

DAILY TRIP ITINERARY ITALY

Day 1—Wednesday 12 March

WMA: We leave the gym parking lot promptly at 1 P.M. for Logan Airport. We'll check in, go through security and customs (expect this part to take a while!), and wait at our gate for the flight. Once we're on the plane and everyone finds their seats, you may change seats with each other (if someone wants a window seat or on the aisle, etc.). Hunker down and sleep as much as you can, because the first day in Rome is the toughest in terms of walking!

Day 2—Thursday 13 March

FRANKFURT: We have a layover in the Frankfurt airport for about an hour, which should give us just enough time to get through customs and to our connecting gate. One more flight (about two hours), and we'll land at Leonardo da Vinci Airport in Rome. We'll meet our EF representative, probably Danielle (she handles the airport arrivals), and we'll claim our luggage. Once we're outside, our wonderful tour director **Elif Altug** will be waiting for us, and she'll take us to the bus. Get ready, because we're off and running to the heart of Rome!

ROME: Welcome to Rome, the Eternal City. One of the ancient world's most populated cities (it was among the first to boast 1 million inhabitants), *bella Roma* is certainly one of the modern world's most famous urban areas. Elif will show us several sites today, then she'll take us to our hotel, so we may be eating lunch on the go. The city is an incredible mix of archeological gems, Roman genius, Renaissance art, and religious treasure. As Italy's capital, it is also the bustling heart of this exciting country. With its fashionable shopping and café culture, Rome really is a unique European experience.

Day 3—Friday 14 March

Guided tour of Rome—wear your walking shoes, because we'll be on foot most of the day!

FORUM: The Forum Romanum was the political and economical center of Rome during the Republic. It emerged as such in the 7th century B.C.E. and maintained this position well into the Imperial period, when it was reduced to a monumental area. The importance of the Forum area is indicated by the presence of many of the central political, religious and judicial buildings: the Regia was the residence of the kings; the Curia was the meeting place of the Senate; and the Comitium and the Rostra, where public meetings were held. Major temples and sanctuaries in the Forum include temples to Castor and Pollux, Saturn, and Vesta. Commercial and judicial activities took place in the *basilica*, which in Latin means “courthouse.”

COLOSSEUM: A site synonymous with Italy, the Colosseum is still one of the world's greatest wonders. Construction of the *Colosseo* (in Italian) was started by Emperor Vespasian in 70 A.D. in the

grounds of Nero's private **Domus Aurea**. Originally known as the Flavian Amphitheatre, after the family name of Vespasian, it was inaugurated by his son Titus in 80 A.D. The massive structure could seat more than 50,000 people, and the bloody gladiator combat and wild beast shows were held there. The arena was also water-tight and was often flooded during mock naval battles (**naumachia** in Latin), where full-sized ships fought each other in spectacular displays. There were 80 arched entrances for spectators, and it's said that the entire building could be evacuated (in an emergency) in about 15 minutes.

PANTHEON: One of the great spiritual buildings of the world. It was built as a Roman temple and later consecrated as a Catholic Church. The only natural light enters through a round hole in the roof (**oculus**) at the center of the dome and through the bronze doors to the portico. As the sun moves, striking patterns of light illuminate the walls and floors of porphyry, granite and yellow marble.

SPANISH STEPS: The piazza, church and famous *Scalinata Spagna* (Spanish Steps) have long provided a gathering place for foreigners. Built with a legacy from the French in 1725, but named after the Spanish Embassy to the Holy See (which is still located in the piazza), the steps lead to a French church. In the 18th century the most beautiful women and men of Italy gathered here, waiting to be chosen as an artist's model. [Some of you may remember the Holy See from listening to the former Vatican ambassador who spoke at a Thursday chapel meeting last year.]

TREVI FOUNTAIN: In a city of 280 public fountains, certainly the most famous and spectacular in Rome is the Trevi Fountain. The fountain is the terminal part of the Vergine aqueduct built by Agrippa, a general of Augustus, in 19 B.C. to bring the water coming from the Salone springs, about 12 miles (19 km) away, to Rome. Travelers who wish to return one day to Rome must throw a coin into the basin, tossed over the shoulder with their back to the fountain.

PIZZAIOLO: We'll also visit an authentic *pizzaiolo* (pizza chef) where we'll learn how to make real Italian pizza—and hopefully eat it, too.

Day 4—Saturday 15 March

VATICAN CITY: An ecclesiastical sovereign landlocked enclave surrounded by Rome. The modern-day home of the popes, it is the smallest independent nation state in the world in terms of area and population. It is administered by the Holy See, the ecclesiastical seat of the Roman Catholic Church. The Head of State is the Pope, currently Pope Benedict XVI, a German. The city takes its name from the Latin Mons Vaticanus (Vatican Hill). This hill, and the adjacent Vatican Fields upon which St. Peter's Basilica and its Sistine Chapel, Apostolic Palace and museums were built, predates Christendom.

ST. PETER'S BASILICA: This ranks second among the five major basilicas of Rome and the Vatican City. The largest church in Christianity, it covers an area of 23,000 m² (5.7 acres), and has a capacity of over 60,000 people. One of the holiest sites of Christendom, it is the supposed burial site of basilica namesake Saint Peter, who was one of the twelve apostles of Jesus. Its dome was designed by Michelangelo, and his famous sculpture *Pietà* (the only work actually signed by the artist) is housed in the building.

SISTINE CHAPEL: a chapel in the Palace of the Vatican, the official residence of the Roman Catholic Pope in the Vatican City. It was built between 1475 and 1483, in the time of Pope Sixtus IV,

and is one of the most famous churches of the Western world. The name Sistine is derived from the Italian *sistino* meaning “of or pertaining to Sixtus IV.” It is known worldwide both for being the hall in which conclaves and other official ceremonies are held, including some papal coronations, and for having been decorated by Michelangelo. It is located to the north of St. Peter’s Basilica, after the Scala Regia, and originally served as the Palatine chapel inside the old Vatican fortress.

After the Vatican tour, we’ll heading out to Ostia by the sea for another tour:

OSTIA ANTICA: located at the mouth of the Tiber River on the Tyrrhenian Sea, Ostia was the ancient harbor of Rome and possibly its first colony. In Republican times Ostia was Rome’s main commercial port and a military base defending the coastline and the mouth of the Tiber. The port continued to flourish under the Empire, despite the development, of **Portus**, a new port slightly to the northwest, in the 2nd century A.D. Ostia’s decline began in the 4th century, when a reduction in trade was combined with the gradual silting up of the harbor. (N.B. Those of you who traveled to Greece with me in 2006 may remember the ancient city of Ephesus in Turkey, which also suffered and declined due to its harbor and river silting up, to the point that trade and supply ships could no longer sail on it.)

People of all social classes and from all over the Mediterranean lived and worked here. Then malaria became endemic in the area and the city, whose population may have been nearly 100,000 at its peak, was totally abandoned. Buried for centuries by sand, the city is remarkably well preserved. The site is less spectacular than Pompeii or Herculaneum because Ostia died a gradual death, but it gives a more complete picture of life under the Roman Empire.

Day 5—Sunday 16 March

FLORENCE: In Italian it’s called *Firenze*, but in any language it’s one of Italy’s most storied cities, home to the world’s greatest works of art. From 1865 to 1870, the city was also the capital of the Kingdom of Italy. Florence lies on the Arno River and has a population of around 400,000 people, plus a suburban population in excess of 200,000 persons (about 1,000,000 with the nearby important city Prato). A center of medieval European trade and finance, the city is often considered the birthplace of the Italian Renaissance and was long ruled by the Medici family. Florence is also famous for its magnificent art and architecture. The city has been called the Athens of the Middle Ages.

We’ll have 4-5 hours here, and Elif will take us to the following sites:

DUOMO: The best-known site and crowning architectural jewel of Florence is the domed cathedral of the city, Santa Maria del Fiore, known as *The Duomo*. The magnificent dome was built by Filippo Brunelleschi. The nearby Campanile tower (partly designed by Giotto) and the Baptistery buildings are also highlights. Both the dome itself and the campanile are open to tourists and offer excellent views; the dome, 600 years after its completion, is still the world’s largest dome built in brick and mortar.

ACCADEMIA: The *Accademia dell'Arte del Disegno* (“Academy of the Art of Design”) is an art academy in the heart of Florence. It was the first academy of drawing in Europe. It was founded in 1561 with high patronage of the Medici by Giorgio Vasari, Agnolo Bronzino and Bartolommeo Ammannati, three of the central artists of Mannerism. At first the academy met in the cloisters of the Church of the Santissima Annunziata.

Most famously, of course, the Gallery of the *Accademia di Belle Arti* has housed the original *David* of Michelangelo since 1873. The sculpture was allegedly brought to the **Accademia** for reasons of conservation, although other factors were involved in its move from its previous outdoor location on Piazza della Signoria. The original intention was to create a ‘Michelangelo museum,’ with original sculptures and drawings, to celebrate the fourth centenary of the artist’s birth. Today the gallery’s small collection of Michelangelos includes his *Captives* intended for the tomb of Pope Julius II and a statue of Saint Matthew, all of which are unfinished. In 1939 these were joined by a *Pietà* discovered in the Barberini chapel in Palestrina, though experts now consider its attribution to Michelangelo to be dubious.

Among the notable renaissance works on display are an outstanding collection of 15th and 16th century Florentine paintings by Paolo Uccello, Domenico Ghirlandaio, Sandro Botticelli and Andrea del Sarto and, from the High Renaissance, Giambologna’s original plaster for the *Rape of the Sabine Women*. As well as a number of Florentine Gothic paintings, the gallery houses the idiosyncratic collection of Russian icons assembled by the Grand Dukes of the House of Lorraine, of which Leopoldo was one.

PONTE VECCHIO: a city landmark, the **Ponte Vecchio** is a Medieval bridge over the Arno River, which flows through the heart of Florence. The bridge is noted for still having shops built along it, as was once common. Butchers initially occupied the shops; the present tenants are jewelers, art dealers and souvenir sellers. It has been described as Europe’s oldest wholly-stone, closed-spandrel segmental arch bridge.

It has always hosted shops and merchants who displayed their goods on tables before their premises, after authorization of the Bargello (a sort of a lord mayor, a magistrate, and a police authority). The back shops (*retrobotteghe*) that may be seen from upriver, were added in the seventeenth century. It is said that the economic concept of bankruptcy originated here: when a merchant could not pay his debts, the table on which he sold his wares (the *banco*) was physically broken (*rotto*) by soldiers, and this practice was called *bancorotto* (literally, “broken table”; possibly it can come from *banca rotta*, “broken bank”). Not having a table anymore, the merchant was not able to sell anything.

Day 6—Monday 17 March

CATACOMBS: Step back into the 11th century on this excursion to Rome’s outlying catacombs. Visit the burial chambers of popes and saints and explore some of the earliest signs of Christian worship. Roman catacombs are made up of underground passages (**ambulacra**), out of whose walls graves (**loculi**) were dug. These **loculi**, generally laid out vertically (**pilae**), could contain one or more bodies. Another type of burial, typical of Roman catacombs, was the **arcosolium**, consisting of a curved niche, enclosed under a carved horizontal marble slab. **Cubicula** (burial rooms containing **loculi** all for one family) and **cryptae** (chapels decorated with frescoes) are also commonly found in catacomb passages. When space began to run out, other graves were also dug in the floor of the corridors—these graves are called **formae**.

VIA APPIA: Then journey down the Appian Way, the most important route to the city in Roman times, to the Church of San Paolo Fuori le Mura (St. Paul Outside the Walls), the second largest church in Rome, after St. Peter’s. The ancient **Via Appia** was the Roman Empire’s first superhighway, stretching from the Forum (the Golden Milestone was the point of origin) all the way into the ‘heel’ of Italy’s ‘boot’ to the port of *Brindisi* (ancient **Brundisium**).

SORRENTO/POMPEII/CAPRI

Day 7—Tuesday 18 March

We'll board the bus and drive south to the Naples area, under the shadow of the infamous Mount Vesuvius. We'll tour the ancient site of Pompeii and eat lunch here before driving to our hotel in Sorrento.

POMPEII: a ruined Roman city near modern Naples in the Campania region. It was destroyed during a catastrophic eruption of the volcano Mount Vesuvius in 79 A.D. The volcano buried the city under many feet of ash and it was lost for 1,600 years before its accidental rediscovery. Since then, its excavation has provided an extraordinarily detailed insight into the life of a city at the height of the Roman Empire. Today, it is one of Italy's leading tourist attractions and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In the 1st century A.D., Pompeii was only one of a number of towns located around the base of Mount Vesuvius. The area had a substantial population that grew prosperous from the region's renowned agricultural fertility. Many of Pompeii's neighboring communities, most famously Herculaneum, also suffered damage or destruction during the 79 A.D. eruption. The inhabitants of Pompeii, as those of the area today, had long been used to minor tremors and wisps of gas from Mt. Vesuvius, and in 62 A.D. there had been a series of earthquakes serious enough to cause structural damage to houses in town. In early August of 79, all the town's wells dried up, but the warnings were not sharp enough, and the Roman world was stunned when on the mild afternoon of August 24, a catastrophic eruption of the volcano obscured the sun and buried the city. Coincidentally, the date was that of the **Vulcanalia**, the festival of the Roman god of fire.

The only reliable eyewitness account of the event was recorded by Pliny the Younger in a letter to the historian Tacitus. Pliny saw a remarkable phenomenon occurring over Mt. Vesuvius: a large dark cloud shaped rather like a pine tree emanating from the mouth of the mountain. After some time the cloud rushed down the flanks of the mountain and covered everything around it, including the surrounding sea. The 'cloud' that Pliny the Younger wrote about is known today as a pyroclastic flow, which is a cloud of superheated gas, ash, and rock that erupts from a volcano. Pliny stated that several earth tremors were felt at the time of the eruption and were followed by a very violent shaking of the ground. He also noted that ash was falling in very thick sheets and the village that he was in had to be evacuated. Also, the sea was sucked away and forced back by an 'earthquake,' a phenomenon which modern geologists call a tsunami. His description then turned to the fact that the sun was blocked out by the eruption and the daylight hours were left in darkness. His uncle Pliny the Elder had already taken several ships to investigate the phenomenon. On the other shore, Pliny the Elder apparently died from carbon dioxide asphyxiation after lying on the ground.

Nonetheless, the town offers a snapshot of Roman life in the 1st century. This moment in time shows that Pompeii was a lively place before the eruption, and evidence abounds of literally the smallest details of everyday life. For example, on the floor of one of the houses (Sirico's), a famous inscription **Salve, lucru** (Welcome, money), perhaps humorously intended, shows us a trading company owned by two partners, **Sirico** and **Nummianus** (but this could be a nickname, since **nummus** means "coin, money"). In other houses, details abound concerning professions and categories, such as for the "laundry" workers (**fullones**). Wine jars have been found bearing what is

apparently the world's earliest known marketing pun, **Vesuvium**. Graffiti carved on the walls shows us real street Latin. At the time of the eruption, the town could have had some 20,000 inhabitants, and was located in an area in which Romans had their vacation villas. Many services were found: the **Macellum** (great food market), the **Pistrinum** (mill), the **Thermopolium** (sort of bar that served cold and hot beverages), the **cauporioe** (small restaurants), and an amphitheater.

How inspirational has Pompeii been in popular entertainment? VERY! Pompeii served as the background for the historic novel *The Last Days of Pompeii* and the British television series *Up Pompeii*, and Robert Harris' recent novel, *Pompeii*, a fictional account focused on **aquarius** (engineer) Marcus Attilius who must repair a fault in the largest aqueduct in the world, the Aqua Augusta, which has failed somewhere around Mount Vesuvius. In the visual arts, *The Last Day of Pompeii* is a famous painting by the Russian-born Carlo Brullo. In October of 1971, the famous band Pink Floyd performed at the vacant 2,000-year-old amphitheater in Pompeii, to an audience composed of camera operators. The performance was released on video later. "Last Days of Pompeii" is the 1991 rock opera by alternative rock band Nova Mob. The theme park Busch Gardens in Williamsburg, Virginia featured an attraction entitled "Escape from Pompeii," which ferried riders via small boats through the city as ruins toppled around them.

After touring Pompeii and having lunch (probably Neapolitan [Naples-style] pizza as a group), we'll board the bus and back to our hotel in Sorrento. I'm not 100% sure yet, but we'll probably check out the shops of Sorrento after dinner.

Day 8— Wednesday 19 March

CAPRI: This morning, we'll board a ferry that will take us to the island of **Capri**, which has been a resort since the time of the Roman Republic. Features of the island are the **Marina Piccola** (Small Harbor), the **Belvedere of Tragara**, which is a high panoramic promenade lined with villas, the limestone masses that stand out of the sea (the *Faraglioni*), **Anacapri**, the **Blue Grotto** (*Grotta Azzurra*), and the ruins of the Imperial Roman villas. Capri is in the region of Campania, Province of Naples. The City of Capri is the main center of population on Capri. It has two adjoining harbours, Marina Piccola and Marina Grande (the main port of the island). The separate commune of Anacapri is located high on the hills to the west.

The etymology of the name Capri can be traced back to the Greeks, the first recorded colonists to populate the island. This means that "Capri" was probably not derived from the Latin **caprae** (*goats*), but rather the Greek **Kapros** (*wild boar*).

Once there, we'll probably board a smaller boat for a short cruise around the island to see a few of the natural attractions, namely the *Faraglioni* and the *Grotta Azzurra* (Blue Grotto).

FARAGLIONI: The *Faraglioni* are three blocks of rock which have survived coastal landslides, erosion by the sea and all manner of atmospheric corrosion. The rocks have each been given a name: the first, still attached to the land, is called **Stella**; the second, separated from the first block by a stretch of sea, **Faraglione di Mezzo**; and the third, **Faraglione di Fuori** or **Scopolo**, literally, "the head or promontory stretching into the sea."

The **Faraglione di Fuori** is the habitat for a famous species of blue tinted lizard, the *Lacerta viridens faraglionensis*, and is the only place where it can be found. It is thought that, following the separation from the mainland, a sort of protective chromatic adaptation resulted in the lizards' scales

assuming the blue tones of the sea and sky. The height of the Faraglioni is, on average, 100 meters. In the **Faraglione di Mezzo** is characterized by a cavity, a natural tunnel which has become famous throughout the world. Italians say that it's good luck to kiss a loved one while floating through this tunnel in a boat.

The Romans were especially fond of this area of Capri: in ancient times scattered with splendid villas and shady *ninfei*, later to become the much sought after retreat of artists in the nineteenth hundreds and now home to exclusive residences and luxury hotels.

GROTTA AZZURRA: a noted sea cave on Capri. The grotto has a partially submerged opening into the sea, as do other grottoes around the island. Roman emperors with villas on Capri reportedly used the Blue Grotto as a private bath. In modern times, it has become a tourist attraction, with visitors rowed inside to see it.

Depending upon the tide and the size of the swells pounding the entrance to the grotto, the guides will ask passengers to lie down while they pull the boat into the grotto with a chain permanently attached to the cave entrance. The guides are also known for demonstrating the grotto's natural echo with energetic bits of song throughout the tour.

Inside the grotto the sea seems to be lit from underwater. It is a magnificent blue color, hence its name. This is due to another opening to the grotto, completely submerged, and the limestone bottom. It allows in sunlight to light the water from below. The underground passages leading to the grotto are partially sealed and supposedly once were connected to catacombs of Roman tombs.

Day 9—Thursday 20 March

ROME: We wake up very early, load the bus (having packed the night before), and drive to the airport. We'll say goodbye (Italian: *arrivederci* [say "ah-ree-vay-DEHR-chee"]) to Italy and fly back to the States via Frankfurt and Washington, DC (via Milan for Group 2). After landing at Logan, we'll board a WMA bus bound for home!