

# *“In the Footsteps of St. Francis”*

## *Franciscan and Renaissance Italy*



### **Day 01 Depart USA**

Depart USA for overnight flight to **Rome, Italy**. Prepare for a **Pilgrimage of a Lifetime**.

### **Day 02 Rome - Orvieto - Florence**

**D**

Upon arrival in **Rome**, you will be met by your Tour Director. Board your waiting deluxe motor coach for the drive through the Tuscan countryside to **Florence** by way of **Orvieto**, a quaint medieval city in the hills above Rome. Relax and settle in before dinner tonight at your hotel. Remainder of the day at leisure.

### **Day 03 Florence**

**B**

Full day **Florence**, rich with world famous Renaissance art treasures of Da Vinci and Botticelli including a visit to the **Academy of Fine Arts** to view **Michelangelo's** magnificent "**David**." Afternoon visit of the great **Duomo** - Santa Maria del Fiori - **Baptistry** and bronze "**Doors of Paradise**." Dinner and overnight at your hotel.

### **Day 04 Florence**

**BD**

This morning take a short walk through medieval Florence to visit the **Uffizi Gallery** with its spectacular collection of **Renaissance Art**. Afternoon excursion to visit the splendid Cathedral and world famous "**Leaning Tower**" of **Pisa** in the Piazza of Miracles. Experience the exquisite organ-like echo in the Baptistry as well as Pisano's magnificent pulpit. Take some time for photos of this world famous landmark. Dinner tonight at our favorite **Tuscan restaurant with wine and music**. Enjoy!!

### **Day 05 Florence**

**B**

This morning enjoy a leisurely breakfast then visit the fabulous Franciscan **Basilica of Santa Croce**, final resting place of Michelangelo, Galileo, and Machiavelli followed by the celebration of **Mass**. Enjoy a pizza for lunch if you wish as you stroll the **Piazza de Santa Croce** where you will find Italy's *best leather and Florentine gold*. Remainder of the day at leisure to wander "as you please" the streets of this quaint city and discover Tuscan cooking in the family restaurants of Florence 'on your own' tonight. Enjoy!!

### **Day 06 Florence - Siena - Assisi**

**BD**

Morning departure from Florence through Tuscany as we continue leisurely southwards through hilly countryside dotted with Chianti vineyards & olive groves to old **Siena**, the best preserved medieval town in Italy. Visit St. Domenic's Church which houses the incorrupt **St. Catherine of Siena**, doctor of the Church. St. Catherine's letters are considered among the most brilliant writings in the history of the Catholic Church. You will also visit the famous shell shaped **Piazza del Campo**, where the famous **Palio** (annual 75 second horse race) is held every summer. Late afternoon arrival in **Assisi**, hometown of our beloved **St. Francis**. Remainder of the day at leisure to wander the medieval, winding streets of this very peaceful village at the base of **Mt. Subasio**. Tonight our welcome dinner at the hotel serving homemade local specialties.

### **Day 07 Assisi "Home of St. Francis"**

**BD**

We begin this magnificent day with a visit to the **Basilica of St. Francis**. Visit the upper and lower **Basilica**, view the cycle of **Giotto's frescos** with the twenty-eight episodes from the "**life of St. Francis**." In the crypt is the **tomb of our beloved St. Francis**. Stop in to visit our friend **Fabrizio** at the best deli in town, **Bodega di Sapori in the Piazza Comune**. He promises to tantalize your taste buds with fresh focaccia bread and the flavors of Italy. Time permitting, visit the **Basilica of St. Clare** housing her incorrupt body and the **Cross of San Damiano**. This afternoon, we continue our visit to lower Assisi and the magnificent **Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli** visiting the **Portiuncula**, the little church that St. Francis built, housed inside the Basilica. Enjoy dinner tonight at a local restaurant.

### **Day 08 Assisi - Osimo - Loreto - Lanciano - San Giovanni Rotonda**

**BD**

Morning departure to **Osimo**, **Shrine of St. Joseph Cupertino**, patron of pilots. Continue just over the hill to **Loreto**, one of Italy's leading Pilgrimage spots. The Basilica here in **Loreto** houses the **Holy House of Nazareth**, which tradition tells us, was transported here by angels from the Holy Land. This Basilica houses the most reproduced Madonna in the world, the **Black Madonna of Loreto**. Afterwards, continue along the scenic Adriatic coastline to **Lanciano**, the site of a **Eucharistic Miracle**. Continue to **San Giovanni Rotonda**, home and birthplace of **St. Padre Pio**. Overnight and dinner in San Giovanni Rotonda.

### **Day 09 San Giovanni Rotonda - Rome**

**BD**

Begin the day with a visit of the sanctuary and tomb of our beloved **St. Padre Pio**. You will be offered a short video of his life story as told by a priest who was very close to him. Afterwards enjoy a breathtaking view and ascend to **Monte Sant' Angelo** overlooking the Gargano peninsula and **Grotto of Archangel Michael**, one of the most celebrated shrines of Christianity. This afternoon, we make our way across the Appenine Mountains of Italy to the "**Eternal City of Rome**," the heart of Catholicism. Relax a bit before dinner. Evening at leisure to stroll the vibrant streets of this magnificent city at night. Dinner and overnight at our hotel in Rome.

**Day 10 Rome****BD**

After breakfast, begin our day in **the Vatican** as we receive the **Papal Blessing** at noon (based on pope's schedule). Continue our day with a visit to the beautiful Basilica of **St. Paul Outside the Walls**. Drive along the Appian Way to the **Catacombs** and later visit **St. John Lateran Basilica and Scala Santa** ( holy stairs Jesus walked to meet Pontius Pilate). Dinner at your hotel.

**Day 11 Rome****B**

Today we will visit the magnificent **Vatican Museum and Sistine Chapel** followed by a guided visit of **St. Peter's Basilica, Santa Maria Maggiore**, outside visit of the **Coliseum and Roman Forum**. Enjoy the evening at leisure to stroll along the festive streets of Rome. Relax in a small café and enjoy homemade pasta, pizza Margarita and the world famous gelato. This is the excitement of Bella Roma!!

**Day 12 Rome****BD**

Guided visit of the **Villa Borghese** decorated with frescoes and marble as well as the famous **Art Gallery and Museum** containing works by **Bernini, Pinturicchio, Botticelli, Caravaggio** and many other great artists. **Remainder of day at leisure** for last minute shopping along the **Via Veneto** or individual sightseeing at the **Parthenon**. Enjoy a Gelato in the **Piazza Navona**, great photo opportunity at the **Spanish Steps**. However you spend your last day in this mesmerizing city, remember to **toss a coin in the Trevi Fountain** to assure your return to Rome!! Tonight we will celebrate together with a **Festive Restaurant Farewell Dinner** including wine and music.

**Day 13 Depart for USA****B**

Transfer to **Rome airport for our return flight home** with peace in our hearts, love in our soul and the many friendships made along the way. Arrivederci for now, but with a promise to one day return soon.