

The Italian Cultural Society of Sacramento Presents:

Hidden Gems of Central Italy

Montepulciano, Bagnovignoni, Pienza, Monte Oliveto, Montalcino, Cortona, Perugia, Assisi, Gubbio, Spello, Todi, Orvieto, Special Rome !



HOSTED BY
PATRIZIA

25 May to 04 June, 2019 -11 days

\$4,499/*double occupancy

☆☆ Tour Includes:☆☆



- ♥ Beautiful, Boutique Hotels, Resorts and Agriturismi
- ♥ All buffet breakfasts
- ♥ All Multi Course Dinners
- ♥ Full time Tour Manager/Concierge
- ♥ English speaking local guides
- ♥ Deluxe Motor-Coach
- ♥ Multiple sightseeing Tours and Museum Admissions
- ♥ Special Cooking Class and Dinner
- ♥ Multiple Wine Tasting Tours
- ♥ Olive Oil and Special Cheese tasting
- ♥ Breakfast in the Vatican Pine Garden

Price is per person double occupancy. Single Supplement fee for Private Room is \$900. Price includes portorage for one large bag, local hotel and city taxes. NOT INCLUDED: Airfare to Italy and tips of 150 Euro per person. Please read terms and conditions.



The Best Small Group Tours to Italy

Italian Cultural Society

Phone: 916 482-5900 Email: Italy@italiancenter.net

www.italiancenter.net

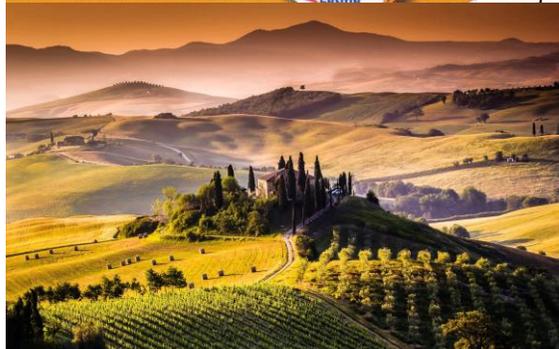
Italy's Hidden Gems Tour!



Discover Italy's "hidden treasures" with this **first time offered** Italian Cultural Society exclusive **Hidden Gems Tour**. This tour is truly unique and allows travelers to experience Italy's special magic in the company of a small group and enjoying carefully selected meals, and exceptional resorts and country estates. Our tour highlights Italy's smaller towns, like the medieval hilltop hamlet of Montepulciano, and the Renaissance Utopia of Pienza, and the serene majesty of Assisi. It allows travelers to experience the breathtaking Tuscan and Umbrian countryside, and delights travelers seeking unique opportunities like enjoying breakfast in the Vatican Pine Cone Courtyard, and a

cooking class and ceramic tour in Deruta. Every day of the tour will bring to life the finest Italy has to offer in art, architecture, culture, wine, food and scenic beauty.

Our tour is carefully planned to maximize the beauty of Italy and to minimize the hassles of traveling. The tour begins in Florence and ends in Rome. We will follow part of the famous VIA FRANCIGENA the Pilgrim's road from Canterbury to Rome, but we will do so in luxury and comfort. We will experience the real. "Dolce vita"! **BUON VIAGGIO!!**



ITINERARY: HIDDEN GEMS May 25 – June 4 2019

Saturday, May 25 2019

Day 1: Departure

Depart the US for your flight to Italy; enjoy Dinner and Breakfast and in-flight movies.

Sunday, May 26 2019

Day 2: Arrival

Arrival at Florence Airport and transfer to your hotel in Tuscany, where you will be staying for the next 3-nights. Group welcome and orientation meeting before we enjoy a delicious three-course welcome dinner at the hotel. Welcome to Italy!

~ Dinner at your hotel in Tuscany ~

Monday, May 27 2019

Day 3: Val d'Orcia: Montepulciano, Bagnovignoni, Pienza



After a delicious breakfast at the hotel, today we discover the Val d'Orcia: this is the Tuscany that one sees on postcards. We will drive from Montepulciano to Pienza, along one of the most beautiful roads in Italy enjoying enchanted landscapes and fantastic panoramas. We will visit the charming medieval village of Pienza, widely known as the "ideal city of the Renaissance". Pienza is the city of *cacio*, cheese! The fragrant 'Pecorino of Pienza' (a luscious cheese made from sheep's milk) is renowned and highly prized worldwide. We will enjoy Pecorino cheese tasting accompanied by local wines.

Our next stop will be Bagnovignoni, known since the Middle Ages because of its position on the Via Francigena, (the Pilgrim's path from

Canterbury to Rome). These 125°F thermal baths were well known even in Etruscan times, and were definitely enjoyed by the Romans, who consecrated these waters to the Nymphs. This Tuscan village doesn't have a main square, it has a big pool instead, which the locals used to bath in (But don't get any ideas! nowadays taking a dip is strictly forbidden!)

Our day includes a visit to the hilltop village of Montepulciano, with its elegant historic center, its Piazza Grande dominated by the beautiful tower and the Gothic-façade of the Palazzo Comunale, the town hall and the Cathedral, dating to the end of the 1500s.

Montepulciano is best known internationally for its *Vino Nobile*, considered one of the best Tuscan wines, it is made with the grapes grown in the vineyards surrounding Montepulciano. We will enjoy a wine tasting of this amazing wine at a top local cellar. *Vino Vino everywhere!* ~ Breakfast & Dinner at your hotel in Tuscany ~

Tuesday, May 28 2019

Day 4: Via Francigena: Sant'Antimo, Monte Oliveto Maggiore & Montalcino



After breakfast, we will enjoy a full day excursion to the Abbey of Sant'Antimo, Monte Oliveto Maggiore and Montalcino. According to ancient legend, Carlo Magno (Charlemagne), stopped to rest here while traveling the Via Francigena and founded the abbey. Next, we visit the Abbey of Monte Oliveto Maggiore with its splendid monastic complex, and a treasure trove of incredible artworks. The history of the Abbey begins in 1313 and the structure follows the classic style for Benedictine abbeys.

Finally we reach the fairy-tale village of Montalcino, renowned for its world-famous Brunello wine. Montalcino has remained practically unchanged over the centuries, and maintains its 13th-

century defence walls and historic center dominated by a 14th-century fortress.

Climb to the top of the hill, and be greeted with stunning views of the surrounding valleys, lush vineyards, olive groves, and scenic fields and other little villages. We will be living the dream captured in so many postcards.

The day will end with a wine tasting in a characteristic local cellar. *Vino Vino everywhere!*

~ Breakfast & Dinner at your hotel in Tuscany ~

Wednesday, May 29 2019

Day 5: Leaving Tuscany to Umbria: Cortona & Perugia



After breakfast at the hotel we will check-out and depart for Cortona, a beautiful city which lies in the mountains between the Valdichiana and Tevere Valley. Cortona was a very important center of Etruscan civilization, and these ancient settlements remain at the core of the city's identity. Cortona is surrounded by two kilometers of the Etruscan walls, which date back to the 5th century BC, and are still standing today. After visiting the town center, we will enjoy a special visit to an olive-oil producer to taste the real extra virgin olive oil obtained by cold pressing of the best local olives.

In the afternoon, we will enter the region of Umbria, one of the only landlocked regions in Italy. Umbria's main city, Perugia, dates back to antiquity, and is a cultural and architectural masterpiece. Perugia has two important Universities, The University of Perugia was founded in 1308, and the University for Foreigners is Italy's most important university for studying Italian language. Perugia also has one of the most extensive museum collections in Italy. With its vibrant cultural center, universities and internationally influential expos, an amazing Jazz festival and a cosmopolitan atmosphere Perugia is certain to become a favorite destination. There are many steps to climb in Perugia and luckily, there are many escalators along the way. We will enjoy strolling Corso Vanucci, visiting La Rocca Paolina, the fortress, the Cathedral of San Lorenzo and the incredible Maggiore fountain.

Check-in at your hotel in Umbria, welcome dinner and overnight-stay.

~ Breakfast at your hotel in Tuscany; Dinner at your hotel in Umbria ~

Thursday, May 30 2019

Day 6: Assisi and Santa Maria degli Angeli and Gubbio



After enjoying breakfast at our hotel, we will visit Assisi. Assisi is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and a breathtakingly beautiful small town. It is also the home of St. Francis, who renounced all his worldly possessions and devote his life to helping the needy. The beautiful Basilica is dedicated to St. Francis and his Franciscan order. The Cathedral is perched on Mount Subasio and it overlooks the entire valley, also dedicated to St. Francis. The Basilica has a great spiritual value for Christians, and it is a monument of great artistic and architectural value as well.

Our visit will continue with Santa Maria degli Angeli Basilica

located at the foot of the hills of Assisi and protecting the Porziuncola, where San Francesco is said to have founded the first group of the Order of the Minor Friars in 1209, and the Chapel of Transit where the Saint died on October 3, 1226.

In the afternoon, we will visit Gubbio, a well-preserved gem and medieval hill town with a compact center and Medieval, Gothic, and Renaissance monuments built of grey limestone and offering great views over the breathtaking countryside. Just outside the town is a Roman amphitheatre, and many other treasures.

~ Breakfast & Dinner at your hotel in Umbria ~

Friday, May 31 2019

Day 7: Cooking class and ceramic tour

Late breakfast today and time to relax before departing for a tour of Deruta. Deruta is considered to produce the finest majolica ceramics in the world. Everywhere there are shops, factories and the Deruta pottery schools. You have come to the right place if you are hunting for traditional jars, terracotta pots in which oil was stored or "scine", basins where laundry was washed with ashes. Many artists from Deruta have their art exhibited at the Louvre Museum and many other great museums around the world!

Italian food has been voted "the most delicious food in the world". This afternoon we will have the opportunity to learn from a master chef. We will enjoy a hands-on cooking class in the countryside and we will enjoy a tasty dinner based on the dishes we prepared during our lesson.

~ Breakfast at your hotel in Umbria, countryside cooking class and dinner ~

Saturday, June 01 2019

Day 8: Spello, Todi and Orvieto



Breakfast at the hotel, check-out and departure to Rome. En route we will visit Spello, Todi and Orvieto.

Spello, nestled on the southern part of Mount Subasio, between Assisi and Foligno, and is considered one of "The Most Beautiful Villages of Italy" for its significant natural, cultural and artistic heritage. The ancient town center is of Umbrian origin and was an important Roman town given the title "Splendidissima Colonia Giulia".

Next we visit the splendid art town of Todi, which is a perched high on top of a hill overlooking the Middle Tiber Valley. Todi's great historic, art and architectural heritage makes it one of the most beautiful hamlets in Umbria.

Before leaving Umbria we visit Orvieto, a spectacular town of Etruscan origin perched high above the Paglia River Valley. The cathedral of Orvieto in considered a masterpiece of the Italian medieval and renaissance art for its great mosaics and frescos. It is one of the most beautiful churches in Italy, and that is saying something!

Arrival to the Rome in the evening, check-in and typical dinner at a local restaurant.

Overnight stay in Rome.

~ Breakfast in Umbria, Optional dinner in Rome ~

Sunday, June 02 2019

Day 9: Trastevere: Villa Farnesina, Palazzo Corsini and Santa Maria

Today we will explore Trastevere, on the west bank of the Tiber. This lovely Roman neighborhood has maintained a centuries old atmosphere and still has narrow, stone paved streets lined by medieval houses.

This area made our "gems" list and we will visit a Trastevere jewel, the lovely Villa Farnesina, an opulent Renaissance villa, home to many incredible frescoes by artists such as Raphael. Across is the Palazzo Corsini, a baroque palace with a collection of antique art by Titian and Caravaggio and, at the end of via Corsini, the second hidden jewel of this itinerary: the Botanic Garden, an oasis with more than 7,000 plant species, and a perfect place to take a rest!

From here, we will reach the Basilica di Santa Maria in Trastevere, one of the oldest Churches of Rome, and historians believe this to be the first church in which Mass was openly celebrated. Inside the church are a number of late 13th-century mosaics. This is a beautiful part of Rome to explore and we will discover it with our local Roman guide.

Enjoy the rest of the afternoon at leisure for individual visits and shopping and gelato!

~ Breakfast at your hotel in Rome ~ Optional dinner in Rome ~



Monday, June 03 2019

Day 10: Early breakfast at the Vatican Museums, Baroque walk



Today we will be one of the first to gaze at Michelangelo's masterpiece, the Sistine Chapel, with this exclusive early Vatican Tour. We will truly skip the lines and beat the crowds! We have an exclusive VIP day planned. Our driver will bring us directly to the entrance of the Museums at 7.00 AM to meet our expert local guide, who, over the next 4 hours, will bring to life the rich history of the Vatican. We will see the best this amazing collection can offer, such as the Gallery of Maps, the Gallery of Tapestries and the off limits Cabinet of Masks. Before we begin the tour, we will enjoy a generous buffet breakfast in the beautiful setting of the courtyard of the Pine Cone in the Vatican Gardens! (Weather permitting). This is the perfect way to visit the Sistine Chapel before the crowds arrive and will make for an unforgettable experience!

In the afternoon, we will walk through Piazza Navona, and visit the incredible Pantheon, Piazza di Spagna and of course throw a coin in the Trevi fountain to ensure our return.

~ Breakfast at the Vatican ~ Farewell Dinner in Rome.

Tuesday, June 04 2019

Day 10: Departure

Breakfast at the hotel, check-out and transfer to Rome Fiumicino airport for the flight home.

Arrivederci!!!!

*** All Sightseeing subject to changes* *When necessary hotels may be substituted with similar properties"**

Italy is a dream that keeps returning for the rest of your life – Anna Akhmatova

Nota Bene: Guest must be able to walk approximately 1.5 miles over uneven and cobble stone surface, inclines and 40 to 65 steps. Due to the nature of this tour, it is not recommended for guests using walkers or wheelchairs or with mobility issues.

Contact: Patrizia Cinquini Cerruti

916-482-5900 or
italy@italiancenter.net

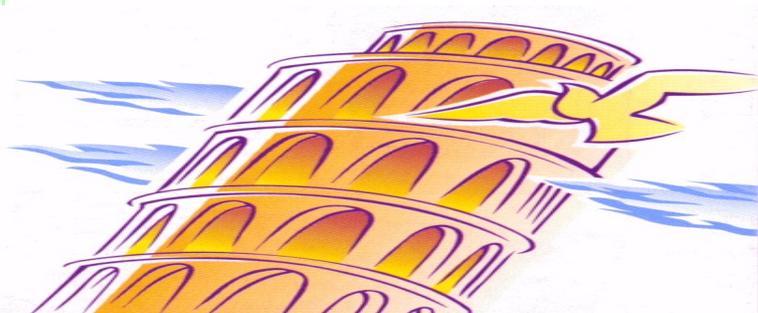
Send, form and checks to:

Ships and Trips Travel

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TERMS AND CONDITIONS: HIDDEN GEMS TOUR 25 May to 04 June , 2019

IMPORTANT: Please print your name EXACTLY AS IT APPEARS ON YOUR PASSPORT!

| | | | | |
|--|---------|----------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| First: | Middle: | Last: | __Mr. __Mrs. __Ms. | Nickname: |
| Address: | | City: | State: | Zip: |
| Phone: () | | Cell: () | email: | |
| Emergency Contact for person NOT traveling with you: | | Phone: () | Cell: () | Relationship: |
| Rooming with: First: | | Middle: | Last: | Nickname: |

PLEASE PROVIDE A COPY OF THE PHOTO PAGE OF YOUR PASSPORT!!

The tour will include:

9 nights lodging in premium resort Hotels, Agriturismo and Historic Inns
Daily buffet breakfasts, and 7 gourmet dinners
Full time English and Italian Speaking tour manager and guide
English speaking licensed local city tour guides
Private Motor coach transportation and professional driver
Accommodations based on double occupancy (single supplement is \$900 for deluxe private room)
Sightseeing tours, Cooking Class and special dinner,
Multiple Wine tastings, olive oil tasting, Cheese tasting and pairing
Ceramic factory, museum admissions and reservation fees
Porterage fees one large suitcase per passenger
Ground Transfers from the Florence Airport on tour start date and to Rome Airport on final tour date
Professionally Planned Tour and Pre-departure information and orientation packet

The tour does not include:

Air transportation (flight to Italy not included)
Meals not specifically included
Drinks except where specifically included
Laundry service
Lunches except where specifically included
*Travel insurance (**STRONGLY URGED!**)*
Telephone charges, incidentals and room service
Gratuities of 150 euros per person to cover all restaurant staff, bus drivers, local guides, reception and hotel staff, and porters. Tips will be collected in euros in Italy.

Terms and Conditions:

Walking is required and is an important part of this excursion. All trip members are expected to be active, in good health, to enjoy traveling as part of a group, and to be ready to experience cultural differences with grace and good manners.

Passports and Visas: U.S. Citizens must be in possession of a passport which must be valid for **at least six months after the return date**. All other nationalities must contact the destination embassies for entrance requirements. This is your responsibility. Passport and visa information may be obtained by contacting the Travel Advisory Section of the U.S. State Department at 202.647.5225 or by visiting the State Department's Web site at travel.state.gov. To obtain medical information, you may contact the Centers for Disease Control at 404.332.4559 or visit the CDC's Web site at www.cdc.gov.

Reservations: I understand that a deposit of \$300 per person is required at booking to secure a reservation. All deposit payments must be made payable to Ships and Trips Travel by check. **(Please note that Credit card payments have a 3% charge.)**

Balance Tour Fees: The balance of the tour cost is due 90 days prior to departure on or before February 24, 2019. If final payment is not received by due date the reservation is subject to cancellation and **deposit will be forfeited**.

Validity: Tour Price and terms are based on a minimum of 12 participants. In the unlikely circumstance where Ships and Trips or the Italian Cultural Society cancels tour your entire deposit will be refunded. All rates are based on the current value of the US Dollar and are based on double occupancy. A one time charge of \$900 for single supplement applies to travelers in private rooms.

Cancellation: **Cancellation fees** apply to this tour. When the cancellation is received in writing after deposit a \$300 penalty applies in addition to the following: 90 days to 76 days prior to departure \$500; 75 days to 45 days prior to departure 50% penalty, 44 days or less or **NO-SHOW** 100% Penalty.

Insurance: We strongly **URGE** that all passengers have comprehensive insurance. (Health, accident, baggage and trip cancellation) the Italian Cultural Society and Ships and Trips Travel shall not be responsible for any personal injuries, personal and or property damages, or losses caused by and to any traveler. Including, but not limited to inability to travel due to medical or personal emergency, terrorist activities, social or labor unrest, mechanical or construction difficulties, diseases, local laws, climatic conditions, supplier bankruptcy, abnormal conditions or developments, or any other actions, and omissions. By embarking upon his/her travel, the traveler voluntarily **assumes any and all risks** involved with such travel, whether expected or unexpected. Traveler is hereby warned of such risks, and is strongly advised to obtain appropriate insurance coverage against them.

I have read and understand and accept the terms and conditions outlined in this trip proposal, and agree to hold the Italian Cultural Society and Ships and Trips Travel, and its employees and representatives harmless for any injury, damage or loss I may suffer traveling on this tour.

Client's Name: (Please Print) _____

Client's Signature: _____ Date: _____

For information contact Patrizia:

italy@italiancenter.net

916 italy-00 (482 - 5900)

ITALIAN CULTURAL SOCIETY

Send form and checks to:

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Sacramento, CA 95821

credit card payment call: 916 564-8747