

ITINERARY:

September 2018

Thursday 06 - hello Rome...

On arrival into Rome you will be met by your driver and privately transferred to your lovely Rome hotel, home for the next 2 nights.

Freshen up and then early evening we head out with Amy, our fabulous Rome guide, for a private tour of the exquisite hall of mirrors, located in a lesser known Galleria in Rome. This is followed by our welcome dinner and the start of our culinary adventure. Tonight we dine in a local Trattoria loved by the locals and a true example of Roman cuisine. Amy will take you through the history of food and Rome, which are inextricably linked....

Then for those who feel in the mood we can head to a favourite enoteca in the heart of the via Condotti area to sample another lovely local vino, or perhaps it is time to sleep!

Overnight Accommodation: Sofitel Villa Borghese

Meals Included: (Dinner)

Friday 07 - time to shop with our very own 'insider' fashion journalist...

This morning, once you have indulged in a delicious breakfast it is time for us to go shopping with Eleonora, a lovely Fashion Journalist based in Rome. She regularly reports on Milan Fashion Week and she is opening her little black book to share her secrets with us. Local Artisans including jewellers and leather boutiques, up and coming designers - this will be fun and informative and will give you some fabulous insight into Italian style.

We will grab a sandwich on the way through and then once we have finished with our shopping then free time to shop your own style or check out somewhere you have always wanted to visit.

Early evening, we meet for Champagne and canapes on the Terrace of the Sofitel before we transfer to the Vatican for a private tour. The Vatican offers so much including the spectacular hall of maps and some very famous artworks, and history comes to life through the narrative of our guide, Amy.

Time after to again explore the beautiful streets of Rome, enjoy a cocktail or just people watch before heading back to the Sofitel.

Overnight Accommodation: Sofitel Villa Borghese
Meals Included: (Breakfast, Champagne & Canapes)

Saturday 08 - vintage vespa time and a picnic in the Borghese Gardens...

Today is so much fun! Enjoy your breakfast this morning and then we are off for a little adventure. We will be collected from the Sofitel by our very own 'vespa' chauffers and whisked around the city on a tour with a difference. We will see all the important sights, be introduced to some of the 'Roman Holiday' sights, travel around like a local and stop when we feel like it. This is such a fun way to see this beautiful city and you will love every second of this experience.

Then we might stop for lunch in the famous Piazza Navona to watch the world go by in this famous square, before leisure time this afternoon to do your own thing and explore at your own pace.

Early evening we then meet in the foyer of the hotel and head to the The Borghese Gardens for our very own catered picnic under the stars!

Overnight Accommodation: Sofitel Villa Borghese
Meals Included: (Breakfast, Dinner)

Sunday 09 - to Sicily we go...

This morning an early breakfast, check out and then we transfer to airport for our flight to Catania in Sicily. On arrival Peter will meet us with our transfer to the exquisite town of Taormina, settled on a hill overlooking divine turquoise bays below, and views of Mount Etna, Europe's highest active volcano.

Check in to your charming hotel in the centre of the town, with breathtaking views of the Mediterranean Sea and relax!

Experience Taormina's perfect combination of atmosphere, history and culture with our first passeggiata. This is an elegant and old-world tradition of dressing smartly and taking a walk through the main street at sundown. Afterwards we meet and will dine at a local trattoria to feast on sumptuous local seafood....

Overnight Accommodation: Villa Schuler
Meals Included: (Breakfast, Dinner)

Monday 10 - wine & a volcano...

Today we leave at 9 for the lava rock vineyards under Mount Etna's eastern side to Azienda Benanti at Viagrande. This is the home of Sicily's greatest living white wine. We will enjoy a palmento visit, wine tasting and light brunch. In the afternoon, we head up to Mount Etna National Park to the viewing and ski lift (yes you can ski around here - just not today). This is where we can choose to ascend to check out a closer view or experience its spectacular craters and walks - getting up close and personal with a live volcano - exciting!

We then return to Taormina late afternoon and this evening and dinner are at leisure.

Overnight Accommodation: Villa Schuler

Meals Included: (Breakfast, Brunch)

Tuesday 11 - wine, a volcano & a seafood lunch...

This morning we are off to discover the northern high altitude Etna vineyards such as contrade vineyards in Castiglione di Sicilia, Solicchiata, Rovitello and Passopisciaro. This is the cradle of rejuvenation of the century, and the pre-phylloxera cooler climate volcanic vine slopes of the southern Mediterranean. Our vineyard visit, tour and tasting is a Passopisciaro winery, an amazing property renovated by the Tuscan entrepreneur Andrea Franchetti from a run-down winery last used in 1947.

We then return to Taormina to indulge in a delicious lunch at a local seafood restaurant on the water. We will experience new and innovative cuisine from a young but distinguished chef. Why not try the black tagliolini pasta with sea bass ragout, sweet chard roasted tomatoes and basil cream sauce??

The rest of the day is at leisure.

Overnight Accommodation: Villa Schuler

Meals Included: (Breakfast, Lunch)

Wednesday 12 - freedom to choose...

Today is yours to create your own memories and explore Taormina at leisure. There is the renowned Greek theatre from 300 BC (beautiful), located high above a cliff overlooking the Tyrrenean Sea and Mount Etna, that must be explored or just be spellbound by the dramatic views whilst you sip cappuccino and people watch. Meander down narrow, medieval streets for pure discovery or stumble across the delight of the Greek sector in Giardini - Naxos. Why not take a chairlift to sea level, and discover Isola Bella? We have lots of suggestions for you for the day.

This evening we dine on eastern Sicilian plates among the bustle of Taormina, at a local trattoria.

Overnight Accommodation: Villa Schuler

Meals Included: (Breakfast, Lunch)

Thursday 13 - to Chiaramonte for wine & olive oil...

We depart Taormina for the south-east and Chiaramonte Hills to visit the ancient Roman area Plaga Meopotamica Sicula, home of the Gulfi family. The Catania's are organic makers of excellent single vineyard nero d'avolas grown in chalk surroundings, which we will taste and discover (yum...). After a tasting and light lunch we will visit a nearby olive oil producer before checking into the elegant and relaxing Locanda before our evening meal in the gourmet restaurant.

Overnight Accommodation: Locanda Gulfi

Meals Included: (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Friday 14 - to Siracusa for wine & chocolate...

Today we depart for a wine tasting at Azienda Agricola COS near Vittoria, a picturesque wine-producing community between the Iblei Mountains and the Mediterranean Sea. Produced here is Sicily's sole DOCG, Cerasuolo di Vittoria, the highest level in Italian wine designation, grown under biodynamic principles. Here we will witness the winemaking reversion to fermenting and ageing wine in terracotta vessels. We will then venture to the old Baroque town of Ragusa Ibla for lunch at an exclusive local restaurant known for its chef's penchant for cooking with medieval Roman ingredients.

We then travel to Siracusa via Modica to visit the famous Antica Dolceria Bonajuto where you will taste a variety of chocolate made to a traditional recipe by the sixth generation of a famous dynasty of chocolate makers. We arrive at our hotel in Siracusa late afternoon, a charming boutique property owned by a local family who share their private antique collection in the hotel! The evening is at leisure for us to wander the historical island of Ortigia, the heart and soul of Siracusa.

Overnight Accommodation: Hotel Cavalieri

Meals Included: (Breakfast, Lunch)

Saturday 15 - history, shopping and a day at leisure...

Today is at leisure to explore Siracusa and its surrounds including the ruins of Tempio di Apollo and the catacombs at Basilica di San Giovanni. Take a sea walk around the island of Ortigia or stroll down Corso Matteotti for the shops and boutiques, then take an underground tunnel from the Piazza del Duomo to the harbour.

This evening for our farewell dinner, we will dine at a traditional local restaurant which features eastern Sicilian seafood, complemented by a selection of Ragusan and Noto wines.

Overnight Accommodation: Hotel Cavalieri

Meals Included: (Breakfast, Dinner)

Sunday 16 - time to say farewell...

This morning we transfer to Catania airport for our flight back to Rome, where we will say farewell. Thanks for coming away and for such a great experience!

Meals Included: (Breakfast)