



A Week in Italy: Venice, Florence & Rome with Eastern Illinois University Alumni Association

9 days | 11 days with Sorrento Peninsula extension | Mar 16 2025—Mar 24 2025

With its millennia-spanning history, comforting regional cuisine, and countless artistic treasures, it's no wonder Italy consistently ranks at the top of travelers' wish lists. Whether you're planning your first visit or coming back for a taste of new-to-you cities and regions, this weeklong tour will take you straight to the pulsing heart of the country's vibrant culture. Venice romances visitors with its sprawling, Baroque palaces and maze of winding canals. Florence, the Tuscan capital, wins hearts with its Renaissance architecture and art. And Rome dazzles with its ever-present history, from the hulking Colosseum to the Forum's still-stately remains. Want to soak up even more of Italy's epic history and endless charm? Extend your tour and continue south to the well-preserved ruins of Pompeii and the coastal city of Sorrento, where la dolce vita is embraced to the nth degree.



Your tour package includes

7 nights in handpicked hotels
7 breakfasts
3 dinners with beer or wine
3 sightseeing tours
Expert Tour Director & local guides
Private deluxe motor coach

Included highlights

St. Mark's Basilica in Venice
The Duomo of Florence
The Ponte Vecchio in Florence
The Piazza della Repubblica in Florence
The Grand Canal of Venice
The Roman Colosseum
The Roman Forum

Tour pace

On this guided tour, you'll walk for at least 2 hours daily across mostly flat terrain, including cobblestone streets, with few hills or stairs.

For more information, contact

<https://groups.goaheadtours.com/tours/a-week-italy> | 1-800-438-7672

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9 days | 11 days with Sorrento Peninsula extension

Overnight Flight → 1 night

Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to Venice today.

Venice → 2 nights

Day 2: Arrival in Venice

Included meals: dinner

Welcome to Italy! Transfer to your hotel and get settled in. Later, meet your group at a welcome dinner, served with beer or wine.

Day 3: Sightseeing tour of Venice

Included meals: breakfast

Sitting atop more than 100 islands, storied Venice is a lattice of historic churches and piazzas, all connected by hundreds of winding canals. Today, meet up with a local guide to get to know the Queen of the Adriatic and discover why the entire city was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

- Step onto iconic St. Mark's Square and into St. Mark's Basilica—an opulent, domed church built in the 11th century to house the body of St. Mark the Apostle.
- View the stately Doge's Palace. Now a museum, this masterpiece of Venetian Gothic architecture once served as both the residence of the Doge (or Duke, the supreme authority of the Republic of Venice) and the seat of the Venetian government.
- Marvel at the attached Bridge of Sighs. Built in 1600 to link the New Prison to the Doge's Palace, the Ponte dei Sospiri (as it's known in Italian) drew its name from the legend that prisoners would sigh at their last view of Venice before descending to their cells.
- See a traditional glassblowing demonstration and learn about Venice's most celebrated art form, whose roots in the city date back to the 10th century.

Then, laze a free afternoon away at a canalside cafe, watching gondolas float by—or add an optional excursion to board one yourself and embark on a canal cruise with your fellow travelers. (You can also enjoy a private float for two.)

+ Gondola Ride: Venice Canal Cruise

+ Private Gondola Ride: Canal Cruise for Two

Florence → 2 nights

Day 4: Transfer to Florence & sightseeing tour

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Today, travel through the scenic Apennine Mountains to Florence—Tuscany's capital and the world's greatest treasure trove of Renaissance art and architecture. Then, get to know the city with a local guide.

This evening, join your fellow travelers at a local restaurant for an included dinner featuring Tuscan specialties and beer or wine.

Day 5: Free day in Florence

Included meals: breakfast

The day is yours! Enjoy a free day in Florence or add an excursion to the Tuscan hill town of San Gimignano, where you can admire its UNESCO-noted historic center and dramatic skyline, punctuated by 14 soaring medieval towers. You'll even stop by a winery to sample local varietals, olive oil, and balsamic vinegar before journeying back to Florence.

+ San Gimignano: Medieval Sights & Tuscan Flavors

Rome → 3 nights

Day 6: Transfer to Rome & sightseeing tour

Included meals: breakfast

Depart for Italy's capital, Rome, whose entire historic center—including the Forum, the Colosseum, the Pantheon, and more—is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Follow in the footsteps of ancient Romans on a guided tour of the Eternal City.

Please note: While sightseeing in Rome, travelers should feel comfortable walking on uneven and rocky pathways and steps. Shade and seating are limited, especially at venues such as the Colosseum and the Forum.

Day 7: Free day in Rome

Included meals: breakfast

The day is yours to seize! Seeking a little extra grandeur? Add our guided tour of Vatican City to your day to experience the serene beauty of the

Vatican Museum, as well as the Sistine Chapel's venerated ceiling fresco. Then, top it all off by adding a pasta-making class and ending the evening dining on your own fresh, sauce-laden creation.

Please note: The Iconic Sights: Vatican City excursion may be offered on day 8, depending on the day of the week.

+ Iconic Sights: Vatican City
+ Pasta-Making Class & Dinner

Day 8: Free day in Rome

Included meals: breakfast, farewell dinner

You won't want to skip the guided tour of St. Paul's Basilica—one of Rome's four major papal churches. Add it to your itinerary to view the final resting place of St. Paul and take a subterranean journey through Rome's ancient catacombs.

This evening, come together for an elegant four-course dinner—served with beer or wine—at a local restaurant and say farewell to your groupmates as you enjoy live musical entertainment.

Please note: The Ancient Rome: St. Paul's Basilica & the Catacombs excursion may be offered on day 7, depending on the day of the week.

+ Ancient Rome: St. Paul's Basilica & the Catacombs

Flight Home

Day 9: Departure

Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Transfer to the airport for your flight home, or extend your stay to visit the magical, terraced cliffsides of the Sorrento Peninsula.

+ Sorrento Peninsula extension

From its perch high above the Bay of Naples, Sorrento welcomes you with its candy-colored villas, turquoise seas, and the delicate citrus scent of its iconic lemon groves. Stay with your Tour Director to explore the peninsula's infinitely picturesque towns and the excavated remains of Pompeii, all under the watchful eye of Mount Vesuvius.

Sorrento Peninsula → 2 nights

Day 9: Sorrento Peninsula via Pompeii

Included meals: breakfast

En route to the Sorrento Peninsula, stop at Pompeii, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, for a guided walking tour of the ancient city's ruins.

Then, continue to the Sorrento Peninsula, a scenic sliver of land whose southern shore is home to iconic resort towns, such as Positano and Ravello, and the glamorous Amalfi Coast.

Please note: The terrain at Pompeii is uneven and rocky in places and can be difficult for travelers with limited mobility to navigate. Both shade and seating are limited throughout the site.

Day 10: Free day on the Sorrento Peninsula

Included meals: breakfast

If you choose to add a day on Capri to your itinerary today, you'll sail across the Bay of Naples to the famed island. Known around the world as a playground for chic jet-setters, Capri's dramatic coastline is dotted with colorful cliffside hotels and lavish villas. You'll traverse crystalline waters by boat and spend time on the island before returning to the Sorrento Peninsula.

This evening, sip a farewell drink as you celebrate your trip with your fellow group members.

+ Capri: A Day on the Iconic Island

Flight Home

Day 11: Departure

Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Transfer to the Naples airport for your flight home.

For more information, contact

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Customize your experience

Customize your tour by adding excursion options. Excursions offered on the same day will occur at different times, so there's no need to choose. Save \$10 when you book your excursion up to three days before your tour departs.* Excursions requiring advance reservation only list this discounted price. Call or go online to customize your tour: <https://groups.goaheadtours.com/tours/a-week-italy> | 1-800-438-7672

Day 3: Gondola Ride: Venice Canal Cruise

From \$95.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (25 minutes, departure time varies)

More than 100 canals crisscross Venice, and boarding a sleek, black gondola to explore them has become a time-honored tradition. On this memorable excursion, join your fellow travelers for a tour through the canals of Venice, with a gondolier deftly guiding your boat along. Please note: This excursion runs as weather permits, and travelers should feel comfortable getting into and out of the gondolas. A private, two-person gondola ride is available for an additional cost.

Day 3: Private Gondola Ride: Canal Cruise for Two

From \$169.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (25 minutes, departure time varies)

More than 100 canals crisscross Venice, and boarding a sleek, black gondola to explore them has become a time-honored tradition. On this memorable excursion, you'll enjoy a private gondola cruise for two through the canals of Venice, with a gondolier deftly guiding your boat along.

Please note: This excursion requires two passengers. Cost is per person, and each traveler must book the excursion. Travelers should also feel comfortable getting into and out of the gondolas. This excursion runs as weather permits.

Day 5: San Gimignano: Medieval Sights & Tuscan Flavors

From \$115.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (6 hours, departs in the morning, lunch included)

Travel through the beautiful Tuscan countryside to discover the medieval village of San Gimignano. During the Renaissance, the rival Guelph and Ghibelline political factions flexed their muscles by constructing tall towers throughout San Gimignano; fourteen of those towers survive today. Later, visit a local winery for a taste of the area's wines and a sampling of olive oil and balsamic vinegar that you won't find anywhere else. Then, enjoy lasagna during a light lunch. Please note: This excursion involves a moderate amount of walking across hilly terrain with some steep inclines.

Day 7: Iconic Sights: Vatican City

From \$135.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (3.5 hours, departure time varies)

This guided tour takes you inside Vatican City—a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the most sacred places in Christendom. This independent city-state within Rome serves as the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church and is home to the Pope. Upon arrival, turn on your pre-distributed headset and dive into the Vatican's rich history with your local guide. First, visit the Vatican Museums, which are more than 500 years old and house many of the world's most important Classical- and Renaissance-era sculptures. Next, step inside the Sistine Chapel, whose frescoed ceiling is arguably Michelangelo's greatest masterpiece. Finally, pay a visit to the enormous St. Peter's Basilica, the

epicenter of the Roman Catholic faith. The artists who have contributed to its glory are some of the best Italy has ever known—Bramante, Peruzzi, Raphael, and Michelangelo. Masterpieces await at every turn, from Bernini's magnificent bronze canopy to Michelangelo's Madonna della Pietà.

Please note: Should this excursion fall on a Sunday, it'll be moved to another day of the tour. Backpacks aren't allowed in the Vatican, and shorts and sleeveless shirts are strictly prohibited. Due to closures of certain entrances and pathways, wait times may extend to several hours during busy travel months. From December 24, 2024, to January 6, 2026, the Jubilee may impact if and when this excursion can run—should your departure be impacted, Go Ahead will inform you.

Day 7: Pasta-Making Class & Dinner

From \$119.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (4 hours, departs in the evening, dinner included)

In this hands-on cooking class led by an experienced Italian chef, you'll learn to make pasta—perhaps pillowy ravioli or castellane, a ridged shell pasta that's rolled into a long, oval shape—using traditional techniques you can keep on practicing when you get back home. Then, sit down for dinner and enjoy the dishes you've prepared, along with wine.

Day 8: Ancient Rome: St. Paul's Basilica & the Catacombs

From \$95.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (4 hours, departure time varies)

Descend into Rome's ancient catacombs, where early Christians buried saints and popes alongside commoners. A local guide will lead you through the burial chambers before your visit to St. Paul's Basilica, one of the four most important basilicas of Rome. Originally founded by Constantine the Great, the Basilica also houses the tomb of St. Paul.

Please note: Shorts and sleeveless shirts are not permitted within the Basilica. Also, this excursion involves extensive walking and may be challenging for claustrophobic travelers.

Extension excursion options

Day 10: Capri: A Day on the Iconic Island

From \$145.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (8 hours, departs in the morning)

Travel by ferry to the fabled isle of Capri, a beloved resort since the days of the Roman Republic. Weather permitting, you'll enjoy a boat ride around the island. Later, you'll enjoy free time to discover why everyone from Roman emperors to Sophia Loren has spent their vacations in Capri. If the weather prohibits a boat ride, you'll travel to the village of Anacapri, which offers stunning views of the surrounding scenery.

Please note: This excursion is weather-dependent. Travelers prone to seasickness should take the proper precautions.

*Optional excursions may be purchased up to three days prior to departure or while on tour. Pre-purchased optional excursions cannot be canceled within three days prior to departure or while on tour. Select optional excursions require advance booking and cannot be purchased or canceled after the advanced reservation deadline. Go Ahead Tours accepts payment by cash, Visa or MasterCard for optional excursions purchased on tour. Additional fees may apply for optional excursions purchased on tour. Excursions require a minimum number of participants to operate. Details and prices are subject to change. Due to seasonal hours of operation and availability, some excursions may not operate. If this occurs, you will be refunded any payments made for that excursion post-tour. Learn more at <https://www.goaheadtours.com/about/terms>.