



A journey to Northern Italy among Religious, Food and Art

DAY 1: ARRIVE MILAN

We arrive in Milan and are met by our representative, who will accompany us throughout our journey. Milan is the See of Ss. Ambrose and Charles Borromeo and Paul VI. According to legend, when St. Ambrose was an infant in Rome, bees had flown into his mouth, attracted by the honey of his tongue. Ambrose's famous eloquence as Bishop (374-97) is given much of the credit for preserving the unity of the Church. His most famous convert was St. Augustine. St. Ambrose left such an imprint on Milan that even today genuine Milanese are called Ambrosiani. Boarding our motor coach, we enjoy a panoramic tour of the city. We transfer to our hotel for dinner and the evening

DAY 3: MILAN / LAKE GARDA / VERONA / VENICE MESTRE

This morning we make our way to the stunning beauty of the tiny lakeside town of Sirmione, "The Pearl of Garda Lake". Romans or Goths or Avars, or Venetians, all were touched by the charm of this beautiful island that juts out on Lake Garda. After spending some time enjoying the beauty of the area we continue on to Verona to walk a bit around this quaint town. Among the cities of the Venetia, it is second only to Venice for the interest of its monuments, and is especially notable for the quantity of its Roman remains. Family feuding produced the story of Romeo and Juliet. We continue to Venice Mestre for dinner and the evening at our hotel.

DAY 4: VENICE: VISIT OF THE CITY, LEISURE

Today we enjoy a full day excursion to Venice, known as 'The Queen of the Adriatic'. "A unique position, the grace of her buildings, the changing colors, and not least the total absence of wheeled transport, make Venice the most charming and poetic city in the world." Our visit begins at the Basilica of St. Mark—golden mosaics from the Second Golden Age of Icons adorn this magnificent Byzantine basilica built to honor the body of St. Mark brought from Alexandria in Egypt. Popes John XXIII and John Paul I were Patriarchs of Venice. After Mass we visit the Piazza di San Marco and the Palazzo Ducale (the palace of the Doge, the political leader of the Republic of Venice). The balance of our day is free to explore this exotic city. Dinner is at a local restaurant in Venice. We return to Venice Mestre for the evening.

DAY 5: VENICE MESTRE: EXCURSION TO MURANO, BURANO & TORCELLO

This morning we depart for a motor launch ride from the Bay of Venice, out on the open lagoon waters, past the Island of Murano. We will make a stop at the glass factory to see how a glass master blows the burning liquid into a multicolored finished piece. We continue the ride to the Island of Burano where, to this day, needle lacework is taught to women and girls. At Torcello, we visit two architectural masterpieces linked closely with the life and aspiration of the first settlers. We return to Venice where the balance of the day is at leisure.

DAY 6: VENICE MESTRE / PADUA / FERRARA/ RAVENNA

After breakfast we depart Venice Mestre for the town of Padua, where we visit the Basilica of St. Anthony of Padua and celebrate Mass. We then board the coach bound for the medieval walled town of Ferrara where we enjoy lunch at a local restaurant. You may wish to try Ferrara's most famous dish (the favorite of Lucrezia Borgia) "salama da sugo", a sausage that is cured for a year, then boiled). We'll have some time at leisure, perhaps to purchase some of the local specialty, "Vino di Bosco". We continue on to Ravenna for the evening. Dinner is on our own.



DAY 7: RAVENNA: VISIT OF THE TOWN

Ravenna boasts a glorious imperial past. As Rome's power declined, Ravenna was made the last capital of the Roman Empire in the West, then became the seat of the King Theodoric and later still, capital of the Western Byzantine Empire. Today, Ravenna still preserves the traces of its noble past, and is listed among the UNESCO World Heritage sites.

We begin this morning with Mass at the Basilica of St. Apollanare in Classe, famous for its 6th century Mosaics, some of the largest to have survived from antiquity. Later, we visit the Basilica of San Vitale, one of the marvels of Western Byzantium. We visit as well the tomb of Dante Alighieri. The greatest Italian poet and one of the most important writers of European literature, Dante is best known for the epic poem "Commedia". The afternoon is at leisure to enjoy this historic town. Dinner is at our hotel.

DAY 8: RAVENNA / BOLOGNA / MODENA / PARMA

This morning we depart Ravenna for Bologna, where we stop at the Church of St. Dominic to visit the Tomb of St. Dominic. Here we celebrate Mass. Born in Calaruega, Spain, Dominic spent much of his time in Italy and came to rest here. Known as Italy's gastronomic capital, Bologna gave Italy its tortellini and lasagna as well as Spaghetti Bolognese!

Next we visit the city of Modena. We'll take some time to visit the Piazza Grande, where we admire the beautiful Dumo di San Gimignano. Of course, there will be time to shop for Modena's famous balsamic vinegar & prosciutto, before we enjoy lunch at a local restaurant.

Our final stop of the day is Parma, one of Italy's great art and music cities (Arturo Toscanini, was born here and Paganini is entombed here). But, perhaps Parma is most famous as the home of Parmesan cheese and wonderful hams. This evening we enjoy wine and cheese tasting before having dinner on our own.

DAY 9: PARMA / CREMONA / PIACENZA / MILAN

After breakfast, we depart Parma for Cremona, Capital of violin masters (including Antonio Stradivarius). Today, some 50 violin masters are housed in workshops around the city. We take some time to admire the Torrazzo, the tallest bell tower in Italy and the Duomo, with its façade of graceful curls and immense rose window. We'll have time to shop for the city's culinary specialty, "Torrone", a nougat made of almonds and honey.

Boarding our motor coach we continue on to Piacenza and the Piazza Cavalli, where we admire two bronze horses, Cavalli masterpieces cast in the 1620's. Our final stop of the day is Milan. Dinner this evening is at our hotel.

DAY 10 MILAN: VISIT OF THE CITY

This morning we visit Milan (the See of Ss. Ambrose and Charles Borromeo and Paul VI). We begin our day at the Duomo, the stunning Cathedral for the Archdiocese of Milan. Here we celebrate the final Mass of our journey. Our next stop will feature one of the masterworks of Leonardo da Vinci – no less than the LAST SUPPER (subject to final confirmation). After some time on our own to shop in the city, we gather for a festive farewell dinner at a local restaurant

DAY 11: RETURN

This morning we transfer to the Milan airport to board our return flight Home