

A MEMORABLE ITALIAN ADVENTURE
September 17- October 1, 2018
(15 days)

Day 1. Sept. 17. Mon. Departure

Fly to Atlanta and from there to Rome, Italy. Dinner is served aboard. When flying over the Alps don't miss seeing fresh snow on their peaks.

Day 2. Sept. 18. Tue. Land in Rome and transfer to Palermo

Welcome to Rome, Italy! First impression: Italian is spoken here! Waiting for your connecting flight to Palermo, begin to taste the Italian espresso coffee/cappuccino. After landing in Palermo a private bus will take you to your deluxe resort hotel by the beach. You are very tired, so take a rest and make sure you wake up on time for your first delicious Sicilian buffet-dinner. At your Fiesta Hotel every night is a "fiesta" of food, dancing and fun. Buona Notte (Good Night).

Day 3. Sept. 19. Wed. Highlights of Palermo

Palermo is a city of about a million people and the capital of Sicily. It is rich in history and culture. During the past 3000 years many nations conquered and ruled it: the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Normans, Germans, Spaniards and French. Their cultural influence is still visible in the highlights of the city and you will see most of them. Have lunch in the resort area of Mondello by the sea. Enjoy another evening of food, dancing and fun at your same hotel.

Day 4. Sept. 20. Thu. Agrigento: Valley of Temples

This morning you travel through central Sicily and in less than two hours you arrive to Agrigento where you visit the famous "Greek Temples". The Greeks settled in Sicily 3000 years ago and built many temples in Agrakos (today's Agrigento). Time, wars, earthquakes, fires and the old city came to an end. Today farmers grow wheat, olive and almond trees on its ruins. However, most temples, ruins and burial sites are still there and attract a large number of tourists. You will see and touch those ruins. A local guide will walk you through them and explain everything. Next, the country restaurant Villa Kephos is waiting for you; you will eat antipasto, three kinds of Sicilian Pizza and all wine you want. Often they have also a folkloric group of singers and musicians to make you sing and dance. After traveling through more of central Sicily you arrive to your next hotel in Taormina.

Day 5. Sept. 21. Fri. Taormina

Taormina is the most visited tourist place in Sicily. It is located above the Ionian Sea with the smoking Mt. Etna on the background. You will have most of the day free to stroll, shop and eat in some cozy restaurant. You will love Taormina! In the late afternoon you return to your hotel and spend time on the beach and/or in your swimming pool. Same hotel.

Day 6. Sept. 22. Sat. Calabria: San Sostene.

Leave Sicily and cross the Strait of Messina on a huge ferry boat. Now you are in the Italian mainland, Calabria region. Travel through mountains, high bridges and quaint villages perched on top of hills. Take a break for lunch and search for family roots in the picturesque country town of San

Sostene. Visiting country towns away from tourist places crowded with foreigners, staying with local people, eating their food and drinking their home-made wine: that is to discover the real Italian life! Americans love it! Enjoy the evening in a nice hotel by the beach.

Day 7. Sept. 23. Sun. Calabria: immersion in local life

This morning you travel through more Calabrian countryside and, if necessary, you will visit a few towns where other people in the group have family roots. Just before lunch we will have a "cooking class" in a country restaurant where the Chef will teach how to prepare some delicious "Calabresi specialties" we are going to eat! Local music and wine will add more fun, fun, fun! Then travel to the Basilicata region and stay in a super-nice hotel.

Day 8. Sept. 24. Mon. Matera and Puglia.

In the city of Matera (Basilicata) you will visit the historical center called "Sassi" (Stones). Those are prehistoric cave-dwellings dug into the rocks thousands of years ago. Until recently those caves were inhabited by a large number of impoverished people. Today they are super tourist attraction. The famous movie "The Passion" was made there. Yes, while you wait for your lunch in another country restaurant, the Chef will show you how to cook some "Pugliese" specialties which then you will eat! Mamma Mia, what an experience! After that you spend a pleasant evening in the town of San Giovanni Rotondo, well known for the shrine and tomb of "Padre Pio", the Saint of our times. You will be moved by the devotion of the numerous pilgrims.

Day 9. Sept. 25. Tue. Abruzzo: sightseeing, food and fun!

This morning you travel through Puglia's plain, strewn with vineyards, vast fields of olive trees and vegetable cultivation. Then you arrive to Abruzzo, a region made of mountains, fertile hills and neat beaches. A delicious "pic-nic" is waiting for you in a country place overlooking vineyards and olive groves. Then you will visit a local Winery: this is the time when farmers pick their grapes and make wine. Perhaps you can help stomping on grapes! You will love your stay in Abruzzo! For some "Abruzzesi" in the group today and tomorrow is perfect time to visit the town of their family roots. Assistance will be provided to them. Now run to the sandy beach, because your hotel is only a feet away!

Day 10. Sept. 26. Wed. Abruzzo: more sightseeing, oil mill, pasta factory, cooking class.

In the morning you go to a country town and stroll through its street-market full of local people and local products. Then you visit an oil mill and a pasta factory. Yes, today you will have another cooking class and you will love it! The Chef will show how to prepare a few Abruzzesi mouthwatering specialties, including the traditional so good "Pasta e Faggioli" (Some people even eat three dishes of it!). And Yes, there will be dancing music and a lot of fun! Next, you have free time in a modern shopping Mall. After dinner, would you like to go to a classy dancing place with locals dancing like professionals? Same hotel.

Day 11. Sept. 27. Thu. Marche: Holy House. Drive to Assisi.

This morning you travel north on the freeway running between the blue

Adriatic Sea and the green hills dotted with medieval towns. In Loreto you will visit the renowned "Santa Casa" (Holy House) where the Holy Family lived. When many centuries ago the Muslims threatened to destroy it, the House was miraculously transported in Loreto. Have lunch and shop for souvenirs. After that you cross the Appennini mountains and enter the Umbria region. More good food and fun is waiting for you.

Day 12. Sept. 28. Fri. Assisi

Today in Assisi you walk through the same streets where St. Francis and St. Clare walked and preached some 800 years ago. They founded the religious order of Franciscans. You will see their tomb and their artistic basilica. Then you will have plenty of free time to explore that medieval town with its quaint streets, shops, restaurants, fortress, etc. Tourists love Assisi! Late afternoon drive to your hotel by Rome

Day 13. Sept. 29. Sat. Rome: highlights

The best way to discover Rome is to see it during a slow walking tour. We begin by visiting the famous "Spanish Steps" and "Via Condotti", where the rich and famous people go to shop. Next, you see the celebrated "Trevi Fountain" where you toss your coins. The 2000 year old and best preserved Roman Temple, "The Pantheon", is a breathtaking wonder of the glory that was Rome. "Navona Square" is the most beautiful and most romantic square in the city. There you will have lunch in one of its outside restaurants. The Colosseum, Forum Romanum, Caesar's Palace, Circus Maximus, etc. are waiting for you. Discovering Rome's numerous shops and sidewalk cafes, observing the locals going on their daily activities: what a unique and pleasant experience! Same hotel.

Day 14. Sept. 30. Sun. Vatican City

One cannot be in Rome and not see Vatican City! This morning you see St. Peter's Basilica, its Catacombs, Swiss Guards and shop for religious souvenirs. It is Sunday and the Pope greets the large crowd of pilgrims from his window. What a manifestation of faith: let's go! The last Sunday of each month the Vatican Museums are free: again, let's go! After lunch you may visit other eminent religious places, like St. John in Lateran Basilica, the Holy Steps and the Relics of the Passion. A last dinner and a party at the hotel will conclude your memorable tour of Italy! Same hotel.

Day 15. Oct. 1. Mon. Wed. Return flight.

An drive to Fiumicino Airport reminds you that your fantastic tour is over! Mamma Mia, I don't want to go back! Arrivederci Roma! Ciao, Bella Italia! I shall return!

The specialty of this tour is that during your stay in Italy you will discover and enjoy the real Italian life away from the large cities crowded with foreign tourists. You will spend relaxing days and enjoy real Italian food, you will discover many lovely sites and you will have a lot of fun.

Dates of the tour: September 17-October 1, 2018 (15 days)

Cost of the tour: \$4090 per person

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You could win a free tour: get your ticket now! There will be a raffle drawing at the Columbus Italian Fest of July 13-15.

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Tour cost includes: round trip air tickets to and from Italy, ticket from Rome to Palermo, all ground transportation in Italy by deluxe bus, all first class hotels in double occupancy, all breakfasts and all dinners, drinks and wine in most hotels, tour escort at all time, local guide in Agrigento, taxes and tips.

Tour cost does not include: lunches, drinks in some hotels, entrance to the Valley of Temples and eventual museums. Why not included? Because often some people don't care to see temples and museums; therefore pay only if you go.

Seats for this tour are limited: first come first served!

For further information and to sign up for this tour contact:

Mr. Sostene Codispoti
(President of Sons of Italy Club)
Ph.: 614-582-7366. E-mail: Soscod@cs.com

OR

The Italian Heritage Tours
P.O. Box 174. Reynoldsburg Oh.
Phone: 1-800-829-2201. E-mail: italiantours@aol.com
www.italianheritagetours.com