

Educational Program Designed For  
University of Houston - 113862A



**“Exploring Tuscany & Rome”**  
03 June 2012 - 14 June 2012

Itinerary Overview

DAY 1	DEPARTURE FROM HOUSTON
DAY 2	ARRIVE FLORENCE - FLORENCE AREA (4 NIGHTS)
DAY 3	FLORENCE ( <i>BIRTH OF THE RENAISSANCE</i> )
DAY 4	DAY TRIP TO LUCCA & PISA
DAY 5	FLORENCE ( <i>THE LIFE OF MICHELANGELO</i> )
DAY 6	FLORENCE AREA - SAN GIMIGNANO - SIENA - ROME (3 NIGHTS)
DAY 7	ROME ( <i>THE CITY OF THE CAESARS</i> )
DAY 8	ROME ( <i>FREE DAY</i> )
DAY 9	ROME - NAPLES - CAMPANIA (1 NIGHT)
DAY 10	MT VESUVIUS - POMPEII - ROME (2 NIGHTS)
DAY 11	ROME ( <i>THE CITY OF THE POPES</i> )
DAY 12	DEPARTURE FROM ROME

# Casterbridge


LEARN TO TRAVEL • TRAVEL TO LEARN




# “Exploring Tuscany & Rome”

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Italy calls to people in a unique way. The rich and colorful culture melts into a warm atmosphere filled with light and life. Ancient traditions combine with a spiritual pride expressed in the art and food that epitomize what we have come to know as *La Bella Vita*. There is something about this country that stirs the soul as much as it educates the mind. From Roman ruins to the richness of the Renaissance, from the ruins of war to the peace of country life, experience the world in a new way in beautiful Italy.

Educational Tour or Visit = 

Recreational Activity = 

Cultural Experience = 

## DAY 1

Sunday, 03 June 2012

Relax and enjoy our scheduled flight from Houston to Florence.

## DAY 2

Monday, 04 June 2012

Our 24-hour Casterbridge Tour Manager/Guide will meet us at the airport and remain with us until our final airport departure.

We will have use of a private coach and driver, while touring for the next 5 days.



Florence is so deeply connected to the Renaissance movement in art and literature that it is often called the “Cradle of the Renaissance.” A walk through the peaceful piazzas reveals the architecture and sculpture that have made this beautiful city one of the world’s greatest artistic capitals.



Stop just outside Florence and explore the Piazzale Michelangelo. Offering a splendid panoramic view of the city's domes and towers, this is a great location to take photos and view some of the local artists at work.

Our base for the next 4 nights will be Florence (Area), where breakfast and dinner will be provided at the hotel.

## DAY 3

Tuesday, 05 June 2012

During the course of our tour we will gain from the knowledge and insight of 5 half-day local guides while we are here in Italy.



Experience the Uffizi Museum, one of Italy’s finest art museums, containing one of the most famous collections of paintings and sculptures in the world. Exhibitions include works by most of the acclaimed Italian artists, as well as German, Dutch, and Flemish masters. Of particular note are European paintings from the 13th to 18th centuries, which include works by da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Botticelli, Rembrandt, and Rubens.



Tour the massive Pitti Palace, a primarily Renaissance building that contains several important museums, including one that features reconstructions of period rooms, and the *Palatine Gallery* with important works by Titian, Rubens, and Raphael.



Lucca's peaceful narrow lanes wind among medieval buildings, churches, tiny piazzas, and Roman ruins, taking visitors on a true journey through the town's long history. Founded as a Roman colony in 180 BC, the city center was shut off from traffic in the 17th century, making it a pleasant place to wander and explore.



Visit San Martino, Lucca's magnificent cathedral, and admire the magnificent green and white marble facade, as well as the Romanesque and Gothic interior.



Spend time in San Michele in Foro, a beautiful church with a rich mixture of twisted marble columns and mosaics on the Pisan-Romanesque facade. A highlight of the interior is *Saints Helena, Jerome, Sebastian, and Roch*, by Lippi. As a student of Botticelli, Lippi's work reflects his master's graceful style, though with a more humanistic approach. Music lovers will note that two generations of Puccinis played organ in this church.



Enjoy a Bike Tour of Lucca. Bike friendly paths allow for a relaxing and scenic tour of the city, its medieval walls, and the surrounding landscape.



During the Middle Ages, Pisa's powerful navy and strong trading position brought enormous wealth to the city. Following several conquests and the silting of the harbor, however, it fell into decline. Now Pisa is primarily visited for its interesting architecture.



View the breathtaking Piazza del Duomo. Known in Italy as the "Field of Miracles," the piazza contains the beautiful cathedral and baptistery, and the famous *Leaning Tower of Pisa*. Despite its sinking foundations, the tower stands as magnificently today as it did upon completion in 1350.



Visit the Accademia Gallery, where we will view Michelangelo's statuary masterpiece, *David*, and Botticelli's *Madonna and Child*.



Enjoy the Piazza del Duomo, where the cathedral, tower, and baptistery exhibit the traditions of Florentine art from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. We will observe the massive and detailed facade of the Duomo before viewing the baptistery's bronze doors, designed by Ghiberti and which Michelangelo commented were worthy to be the "Gates of Paradise." After a brief visit inside the Duomo, we will have the opportunity to do one of the following: ascend the Bell Tower; climb the narrow steps to the top of the Red Dome; or visit the spectacular interior of the Baptistery. (*One admission included*).



Stop for a brief visit to the Church of Santa Croce, featuring the impressive tombs of many of Florence's most influential figures, including Michelangelo, Machiavelli, Dante, and Galileo.



Spend time in the Piazza della Signoria, the political stage of Renaissance Florence and an open-air museum of sculpture.

## DAY 6

Friday, 08 June 2012

Today we will travel from Florence to Rome. En route we will stop in both San Gimignano and Siena.



The striking skyline of San Gimignano is one of the most familiar views of Tuscany. The town is noted for its thirteen towers, built by various noble families in the 12th and 13th centuries, which dominate the scene and impart a unique character to this idyllic location.



Once a capital to rival Florence, Siena is Italy's prettiest medieval town, and still possesses the grandeur of the age when it was at its peak.



Visit the Duomo, highlighted by distinctive striped marble columns. Our visit will include the beautiful Piccolomini Library, designed to house the cathedral's collection of illuminated manuscripts. The magnificent room features an unrivaled ceiling and large frescoes depicting important events in the life of Pope Pius II.



Stroll through the narrow and winding streets of Siena to the Piazza del Campo, a vast and lively square in the heart of the city.

For the next 3 evenings we will enjoy the convenience of our centrally-located Rome hotel, where daily breakfast will be included.



Known to many as the "Eternal City," Rome is the capital of Italy, with an uninterrupted history spanning two and a half thousand years. As one of the founding cities of western civilization, Rome is filled with incredible historical sites. It is a city with many faces, encompassing medieval, Renaissance, and modern. To define Rome is an impossible task, but to enjoy Rome is a wondrous experience.



In Rome, the cost of public transport is included for all group sightseeing. Escorted by our guide, we will be able to experience the city in the same manner as the local people.



This evening, dinner will be provided in a local restaurant.

## DAY 7

Saturday, 09 June 2012



Enjoy a specialist-guided tour through the spectacular remains of the Roman Empire, beginning at the Colosseum, considered to be the greatest symbol of Ancient Rome's power and glory. Completed under Titus in 80 A.D., the Colosseum could hold 55,000 spectators, on a par with many of today's modern sports stadiums. Among the sights included on our tour is the *Arch of Constantine*, a triumphal arch finished in 315 A.D., commemorating the victory of Constantine I over Maxentius in the year 312 A.D. We will amble up the *Palatine Hill*, the fabled spot on which Rome's first settlers built their huts under the direction of Romulus.

In later years, this became a patrician residential district that attracted such notables as Cicero. We will also tour the ruins and excavations of the Roman Forum, which features the remains of magnificent temples, basilicas, and triumphal arches that once formed the heart of the Empire.



🎓 Visit the **Capitoline Museums**, which house one of the greatest collections of classical sculpture in the world. Our visit includes the *Picture Gallery*, containing works from the 16th and 17th centuries by Caravaggio, Rubens, and Titian, among others.



🎓 Visit the **Pantheon**, one of the grandest and best-preserved Roman monuments, and the oldest large-scale dome in Rome. The Pantheon has been in continuous use throughout its history and today houses many tombs, including those of Italian kings Victor Emmanuel II and Umberto I, and painters Caracci and Raphael.



🇮🇹 This evening we will dine in the **Piazza Navona** area. Built on the foundations of Domitian's Circus, this magnificent square was designed in the 17th century by Bernini. It is full of life and is highlighted by one of Rome's most spectacular fountains, the *Four Rivers*. The square is often filled with local artists. The surrounding neighborhood is also one of the best places in Rome to get a tasty tartufo or gelato ice cream.

## DAY 8

Sunday, 10 June 2012

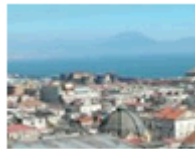
Enjoy free time today to explore Rome at your leisure.

🇮🇹 This evening, dinner will be provided in a local restaurant.

## DAY 9

Monday, 11 June 2012

We will have use of a private coach and driver, while touring for the next 2 days.



As the capital of the Campania region, Naples is known for its rich history, art, culture, and gastronomy. For 2,800 years Naples has reigned as a powerful and unique city. A visit today reveals the same distinctive way of life that has made it one of the great cities of Italy.



🎓 Visit the **National Archaeological Museum**, one of the finest antiquities museums in the world. With its Roman and Greek sculpture, this museum contains one of Europe's most valuable archaeological collections, highlighted by the select Farnese acquisitions, and the mosaics and sculpture excavated at Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Our base for the night will be in Campania, where breakfast and dinner will be provided at the hotel.



The region of Campania is one of the most culturally diverse in Italy. Influenced by Roman, Greek, Byzantine, Norman, Spanish, and French cultures, Campania is known for its gastronomy, music, architecture, and divine beauty.

## DAY 10

Tuesday, 12 June 2012



🎓 Ascend **Mt. Vesuvius**, the active volcano that dominates Campania. When it erupted in 79 AD, it destroyed most of the nearby Roman settlements, including Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Stabiae.



- Take a specialist-guided tour of Pompeii. This once thriving Roman city was buried in ash following the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 A.D. Today, it provides us with a fascinating look at life in a Roman merchant city. Our guide will lead us through the excavations within the city walls, including those at the basilica, forum, baths, theater, and amphitheater.

For the next 2 evenings we will enjoy the convenience of our centrally-located Rome hotel, where daily breakfast will be included.

In Rome, the cost of public transport is included for all group sightseeing. Escorted by our guide, we will be able to experience the city in the same manner as the local people.

- This evening, dinner will be provided in a local restaurant.

## DAY 11

Wednesday, 13 June 2012



- Experience a specialist-guided tour of the Vatican Museums, home to one of the world's most impressive collections of art. Our tour includes the map tapestry rooms, the magnificent *Raphael Rooms*, and the spectacular *Sistine Chapel*, highlighted by Michelangelo's ceiling and his *Last Judgment*. We will continue into St. Peter's Square to visit **St. Peter's Basilica**, the largest church in the western world and the center of Catholicism. Highlights of our visit include Michelangelo's *Pieta* and Bernini's magnificent *Baldacchino Over the High Altar*.



- This evening we will dine near the spectacular Trevi Fountain where it is traditional to toss a coin into the fountain to ensure a safe return to The Eternal City. Spend time at Rome's meeting place, the Piazza di Spagna, home of the famous **Spanish Steps**. The piazza and steps are both named in reference to a 16th century Spanish ambassador who lived here. English poet John Keats lived and died in the house to the right of the steps, which is now a memorial.

## DAY 12

Thursday, 14 June 2012

Our rewarding and enjoyable tour comes to an end as our guide accompanies us to the airport on our final day.