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November 30-  
December 8, 2009  
8 Days

## Italian Holiday

*This travel package planned & escorted by Jane Sorenson*

Join us for a short Italian vacation during the Holiday season! We'll take in the best of Florence and Rome, with some unique experiences.

November 30 we pick up in our guaranteed departure cities on our way to Des Moines. Check in for your flight along with your experienced international escort. Let us navigate the airports! (in-flight meals)

December 1 we arrive in **Rome**. We clear passport control, immigration and meet our local host. We'll transfer to our hotel in central Rome. Explore a little on your own or simply relax in our newly furnished hotel. Tonight we're in for a treat! Combine **dinner**, full of Italian delicacies with **fine Italian wine** and add a **live performance by Italian tenors**. Welcome to Italy! (in-flight meals, D)



December 2 get set to experience Rome with an **expert local guide**. Our day will include **the Colosseum, the Roman Forum, Circus Maximus, the Fountain of Trevi** and more! This afternoon, you'll have some time to explore on your own, if you wish. (B)



December 3 no trip to Rome would be complete without a visit to St. Peter's Basilica and the Vatican. The **Vatican Museums** house priceless artifacts from around the world as well as ancient maps, tapestries, paintings and other fine art. An **expert guide** will lead us through the Vatican on an **in-depth tour, complete with headphones**, which will also include the incredible **Sistine Chapel**. The ceiling took Michelangelo four years to complete. **St. Peter's Basilica** is one of the largest in the world and is home to hundreds of pieces of art, including Michelangelo's *Pieta*. Our **expert guide** will conduct an **audio tour**. Tonight, we'll learn how to make some Italian Holiday specialties during a **cooking demonstration** (and we get to sample the results!). And a great **dinner** is planned for us. (B,D)



December 4 we'll have a chance to explore one of the most spectacular medieval squares in all of Europe, **Siena's Piazza del Campo**. The maze of streets which surround this square were the site of many rivalries of neighborhoods or "parishes." These rivalries were so remarkable that they're still acted out during a festival known as the "Palio." Later today we arrive in Florence (Firenze), the capital city of Tuscany, and check into our historic hotel in the heart of the city. (B)



December 5 we experience "La Bella Firenze" as we take in some of the world's finest art, architecture and culture on a **tour of Florence**. The Renaissance style of architecture is exquisitely displayed in this city where the Renaissance was born! Our tour will include **Santa Maria del Fiore**, the Duomo with its unique orange-tiled dome and golden Baptistery doors. It's the fourth largest cathedral in Europe with parts dating to



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the 1200s. We'll also see the **Palazzo Vecchio** (Old Palace), which still serves as the town hall. Its huge bell warned residents of attacks or impending disasters. The **Gothic Church of Santa Croce** will also be on our agenda. Michelangelo, Galileo, Machiavelli and other famous Florentines are entombed here. We'll visit a **family-owned leather works**, where we'll learn about traditional Italian leather-making techniques. After some time to shop (gold, leather and porcelain are specialties here) and have lunch, we'll gather for a **guided tour of the incredible Uffizi Museum**, Italy's greatest art gallery. We'll see works by Michelangelo, Botticelli, Giotto, da Vinci and many others. (B)



December 6 we take you to **Pisa**, where the unmistakable leaning bell tower and Duomo stand in the Campo dei Miracoli (Field of Miracles). **The Duomo** is one of the best examples of Pisan-Romanesque architecture. The **Leaning Tower** was designed as a campanile. The circular **Baptistry** (begun in 1152) is beautiful and the acoustics are amazing! A **local guide** will fill us in on all three. Then **visit a Tuscan winery** where we'll have a great **lunch** and learn about olive as well as wine production. Tonight we wrap up our time in Italy with a wonderful **farewell dinner and Christmas music**. Grazie! It's been another great trip filled with fun experiences, a look at cultures, some history, a little shopping (or a lot, for some!) but most importantly, the pleasure of each others' company. (B,L,D)



December 7 we transfer to the airport for our flights home. Upon arrival in Des Moines, we're transferred to our departure cities. (B, In-flight meals)



**This 8-day international travel package includes:** Luxury motor coach transportation between our guaranteed departure cities and Des Moines, round-trip air transportation, excellent hotels for 6 nights, luggage handling, tickets/admission fees to listed attractions, 6 breakfasts, 1 lunch and 3 dinners (meals inclusive of tax and gratuity).

\$3,395 per person, double occupancy

\$3,365 per person with 3 persons sharing a room with 2 beds

\$3,945 single room accommodations

**Reservations:** Anytime, as long as space remains (we will reduce space June 1, so please reserve early!)

**Deposit:** \$300 per person, due with reservation

**Balance Due:** September 24

**Early Booking Discount:** \$50 per person discount applied to final balance if your deposit is made by May 22

**Peace of Mind Protection:** Not available but affordable travel insurance/cancellation protection is available. Without protection, regardless of the reason for cancellation, the following penalties will apply:

Cancellations from June 1-September 28 are subject to a \$300 per person penalty

Cancellations from September 29-October 12 are subject to a 20% penalty

Cancellations from October 13-November 27 are subject to a 40% penalty

Cancellations on or after November 28 are subject to a penalty of 100% of the gross tour price

**Guaranteed departure cities:** Decorah, New Hampton, Waterloo, Marshalltown, Ames, Des Moines, Fort Dodge, Webster City, Williams, Cedar Rapids, Coralville and Newton

**A valid passport is required for this travel package.**

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