suggest that you bring more than one brand of card (i.e. Visa, MasterCard, American Express) if possible, because not every shop will take every card. For example, although Discover and American Express cards are accepted in some countries outside the U.S., they are not widely adopted, so other brands will work at a much larger range of stores, restaurants, etc.

If you are visiting a country that does not commonly accept credit cards, they will be listed below.

Italy: Credit and debit cards are widely accepted in Italy. Occasionally a small “Mom and Pop” restaurant will be cash only, and street vendors or taxis usually are cash only, but most other businesses will take cards.

Chip Cards

Many countries have adopted credit cards that have an embedded computer chip. These cards are inserted into the reader instead of swiped. The card owner then authorizes the purchase using a PIN instead of signing.

Though this technology is common in the U.S., occasionally there are machines in other countries that can't read U.S. cards or the machine can read the card, but asks for a PIN. This doesn't happen often, and is nothing to worry about. You can usually resolve the situation by asking the cashier to let you sign. (If you don't speak the language, just mime signing on your hand.) If you are not able to sign for a purchase, such as at an automated ticket booth, you can use another form of payment, such as a debit card that has a PIN.

Notify Card Providers of Upcoming Travel

Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges or withdrawals from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company and/or bank you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure. Some banks or credit card companies will also let you do this online.

You should also double-check what phone number you could call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don't assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1 800 numbers don't work outside of the U.S.!

Tipping Guidelines

Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. But for those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines:

- **O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your Trip Experience Leader at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$10–\$14 USD (or equivalent in local currency) per person for each day their Trip Experience Leader is with them. *Please note that these tips can only be in cash. If you are taking any of the optional extensions, your Trip Experience Leader during the extension(s) may not be the same as the one on your main trip.*
- **Housekeeping staff at hotels:** The equivalent in euros of \$1–2 per room, per night
- **Waiters:** Your Trip Experience Leader will tip waiters for included meals. If you are dining on your own, tipping is often included in the price; look for the words *servizio incluso* in the menu or bill. If tipping is not included, a tip of 5% to 10% is customary. In addition, you may see the word *coperto* on your bill. This is not a tip, but more of a cover charge for the use of the table.
- **Public Restrooms:** Many public restrooms in Italy are manned by cleaning staff. It is customary to leave a small tip for them—about EUR .50 per person. Some restrooms are pay-toilets; you pay the staff at the entrance to the restroom or drop the appropriate coin into the slot on the stall door. Prices range from EUR .50 to EUR 2.00 per single use. Many restaurants, cafes, and shops have pay-toilets or expect you to make a purchase before using the facilities.
- **Included in Your Trip Price:** Gratuities are included for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters on your main trip, extensions, and all optional tours.

Please note: For your convenience, tips to O.A.T. staff can be paid in U.S. dollars or local currency. Please do not use personal or traveler’s checks for tips.

AIR, OPTIONAL TOURS & STAYING IN TOUCH

Land Only Travelers & Personalized Air

Quick Definitions

- **Land Only:** You will be booking your own international flights. Airport transfers are not included.
- **Air-Inclusive:** You booked international air with us. Airport transfers are included as long as you didn't customize your trip's dates (see next bullet).
- **Arrive Early or Stopover (select adventures only):** If you chose one of these Personalization options and purchased air through O.A.T, accommodations and airport transfers are included. However, if you chose one of our Personalization options, but did not purchase air through O.A.T., accommodations are included, but airport transfers are not. If you chose one of our Personalization options, and purchase air through O.A.T. but not the accommodations, the airport transfers are not included. We have included transfer options below.
- **Personalization on Your Own:** If you have not purchased air through O.A.T. and decided to arrive early, stay longer, or stop in a connecting city on your own, you are responsible for airport transfers and accommodations. For your convenience, a preliminary list of your included hotels is available on your My Planner at www.oattravel.com/myplanner under "My Reservations" to help you with selecting a hotel for your additional time.

Air Inclusive Travelers

If you have purchased international air with us, there are some points that may be helpful for you to know.

- **U.S. Departure:** If you are among a group of ten or more travelers who depart the U.S. from your international gateway city, it is our goal to have an O.A.T. Representative assist you at the U.S. airport with the check-in of your flight. Unless there are extenuating circumstances beyond our control, the Representative will be at the check-in counter three hours before your departure time. If you are flying domestically before your international flight, the representative will be stationed at the check-in counter for your departing international flight, not at the domestic arrival gate.
- **U.S. Return:** If you are among a group of ten or more travelers who return to the same U.S. gateway city, an O.A.T. Representative will meet you as you exit Customs and help you find taxis, buses, hotel accommodations, or connecting flights. Again, it is our goal to have our Representative waiting to assist your group. In rare instances, unforeseen circumstances may prevent this service.

- **Flying with a Travel Companion:** If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.
- **Selecting Your Seats:** If your airline allows pre-assigned seats, you will be able to select and view them directly from the airline's website after booking. Some airlines will not allow seat confirmation until your reservation is ticketed 45–30 days prior to departure, and/or they may charge a nominal fee. You may locate your itinerary on an airline's website utilizing the Record Locator Number found on the Air Itinerary in your My Planner.

Airport Transfers Can Be Purchased

For eligible flights, airport transfers may be purchased separately as an optional add-on, subject to availability. To be eligible, your flight(s) must meet the following requirements:

- You must fly into or fly home from the same airport as O.A.T. travelers who purchased included airfare.
- Your flight(s) must arrive/depart on the same day that the group arrives or departs.
- If you are arriving early, you must have arranged the hotels through our Arrive Early personalization option

Airport transfers can be purchased up to 45 days prior to your departure; they are not available for purchase onsite. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**.

If you don't meet the requirements above, you'll need to make your own transfer arrangements. We suggest the Rome to Rio website as a handy resource: www.rome2rio.com

Optional Tours

Optional tours are additional add-on tours that allow you to personalize your adventure by tailoring it to your tastes and needs. And if you decide not to join an optional tour? Then you'll have free time to relax or explore on your own—it's about options, not obligations.

What You Need to Know

- All optional tours are subject to change and availability.
- Optional tours that are reserved with your Trip Experience Leader can be paid for using credit/debit cards only. We accept MasterCard, Visa, and Discover credit cards; we can also take MasterCard or Visa debit cards as long as the card allows you to sign for purchases. (You won't be able to enter a PIN.)

- To ensure that you are charged in U.S. dollars, your payment will be processed by our U.S. headquarters in Boston. This process can take up to three months, so we ask that you only use a card that will still be valid three months after your trip is over. The charge may appear on your credit card statement as being from Boston, MA or may be labeled as “OPT Boston”.
- Your Trip Experience Leader will give you details on the optional tours while you’re on the trip. But if you’d like to look over descriptions of them earlier, you can do so at any time by referring to your Day-to-Day Itinerary (available online by signing into My Planner at www.oattravel.com/myplanner).

Communicating with Home from Abroad

Cell Phones

If you want to use your cell phone on the trip, check with your phone provider to see if your phone and service will work outside of the U.S. It may turn out to be cheaper to rent an international phone or buy a SIM card onsite. If you want to use a local SIM, just make certain your phone can accept one.

Calling Apps

Another option is to use a smartphone app like Skype, FaceTime, or WhatsApp. We recommend you use WhatsApp to communicate with home while abroad and with your Trip Experience Leader while onsite. You will need a Wi-Fi connection if you do not have international coverage. Other calling options include smartphone apps such as Skype or FaceTime. You will need a Wi-Fi connection for these apps and the calls may count towards your phone plan’s data allowance. Many smartphones—and some tablets or laptops—come with one of these apps pre-installed or you can download them for free from the appropriate apps store.

Calling Cards and 1-800 Numbers

When calling the U.S. from a foreign country, a prepaid calling card can be useful because it circumvents unexpected charges from the hotel. Calling cards purchased locally are typically the best (less expensive, more likely to work with the local phones, etc.).

One reminder: Do not call U.S. 1-800 numbers outside the continental United States. This can result in costly long distance fees, since 1-800 numbers do not work outside the country.

Internet

Most hotels in Italy have Internet services available, some for free, some for an hourly charge. Sometimes the charge depends on your location—for example, there may be complimentary WiFi service in a common area, like the lobby or reception, but the WiFi in the guest rooms is a paid service. Most hotels will also offer a limited number of computers in the lobby or business center for guests to use. So you can either bring your own device during the trip and use WiFi where it is available, or leave your device at home and rely on hotel computers.

How to Call Overseas

When calling overseas from the U.S., dial 011 for international exchange, then the country code (indicated by a plus sign: +), and then the number. Note that foreign phone numbers may not have the same number of digits as U.S. numbers; even within a country the number of digits can vary depending on the city and if the phone is a land line or cell phone.

Italy: +39

PACKING: WHAT TO BRING & LUGGAGE LIMITS

Luggage Limits

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on per person.
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current standard is 50 lbs for checked bags and 15 lbs for carry-ons .
Size Restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (<i>length+width+depth</i>). Generally, 62 linear inches is the checked bag limit; carry-on limit is 45 linear inches .
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.
TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS	
Same as main trip.	
REMARKS/SUGGESTIONS	
<p>Luggage rules: Luggage rules and limits are set by governmental and airline policy. Enforcement of the rules may include spot checks or may be inconsistent. However one thing is the same across the board: If you are found to have oversized or overweight luggage, you will be subject to additional fees, to be assessed by—and paid to—the airline in question.</p>	

Don't Forget:

- **These luggage limits may change.** If the airline(s) notify us of any changes, we will include an update in your Final Documents booklet.
- It's a good idea to reconfirm baggage restrictions and fees directly with the airline a week or so prior to departure. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our website in the FAQ section.
- **Baggage fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines.

Your Luggage

- **Checked Luggage:** One duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase. Look for one with heavy nylon fabric, wrap-around handles, built-in wheels, and a heavy duty lockable zipper. Please do not bring a rigid (plastic shell) suitcase.
- **Carry-on Bag:** You are allowed one carry-on bag per person. We suggest a tote or small backpack that can be used as both a carry-on bag for your flight and to carry your daily necessities—water bottle, camera, etc—during your daily activities.
- **Locks:** For flights that originate in the U.S., you can either use a TSA-approved lock or leave your luggage unlocked. Outside of the U.S. we strongly recommend locking your luggage as a theft-prevention measure.

Clothing Suggestions: Functional Tips

As you will experience a wide range of temperatures and weather conditions, we suggest several layers of clothing. If you like to hand-wash your clothes, look for fabrics that will dry out overnight. You can buy clothing designed especially for travel, with features like wrinkle-resistant fabric or built-in sun protection.

- **Footwear:** You'll be on your feet a lot during the trip, and walking over some rough and slippery surfaces. The soles of your shoes should offer good traction. Sturdy and comfortable walking shoes with arch support are suggested.
- **Light rain gear is recommended.** Regardless of when you travel, rainfall is a possibility. While it may not rain on your trip, we suggest you bring a waterproof shell or coat, preferably with a hood. This might be a better choice than a folding umbrella, which is usually less effective in wind. (Plus it can be tricky to try to hold onto an umbrella and take photos at the same time.)
- **Layers are key.** We suggest wearing layers, so you can adjust to warmer and cooler conditions as needed. Even in winter, temperatures are moderate, but you should plan to bring some warm layers.
- **Bring water gear.** We suggest bringing a bathing suit as certain hotels will have pools. Also, bring a pair of shoes or sandals that you don't mind getting wet. These will be useful for when we go rafting.

Style Hints

Dress on our trip is functional and casual. You might want to bring one slightly dressier outfit for dining on your own at a nice restaurant, or for the Welcome and Farewell Dinners, but that is totally up to you.

Suggested Packing Lists

We have included suggestions from Trip Experience Leaders and former travelers to help you pack. These packing lists are only jumping-off points—they offer recommendations based on experience, but not requirements. We recommend using www.weather.com and consulting the “Climate” chapter of this handbook.

And don’t forget a reusable water bottle—you’ll need it to take advantage of any refills we offer as we are working to eliminate single-use plastic bottles on all of our trips.

Recommended Clothing

- ☐ Shirts: A mixture of short and long-sleeved shirts to layer, in a breathable fabric
- ☐ Trousers, jeans, or skirts
- ☐ Shoes and socks: Sturdy and comfortable walking shoes with arch support are suggested. Bring at least a couple pairs of medium- to heavy-weight socks for hiking
- ☐ Light rain jacket/windbreaker with hood
- ☐ Sleepwear and underwear
- ☐ Swimsuit for hotel pools

Seasonal Clothing

Spring & Fall Departures

- ☐ Light tops, pants, and cotton sweaters for daytime
- ☐ Long-sleeve shirts, long pants, and a heavy sweater or fleece for evenings
- ☐ Rain gear and/or umbrella

Summer Departures

- ☐ Short-sleeve tops
- ☐ Lightweight pants or shorts
- ☐ Cotton or linen skirts or sundresses
- ☐ Sweater or light layers for cool evenings

Winter Departures

- ☐ Warm pants and socks

- ☐ Long-sleeved tops
- ☐ Fleece or wool sweater, for layering
- ☐ Warm coat

Essential Items

- ☐ Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, etc.
- ☐ Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription (consider a neck strap for rafting)
- ☐ Sunglasses with a neck strap
- ☐ Sunscreen
- ☐ Insect repellent
- ☐ Moisturizer and sun-blocking lip balm
- ☐ Compact umbrella
- ☐ Wide-brim sun hat with chin strap
- ☐ Pocket-size tissues
- ☐ Water bottle
- ☐ Moist towelettes and/or anti-bacterial “water-free” hand cleanser
- ☐ Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards, prescriptions for your medicines
- ☐ Camera gear with extra batteries or battery charger
- ☐ Electrical transformer & plug adapters

Medicines

- ☐ Your own prescription medicines
- ☐ Travel first aid kit: Band-Aids, headache and pain relief, laxatives and anti-diarrhea tablets, something for upset stomach, cold remedy, moleskin foot pads, anti-biotic cream, or allergy medication.
- ☐ An antibiotic medication for gastrointestinal illness

Home-Hosted Visits

Many of our adventures feature a visit with a local family, often as part of the *A Day in the Life* experience. It is customary, though not necessary, to return your hosts' generosity with a small gift. If you do bring a gift, we recommend that you bring something the whole family can enjoy, or something that represents your region, state, or hometown. Get creative and keep it small—peach jelly from Georgia, maple sugar candy from New England, orange blossom soap from California; something that can be used or used up is best. When choosing a gift, be certain to consider the local culture as well. For example, we do not recommend alcohol in Muslim countries because it is forbidden in Islam, and your hosts may be religious. Not all O.A.T. adventures include a Home-Hosted Visit; please check your final itinerary before you depart.

Electricity Abroad

When traveling overseas, the voltage is usually different and the plugs might not be the same shape.

Voltage

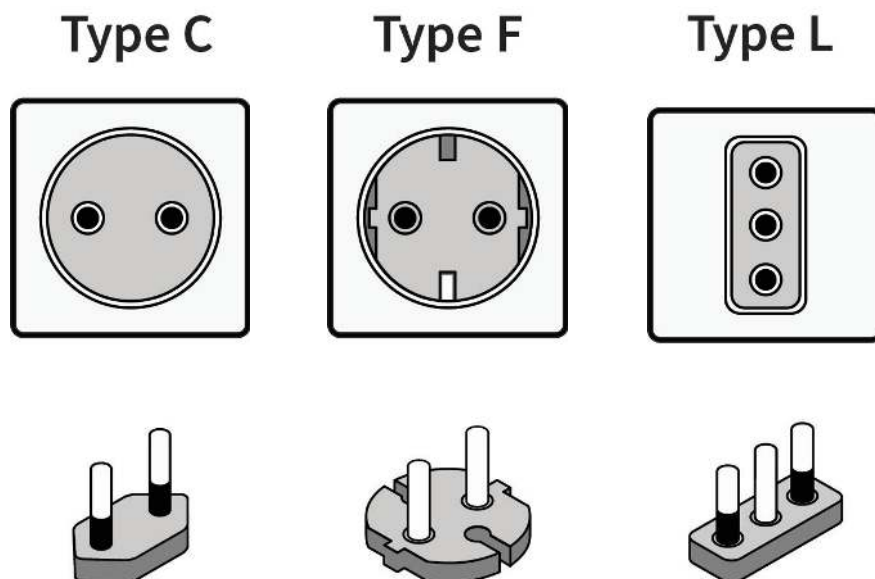
Electricity at hotels in Italy is 220 volts. In the U.S. it is 110 volts. Most of the things a traveler will want to plug in—battery chargers, smartphones, tablets or computers—can run off both 110 and 220–240. But you should check the item or the owner's guide first to confirm this before you plug it in. Plugging a 110V U.S. appliance into 220/240V 50/60Hz service will ruin the motor. If you have something that needs 110 volts—like a shaver or a hairdryer—you can bring a transformer to change the current. (But transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave whatever it is at home.)

Plugs

The shape of plugs will vary from country to country, and sometimes even within a country depending on when that building was built. To plug something from the U.S. into a local socket you'll need an adapter that fits between the plug and the socket. Although you are only traveling in one country on this trip, it may be easier to purchase an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, these can usually be found at your local electronics goods or hardware stores. Sometimes you can buy them at large retailers too, like Target or Walmart. If you forget to bring an adapter, you might also find them for sale at the airport when you arrive at your destination.

Different plug shapes are named by letters of the alphabet. Standard U.S. plugs are Type A and Type B. Here is the list of plugs for the countries on this trip:

Italy: C, L, or F



Availability

Barring the occasional and unpredictable power outage, electricity is as readily available on this adventure as it is in the U.S.

CLIMATE & AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

Lucca, Italy: The coast and valleys near Lucca usually have warm summers, with highs in the 80s. July and August are generally the hottest months, while June and September offer warm weather without being too hot. April, May, and October have sunny days but the chances of rain are higher. Winter offers many sunny, mild days but nights are cool.

Bologna, Italy: The city is located in the northern region of Emilia-Romagna, away from the coast and close to the Apennines Mountains. As a result, temperatures are generally cooler in Bologna than in other parts of Italy. It still can be warm—summer highs are usually in the 80s, and can spike into the 90s—but winter can be very chilly, with lows below freezing; snow is common. April, May, September, and October are all moderate months, with highs usually staying in the 60s and 70s. Rainfall is possible any time of year, but is most common in the spring and fall.

Rome, Italy: The city of Rome has a climate similar to that of Tuscany, with temperatures averaging in the 40s and 50s during peak winter months, and the 60s and 70s in spring and autumn. Winter rains can be heavy, but periods of sunshine are also common. Summer can be very hot and humid with average temperatures ranging from 65–85 degrees, but potentially reaching into the 90s, especially during July–August.

Tuscany and Umbria: The weather is considerably milder year-round in Italy than in the north and central United States, but with differences depending on the geography of each area. In Tuscany and Umbria, the coast and valleys (Lucca) usually have hotter summers than the hills or mountains (Trevi, Pettino). April, May, and October have sunny days but the chances of rain are higher. Winter offers many sunny, mild days but nights are cold, particularly in hilly regions. July and August are generally the hottest months, while June and September offer warm weather without being too hot.

Winter Departures

If you are traveling during the winter, please be aware that the weather in Italy can be somewhat volatile at this time of year, though it's still relatively mild compared to that of the rest of the world. Moreover, while “off-season” travel may involve stints of inclement weather, it rewards you with the chance to explore Italy's museums, piazzas, and ruin sites at a time when they are wonderfully free of the summer tourist crowds. Just remember to bring layers, especially if you are taking the Bologna and Parma extension, as both snow and heavy fog are common in this region.

Climate Averages & Online Forecast

The following charts reflect the **average** climate as opposed to exact weather conditions. This means they serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. An extreme heat wave or cold snap could fall outside these ranges. As your departure approaches, we encourage you to use **www.weather.com** for a more accurate forecast of the locations you visit.

Average Daily High/Low Temperatures (°F), Humidity & Monthly Rainfall

MONTH	LUCCA, ITALY			CHIANTI REGION, ITALY		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
JAN	65 to 36	--	2.4	60 to 45	78	2.5
FEB	68 to 37	--	1.9	67 to 38	77	2.7
MAR	70 to 41	--	2.3	73 to 41	74	2.8
APR	80 to 46	--	3.3	80 to 45	75	2.8
MAY	80 to 55	--	2.3	83 to 52	75	3.1
JUN	90 to 59	--	1.5	91 to 59	73	2.2
JUL	93 to 64	--	1.0	100 to 64	69	1.8
AUG	100 to 65	--	2.3	103 to 64	72	2.4
SEP	91 to 59	--	4.9	95 to 59	75	3.1
OCT	85 to 53	--	5.9	85 to 53	80	3.5
NOV	75 to 45	--	5.6	67 to 44	81	3.8
DEC	65 to 39	--	3.4	60 to 46	80	2.7

MONTH	PIENZA, ITALY			BOLOGNA, ITALY		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
JAN	65 to 37	--	1.3	50 to 30	83	1.7
FEB	65 to 37	--	1.3	60 to 33	78	1.8
MAR	68 to 41	--	1.4	70 to 39	70	2.4
APR	75 to 44	--	1.8	77 to 46	71	2.6
MAY	80 to 52	--	1.4	79 to 53	69	2.6
JUN	93 to 58	--	1.5	88 to 60	68	2.1
JUL	95 to 63	--	0.8	97 to 65	65	1.7
AUG	95 to 65	--	1.0	98 to 64	66	2.3
SEP	88 to 58	--	3.9	90 to 59	69	2.4
OCT	85 to 53	--	2.5	84 to 50	76	2.8
NOV	70 to 45	--	4.5	70 to 40	84	3.2
DEC	65 to 39	--	3.2	60 to 32	84	2.4

MONTH	ROME, ITALY		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	69 to 38	76	7
FEB	73 to 38	72	7
MAR	80 to 43	71	7
APR	86 to 48	70	7
MAY	94 to 55	70	6
JUN	103 to 62	65	3
JUL	104 to 67	63	2
AUG	105 to 68	64	2
SEP	104 to 61	70	6
OCT	90 to 54	74	7
NOV	80 to 47	78	9
DEC	70 to 41	77	9

ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

O.A.T. Trip Experience Leaders: A World of Difference

During your adventure, you'll be accompanied by one of our local, Trip Experience Leaders. All are fluent in English and possess the skills, certification, and experience necessary to ensure an enriching adventure. As locals of the regions you'll explore with them, our Trip Experience Leaders provide the kind of firsthand knowledge and insight that make local history, culture, and wildlife come alive. Coupled with their unbridled enthusiasm, caring personalities, and ability to bring diverse groups of travelers together, our Trip Experience Leaders ensure that your experience with O.A.T. is one you'll remember for a lifetime.

Italian Culture

Encompassing landscapes as varied as the snow-capped mountains of the Alps to the sunbaked vineyards of Sicily, it stands to reason that Italian culture would vary by region. But there are also many cultural influences shared by Italians everywhere, of course. And two of them are food and family. Italians place a great importance on *la famiglia*, and extended family members gather regularly for meals and celebrations. Lots of businesses in Italy are both family owned and family run, especially the numerous *trattorias* and *enotecas* (wine bars). And never underestimate an Italian's love of food. Many recipes are passed down through generations and they are deeply proud of their cuisine—just as they are of their country.

The Tuscan experience is bound together through its legendary landscapes, world-renowned art, and *cucina contadina* (farmer's kitchen). Tuscany's timeless vistas are truly postcard material—from grape-laden vines blanketing its rolling hills to honey-hued medieval villages perched along the hillsides. Then, there's the art. The Etruscans and Romans left their mark with fabled sites and monuments, such as the necropolis of Populonia and the Roman Theatre in Fiesole. But it was during the Middle Ages where Florentine art really began to flourish. From sculptors like Nicola Pisano, Giovanni Pisano, and Arnolfo di Cambio to painters like Cimabue and Giotto, Tuscany was the pinnacle of artistic grandeur in Italy. Michelangelo, one of the greatest Tuscan artists, actually argued that his talent and skills were due to the "lightness" of Tuscan air. Today, these masterpieces are safeguarded in churches and museums throughout the region.

Tuscany is a gastronomic paradise, where residents spend most of their time thinking about, discussing, and consuming the fruits of their fertile land (understandably so). Tuscans show an enormous amount of pride in the quality and taste of their food and wine. From handmade pastas at a family-run *pastificio tradizionale* to locally produced wines in Chianti, Montalcino, and Montefalco, simple and honest flavors are the mark of central Italy's medieval villages and terraced countryside.

Religious Festivals in Italy

As a deeply Catholic country, Italy celebrates many religious festivals. But the two biggest are Christmas and Easter. Christmas is celebrated much as in the U.S. but with some key differences. For example, the unofficial start of the Christmas season is the Day of the Immaculate Conception

(December 8) and the end is Epiphany (January 6); the focal point of decoration is usually an elaborate nativity scene rather than a Christmas tree; and the festive meal often features fish and seafood rather than a turkey, ham, or other meat. Special foods like *panettone* cake or certain pastas may also be served at this time of year. Also different from the U.S. is when presents are opened—depending on what part of Italy you are from, it could be on Saint Lucia's Day (December 13), Christmas Day (December 25), or Epiphany, when a good witch called *la befana* brings candy to children—but only if you were good last year.

The other big festival is Easter, which is on a lunar schedule, and thus changes dates each year (although it usually falls in February or March). The kick off for the Easter season is Lent, a six-week period of penitence when practicing Catholics “give up” something they enjoy as a way of showing devotion. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, when many Italians will go to church to receive a cross made of ashes on their forehead, which they will then wear for the rest of the day.

Note that Carnival—which is meant to blow off steam before the seriousness—comes before Lent, but is not considered a religious festival. Instead it usually involves street parties, costumes, music, masks, eating, drinking, and crowds. (Venice in particular gets *very* crowded.)

Lent ends during *Settimana Santa* (Holy Week). This runs the week before Easter, and includes the Monday after. Smaller shops or family-run restaurants may be closed during this week or on special hours. But larger or famous sites generally stay open as normal except on Easter Sunday or the Monday after. If you have your heart set on a specific attraction, we suggest you check their holiday schedule in advance to avoid disappointment. Religious places of interest, such as historic chapels/churches, will often have special services that you are welcome to attend—even if you are not Catholic. Note that the Vatican celebrations in particular are very popular and will likely need some advance planning or involve waiting in some very long lines.

Dressing for Churches

Most churches in Italy have a dress code, whether overly stated or not. Typically all they are looking for is shorts/skirts to the knee and covered shoulders. If you'll be traveling during warm weather months and want to go sleeveless or wear a tank top, then we suggest that you throw a light sweater, cover-up, or shawl into your daypack. That way you'll have it on hand if you want to pop into a church. In our experience, the dress code is enforced the most in the Vatican/Sistine Chapel and in Rome, but it could come up in any church.

Hotel Courtesy in Italy

Italian hotels do not allow food and beverages to be taken from their breakfast rooms, nor is it courteous to eat or drink food or beverages purchased elsewhere in hotel common rooms. In conformity with municipal laws to promote urban decorum, hotels do not allow hanging laundry on room balconies. Travel clotheslines, used in your bathroom, are a more private and effective solution.

Taking Photographs

The etiquette of photographing people in most countries is about the same as it would be on the streets of your hometown. You need permission to take a close-up, but not for a crowd scene. Be especially polite if you want to photograph children or older women. If you want to shoot a great portrait, show interest in your subject and try to have a bit of social interaction first. Then use sign language to inquire if a picture is OK.

Please do not take photographs of military personnel, military compounds, or other official institutions/personnel (such as police). This may result in the confiscation of your camera.

In museums or at archaeological sites, there may be restrictions on using your flash. Please obey any signs or directions by staff; the no-flash rule protects the fragile artifacts and artwork from damage by repeated exposure to light. Occasionally, there may also be a small fee levied by the museum or site for the privilege of taking photos.

Safety & Security

As you travel, exercise the same caution and awareness that you would in a large American city. Don't be overly nervous or suspicious, but keep your eyes open. If you are venturing out after dark, go with one or two other people.

Carry a one-day supply of cash, and your passport, in a travel pouch. Don't leave valuables unattended in your hotel room. Most hotels will offer use of a hotel safe at the front desk or an electronic in-room safe (for which you can set your own personal number). Please utilize this.

Pickpockets may create a sudden distraction. In any sort of puzzling street situation, try to keep one hand on your wallet or money belt. If an encounter with a local turns out to be long and complicated and involves money or your valuables, be very careful.

Italian Cuisine

Italy may have been unified as a nation in 1861, but its cuisine is another story—and a glorious one at that. Here, gastronomy has always been a matter of regionalism and seasonality. The country is divided up into 20 distinct regions, each with its own specialties. The good news is that there is certainly culinary overlap, and since Italians are famously passionate about food, you can enjoy many beloved regional dishes all over Italy.

The structure of a typical Italian meal is designed to stimulate your appetite, and promote moderation—along with variety. So it will begin with dishes like the following:

- **Aperitivo:** A glass of sparkling prosecco or spumante white wine.
- **Antipasto all'Italiana:** Raw vegetables served with various cheeses and salami
- **Fritto Misto:** A lightly fried seafood mix, usually with calamari, shrimp, and fish such as sardines or anchovies.
- **Crostini:** Chicken liver pate or fresh cut tomatoes served on a thin piece of toasted bread

- **Caprese Salad:** Thick slices of tomato and mozzarella flavored with fresh basil leaves, olive oil.

The first course, called Primo, comes next. Here is where you may enjoy your carbohydrates with a small dish such as:

- **Tagliatelle al Tartufo:** Long ribbons of delicate tagliatelle pasta, swirled with warm melted butter, garlic, and decadently topped with black truffle shavings and parmesan cheese
- **Ribollita:** A bean and kale soup served with toasted bread. On the second day, the soup is cooked again in a pan with olive oil, hence the meaning “boiled twice”.
- **Gnocchi alla Sorrentina:** Potato gnocchi baked in a rich and delicious tomato sauce with bubbling mozzarella cheese and fresh basil.

The main course is called Il secondo. This is usually a small, simply prepared dish of chicken, meat, or fish including:

- **Bistecca alla Fiorentina:** A T-Bone steak from a local breed of cow, the Chianina cattle
- **Lampredotto:** A panino stuffed with the fourth stomach of a cow and soaked in broth, with salsa Verde and black pepper from Florence
- **Polpette:** Savory and seasoned Italian meatballs.

Your meal will conclude with a Dolce (sweet) such as:

- **Tiramisu:** A layered confection of sponge cake, mascarpone cheese, coffee and liqueur.
- **Delizia al Limone:** Sponge cakes filled and coated with lemon custard from Amalfi Coast
- **Buccellato:** A dessert made of a sweet and soft pasty with lots of raisins and aniseed. It can be shaped like a donut or oval, per the original recipe from Lucca

Dolci may be served with coffee or an alcoholic digestivo such as herbal amaro or limoncello. It is meant to aid your digestion of a memorable meal, one that will certainly have been toast-worthy

Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More

There may be scheduled visits to local shops during your adventure. There is no requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor’s terms of purchase. O.A.T. is not responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.

Returns

If you discover an issue with an item, you should contact the vendor directly and expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. We recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop’s contact information. Keep in mind, local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don’t assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up or that you are guaranteed a refund.

Crafts & Souvenirs

Italy

Popular souvenirs include leather goods, silk ties, knitwear, gold jewelry, ceramics, straw goods and other handicrafts, small cabinets, and jewelry boxes. Each region in Italy has its specialties. You'll also see many different items made from olive wood or Carrara marble; just remember that any marble items you purchase should be put into your checked luggage for the flight home. (If you put them in your carry-on, they may be confiscated by security as "weapons".) In Italy, a Value Added Tax is levied on most articles, services, and meals, and ranges from 4% to 22%. Depending on how much you spend on certain goods in specially marked Tax Free Shopping stores, you may be eligible for a partial refund of this tax. Ask the shopkeeper, salesperson, or our local staff for details. Be sure to save all receipts and the special Global Tax Refund forms for Customs, as receipts alone are not enough.

U.S. Customs Regulations & Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, www.cbp.gov has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.
- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the export duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the import duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins.

DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

Italy

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 116,348 square miles
- **Capital:** Rome
- **Languages:** Italian is the official language; German, French, and Slovene are also spoken in towns near the borders of Austria, France, and Slovenia.
- **Ethnicity:** Italian, with small clusters of German-, French-, and Slovene-Italians in the north and Albanian- and Greek-Italians in the south
- **Location:** Italy is bordered by France, Slovenia, Austria, Switzerland, the Ligurian Sea, the Tyrrhenian Sea, the Ionian Sea, the Adriatic Sea, and the Mediterranean Sea.
- **Geography:** Italy lies in southern Europe and includes the Mediterranean islands of Sicily, Sardinia, and several other small islands. The region of Tuscany is a blend of rugged hills, fertile valleys, and long stretches of sandy beaches that curve along the west coast of central Italy and fringe the pine-forested coastal plain of the Maremma. Sicily enjoys mountains in the north and east, a vast central plateau, and a fertile coastline dotted with sea-level resort towns.
- **Population:** 58,853,482 (estimate)
- **Religions:** Christian 80% (overwhelming Roman Catholic), Atheists and Agnostics 20%, Muslims estimated at less than 2%
- **Time Zone:** Italy is on Central European Time, six hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is noon in Rome. Daylight Saving Time begins the last weekend in March and ends the last weekend in October.

National Holidays: Italy

In addition to the holidays listed below, Italy celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

01/06 Epiphany

04/25 Liberation Day

05/01 Labor Day

06/02 Republic Day

08/15 Assumption of Mary

11/01 All Saints' Day

12/08 Feast of the Immaculate Conception

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 St. Stephen's Day

Italy: A Brief History

Italy proudly wears the mantle of Rome, the polity from which so much of Italy's historical, cultural, and religious heritage has derived. But even though the Romans were the first to unify the peninsula, they were not the first to dominate it. That honor goes to the Etruscans, whose empire, Etruria, reached its zenith in the 7th century BC. It was centered between the Arno and Tiber rivers, mostly in Tuscany. The Etruscans were farmers, miners, seafarers and warriors, but they were riven by factionalism and in 509 BC, their last king was tossed out by Ligurian-Latin nobles in the small town of Rome. Tired of monarchs, they created the first Roman Republic.

Etruscan culture disappeared by the 2nd century AD, but the Romans were quick to appropriate many aspects of the Greek culture that had taken root in southern Italy and Sicily, where there were Hellenic colonies called "Magna Graecia." As the colonies were absorbed, so were Greek religion, architecture, and the basic tenets of democracy. During the 1st century BC, Julius Caesar defeated Gaul, making Rome the ruler of the entire Mediterranean world. After Caesar's assassination in 44 B.C., his nephew Octavian, later called Augustus, became Rome's first official emperor. The capital became an architectural showcase, and new territories stretched across Europe into Asia Minor, existing under a "Pax Romana" that brought prosperity and stability.

Pax Romana declined in the 3rd century A.D. thanks to inept and corrupt emperors, and attacks by outside barbarians. Rome eventually embraced Christianity in 313 under Constantine I, who established an eastern capital in Constantinople. But splitting the Rome into western (Roman) and eastern (Byzantine) halves did not halt the empire's demise. The eastern Roman empire fell in 476, and though the Byzantine half survived, it never regained the full might of Rome. In 800, Italy was briefly reunited under Charlemagne, but soon disintegrated into squabbling kingdoms.

Italian culture peaked during the 15th and 16th-century Renaissance. The independent city-states formed a delicate balance of power, with ruling families (such as the Sforzas, Borgias, and the Medicis) funding a golden age of art, invention, and intellectual activity that produced some of the greatest figures of Western civilization—Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Dante Alighieri, Brunelleschi, Galileo, and others. It did not, however, stop the rival families from fighting.

By the 19th century, many Italians believed that they could function as a single nation, a belief spearheaded by the general Giuseppe Garibaldi. Independence was declared in 1861, and by 1870, the nation was consolidated under King Victor Emmanuel II. Italy was ruled as a monarchy and joined the Allies in World War I. But the 1920s ushered in a dark era as Benito Mussolini organized discontented Italians into the Fascist Party to “rescue Italy from Bolshevism.” What he delivered was a totalitarian state. Mussolini joined with Hitler and fought the Allies during World War II, during which 400,000 people were killed, hundreds of thousands were left homeless, and the economy was ruined. In 1945, Mussolini was captured and killed by partisans.

Italy was again declared a republic in 1946, but remained seriously divided during the postwar era by political extremes. Governments rose and fell, and in the 1970s, a series of terrorist acts by the left-wing Red Brigades threatened stability. By the early 1980s, the terrorists had been suppressed, but public discontent spilled into the 1990s as inflation and ongoing scandals involving public officials and the Mafia altered Italian politics. Parties dissolved, new ones formed, and new alliances emerged. This led to the election of media mogul Silvio Berlusconi as Prime Minister in 1994. But within a year, Berlusconi was forced to resign. He ran again in 2001 and was reelected, setting up a pattern that repeated for more than a decade: Berlusconi has been Prime Minister three separate times between 1994–2011, and continues to remain a political force despite having been convicted of tax fraud.

The previous Prime Minister, independent Giuseppe Conte, was elected in 2018 and heads up a populist coalition. Among his accomplishments have been the introduction of a national guaranteed minimum income, the nationalization of several companies, stricter immigration policies, and the western world’s first national lockdown in response to COVID-19. The current Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Italy’s first female Prime Minister, was sworn in on October 22nd, 2022. Meloni is a member of the right-wing, national-conservative party, Brothers of Italy, a party that is considered to be the most right-wing party in power in Italy since World War II.

RESOURCES

Suggested Reading

Tuscany

The Tuscan Child by Rhys Bowen (2018, Fiction) An estranged daughter seeks to uncover her family's past when she discovers an unopened letter written by her father after his passing. The narrative jumps between the father in World War II and the daughter in the 1970s.

A Culinary Traveller in Tuscany: Exploring and Eating off the Beaten Track by Beth Elon (2006, Food) Combining travel and food, this book is half guidebook (where to eat in small towns throughout Tuscany) and half cookbook (recipes from those small towns).

Brunelleschi's Dome by Ross King (2000, History) What goes into the making of an architectural masterpiece? This book uncovers the behind-the-scenes story of the first dome to be built in Europe since ancient Rome.

Under the Tuscan Sun: At Home in Italy by Frances Mayes (1996, Memoir/Travel Narrative) The true-life story of a wealthy American who falls in love with a dilapidated farmhouse in Tuscany and vows to restore it. Unlike the movie, the book focuses a lot on daily life and the renovations process, rather than romance.

The House of Medici: Its Rise and Fall by Christopher Hibbert (1974, History) Portrays the Medici's personal lives and political squabbles, and captures the workings of Renaissance city-state politics.

Italy

Princes of the Renaissance by Mary Hollingsworth (2021, History) An exploration of the lives and times of the aristocratic elite whose patronage sparked the art and architecture of the Renaissance in fifteenth and sixteenth century Italy.

Absolute Monarchs: A History of the Papacy by John Julius Norwich (2011, History) A deeper look into the most significant popes in history and what they meant politically, culturally, and socially to Rome and the rest of the world.

La Bella Figura: A Field Guide to the Italian Mind by Beppe Severgnini (2007, Nonfiction/Humor) An Italian columnist and best-selling author journeys through his homeland while providing hilarious observations at the beautiful face Italy shows to the world, and the chaotic, garrulous, and often contradictory impulses that lie behind it.

The Monster of Florence by Douglas Preston and Mario Spezi (2008, Non Fiction) A remarkable true story by best-selling author Douglas Preston who, with Italian investigative journalist Mario Spezi, try to track down the identity of a serial killer known as the Monster of Florence.

History by Elsa Morante (1974, Fiction) A half-Jewish, Roman mother tries to survive in WWII Rome with her two sons. Though the main characters are fictional, each chapter opens with an factual account of real events that happened when the action takes place.

Suggested Films & Videos

Italy

The Life Ahead (2020, Drama) At 86, Sophia Loren makes her first screen appearance in ten years in this Netflix original, filmed in Puglia. And it's a stunner. She plays Madame Rosa, a Holocaust survivor who takes in the children of local sex workers. A neighbor asks her to care for Momo, a Senegalese refugee whose delinquency may be too much for Rosa, whose own tormented past is catching up to her.

The Tourist (2010, Thriller) Beautiful Elise (Angelina Jolie) has a mysterious off-screen lover, Pearce, who has fled England and is wanted by both Scotland Yard and the mob. He tells Elise to entrap an unwitting tourist (Johnny Depp), who will be mistaken for Pearce (who is rumored to have altered his appearance), and arrested in his place. This convoluted caper plays out beautifully in Venice's mysterious alleys, romantic canals, and opulent palaces.

Rome (2005-07, Television Series) This multiple Emmy-winner from HBO deftly weaves the stories of fictional and real characters (Julius Caesar, Octavian, Marc Antony, Cleopatra, etc.) during Rome's 1st century BC transition from a republic to an empire. Outstanding production values and a stellar cast.

The Merchant of Venice (2004, Drama) Al Pacino gives us one of the most masterful portrayals on stage or screen of Shakespeare's tragic moneylender, Shylock. He receives strong support from Jeremy Irons and Joseph Fiennes, and Venice itself, where much of the production was filmed. The city looks so enticing, it's a wonder that Pacino did not chew up the scenery.

Life Is Beautiful (1997) Roberto Benigni is the lead actor and director of this heart-wrenching comedy/drama about a Jewish Italian bookshop owner in Mussolini's Italy who tries to shield his son from the horrors of a Nazi concentration camp. Italian with English subtitles.

Useful Websites

Overseas Adventure Travel

www.oattravel.com

Overseas Adventure Travel Frequently Asked Questions

www.oattravel.com/faq

International Health Information/CDC (Centers for Disease Control)

www.cdc.gov/travel

Electricity & Plugs

www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets

Foreign Exchange Rates

www.xe.com/currencyconverter
www.oanda.com/converter/classic

ATM Locators

www.mastercard.com/atm
www.visa.com/atmlocator

World Weather

www.intellicast.com
www.weather.com
www.wunderground.com

Basic Travel Phrases (80 languages)

www.travlang.com/languages

Packing Tips

www.travelite.org

U.S. Customs & Border Protection

www.cbp.gov/travel

Transportation Security

Administration (TSA)

www.tsa.gov

National Passport Information Center

www.travel.state.gov

Holidays Worldwide

www.timeanddate.com/holidays

History & Culture

en.wikipedia.org

Useful Apps

Flight Stats

Track departures, arrivals, and flight status

LoungeBuddy

Get access to premium airport lounges around the world

Timeshifter

Personalized tips for avoiding jetlag, based on neuroscience and your own data

GoogleMaps

Maps and directions anywhere in the world

Triposo

City guides, walking maps, and more – and it works offline

Rome2rio

Where to go, what to see, and what to do in more than 160 countries

Flush or Sit or Squat

Find a clean toilet anywhere

Uber

Ride sharing around the world

Visa Plus and Mastercard Cirrus

ATM locations

Shows the location of the nearest ATM in your network

TunnelBear

Provides a secure VPN (virtual private network) that will encrypt your browsing data when you use a public WiFi network

What's App, Skype, or Signal

WiFi calling anywhere in the world

Duolingo, FLuentU, or Babbel

Learn dozens of foreign languages

Google Translate

Fast and simple translations

XE

Currency conversions

SizeGuide

Clothing and shoe sizes in all countries

Best Units Converter

Converts currency, mileage, weights, and many other units of measurement

Tourlina

For women only, it connects you with other female travelers

Happy Cow

Locate vegan and vegetarian eateries in 195 countries

Eatwith

Dine with locals all over the world

Meetup

Connects you with locals who share your interests

Skyview

Identifies constellations and heavenly bodies

Travello

Find travel friends on the road

ALIX for One

Created by and for women, it identifies solo-friendly dining spots in major international cities

TripWhistle

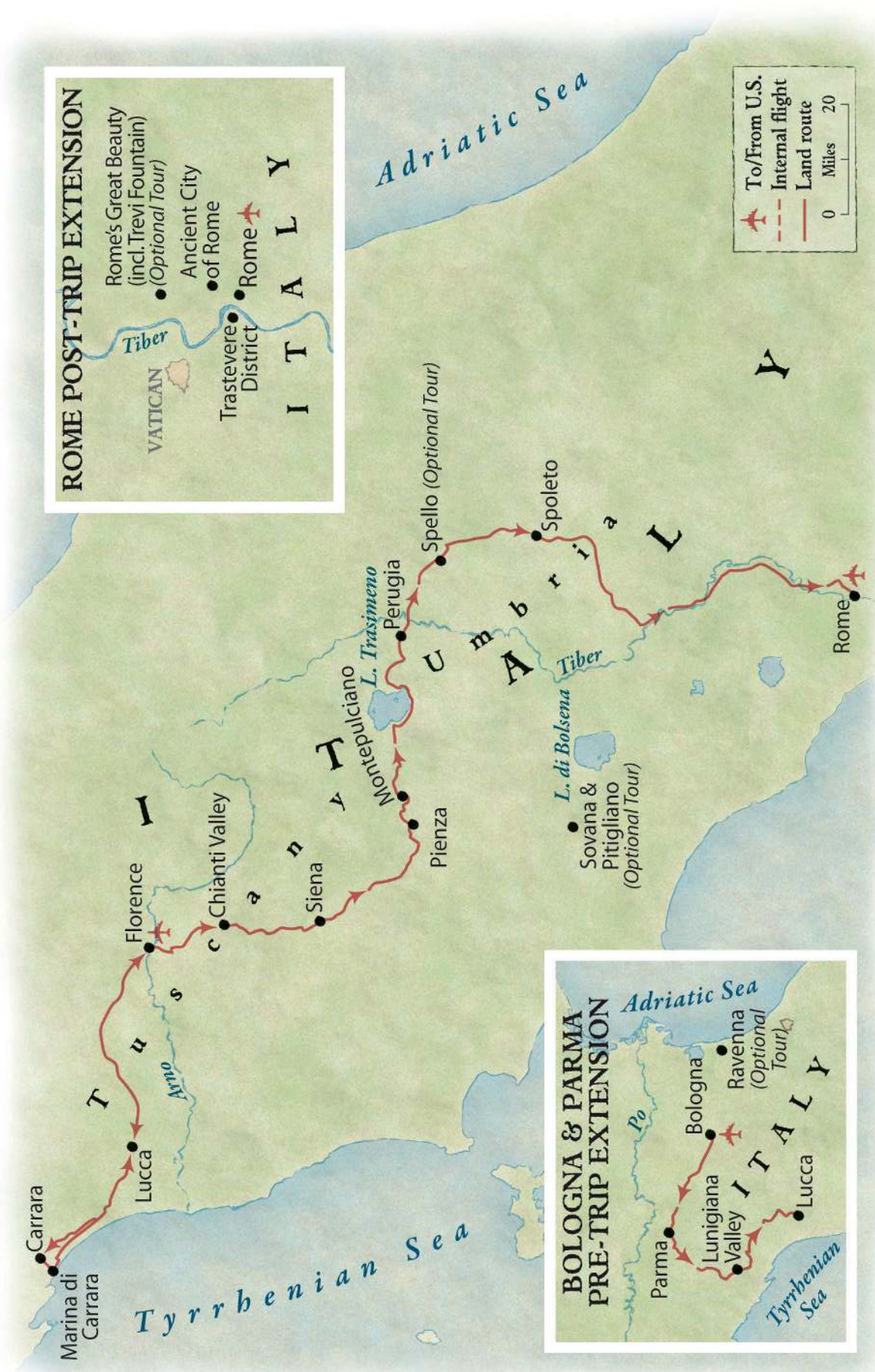
Maps your location and provides emergency numbers for police, medics, and more

GeoSure

Safely navigate neighborhoods around the world

Chirpey

For women only, connect with other women, find out what's safe, meet up, and more



ROME POST-TRIP EXTENSION

Rome's Great Beauty
 (incl. Trevi Fountain)
 (Optional Tour)

Ancient City
 of Rome

Trastevere
 District

Rome

ITALY

BOLOGNA & PARMA PRE-TRIP EXTENSION

Bologna

Ravenna
 (Optional Tour)

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Parma

Lucca

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 Land route

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 Miles

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