

A Northern Italy Adventure

Venice, Bologna, Tuscany (Florence, Monteriggioni, Greve in Chianti, Montefioralle, San Gimignano), Cinque Terre and Lake Como



A TWELVE DAY ADVENTURE



October 20 - 31, 2016

“You may have the universe, if I may have Italy.”
~ Giuseppe Verdi

KEYROW TOURS

60 Georgia Road Trumansburg, NY 14886 Tel: 315.491.3711 www.keyrowtours.com

Day#1: Northern Italy Bound

Thursday: October 20th, 2016

In conjunction with AAA Travel (Ithaca, NY), Keyrow Tours is pleased to make all flight arrangements, including primary flights originating from anywhere in the United States. As a group we will depart the United States from JFK or PHL and fly direct into Venice's Marco Polo Airport, Italy.

The international flight is typically eight and one-half hours long, and arrival time on the following day is mid-morning.

Transportation to and from your primary airport of departure is each person's responsibility.



“What is the fatal charm of Italy? What do we find there that can be found nowhere else? I believe it is a certain permission to be human, which other places, other countries, lost long ago.”

~ Erica Jong

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Day #2: Venetian Wonders”

Friday: October 21st, 2016

Morning arrival at Marco Polo Airport, Venice Italy

After collecting our luggage and going through customs, we will wind our way through the majestic water canals of Venice by private boat. The trip to our hotel is a scenic orientation to this magical city built upon water.

Check in

Pranzo! (Light lunch included)

A.) Departure for St. Mark’s Square

St. Mark’s Square is the center-stage of Venetian life, and is crowned by St. Mark’s Basilica. While it is large in size and grandeur, the Piazza San Marco maintains a feeling of coziness with its cafes, dueling musicians, and children of all ages chasing pigeons. While we are in Piazza San Marco we will see...

B.) St. Mark’s Basilica – exterior

This is a real blend of world culture: Byzantine mosaics, Romanesque archways, French Gothic pinnacles, Muslim-shaped onion domes, columns from Alexandria, capitals from Sicily, and carvings from Constantinople.

C.) The Clock Tower (Torre dell’ Orologio)

Two bronze African Muslims stand high above the tower, with their mechanical mallets that swing every hour. The clock dial shows 24 hours, and above the dial is the world’s first digital clock that changes every 5 minutes.

D.) The Campanile

Originally dating back to the 10th century, this is Venice’s original lighthouse and bell tower. In 1902 it toppled to the center of the square but was rebuilt 10 years later.

E.) The Bridge of Sighs

The Venetian government meted out its justice from the Doge’s Palace. Prisoners that were sentenced crossed this covered bridge to the prison: A final view of sunny, glorious Venice! Tradition says that you could hear the prisoners sighing along the way...

F.) St. Mark’s Basilica: church, cathedral, and basilica in one!

One of Europe’s most celebrated churches and the final resting place of St. Mark the Evangelist. Its riot of domes, columns, statues, gold mosaics, colored marble and oriental treasures will bedazzle our eyes.

G.) The Doge’s Palace – exterior

Originally built in the 9th century, today the palace is a fusion of Italian Gothic with an Islamic flair. Each Doge (or duke) left his mark on history by supplying new decor for this awe-inspiring work of architecture.

Back to hotel

Day’s recap

Cena! (Dinner included)

“It is the city of mirrors, the city of mirages, at once solid and liquid, at once air and stone.”

~ Erica Jong

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Day #3 “Island Hopping: Adriatic Style!”

Saturday: October 22st, 2016

Continental breakfast

A.) Morning excursion to Venice’s Pescheria (Seafood Market)

Venice's **Pescheria** (pronounced "Peskaria"), the **Rialto Fish Market**, is an authentic food market where you'll find restaurant chefs and homemakers selecting from an array of freshly-caught fish, crustaceans, and other seafood every morning except Monday. There's no better show in town: fishermen unload crates of fish from their barges; vendors hawk their wares; chefs examine the daily supply of fish, crustaceans, and bivalves; delivery men push handcarts laden with fruit and vegetables... it is a feast for the eyes!

B.) Doge’s palace tour or island-hopping, Venetian style

For those going to the Doge’s Palace, your reservation is at 9:00 AM. Others will enjoy a trip to the island of Murano. A private chartered boat will take us from our hotel to a Venetian glass factory for a tour and glass blowing demonstration. Afterward, Paolo will lead an excursion to the Island of Burano on public boat transportation. Burano is a colorful Adriatic gem that features panoramic views of the Venetian seacoast. Visit the shops or sit at a café, and watch the world go by...

Pranzo (Lunch on your own)

C.) Return by public water transport to Venice for free time

Venice is beauty itself...the kind of place to enjoy by walking around, visiting shops and soaking in the atmosphere. Take a tour of the Doge’s Palace. Enjoy a gondola ride. Explore hidden corners in this water city that the locals call *La Serenissima* (“The Most Serene Place”).

Day’s recap

CENA! (Dinner as group)



“Traveling is almost like talking with men of other centuries.”

~ Rene Descartes

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Day #4: Bella Bologna

Sunday: October 23rd, 2012

Continental breakfast

Early morning train departure for Bologna

Bologna is the capital city of the Emilia-Romagna Region: a cosmopolitan college town with rich history, art, cuisine, music, and culture. It was one of the first settlements in Italy dating back to at least one millennium before Jesus... first settled by the Etruscans, then the Celts, and then the Romans. By the Middle Ages it was home to the oldest university in the world; the University of Bologna was founded in 1088 and today hosts thousands of students who enrich the social and cultural life of the city. Famous for its towers and lengthy porticoes, Bologna has a well-preserved historical center. It is also one of the wealthiest cities in Italy, often ranking as one of the top cities in terms of quality of life in the country.

Arrival to hotel

Time to unpack and get settled

Piazza Maggiore

Bologna's primary outdoor plaza was built in the 13th century as a place where people gathered and the market was held. The piazza continues to serve this function as the preferred meeting place of the Bolognese who gather in the shadow of the statue of Neptune with the Basilica of San Petronio (dedicated to the city's patron saint) in the background. Piazza Maggiore is surrounded by the most important buildings of the medieval city. The oldest is Palazzo del Podestà, dating back to 1200 as the palace of government. Opposite this building is the famous unfinished facade of the Basilica of San Petronio: an example of Italian Gothic architecture begun at the end of the 14th century and never completed. In or around the neighborhood of Piazza Maggiore we will also visit:

- A.) The Basilica San Petronio (The year 2013 will be the 350th anniversary of its completion)
- B.) The Fountain of Neptune
- C.) The World War II Memorial

Pranzo! (Light on your own)

- D.) The University of Bologna's "Anatomical Theater"
Dedicated to the study of anatomy... offering public autopsies in the 17th century
- E.) Santa Maria della Vita
Visit what the locals call "The Screaming Marys"...the largest collection of terracotta sculptures of the Italian Renaissance depicting the death of Jesus.
- F.) The Two Leaning Towers of Bologna
- G.) The Basilica of Santo Stefano

Day's recap

Cena! (Group dinner)

"All journeys have destinations of which the traveler is unaware." ~ Martin Buber

Day #5: "Di-Vine Wanderings"

Monday: October 24th, 2016

Continental breakfast

Morning departure for the Emilia–Romagna countryside

Parmigiano Reggiano Cheese Factory

With a private coach we will leave Bologna and visit a famous **Parmigiano Reggiano Cheese Farm**. During our visit we will discover the various steps in the production of this world famous cheese, and in the farm's aging rooms we will sample some of its products.

Balsamic Vinegar Production

From the cheese farm we will travel to a private **Traditional Balsamic Vinegar Production** located in an amazing villa where we will taste 12, 25, 30 and 45 year old vinegars. The original traditional product (*Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale*), made from a reduction of cooked white Trebbiano grape juice and not a vinegar in the usual sense, has been made in Modena and Reggio Emilia since the Middle Ages; the production of balsamic vinegar is mentioned in a document dated 1046. Today, traditional balsamic vinegar is highly valued by chefs and gourmet food lovers. The word *balsamico* (from Latin *balsamum*, and from the Greek *balsamon*) means "balsam-like" in the sense of "restorative" or "curative".

Organic Wine Tasting

Pranzo! (Lunch!)

We will dine well at a rustic countryside trattoria... a perfect end to a day filled with the very best of local food culture.

Back to Bologna

Day's Recap

Cena! (Dinner on your own)



*"Life for the Italians was what it was, no more and no less,
an interlude between meals."*

~ Abraham Verghese in "Cutting for Stone"

KEYROW TOURS

Day#6: “Firenze: A Feast for the Senses”

Tuesday: October 25th, 2016

Tuscany’s Heart of the Italian Renaissance...

Continental breakfast

Morning Train Departure for Florence

Pranzo! (Light Lunch)

For those who have never been to Florence before, “follow Paolo” to the following sites. If you have been to Florence with Keyrow Tours in the past, enjoy free time and explore places such as San Lorenzo’s outdoor shopping market, the Boboli Gardens, the Pitti Palace, Florence’s famous farmer’s market and more...

A.) The Ponte Vecchio

Ponte Vecchio literally means, “The Old Bridge.” This historic bridge that crosses the Arno River is laden with gold and diamond shops. Conveniently located just around the corner from our hotel, shoppers...this one’s for you!

B.) Piazza Signoria

This is Florence’s central square. See the Palazzo Signoria (Florence’s City Hall since the reign of the Medicis), the outdoor Loggia which contains ancient Roman and Greek statuary, as well as Cellini’s famous bronze of Persius holding Medusa’s severed head.

C.) The Mercato Nuovo

Florence has two excellent outdoor markets, and the Mercato Nuovo is very close to our hotel. Beautiful leather goods: jackets, wallets, purses, gloves, and more. It’s fun to wander through, even if you’re not interested in buying things.

D.) Santa Croce Church

This wonderful medieval church is the final resting-place of Michelangelo, Machiavelli, Galileo, Rossini, and many others.

E.) The Uffizi Museum

Unguided time at the Uffizi Gallery...one of the most famous museums in the world, given the abundance of unique artwork and masterpieces conserved within its walls. Located in the heart of Florence just five minutes from our hotel, the Uffizi hosts works of art by great Italian artists such as Botticelli, Giotto, Cimabue, Michelangelo and Raffaele, just to name a few of the most famous. The Uffizi, together with the Vatican Museum in Rome, are the two most visited museums in Italy.

Cooking Class in private Tuscan villa with dinner and gelato making demonstration

Tonight we dine outside the city of Florence in a private Tuscan villa. Paolo has been friends with Roberto’s family for many years, and they are pleased to host our party. Brace yourself for an Italian feast that features family-style homemade pasta, local meats, potatoes and vegetables roasted in an outdoor oven. Roberto will make his famous gelato before our eyes in this Tuscan villa’s own gelato studio...

“Everything about Florence seems to be coloured with a mild violet, like diluted wine.”

~ Henry James

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Day #7: "Tuscan Meanderings"

Wednesday: October 26th, 2016

Continental breakfast and the Tuscan villages of:

Monteriggioni

Greve in Chianti

Montefioralle

Pranzo (Lunch!)

San Gimignano and Tenuta Torciano Wine Tasting School



Return to Florence

Day's recap

Cena (Dinner on your own)

"As with circling round of turrets, Monteriggioni crowns his walls; E'en thus the shore, encompassing the abyss, was turreted with giants, half their length uprearing, horrible, whom Jove from heaven yet threatens, when his muttering thunder rolls."

~ Dante Alighieri, Hell, canto XXXI, lines 40-45

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Day#8: “Cinque Terre Bound!”

Thursday: October 27th, 2016

Continental breakfast

Morning minivan departure for Cinque Terre

A private minivan will take us from Florence to Cinque Terre’s villages of Monterosso. The Cinque Terre was recognized in 1997 as a **Unesco World Heritage** site, and exists as a national park and protected marine area. Truly “off the beaten path,” this portion of the Italian Riviera is situated in the Ligurian region. “Cinque Terre” literally means “Five Lands,” and is composed of these five towns: Monterosso, Vernazza, Corniglia, Manarola, and Riomaggiore. Over the centuries, people have carefully built terraces on the rugged, steep landscape that overlooks the sea. Paths, trains and boats connect the villages, and for the most part cars for cannot reach them from the outside.

Pranzo! (Light lunch on your own)

Local Specialties include *Accuighe* (ah-CHOO-gay) anchovies (small bluefish), which are served fresh rather than canned. *Tegame alla Vernazza* is a typical main course in Vernazza: anchovies, potatoes, tomatoes, white wine, oil, and herbs. *Pansotti* is ravioli with ricotta and spinach, often served with a hazelnut or walnut sauce...delightful and filling. This region is also the birthplace of *pesto*. Basil, which loves the temperate Ligurian climate, is ground with cheese (half *Parmigiano* cow cheese and half pecorino sheep cheese), garlic, olive oil, and pine nuts, and then poured over pasta. Try it on the local *trofie* (made of flour with a bit of potato, designed specifically for pesto). Paolo and Heather also like pesto lasagna. *Farinata*: This humble fried bread snack — made from chickpea meal, water, oil, and pepper — is baked on a copper tray in a wood-burning stove. Finally, for a sweet dessert wine, the local *sciacchetra* wine (pronounced SHOCK-A-TRA) is worth the splurge. Aged *sciacchetra* is made from near-raisins, and the word means “push and pull” — push in lots of grapes, pull out the best wine!

Free Time to Explore Monterosso

Late afternoon train to Riomaggiore

Transportation throughout our time in the Cinque Terre will be dependent on weather and seasonal schedules. If the weather is favorable, we will take public boats as much as possible.

Riomaggiore and the Via Del Amore to Manarola

Riomaggiore is the first of the five villages, situated in the valley of the river “Rivus Maior” (after which the village is named). An old story tells that the historical roots of this village date back to 8th century, when a group of Greek refugees found shelter here. The most beautiful and famous part of Riomaggiore is the “Via dell’Amore” (“Lover’s Way) – an easy walking path along the sea leading to the nearby village of Manarola providing breathtaking views.

Manarola may be the oldest town in the Cinque Terre, with the cornerstone of the Church of San Lorenzo dating back to 1338. The name “Manarola” is probably a dialectical evolution of the Latin, “magna rota”. In the Manarolese dialect this was changed to “magna roea” which means “large wheel”, in reference to the mill wheel in town. With bright and colorful houses, Manarola’s primary industries have traditionally been fishing and wine-making (especially the local wine called *Sciacchetra*). Wander through terraced vineyards and view the village’s “largest nativity set in the world”.

Train/Boat back to Monterosso

Day’s recap

Cena! (Group Dinner)

“Thou paradise of exiles, Italy!” ~ Percy Shelley

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Day #9: “Life on the Ligurian Sea”

Friday: October 28th, 2016

Continental Breakfast

Morning Hike: Corniglia to Vernazza

For those who wish to hike, enjoy a trek from the village of Corniglia to Vernazza, a 2.5 hour hike. This trail in Cinque Terre is an old goat path that links the villages together. Difficulty level: 3 out of 4. Put your “billy goat” legs on and go take a hike!

Or for those not interested in hiking, explore the area and meet the hikers in Vernazza for optional lunch...

Lunch in Vernazza

Back to Monterosso for Beach time and Free Afternoon

The ancient, original centre of Monterosso lies on the summit of the hill of San Cristoforo, which separates the present village into two. During the 12th and 13th century there was an increase in population and families began to move down the slope of the hill, setting up house on the banks of the stream called “Branco” which is now covered. This part of the village, known as Monterosso Vecchio (Old Monterosso), has remained practically intact from that time period. Monterosso's beach is the longest of the Cinque Terre coast and the “carruggi” (small streets) of Old Monterosso are picturesque gems from a different time period...



Day's recap

Cena! (Dinner on your own in Monterosso)

“For us to go to Italy and to penetrate into Italy is like a most fascinating act of self-discovery – back, back down the old ways of time. Strange and wonderful chords awake in us, and vibrate again after many hundreds of years of complete forgetfulness.”

~ D.H. Lawrence

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Day#10: “The Lake Escape”

Saturday: October 29th, 2016

Continental breakfast

Morning minivan departure to Lake Como

We will take a private minivan from Monterosso to the village of Varenna. Hotel Olivedo will be our enchanting home for two nights. Located on the shores of Lake Como, the hotel was built in the Liberty style. The building dates back to 1895, although its interior was completely renovated in 2005. Each room has a full view of Lake Como and is rich in charm and personality.

Pranzo (Lunch on your own)

Time to explore Varenna

Como is a lake of glacial origin in Lombardy, Italy. It has an area of 146 km, making it the third largest lake in Italy. At over 400 m (1320 ft) deep, it is one of the deepest lakes in Europe. The bottom of the lake is more than 1300 feet deep. Lake Como is widely regarded as one of the most beautiful lakes in Italy.

The lake is shaped much like the inverted character "Y". The northern branch begins at the town of Colico, while the towns of Como and Lecco sit at the ends of the southwestern and southeastern branches respectively. The small towns of Bellagio, Menaggio, and Varenna are situated at the intersection of the three branches of the lake: a triangular boat service operates among them. Many celebrities have or had homes on the shores of Lake Como... Matthew Bellamy, Madonna, George Clooney, Gianni Versace, Sylvester Stallone, Richard Branson, and Ben Spies.



Day's recap
Cena! (Dinner)

*“Our battered suitcases were piled on the sidewalk again; we had longer ways to go.
But no matter, the road is life.”*

~ Jack Kerouac

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Day#11: “Bellagio and Beyond”

Sunday: October 30th, 2016

Continental breakfast

Late morning departure for Bellagio

Each person will receive a public boat pass to personally explore the town of Bellagio on lake Como.

Bellagio is a *comune* (municipality) in the Italian region of Lombardy, located on Lake Como. It has long been famous for its setting at the intersection of the three branches of the Y-shaped lake, which is also known as Lario. Bellagio is situated at the tip of the peninsula separating the lake’s two southern arms, with the Alps visible across the lake to the north. The medium temperature during winter is never below 6-7 C°, while during summer it is around 25-30 C°, mitigated during the afternoon by the characteristic *breva*, the gentle breeze of the Lake Como.

Pranzo! (Lunch on your own)

Free afternoon to explore Lake Como

Lake Como has been a popular retreat for aristocrats and wealthy people since Roman times, and a popular tourist attraction with many artistic and cultural gems. It has many villas and palaces (such as Villa Olmo, Villa Serbelloni, and Villa Carlotta). Lake Como is widely regarded as one of the most beautiful lakes in Italy. After visiting Bellagio, visit Menaggio with its gardens and villas and enjoy the tranquility of the lake and Alps...

Day’s recap

Cena! (Dinner)



“Open my heart and you will see, Graved inside of it, Italy.”

~ Robert Browning

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Day #12: “Arrivederci Italia!”

Continental breakfast

Monday: October 31th, 2016

- A.) Early Morning Departure for Milan’s Airport
- B.) Departure for the United States



“Travel does what good novelists also do to the life of the everyday, placing it like a picture in a frame or a gem in its setting, so that the intrinsic qualities are made more clear. Travel does this with the very stuff that everyday life is made of, giving to it the sharp contour and meaning of art.”

~ Freya Stark

KEYROW TOURS

Italy in 2016

WHAT IS INCLUDED?

Centrally Located Hotels

Double room occupancy in our three and four star historic hotels. Accommodations are centrally located with private baths. 2 nights in Venice, 2 nights in Bologna, 3 nights in Florence, 2 nights in Cinque Terre and 2 nights on Lake Como

Meals

Daily continental breakfast
Daily exquisite traditional main meal with local wine/beverages (lunch or supper)
Two light meals (lunch or supper)
Dinner and cooking class in a private Tuscan villa!

All Ground and Sea Transportation

All train fares between destinations
Private minivan service for all day trips and train station transfers
Public and private boats in Venice, Cinque Terre and Lake Como

All Entrance Tickets

Venice: Glass Factory on Murano Island
Bologna: Parmigianno, balsamic and prosciutto productions tour
Florence: Santa Croce Church and the Uffizi Gallery
Tuscany: Wine tasting school and cooking class
Cinque Terre: Hiking pass for the Via Dell' Amore (if open)

Keyrow's Services

Paolo will serve as your personal full time director, offering daily walking tours and sharing his knowledge of each sight and region visited.
Please make known any special needs well in advance of the trip.

"Italy is a dream that keeps returning for the rest of your life." ~ Anna Akhmatova

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