

# Florence & Rome

## Treasures of Italy

March 21 - 28, 2009

### Saturday, March 21: FLIGHT TO FLORENCE

Depart St. Louis or Springfield for your flight to Florence, Italy

### Sunday, March 22: FLORENCE

Buon giorno! Welcome to Florence! Meet our local representatives at the airport and transfer by private motorcoach to your hotel. The remainder of your first day in Italy is free for sightseeing and exploring the area around your hotel. You can stay with the tour escort, or explore on your own. The birthplace of the Italian Renaissance, Florence boasts countless art museums featuring the works of such masters as Caravaggio, Botticelli, Titian, and Michelangelo. To delve into art history, visit Pitti Palace, a complex of art museums housing some of the most celebrated treasures in the city. *Included meals: Dinner*



### Monday, March 23: FLORENCE

Today, enjoy a formal introduction to Florence on a guided walking tour. Your guide will share the history of the Piazza del Duomo, with its magnificent cathedral and baptistery. This large city square contains the Basilica of Santa Maria del Fiore, the third largest cathedral in the world. You'll learn the story of the competition to design its famous baptistery doors. Ghiberti secured the commission with his extraordinary relief panels, called *Gates of Paradise*, now a renowned landmark of Renaissance sculpture. Also see the Church of San Lorenzo, the Bargello, and the Ponte Vecchio, the most famous bridge over the Arno River. Visit the Galleria dell'Accademia, home of Michelangelo's marble sculpture *David*. Your afternoon is free to explore Florence with your group. This is a great opportunity to experience the Straw Market, a semi-enclosed market bustling under a beautiful, spacious loggia dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Under the arches, numerous



vendors sell belts, scarves, leather goods, embroidered linens, souvenirs, and Florentine straw hats.

*Included meals: Breakfast and Dinner*

## Tuesday, March 24: FLORENCE

Today, you have the choice of sightseeing with the tour escort or designing your own itinerary. There are countless historical sites and attractions to choose from. Stroll through the Boboli Gardens, get an up-close look at priceless Renaissance art at the Uffizi Gallery, or visit the Basilica di Santa Croce, the richest medieval church in Florence, featuring frescoes by Giotto, a chapel by Brunelleschi, and one of the finest of all early Renaissance tombs. For an off-beat but very Italian experience, try the Salvatore Ferragamo Museum, a heaven to shoe buffs since it houses a collection of more than 10,000 shoes dating from the 1920s. *Included meals: Breakfast and Dinner*

## Wednesday, March 25: FLORENCE—ROME

Depart by private deluxe motorcoach for Rome. A stop in Siena en route will give you a chance to visit this beautiful city. You may wish to visit Siena Cathedral, a spectacular Gothic cathedral with an elaborately carved exterior, considered by many to be one of the most beautiful churches in Italy. Later in the afternoon, arrive in Rome. Settle in to your hotel, and then meet for dinner with your group. After dinner, enjoy a guided walking tour of the area around Trevi Fountain, Piazza Novano, and the Spanish Steps. At 85 feet high, Trevi Fountain is the



most ambitious of the Baroque fountains of Rome. Piazza Novano boasts sculptural and architectural creations by Bernini, Borromini and Rainaldi, as well as the famous Fountain of the Four Rivers, surrounding an ancient Egyptian obelisk. The 138 Spanish Steps, leading up to Trinita dei Monti, are considered the longest and widest set of stairs in all of Europe. *Included meals: Breakfast and Dinner*



## Thursday, March 26: ROME

Today you're off on a guided tour of Imperial Rome. See Palatine Hill, Circus Maximus (seating capacity 250,000!), the Arch of Constantine, the Imperial Forums, Piazza Venezia, the Monument of Vittorio Emmanuel, and visit the Colosseum. Then on to Capitoline Hill where you'll enjoy a spectacular view of the Roman Forum. Next, cross the Tiber and leave Italy behind as you enter the independent city-state of the Vatican. See Bernini's legacy, St. Peter's Square, where 284 Doric columns and 140 saints ring this oval 'square' encompassing a 2,000-year-old obelisk. Visit St. Peter's Basilica, the largest church in the world. From St. Peter's, continue to the Vatican Museum for a guided tour.



Included among the impressive collections is the Sistine Chapel's ceiling by Michelangelo.

*Included meals: Breakfast and Dinner*



### **Friday, March 27: ROME**

Spend the final day of your trip at leisure in Rome. Tour the Galleria Borghese if you wish to savor more Renaissance art from the likes of Raphael, Rubens, and Canova. No trip to Rome would be complete without a visit to the Pantheon. Originally built in the

first century, AD, the temple was designed to honor all the Roman gods. Later, it was converted into a Christian church, and demonstrates the transition between pagan Rome and Christian Italy. If you wish to experience Rome as a local, head to Trastevere, a quiet community with quaint shops and restaurants offering delicious Italian cuisine. This evening, savor a special farewell dinner and share your priceless memories of Italy with your fellow travelers. *Included meals: Breakfast and Dinner*

### **Saturday, March 28: ROME TO HOME**

Transfer by private motorcoach to the airport in Rome for your return flight to St. Louis or Springfield. *Included meals: Breakfast*

**Package and Pricing:** Round trip airfare from St. Louis or Springfield to Florence and returning from Rome to St. Louis or Springfield including airline taxes totaling \$399, 6 nights in centrally located 3 star hotels with private facilities in all rooms, continental breakfast and dinner daily, tips and gratuities, professional English-speaking local guides for scheduled tours per itinerary, private deluxe air-conditioned motorcoach for all land transportation, entrance fees to all scheduled museums and attractions as stated in itinerary, travel, accident, and baggage insurance, 2 baggage tags (1 carry-on with space for purse or a backpack, and 1 big suitcase) and a fun and friendly tour escort.

**\$2597** per person/double or triple occupancy

\$400 deposit due with reservation. Final payment due by December 1, 2008.

**Call 800-247-3204 for reservations or more information!**



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