ITALY ITINERARY

A 10 day highlights tour
# 10 day Italy highlights itinerary

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Are you dreaming of Italy and want some ideas to help you plan your itinerary?

This country full of history, culture, delicious food and incredible landscapes is a favorite destination for many.

But when it is your first visit or you are returning after a long while, where do you start?

We created this 10 day Italy itinerary that takes in all the highlights to help you plan your trip.

This article includes all the information you need to know to book your own Italy adventure - from booking flights, transport and accommodation to which attractions to see and selecting tours and activities.

We have also included links to our packing list for Italy and tips to know before you go.
10 days in Italy – itinerary overview

Day 1 – 3  Rome
Day 4 – 5  Florence
Day 6 – 7  Cinque Terre or Tuscany
Day 8  Milan
Day 9 – 10  Venice

Italy is a country that deserves to be enjoyed slowly, but we get it.. there's so much of the world to see, and a limited number of vacation days.

This itinerary packs a lot in and you probably won't feel rested when you arrive home. But you will feel exhilarated and a little in love with Italy. Included are the major cities and sights that most people visiting Italy want to see.

We see it as a guide to show you what is possible with 10 days in Italy and how to go about choosing where to stay and what to do. Use it as a template and add your own flair.

After all, you know your travel style and preferences the best.

If you wanted to slow the pace down a little you could skip Milan and add another day to Venice or Florence.

Unfortunately we couldn't squeeze in the Italian Lakes, Amalfi Coast and Sicily – you'll just have to come back for them.
Welcome to Italy and Rome!

One of the world’s greatest cities, Rome is where you start your Italian journey. It is a fun and vibrant city with a magnificent past stretching over 2,000 years.

You can see evidence of the Ancient Roman civilisation on almost every corner and of course the iconic monument – the Colosseum.

But Rome has evolved over the ages and it is this melange of Ancient, Baroque and medieval architecture that makes the city so special.
Day 1 – Fountains and statues

Check into your hotel, freshen up and go for a walk to get your bearings in the city.

A stroll through the historic centre (centro storico) takes you along cobbled streets until you stumble on the most incredible squares (piazzas) where fountains cascade over travertine marble sculptures.

Rome is a compact city and it is easy and mostly flat to walk around the old town. Simply wander the streets and maybe duck into one of the 900 churches in the city – some hold priceless art. Example – Chiesa di Sant'Ignazio di Loyola is a baroque masterpiece.

This is the beating heart of Rome and it is full of wonder. Click here for our map of highlights

Highlights

- Spanish Steps
- Trevi Fountain
- Pantheon
- Piazza Navona
**Where to eat in Rome**

There are many restaurants in the Campo de' Fiori area. Try Roscioli for their classic carbonara. If you want to explore further, head over the Tiber river to Trastevere and enjoy the atmosphere.

More info about where to eat in Rome in our – [food guide to Rome](#)

**Day 2 – Colosseum and Roman Forum**

Today's the day you meet Ancient Rome in all its glory.

Rise early and beat the crowds to view the Colosseum. This huge stadium is the largest amphitheatre ever built and once held up to 80,000 spectators cheering on their favorite gladiator.

The Colosseum is an iconic monument of the Roman Empire and is a must see site in Rome.

Next to the Colosseum there is a huge field of ruins known as the Roman Forum. This was the center of ancient Rome and where all the important government buildings and temples once stood.
Nearby Palatine Hill was a residential area for Roman nobility. This is one of the seven hills of Rome and provides incredible views of the city and ruins below.

Unless you are visiting in winter it is advisable to prebook tickets or a tour. This is because when you have limited time you don't want to waste it spending time in a line – and believe me, they are long and somewhat confusing.

*Your tickets to the Colosseum include the Roman Forum and Palatine Hill* – book tickets [here](#) or a guided tour [here](#)

The Colosseum is open from 8:30 am – 4:30 pm daily except January 1st, May 1st and December 25th. You can take advantage of later opening times in summer. There is no charge for children under 18 but they still need a ticket – [more information](#)

**Tips for visiting the Colosseum and surrounding area**

Take the metro Line B to Colosseo, Line 3 tram or bus lines 75 – 81 – 673 – 175 – 204

Wear comfortable shoes and bring water and a snack. The site is open to the elements so if it is cool you will need a jacket or coat and in summer a hat and sunscreen are advisable.

Be prepared for lines for security checks. You may not bring large bags or backpacks into the site.

There is a lift at the Colosseum to take those with small children or mobility issues to the upper levels.

There are minimal catering facilities on site. If you want to stop for lunch nearby, we recommend **Alle Carrette** [Via della Madonna dei Monti, 95] a casual pizza restaurant in the Monti district near the Colosseum.
After your visit to the Colosseum

Take a stroll around Monti, Rome's oldest district, and browse the boutiques or simply stop for gelato.

If you can't get enough of the ruins there are more to see at Trajan’s Market – the commercial hub of Ancient Rome. There is an interesting museum of artifacts here too – more information

Lastly, go to Piazza Venezia to marvel at the Altar of the Fatherland, the huge classical style monument to its first king and soldiers who served in the first world war.

You can take a lift to the Terrazza delle Quadrighe for incredible views of the city. Access is from the main entrance – more information
Day 3 – The Vatican

On your last day in Rome, explore the Vatican, home to the pope and thousands of architectural and art treasures.

Imposing St Peter’s basilica dominates the western side of the Tiber River and you can’t fail to be impressed by the grandeur of this monument to Christianity.

The Pope himself appears here in the Piazza san Pietro most Wednesdays to address the crowds. If you want to take part in the Papal Audience you should prepare yourself with these tips.

There are two main sites in the Vatican – St Peter’s and the Vatican Museums. There are queues for both areas but those for the museums are the longest. At peak times (mornings and during summer) the lines can be as long as 3 hours.

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Prebook your Vatican Museum tickets – book tickets here or a guided tour here
St Peter’s Basilica

St Peter’s is free to enter and view its incredible artwork and beauty including Michelangelo’s Pieta sculpture and dome also designed by the artist.

If views are your thing, then climb the stairs or take the elevator part of the way to the top of the dome (saving 300+ stairs). To get to the very top there are over 230 more stairs. It costs €10 with the elevator and €8 without. You can buy tickets at the kiosk after you pass security to enter the basilica.

You can also visit the tombs of kings, queens and former popes interred inside the basilica.

St Peter’s is open daily 7:00am to 6:30pm with exceptions for events.
The Vatican Museums

The Vatican’s collection of art and artifacts is one of the most extensive in the world.

Inside these walls are masterpieces by some of the most talented artists in history – Michelangelo, Raphael, and Leonardo da Vinci.

This is the most popular sights in Rome and attracts millions of visitors a year. It is one of those places you should see once in your lifetime. Expect to spend 2-3 hours in the museums before you reach the finale – the Sistine Chapel.

The Vatican Museums are open from Monday to Saturday from 09:00 am to 18:00 pm. An adult ticket is €17 [2018] Note – they are closed on most Sundays and other days throughout the year – check their site for more information

Highlights of the Vatican museums

- Sistine Chapel with its famous ceiling painted by Michelangelo
- Spiral staircase designed by Giuseppe Momo
- The Raphael Rooms – frescoes by Raphael and Michelangelo
- Gallery of Maps – 120 metres of painted topographical maps
- Sala Rotonda – a smaller scale version of the Pantheon
Tips for visiting the Vatican and surrounding area

Visiting St Peter’s and the Vatican Museums is a half day activity [3-4 hours] involving a lot of walking and crowds. We strongly advise that you prebook tickets to make the most of your time in Rome.

A strict dress code applies in both venues – knees and shoulders must be covered, no shorts and no hats can be worn.

Sistine Chapel – no photography is allowed and you must visit in silence

You may not bring large bags or backpacks into the basilica or museums but they can be checked

If you are traveling with kids under the age of 10 or who are easily bored and frustrated I would give the Vatican Museums a miss unless you book a special family tour. Go to St Peter’s and Castel Sant'Angelo instead.

After your visit to the Vatican

Honestly, this site can take a full day to explore especially if you also want to visit the Vatican Gardens [2 hours] and St Peter's tomb [another 2 hours – tickets are very limited – more information]

Catering on site is not brilliant so we suggest that you enjoy a long lunch followed by a walk along the Tiber to admire Castel Sant'Angelo otherwise known as Hadrian's tomb
Lunch suggestions – **Secondo Tradizione** [Via Rialto, 39, Roma] – classic Roman pasta dishes as well as gourmet cheese and cold cut meats or **Osteria delle Commari** [Via Santamaura, 23] – for a more traditional menu

**Recommended hotels in Rome**

We recommend staying in the centre of Rome so you can walk to most of the attractions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Hotel</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>More info</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upscale</td>
<td>Hotel Indigo Rome – St. George</td>
<td>A 5 star luxury hotel in the heart of the old city near vibrant Campo de’Fiori. Some rooms have balconies and there is a roof terrace</td>
<td><a href="#">click here for prices</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midrange</td>
<td>Antica Dimora Delle Cinque Lune</td>
<td>Close to the Vatican and Piazza Navona, this hotel has a rooftop terrace with sweeping views of the city</td>
<td><a href="#">click here for prices</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>Eccelso Hotel</td>
<td>This small hotel close to the Vatican is clean and modern and delivers tons of value</td>
<td><a href="#">click here for prices</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>HT6 Hotel Roma</td>
<td>Offers quadruple rooms in a great location close to Piazza Venezia</td>
<td><a href="#">click here for prices</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Getting around Rome**

Rome is mostly a walkable city but you may need to access transport depending on where you stay. We found the bus system to be slow and the metro limited for a short stay in central Rome but we were not staying near a metro station.

An individual ticket for bus, metro, tram and trains inside the municipality of Rome costs 1.50 € and is valid for 75 minutes.

You can buy tickets at metro stations, tabacchi or news stands. Remember to validate your ticket on the bus to avoid a fine.

We found it easier and faster to use taxis – they can be easily hired on the street. Just look for the taxi ranks. You can also book taxis using the MyTaxi app or try Uber for fixed price fares.
Transfer from Rome to Florence

Transit time from Rome to Florence on the fast speed train from Roma Termini to Florence Santa Maria Novella is 1½ hours.

Book your tickets for around 4 in the afternoon and you will be relaxing with your aperitif in Florence that evening.

Click here to book your train from Rome to Florence
Day 4 – 5: Florence

Beautiful Florence was the birthplace of the Renaissance and is now home to a hoard of art masterpieces, delicious food and some of Italy's best shopping.

Florence is a small city so it is easy to simply wander and enjoy roaming from one historic piazza to another. You literally walk the same paths as some of the most important people in history – Dante, Galileo and Donatello.

Even if you are not an art fanatic it's hard not to be charmed by the slower, more refined pace of Florence compared to Rome.
Arrival evening

Once you have checked into your accommodation (see below for recommendations), head out onto the streets of Florence to explore.

There is something quite magical about Piazza di Santa Croce at sunset. Have a drink at one of the bars lining the square and enjoy the goings on.

Did you know? Michelangelo’s tomb is found within Santa Croce

You could then go to dinner at Del Fagioli [Corso dei Tintori, 47-r, 50122 Firenze] – for a delicious steak florentine

For something a little more fancy La Terrazza terrace bar at the Hotel Continentale [Vicolo dell’Oro, 6, Firenze] has wonderful views of the Arno to enjoy while you sip your cocktail.
Then take a walk to Restaurante Santa Elisabetta, a great value fine dining option in central Florence.

Click here to find and book restaurants in Florence

If you just want a quick bite head to Mercato Centrale – this fabulous modern food hall has a vast array of casual dining options. Go to Piazza del Mercato Centrale – Via dell’Ariento and head up the escalators.

Day 1 – Santa Maria del Fiore Cathedral and Accademia (statue of David)

Florence is an art lovers paradise but even if (like me) you get museum fatigue after an hour or so, it would be almost criminal to miss out on the collections on show in Florence.

Today we start our art journey in Florence but first to the Cathedral that dominates the city.

Santa Maria del Fiore – Duomo, Baptistry, cupola and bell tower

This stunning collection of buildings is at the heart of Florence. Their exterior is inlaid with pink, white and green marble, that beautifully reflects the Tuscan light.
Building work started in the 13th century and the famous dome designed by Filippo Brunelleschi was added in the 15th century. It wasn't until the 19th century that the site was completed as we know it today.

The interior of the main cathedral is quite plain in contrast to the ornate detail outside but it also holds many treasures that it's worth taking the time to explore.

**Highlights**

- Duomo interior – look for Donatello's design among the 44 stained-glass windows
- Cupola – climb to the top for amazing views of Florence and The Last Judgement fresco
- Baptistery – exterior doors including a replica of Ghiberti's “Gates of Paradise” and mosaics
- Belltower – also known as Giotto's Campanile after its designer, with an intricate design

You can cover this on your own with a combined ticket entry (the Duomo on its own is free) but we recommend joining a full guided tour (about 2.5 hours) to get the most out of your experience – click for more information

Lines at the cathedral for security checks seem long but they move quickly.
If you want to climb the cupola or dome be aware that there are over 400 steps (and no elevator) and the passageways are small and narrow.

Large bags, backpacks and suitcases are not permitted in the cathedral. Only very small bags are allowed.

As with all churches in Italy, please make sure your shoulders and knees are covered and you remove your hat.

**Wandering and lunching**

By now you are no doubt hungry so it is time for a break. Just around the corner from the Duomo is [Enoteca Coquinarius](via delle oche 11, Firenze) where you can eat a delicious pasta lunch with wine for around €20.

**Eataly Florence** is close too at Via de ‘Martelli, 22 – here you can pick up supplies and marvel at the gourmet food on offer.

You can find all the places mentioned in [this map](#).

Now take a stroll around the old town of Florence. The Piazza della Repubblica is one of the main squares of the city and has been an important site since Roman times. These days it is a open space where buskers entertain crowds. There is a pretty carousel you can ride there too.

Onward to the Piazza della Signoria home to the Palazzo Vecchio (town hall), Neptune fountain and replica of the David statue. You can rest your legs under the loggia here before making your next stop.

Time for a gelato break! Walk back around the cathedral. On the other side you will find the incredible La Strega Nocciola artisan gelateria at Via Ricasoli, 16r.

That should keep you going for the short 5 minute walk up Via Roscioli to the Galleria dell’Accademia

**Galleria dell’Accademia**

Possibly the most famous statue in the world Michelangelo's nude David is the main attraction at the Galleria dell’Accademia.

Originally destined for the roof of the cathedral, the statue made of Carrara marble was first placed in the Piazza della Signoria before it was moved to the Accademia in 1910.
A replica stands outside the Palazzo Vecchio today but you need to see the original to take in its full beauty.

Apart from David, there are many other priceless works of art to see by Michelangelo, Botticelli and Bartolini.

Expect to spend an hour to an hour and a half here. The museum is open Tuesday to Sunday, 08:15 am – 18:50 pm. It is closed on Mondays – more information

One of the most popular attractions in Florence, it is advisable to prebook tickets for your visit to the Accademia. Note – tickets are for timed entry a 15 minute intervals – don't be late!

Click to book tickets for the Accademia
Views and dinner

After your art fix, there is time to freshen up before heading over the Arno for the most spectacular and iconic views of Florence.

There is a steep climb up the hill to Piazzale Michelangelo but I promise you it is worth it. (In any case, there are always taxis!) From here you can take in the panoramic view of the city below. It's simply breathtaking.

You will find an (overpriced) coffee bar and restaurant at the terrace below but we suggest taking a walk down the hill to the artistic San Niccolo neighbourhood.

Here you find a buzzing nightlife and some great restaurants. Our meal at Boccadarno [Via di S. Niccolò, 56r] was seriously good and lots of fun too.
Day 2 – Uffizi, Ponte Vecchio and Boboli Gardens

On your final day in Florence, enjoy a feast of art and explore the world of the Medici family that ruled Florence during the 15th century.

**Uffizi Gallery**

One of the finest art galleries in the world, the Uffizi has masterpieces around every corner from the priceless collection amassed by the Medici.

The collection was bequeathed to the city by the last remaining descendant of the family, Anna Maria Luisa de’ Medici who ensured it remained intact and is able to be enjoyed by so many people.
Highlights of the Uffizi Gallery

- The Birth of Venus by Sandro Botticelli
- Medusa by Caravaggio
- Doni Tondo by Michelangelo
- Venus of Urbino by Titian
- Filippo Lippi’s Madonna and Child
- Various works by Leonardo da Vinci

You could spend days exploring the treasures within.

The Uffizi is the most popular attraction in Florence and it gets crazily busy. You must book tickets in advance to avoid disappointment (except in winter). I cannot stress this enough.

There are a few ways to do this:

1. Buy tickets only and explore on your own – get your timed entry tickets here
2. Join a group tour where you can learn about (and easily find) the works of art – click for more info
3. Do a combined tour of the Palazzo Vecchio and Uffizi – click for more info

On our last visit to Florence we did the combined Palazzo Vecchio and Uffizi tour and loved walking through the secret passageway the Medici used to move between the two buildings.

Try and get to the Uffizi as early as possible to avoid the crush of people you will find there in all seasons except winter.

Tip – make sure to visit the terrace on the second floor for lovely views of the city and Duomo.
Stroll across the Ponte Vecchio to the Oltrano district for shopping and lunch

After all that art it is time to take a walk across the most famous bridge in Florence – the Ponte Vecchio. Also one of the oldest bridges in the city, there have been shops on the bridge since the 1300s.

Above the shops, the Medici built a private passageway called the Vasari corridor to move between the Uffizi and their newly built Pitti Palace on the other side of the river.

In 1593 that King Ferdinand I decreed that only goldsmiths and jewellers could have their shops on the bridge and that is the case to this day.

**Shopping in Florence**

Now is the time to start thinking about a special souvenir from your trip to Italy. If jewellery isn't your thing then the artisans of the Oltrano neighbourhood are sure to have something to tempt you.

Perhaps you would like some new leather gloves? Try Madova – Via de ‘Guicciardini, 1
Or a hand bound notebook with marbled papers? Visit Il Torchio – Via de ‘Bardi, 17

Sadly the San Lorenzo market on the other side of the river has lost its lustre and is mainly filled with tatty souvenirs and knock offs so Oltrano is really the place to go if you are looking for something unique and well made.

Note – Stores are generally closed on Sundays and on a Monday morning

Take time out for lunch at a casual trattoria – we like Trattoria Giovanni at Via Sant’Agostino, 38 or if you would like something lighter head to Carduccio at Sdrucciolo de ‘Pitti, 10

Boboli Gardens at the Pitti Palace

After lunch it's time for a long stroll around the Boboli Gardens of Palazzo Pitti. There are many formal and informal gardens to explore but you may want to simply relax.

For one last epic view of Florence you can head to the grounds of the Museo delle Porcellane up the hill directly facing the palace.
Buy tickets for the gardens at the main entrance for the Pitti Palace at Piazza de ‘Pitti, 1

**Recommended hotels in Florence**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Prices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upscale</td>
<td>Hotel Lungarno</td>
<td>Just 100m from the Ponte Vecchio, luxury 5* Hotel Lungarno has a rooftop terrace with incredible views of the bridge</td>
<td>click here for prices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midrange</td>
<td>Hotel Balestri</td>
<td>Right on the banks of the Arno and just a short walk from the main attractions, some of the rooms at this elegant hotel have views of the river</td>
<td>click here for prices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>Hotel Bodoni</td>
<td>A small, friendly hotel offering rooms and apartments and a decent breakfast close to Santa Croce. Has an elevator.</td>
<td>click here for prices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Hotel Globus</td>
<td>With a great location close to the San Lorenzo market, Hotel Globus offers decent sized quadruple rooms and a varied breakfast</td>
<td>click here for prices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Getting around Florence**

Florence is a very small city and you can walk from one side to another in 30 minutes or less.

If you have mobility issues or are just tired from walking then your best bet is a taxi – they are white and you can get them at the taxi stands around the city.

**Transfer to Cinque Terre, Siena or Milan**

When it is time to leave Florence, head straight to Santa Maria Novella train station where you can catch a connecting train to your next destination.

For the Cinque Terre – Monterosso al Mare, for Tuscany – Siena

[Click here to book your onward journey from Florence](#)
Day 6 – 7: Cinque Terre or Tuscany

This section of the itinerary is an option. Choose from either the stunning seaside towns of the Cinque Terre or the rustic beauty of Tuscany. I know, it's a very hard decision to make!

If you just can't choose then you could also stay in Florence and do day trips to both these places.

Option 1 – Cinque Terre

The Ligurian coastline is actually quite close to Florence making the Cinque Terre a natural add on to your trip to the major Italian cities.

Cinque Terre is the name given to the area of rugged coastline where five colorful villages hug the cliffs in spectacular fashion. Visiting this area provides quite a few “pinch yourself” moments.

Starting from the north the villages are: Monterosso al mare, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola and Riomaggiore.

You can easily take the train to the northern-most village – Monterosso – from Florence. The journey will take around 3 hours.
Recommended hotel in Monterosso

Locanda Il Maestrale is a popular choice in the old town. A friendly traditional hotel close to the beach, some of the rooms have frescoed ceilings and there is a terrace overlooking the old town. It is a 12 minute walk to the train station – [click here for prices]

Touring the Cinque Terre

There are a few ways you could do this depending on your mood, time of year and the weather.

On arrival explore the old town of Monterosso and take a walk along the beach. It is the largest stretch of sandy beach along this part of the coastline.

If you are hungry, try the seafood pasta at Ristorante Miky [Via Fegina 104]

Day 1 in the Cinque Terre

There are 3 ways to get around this region – by ferry, rail or foot (hiking).
10 day Italy highlights itinerary

Boats usually run between May and September but depending on the weather ferries may not run so you need to be prepared to be a bit flexible.

You can catch the ferry from Monterosso and stop at all the towns except Corniglia. Here is a link to the 2018 timetable and prices

If you feel like a bit of a splurge then this private boat excursion looks amazing.

But the most popular way to get around the villages is by train. The distance between each town is very short and you can buy separate tickets but the best thing to do is buy the Cinque Terre card at Monterosso station. It's available for one or two days and starts at €16 for an adult with a generous discount for families.

The card also includes access to the hiking trails and local buses.

If you are interested in doing some hikes in the area visit the National Park site to check if the paths are open as they are often closed for maintenance.

Enjoy your time exploring this beautiful part of the world. Each of the villages has a unique charm, which will be your favorite?
Day 2 in the Cinque Terre

Enjoy a lazy day on the beach at Monterosso. You can hire a lounger at one of the beach clubs – try Bagni Eden [Via Fegina, 7-11] – for around €10 per person – this gets you access to showers, bathroom facilities and a bar/cafe. It’s quite civilized!

Three is also a free beach – La Spiaggia del Gigante

Or if you are feeling energetic, hike from Monterosso to Vernazza for incredible views over the coastline and Vernazza itself. The return journey will take around 3 hours not including photo and cafe stops.

Note – the path is steep and has many steps.

In the mid afternoon, join the train to Milan – it takes 3 hours on the direct intercity train.
Option 2 – Siena, Tuscany

Sitting on three hills, in idyllic countryside, Siena has hundreds of small cobbled laneways adorned with flower boxes leading to wide piazzas where you can relax under the Tuscan sun.

It is also the perfect place to explore the surrounding famous wine regions.

You can either take a train to Siena from Florence – it takes about an hour and a half. Or you could hire a car from Florence for more flexibility.

Driving in this part of Italy is easy as long as you avoid the historic centre ZTL zones. You can read all our tips on driving in Italy here.
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We get the best deals on car hire in Italy with Rentalcars.com – they search all the major car companies for the best deals.

Recommended hotels in Siena
Stay in town at NH Siena - A modern hotel right in the heart of the old town, close to the train station and main attractions. An American style breakfast is served each morning and there is street or paid parking close by - click to see the latest prices

Stay in the country at Villa Scacciapensieri – perfect spot for experiencing the Tuscan countryside within 15 minutes from Siena by bus. This boutique style hotel offers an on site restaurant, swimming pool and free parking close by - click here to see the latest prices

Touring Siena and Tuscany
Depending on where you choose to stay, in the city or just outside (see below), take the time to relax and take a stroll around the city or the beautiful gardens of the villa.

If you are eating in town try Osteria da Divo [Via Franciosa 25, Siena] close to the cathedral. Specializing in Tuscan cuisine, this restaurant also boasts a special menu featuring white truffles!
Day 1 in Tuscany – Head to the hills!

If you hired a car, head south along the Via Cassia (SR 2) through the UNESCO listed Val D'Orcia. Stop at some of the beautiful hilltop towns and enjoy the peaceful atmosphere and thousands of photo opportunities.

Highlights

- Buonconvento – considered one of the most beautiful villages in Italy
- Pienza – designed to be the perfect town by its founder – a pope! – read our full guide here
- Montalcino – climb the ramparts for views of the valley and stop in town for wine tasting
- Sasso di Sole – wonderful winery – you must prebook your visit – more info
- Montepulciano – famous for Renaissance architecture and wine tasting

We had an amazing lunch on the terrace at Osteria La Porta in Montichiello – highly recommended

If you don't have a car and this is sounding all too tempting then you can join a small group tour of southern Tuscany from Siena that takes in the Val D'Orcia, wineries and of course lunch! – click here for more info
Day 2 in Tuscany – Explore Siena

Spend the day exploring Siena. Start in Il Campo, the main square, where the city’s famous Palio horse race takes place on 2 July and 16 August each year.

During the rest of the year the piazza’s cafes are a popular spot to relax with a coffee or pre dinner drink. From here it is a short walk to the magnificent Duomo with mosaic floors and statues by Bernini and Michelangelo.

Stop at Il Magnifico at Via dei Pellegrini, 27 behind the Duomo to try the local pastries and fortify yourself for an 88 metre and 420 step climb up the Torre del Mangia. Here you have stunning views of the city and surrounding countryside.

Enjoy shopping and wandering around Siena for the rest of the day. At Toscana Lovers [Via delle Terme, 33] you can find beautifully handcrafted local goods. Ignore the name, the wares are very special.

Suggested lunch spot – Taverna di San Giuseppe at Via Giovanni Duprè, 132

Transfer to Milan
The train journey to Milan takes just over 3½ hours including a transfer in Florence. Aim to leave Siena around 15:00pm so you can enjoy pre dinner drinks in Milan!

**Option 3 – day trips from Florence**

If you would rather stay in Florence (and who could blame you!), then you can join a tour or take a train to some of the nearby places in Tuscany or even the Cinque Terre.

**Journey to Pisa by train**

Trains run several times an hour to Pisa from Florence Santa Maria Novella station.

The journey takes about an hour and it is a 20 minute walk to the famous leaning tower and the Piazza dei Miracoli (Field of Miracles).

*Book your train tickets to Pisa*
Explore the Tuscan countryside

Isn't this scene incredible? You can only find it in Tuscany. If you are staying in Florence, I think it would be a shame to miss out on this beauty. Medieval hilltop towns and wineries are just some of the attractions.

There are a couple of ways to do this.

You could hire a car in Florence and explore at your leisure. Either go south east to visit Montepulciano, Pienza and Montalcino OR south west to the area around San Gimignano. Read our tips on driving in Italy before you go.

Or, let someone else do all the driving while you taste the wine! Here are some tours you might like:

- Visit San Gimignano, Siena, and Chianti on this full day tour – includes wine tasting – [click here to book](#)
- Wine tasting experience in the Chianti region (half day) – [click here to book](#)
- Discover Montalcino, Pienza and Montepulciano on a full day wine tour – [click here to book](#)
**Day trip to Lucca**

One of our favorite cities in Italy, Lucca is a walled medieval city with lots of charm. The journey from Florence by train is just under 1½ hours.

From the train station it is a short walk to the city walls. Here you can hire bikes to ride around the city or simply enjoy a stroll on top of the walls – now converted into an elegant park.

Read our full guide to Lucca [here](#)

**Book train tickets to Lucca**

**Day trip to the Cinque Terre**

If you simply can't miss the stunning seascapes of Liguria, then you can take a guided day tour of the Cinque Terre from Florence.

Your full day tour includes a coach transfer to the Cinque Terre from Florence and a guide to help you make the most of your time in the area. There is even time for a swim if you are keen – [click here for more info](#)
Transfer to Milan

The best way to get to Milan is to catch the train. Plan to arrive around 6pm so you can enjoy the famous Milanese aperitivo (pre dinner drinks). The intercity train from Florence to Milan takes an hour and a half.

Day 8: Milan

Milan is Italy’s most modern cosmopolitan city and lots of fun. We are taking a whistle stop tour here but it is worthy of a longer visit and an excursion to nearby Lake Como if you have more time.

You will arrive into Milano Centrale, the main train station – a stunning building with grand proportions. Go to your hotel, check in and freshen up quickly.

Take a taxi or the efficient Metro system to the Piazza Duomo. It’s time for aperitivo!
Aperitivo are traditionally pre dinner drinks served with snacks served between 19:00 and 21:00pm. This has evolved into more substantial feasting with many bars hosting an aperitivo buffet. And the best place to try this is Milan.

Where to go for aperitivo in Milan

**Terrazza Aperol** [Via Ugo Foscolo, 1] – with an unbeatable location overlooking the Duomo, and piazza below, you don't go to Terrazza Aperol for the food but rather the drinks (aperol spritz of course!) and the atmosphere. You may need to wait a little while for a table on the terrace but it is worth it.

**Camparino Bar** inside Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II was opened by Gaspare Campari in 1867. Legend has it that opera great Verdi enjoyed a drink or two there.
Recommended hotels in Milan

As we will only have 24 hours in Milan, suggested hotels are near the station.

Midrange - NYX Milano – Just minutes on foot from Milan central station, NYX is one of Milan’s coolest hotels. Rooms have a sleek and modern design and service is attentive thanks to the friendly staff - click here to check prices

Budget - Glam Milano - This modern hotel close to the station is popular with business travelers and families. Some rooms have balconies with views of the beautiful Milan Centrale building - click here to check prices

Click here to read our full guide of places to stay in Milan

Milan highlights

Most visitors come to Milan to see Leonardo Da Vinci’s The Last Supper painting and the city’s soaring gothic cathedral and elegant shopping arcade Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II.
This itinerary helps you see all of this but you need to do some forward planning.

You must prebook tickets to visit the Last Supper well in advance – click here to book the tickets. It is best to do this at least 2 months in advance.

If you don't want to organize the details for yourself, consider this 3 hour Milan highlights tour that will give you some shopping time before your train to Venice.

This is also a useful option if you were not able to secure advance tickets.

**Morning in Milan**

Take Metro Line 3 for the 10 minute journey to the Duomo from Milano Centrale station. Buy your Metro ticket at the station ticket machines – it is €4.50 for an unlimited day pass.

If you arrive just before the opening time of 09:30 armed with your pre-booked pass you will have a couple of hours to look around the cathedral and take in the views from the terrace before heading across town.

Milan’s Duomo is the fifth largest Christian church in the world and an icon of the city. Building started on the site in the 14th century and has continued for centuries. The intricate exterior is made from Condoglian marble from Lake Maggiore brought to Milan by a series of canals.

The cathedral is decorated with over 3,400 statues and 145 gargoyles and is an architectural masterpiece.

If you are hungry, after your visit to the Duomo try Luini’s famous panzerotti (savory donuts) around the corner at Via Santa Radegonda, 16

From the Duomo take Metro Line 1 four stops to Conciliazione station from where it is a 5 minute walk to Santa Maria delle Grazie
Around midday

The church of Santa Maria delle Grazie is where you view The Last Supper by Da Vinci. It truly is a magnificent work of art that is still in place exactly where the master painted it – on the wall of the refectory in the church.

Tickets are restricted and must be prebooked in advance. You enter the climate controlled chamber as a small tour group and can view the painting for 15 minutes.

Click here to book Last Supper Tickets

Read more about Da Vinci’s Milan

Head back to Milano Centrale to catch your final train to Venice.

Transfer to Venice

The direct train journey from Milan to Venice takes around 2.5 hours. Grab a snack or some food to go at Milano Centrale – at Bistro Centrale you can get freshly squeezed juices, salads and sandwiches.

Or just go straight to Venchi near the train platforms for your daily gelato.
Day 9 – 10: Venice

Nothing can prepare you for the uniquely beautiful sight that is Venice. The city built on canals is a fitting finale to your Italian trip with its grandeur and mystery.

As you walk around the iconic sights and back canals, take time to breathe in the air and savour the city.

Arriving in Venice

You arrive into Venice at Santa Lucia train station, from here it is a quick education into life on the water. To reach your hotel you have a few options.

Most places in Venice can be reached on foot however carrying your luggage over a hundred tiny bridges is quite exhausting.

You can take a vaporetto or water bus from stop Ferrovia close to the station to the stop nearest your hotel and walk from there. A one way ticket on the vaporetto is €7.50 per person. Unless you plan to do a lot of vaporetto trips it does not make sense to buy a pass.
Most places are a short walk from the Grand Canal on vaporetto Line 1 but make sure to check with your hotel for directions. For a map with all the vaporetto stops – click here

If you want your first experience in Venice to be glamorous, hire one of the water taxi boats. They have their own pier near the Scalzi Bridge or you can organise a private arrival transfer here.

They will take you to the side canal nearest your hotel in impeccable style but this is definitely not a budget option.

**First evening in Venice**

Once you have checked into your hotel, explore the neighbourhood you are staying in. Our best advice is to ask your hotel for recommendations of nearby *bacari* (bars).

There are 1000s of bacari across the city serving Venetian bar snacks called cicchetti. Many of them are seafood based but you will also find polpette (meatballs) and other delicious savory treats. Make sure to order a glass of the local prosecco to celebrate your time in Italy.

To read our guide to eating in Venice click here
## Recommended hotels in Venice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Prices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upscale</td>
<td>Baglioni Hotel Luna</td>
<td>This boutique luxury hotel is down a quiet side canal near the Rialto Bridge. The property is decorated in traditional Venetian style and has a rooftop terrace</td>
<td><a href="#">click to check prices</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midrange</td>
<td>Hotel Ai Reali</td>
<td>This charming boutique hotel is down a quiet side canal near the Rialto Bridge. The property is decorated in traditional Venetian style and has a rooftop terrace</td>
<td><a href="#">click to check prices</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
<td>Hotel Al Ponte Mocenigo</td>
<td>A friendly traditional Venetian style hotel in Santa Croce neighbourhood very close the San Stae vaporetto stop</td>
<td><a href="#">click to check prices</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Hotel Flora</td>
<td>A small and friendly hotel in a great location near Piazza San Marco. Offers triple and family rooms</td>
<td><a href="#">click to check prices</a></td>
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Day 1 – San Marco and Doge’s Palace

After breakfast head to iconic Piazza San Marco. This huge square is home to the two most important buildings in Venice – St Mark’s Basilica and the Doge’s Palace (Palazzo Ducale).

Here you will also find the campinile (bell tower) of the cathedral, the famous cafes of St Mark’s Square and the bronze winged lion statue – the symbol of Venice.

Tip – a cup of coffee or meal at one of the cafes in St Mark’s Square is one of the most expensive you’ll ever have – you have been warned!

The Venetian Republic was one of the most powerful forces in Europe for hundreds of years, extending their influence across the Mediterranean and beyond. There is no better way to see this than in these incredible buildings made from the profits of trade.

The elaborate Byzantine exterior of the Basilica is unlike any other church in Italy. And if you think the exterior is ornate, you should see inside. The interior is covered with gold and stunning mosaics.
Next door to San Marco, the Doge's Palace is no less dramatic. This was the former residence of the elected leader of the Venetian republic. The complex also housed administrative offices in extravagant style. You can tour the rooms and even walk over the famous Bridge of Sighs.

Both these buildings are a must do in Venice and are extremely popular. To make the most of your time we strongly recommend buying skip the line tickets. You still need to pass security and we hear there is a long line for this on top of the ticket line but it is worth the extra expense.

We recommend buying a combined tour ticket of Palace and Basilica. These tours last around 2 hours and you see both buildings.

If you want to visit them separately the details are below

- St Mark's Basilica – book tickets [here](#) or a guided tour [here](#)
- Doge's Palace – book tickets [here](#) or a guided tour [here](#)

Remember the strict dress code to be observed in churches – knees and shoulders must be covered, no shorts and no hats can be worn.

Also note – the basilica is closed to visitors until 2pm on Sundays while mass is taking place. You can still access the Basilica Museum (€5) from where you access the second floor terrace. As you can imagine the views are wonderful.
Afternoon in Venice

Now you have the major attractions out of the way it is time to explore the Venice we love best. The side canals and laneways are fun to explore and get lost in.

In fact it’s probably a good time to mention that Google maps doesn’t work so well in Venice but that’s part of the charm.

Wind your way through the Castello district to Campo San Giovanni e Paolo. Along the way you might stop for lunch at Osteria Raja di JaMa [Ruga Giuffa 4864, Castello] – famous for cicchetti and fish dishes – or stumble upon Libreria Acqua Alta [Calle Longa S. Maria Formosa, 5176/b, Castello] – a wonderful bookshop where the wares are piled high in gondolas.

Once you get there, the piazza is a large open space lined with cafes and restaurants that is home to yet another incredible church filled with treasures. Enjoy the relaxed atmosphere and watch the passing foot traffic from one of the cafes.
A gondola!

Of course you must ride in a gondola. You can find them all around Venice and they are easy to book.

The set rate is €80 (cash) for 30 minutes for up to 6 people. So if you are on a budget try to find some people willing to share the ride. We like to choose one in the side canals off the Grand Canal so you can get both the Grand Canal and smaller canal experience.

If you want to book your gondola ride you can do so here but it really isn't necessary.

Best view of Venice

Now meander back to Piazza San Marco and find the San Marco S. Zaccaria vaporetto stop. Take Line 2 to San Giorgio Maggiore on the other side of the lagoon.

The views from the bell tower here are incredible and there is a lift that takes you all the way to the top.
Evening in Venice

As this may be your last night in Italy, take time to enjoy a meal by the water with some of the best views in the world. In a quiet area of the Dorsoduro district, Ristorante Lineadombra [Dorsoduro 19, 30123] has a terrace that looks out towards San Marco and an acclaimed menu to match.

Click here for more hidden secrets in Venice

Day 2 – Rialto market and Burano

On your last day in Venice, rise early and head to the Rialto fish market and watch the fisherman bring in the catch of the day. The market is a bustling hive of activity where you can see 100s of different species of fish and all manner of seafood.

This is also your chance to walk across the famous Rialto bridge and take your hero shot of the Grand Canal before the crowds appear.

If it is a sunny day, plan to spend a part of it in Burano – a small island not far from Venice famous for its Instagram friendly colorful houses and lace making skills. You can also stop at Murano (famous for glassmaking and Torcello).
Burano is such a pretty place to wander around and enjoy the different hues and views down its small canals. If you are there around lunch time, Trattoria al Gatto Nero on Via Giudecca 88 is the place to eat the island’s famous dish – squid ink risotto.

To get there take the number 12 vaporetto line from San Zaccaria stop near San Marco. The trip takes around 45 minutes. One way fares on the vaporetto water bus were €7.50 in September 2017 so a day pass at €20 is the most cost effective way to visit all the islands.

Alternatively you can take a tour of the islands with a guide to help you navigate the vaporetto lines – click here for more info

If the weather is not being kind then there are wonderful museums and galleries to explore in Venice. We loved Ca’Rezzonico – a stunning palace overlooking the Grand Canal – and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection – one of Italy’s most important modern art museums.

You could also do a food tour of the famous cicchetti bars and classic dishes of the city. This was one of our favorite experiences in Venice. We’ll never forget all the different tastes and insight into this unique city and culture – more information
10 day Italy highlights itinerary

Summary

ITALY
10 DAY ITINERARY OVERVIEW

Day 1  Rome - Fountains and statues
Day 2  Rome - Colosseum and ancient Rome
Day 3  Rome - Vatican
Day 4  Florence - Duomo and Accademia
Day 5  Florence - Uffizi Gallery and Boboli Gardens
Day 6  Cinque Terre or Tuscany
Day 7  Cinque Terre or Tuscany
Day 8  Milan - City highlights
Day 9  Venice - St Mark's Square
Day 10  Venice - Burano
Trip preparation

When to go

Italy is wonderful all year round but we prefer to visit in the shoulder seasons in Spring and Fall/Autumn. At these times the weather is mild and great for sightseeing and there are fewer crowds. The exception is Easter which is usually busy.

Summer can be very hot, particularly in Rome and the south, and air-conditioning is not common except in upscale hotels. This is also peak season for visitors so all the main attractions and areas like the Cinque Terre are very busy and prices are more expensive.

In August most Italians are on vacation so services and accommodation may not be fully available depending on where you stay.

During winter you will miss the crowds but prepare for cold weather and for some places to be closed eg Cinque Terre restaurants and hotels.
10 day Italy highlights itinerary

**Booking your flights**

If you have a rough idea of when you want to go to Italy then keep an eye on Google Flights for the best deals.

This itinerary can be done forwards or backwards flying into or out of Rome and Venice although you may find it more cost effective to book a round trip ticket from either city and transit by train or air back to your departure point.

The main international airport in Rome is Leonardo da Vinci at Fiumicino (FCO) and in Venice it is Venice Marco Polo (VCE).

**Booking accommodation**

Try to book your accommodation at least 3 months in advance and earlier at peak times to avoid being stuck with minimal choice.

We use Booking.com and AirBnB to book accommodation in Italian cities. If we are staying only a few days we prefer to use hotels which is why the recommendations in this itinerary are from Booking.com.

When we are traveling as a family it is usually better value to rent an apartment for longer stays – you can find these on both Booking.com and AirBnB.

If you are new to AirBnB and booking vacation rentals then you might like to check out our tips for finding the best accommodation on these sites. You can also get a credit for your first AirBnB booking if you use this link.

**Rail tickets and transfers**

Traveling by train is the best way to get around Italy for this type of trip. The trains are efficient and clean and will pick you up and drop you off right in the centre of the city which is exactly where you want to be.

There really is no need to prebook train tickets. You can buy them easily enough at the train station. But, if you are like us and want to have everything organized before you go then Rail Europe have an easy to use online booking system.

You can also book directly on the Italian train system – this guide is an excellent source of information on how to do this.

We do NOT recommend buying a rail pass for Italy as you get much better value when you buy separate tickets.
10 day Italy highlights itinerary

**Booking tours**

You need to book tours around a month in advance and earlier in peak tourist times over summer.

We mainly use booking engine [Get Your Guide](#) to find and book tickets and tours in Europe. Having tried booking directly with the Italian attractions sites you will learn it is a bit of a pain.

Get Your Guide makes booking the tickets and keeping them with you on your smart phone easy. You can read our full review of Get Your Guide [here](#). You can book tours with Get Your Guide [here](#).

Our favorite tour company in Italy is [The Roman Guy](#). Their passionate guides take small group tours to the major attractions all over Italy. Use this code – UntoldItaly – for a 5% discount on most small group tours with The Roman Guy.

Note – There are some attractions that we believe you must book *skip the line tickets* to avoid disappointment and incredibly long lines.
Rome
- Colosseum (includes Roman Forum and Palatine Hill) – book tickets here or a guided tour here
- Vatican museums – book tickets here or a guided tour here

Click here for our full guide to recommended tours in Rome

Florence
- Uffizi Gallery timed priority entrance – book tickets here or a guided tour here
- Accademia Gallery for Michelangelo's David – book tickets here

Milan
- Milan cathedral and rooftop tickets – click here
- Da Vinci's Last Supper tickets – click here (must book at least 2 months in advance)

Venice
- St Mark's Basilica – book tickets here or a guided tour here
- Doge's Palace – book tickets here or a guided tour here

Getting to and from the airport

Rome airport transfers
The express train between Fiumicino Airport and Rome's main train station – Stazione Termini – costs €14 and the journey takes about 30 minutes.

The train arrives Termini station at track number 24 and runs every half hour at 23 and 53 minutes past the hour between 06:30am until 23:30pm. It is a 10-15 minute walk from the airport terminal to where you catch the train.

You can take a taxi from the taxi ranks at the airport. Prices are capped at €50 [2018] for journeys into central Rome. Bear in mind that taxis are small and can generally hold 3 adults and 3 large cases comfortably.

For peace of mind and if you are traveling in a group book an airport transfer – click here for information and prices
Venice airport transfers

When it is time to leave beautiful Venice you have a few options. Take note that the airport is on the mainland, not the islands.

The easiest way is to leave by water. The water bus company Alilaguna runs regular shuttles (every 15 -30 minutes in peak season) from the islands on the lagoon to the airport stopping at San Marco and Rialto (main stops). The fare is €15 and the journey takes 1½ hours – you can book online here.

For a glamorous departure hire a private boat transfer or shared transfer in a water taxi – journey times and prices increase depending on number of people and exclusivity. A direct private transfer to the airport takes around 45 minutes.

You can also head to Piazzale Roma and take a taxi to the airport from there or to Santa Lucia station for an onward train journey.
Packing guide and travel tips

Before you depart on your trip, it is a good idea to do some research on how things are different in Italy compared to your home country. We wrote an essential travel tips guide for Italy - you can find it here.

Once you begin your packing, remember that Italy is a big country. You should prepare for seasonal weather variations across the regions. We wrote a full guide on what to pack for your trip to Italy to help your planning - click here for the packing guide.

So there you have it, Italy and some of her most loved highlights over 10 glorious days.

As mentioned at the start of the article, use this 10 day Italy itinerary as a guide for your own adventures. Ideally you would have more time but often that's just not possible.

If you want to slow things down then go right ahead. Check out our Italy page for further inspiration and ideas for your trip to Italy.

Buon Viaggio! Have a great time in Italy.

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