



A SAMPLE ITINERARY

Created by
Friendship Ambassadors Foundation

ITALY & SLOVENIA

Day 1 - Depart USA (Meals enroute)

Evening departure – overnight flight to Italy. Arrive at least two hours prior to departure - don't forget your passport or tickets! Refreshments and meals served in flight. Remember to set your watches ahead six hours and try to get some rest.

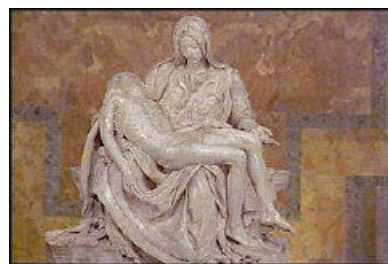
Day 2 - Arrive in Rome



Bon giorno and welcome to Italy! You will arrive in Rome, where your English-speaking tour escort is awaiting your arrival. Board your private motorcoach and transfer to your hotel; check in and settle in. After some time to freshen up, begin your city tour at the Campidoglio (Capitol Hill): the citadel of ancient Rome that was given a face-lift in 1536 by Michelangelo – who also redesigned the piazza, renovated the façades of the palaces, and built a

new staircase – the Cordonata. Visit the Roman Forum, which used to be the religious, political and commercial center of Rome and includes such sites as Curia, the Rostra, the House of the Vestal Virgins and the Basilica of Constantine, and the Arch of Titus. The tour will end with the remarkable Colosseum.

Dinner in a local restaurant tonight.



Day 3 - Rome

After breakfast at the hotel, visit St Peter's Basilica and the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican City, which took over 150 years to complete. Michelangelo took over the “project” in 1547 and was responsible for the design of the dome. The cavernous interior, which can hold up to 60,000 people, contains many treasures including Michelangelo's Pietà. The Vatican is a sovereign state with its own post office, broadcasting service and newspaper, ruled by Europe's only absolute monarch (the

Pope). After some free time, return to your hotel for rehearsal and dinner, followed by a concert in one of the numerous beautiful churches of the Ancient City.

Day 4 – Assisi and Florence

Say good-bye to Rome and depart for Assisi. Despite the millions of tourists and pilgrims it attracts every year, the home town of St Francis remains a beautiful and tranquil refuge. Located in the middle of the "boot" near Perugia, Assisi is a well-preserved medieval town with an air of mystical serenity. A must-see is the Basilica of San Francesco; other places of interest include the Church of Santa Chiara, a

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medieval fortress (La Rocca Medioevale), the Piazza del Comune, and St. Peter's church. You will be free to explore this beautiful town on your own. After a lunch on your own, continue to Florence for check in and dinner.

Day 5 – Florence

After breakfast to the hotel, embark on a guided sightseeing tour of this city of many cultural treasures located on the banks of the Arno. We start with the city's eternal masterpiece: Michelangelo's David in the Academy of Fine Arts. Further sights will include the golden Paradise doors of the Baptistery, Giotto's bell tower, and the cathedral with its famous dome by Brunelleschi. This historic quarter recalls its ancient past with its unique charm. Passing by the scenic Signoria square and the famous Old Bridge, this exciting visit ends at the Santa Croce church, housing the tombs of such illustrious Florentine citizens as Michelangelo, Galileo Galilei, and Macchiavelli, as well as incredible works by Giotto and Donatello. Lunch is on your own, and you can spend the afternoon at your leisure in this charming town. Meet the group again for dinner in a local restaurant, followed by a concert at a Florence church.



Day 6 – Padua and Venice

Depart for Venice in the morning, leave with a stop along the way in Padua (which is about 2.5 hours from Florence). Visit the 13th-century Basilica housing the relics of St. Anthony, and the small Scrovegni Chapel (Cappella degli Scrovegni), adorned with exquisite frescoes by Giotto. After a short walk we come to the Piazza Bo, the scene of one of the liveliest daily markets in Italy. Free time for lunch, and then continue your drive to the Venice area. Upon arrival, check into your accommodations for dinner and overnight.

Day 7 – Venice

After breakfast at the hotel, transfer to the very heart of Venice with private coach and boat. Your knowledgeable guide will take you on a visit of the historical center. Start at the golden Basilica of St. Mark, enriched with marble plundered from conquered cities by the once powerful Venetians. Visit the Doge's Palace (Palazzo Ducale) that served as the residence of the doges and the seat of government for nearly one thousand years, and is resplendent with rooms decorated by Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese. See the graceful Bridge of Sighs, the Clock Tower, the Campanile, and the Marciana National Library.



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Lunch is on your own today. The afternoon is free for private explorations or a Gondola Tour; feel free to ask your tour escort for suggestions! A performance at a mass in San Marco Basilica will be followed by dinner in a local restaurant in the heart of Venice. Return to the hotel for the night.

Day 8 – to Portorose via Trieste and Piran

After breakfast, depart for to Trieste and meet with your local guide there for a city tour. This will include the Central Railway Station, the neo-Gothic church in Largo Panfili, a walk around Ponterosso Market and a visit in the Serbian Orthodox Church; a short walk to the Piazza della Borsa (the neo-Classical palazzo of the old Stock Exchange and the Tergesteo) and the Piazza Unità d'Italia; the Roman Amphitheatre and a bit of climb up Via Rota to the Capitol Hill, the Castle and Cathedral of San Giusto.

After a lunch on your own, continue your way to Piran, which is (probably) the most beautiful city on the Slovenian coast and (undoubtedly) the birthplace of famous composer and violinist Giuseppe Tartini. Stroll along the narrow streets with fascinating Venetian architecture and packed with boats along the quay. From this lovely town, you can see the entire Slovenian coast as well as the shores of Italy and Croatia. After a guided sightseeing of Piran, travel on a short distance more to Portorose, for check in to your hotel. A concert in town will be followed by a hearty dinner.



Day 9 – Portorose – Istria Tour

Your journey begins with sightseeing in one of the most beautiful cities on the west coast - Rovinj, where you can see many cultural monuments, among others the Church of Sv. Eufemija. She opens her gate and invites you to unravel her secret and research her past. Continue the sightseeing in Pula with its ancient roman amphitheater; and Opatija that was once an Austro-Hungarian winter resort – today it's a fashionable summer resort whose beauty inspired many of the rich and famous.

Day 10 – Ljubjana

Depart early in the morning for Ljubjana. Upon arrival, enjoy a guided visit of the city, capital of Slovenia, known already from the Roman era as the meeting point of Roman, Germanic and Slavic nations. Walk in the old town, lying between the castle hill and the Ljubljanica river, abounding in exquisite Baroque and Secessionist period buildings, as well as the works of the great Slovene architect

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Joze Plecnik. Lunch on your own, followed by rehearsal before the evening concert. Dinner in a local restaurant tonight.

Day 11 – Day trip to Bled

Drive among rolling hills dotted with small farms, crystal clear mountain streams, and some of this new nation's oldest inhabited towns. We will visit three of these towns today, all of which teach us something about Slovenia's past. Our first stop is Skofja Loka. Nestled in the side of a forested hill, this town is not only delightful to walk through but also houses one of the best ethnographic museums in the country. A visit to this museum, housed in the town's castle, is included in your tour.

The drive continues on to Bled with its emerald-green lake, picture-postcard church on an islet, medieval castle clinging to a rocky cliff, and some of the highest peaks of the Julian Alps with the Karavanke as backdrops. Take a boat trip on the lake with a stop at the little island and its small church.



Lunch on your own, and late afternoon return to Ljubljana. Enjoy your farewell dinner in a typical Slovenian restaurant – and don't forget to pack!

Day 12- Return to the US

After breakfast, check out of your hotel and leave for the Milan airport in plenty of time to meet your international flight home. Good-bye!

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