



Best-Day
Adventures
A division of Ayelet Tours

BEST-DAY ADVENTURES:

Tuscany & the Italian Countryside

For single Jewish travelers in their 40s, 50s & 60s

June 11-20, 2023

plus optional Venice extension

June 20-22, 2023

(As of 4/26/23)

Home to some of Italy's most romantic medieval cities, the central region of Tuscany is most coveted for its landscape, artistic legacy, hilltop villages and rustic farm-to-table menus. Join us on an extraordinary, customized immersion into this truly wondrous culture as we visit Florence, Bologna, Parma, Cortona, Pisa, Siena, Cinque Terre and more!



Accessibility note: Please note that the tour will involve a number of walking tours and participants should be in adequate physical condition. Walking levels will generally be easy-moderate and while plenty of shade and breaks are incorporated, full participation may require periods of standing or walking along even, uneven and occasionally hilly terrain that could include steps, inclines and cobblestone surfaces. Participants with physical limitations should take this into account.

Day 1: Sunday, June 11, 2023: DEPARTURE

- North American travelers depart home for overnight flight to Florence!
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Day 2: Monday, June 12, 2023: BENVENUTO IN ITALIA!

- Welcome to beautiful **Florence**! Upon arrival, transfer to our beautiful centrally located hotel in the heart of the city. Florence is the place where history revolves around art. The birthplace of Renaissance, this magnificent city is home to artworks by masters such as Leonardo Da Vinci, Donatello, Michelangelo, Raphael and many more.
- This morning we offer a meet and greet at our hotel for all arriving travelers.
- While Florence is known for its works of art, we begin our tour with another important landmark of the city. As we wait for our hotel rooms to become available, we embark upon a walking tour of the former **Jewish ghetto**, a history-filled neighborhood, where we see the **Loggia del Pesce** with sweeping views of the entire city as well as the **synagogue** and **Jewish Museum**.
- Mid-afternoon we check into our hotel and have a little down time to refresh before we join together for a festive **welcome program** and our first taste of fine Italian cuisine at our **welcome dinner**.



Overnight in Florence (D)

Day 3: Tuesday, June 13, 2023: FLORENCE, BOLOGNA & PARMA

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we have allotted some time for a leisurely start to the day. Choose to sleep in a bit and then have a stroll down the fascinating corridors of Florence, visiting a museum or enjoying an espresso at a local *caffe*. For those interested in the market scene, plunge into the Italian hustle and bustle by paying a short visit to Florence's most famous marketplace, the **San Lorenzo Market**. Here you'll discover local traditions and crafts, as well as beautiful Florentine leather products handcrafted nearby. You may also choose to visit the adjacent **Mercato Centrale**, an indoor food market largely aimed at the local population offering an abundance of stalls with regional specialties.
- Late this morning, we check out of our hotel and depart for **Bologna**, where we immerse ourselves into the stories of the city while experiencing the porticos, monuments and towers of this well-preserved medieval center. We learn about the city's past and present and discover the most magnificent monuments, including the **Two Towers**, the inner courtyard of **Archiginnasio** and **San Petronio Church**. We also admire **Piazza Maggiore** and the romantic **Piazza Santo Stefano**, the social hub of Italian lifestyle.
- After lunch on own at a local restaurant in Bologna (feel free to sample the real pasta Bolognese), we will continue on to **Parma**.
- Upon arrival, we check into our hotel for the night and enjoy delicious **Italian dinner** (with Parmesan cheese of course!).



Overnight in Parma (B, D)

Day 4: Wednesday, June 14, 2023: PARMA & LUCCA

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- Following breakfast, we set out on a **bike tour** of Parma, a small but prosperous and quaint city. Here, you will not see many cars as most locals prefer to walk or bike to get around. (Alternative touring available for anyone not comfortable on a bike).
- Next, we visit a **local farm** where Parmesan cheese is made; one of Italy's most famous and delicious exports.
- We enjoy **lunch** together at the **Parmigiano-Reggiano Factory**, including tasting the delicious cheese and aperitif.
- We continue on to **Lucca**, checking into our hotel upon arrival and then setting out again for your choice of dinner on own, or "follow the leader" to a local establishment.

Overnight in Lucca (B, L)

Day 5: Thursday, June 15, 2023: LUCCA & CINQUE TERRE

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We begin with a short **walking tour around Lucca**, known throughout Italy for its fantastic medieval city walls that still encircle most of the historic old town.
- We set off for the colorful and romantic **Cinque Terre**. The beautiful coastline, lovely beaches, bright colored homes built among the cliffs as well as the great hiking trails, spectacular nature and well-known Italian cuisine and hospitality make up this stunning destination. Cinque, meaning five in Italian, is made up of five impressive towns, of which two we will visit; **Riomaggiore** and **Manarola**.
- We complete our day with a **sunset cruise** along the coast and dinner on own before returning to Lucca.

Overnight in Lucca (B)

Day 6: Friday, June 16, 2023: PISA, SAN GIMIGNANO AND BEYOND

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- We depart Lucca and travel through the stunning scenery of Tuscany to **Pisa**. As a city port, Pisa was the first place in Tuscany where Jewish families settled as early as the 9th century. Here, we will meet our local guide who will weave stories of the past Jewish presence in Pisa as we visit the **Jewish cemetery** and **synagogue**.
- A visit to Pisa would not be complete without a photo opportunity with the famous **Leaning Tower of Pisa**.
- We continue to **San Gimignano**, whose famous silhouette is an enduring symbol of Tuscany. We set out on a guided tour of the town known as one of the most attractive and popular destinations in Italy and a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- Our next stop is in **Pienza**, a true gem famous for their local pecorino sheep's milk cheese, then it is on to the medieval hilltop town of **Montepulciano**, where we are surrounded by vineyards, where **Vino Nobile** red wine is the name of the game.
- We arrive in **Cortona** in the early evening. Join us for a short but sweet **Kabbalat Shabbat** and then set out for dinner on own or choose to "follow the leader" to a local establishment.



Overnight in Cortona (B)

Day 7: Saturday, June 17, 2023: CORTONA

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we embark on a walking tour of Cortona, one of Italy's oldest towns. Without question, the most popular place to visit in Cortona is the **Convento delle Celle**, which sits above a stream on the slopes of Monte Sant'Egidio.
- Next, we enjoy **Piazza della Repubblica**, once the Roman Forum, sitting in the historic center overlooked by the 14th century **Palazzo del Popolo** and the imposing **Palazzo Comunale**.
- After some free time to enjoy a little Italy on our own, we partake in a **cooking class** at a local farm and then enjoy the fruits of our labor at **dinner**.

Overnight in Cortona (B, D)

Day 8: Sunday, June 18, 2023: CORTONA – SIENA – FLORENCE

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- Today, we travel to **Sienna**, where we enjoy a walking tour featuring **San Domenico Church** and **Piazza del Campo**, a shell shaped plaza where the famous **Palio horse race** takes place each summer. We complete our tour in **Piazza del Duomo** in front of the grand and colorful façade of the Cathedral dedicated to the Virgin Mary, where visitors can admire works of art by world-renowned artists like **Michelangelo, Donatello and Bernini**.
- We enjoy **lunch** together at a local restaurant, where you will want to try the **pici** (specialty pasta), **ricciarelli** and the **panforte** (delicious sweets).
- In the late afternoon, we return to **Florence** and enjoy a visit to the **Galleria dell' Accademia di Firenze** (Gallery of the Academy), best known as the home of **Michelangelo's Statue of David**.
- We check into our hotel and enjoy a free night in Florence ("Follow the Leader" option for dinner will be offered).



Overnight in Florence (B, L)

Day 9: Monday, June 19, 2023: BEAUTIFUL FLORENCE

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We begin our day with a walking tour visiting some of the city's most iconic attractions. The entire city is a showcase of the Italian Renaissance, the humanistic artistic movement that broke Europe from the Dark Ages. Stops include the **Ponte Vecchio** and **Brunelleschi's Dome**.
- Our walking tour continues at the **Piazza Duomo**, where a cluster of buildings form a cathedral complex, home to some of Italy's greatest artistic treasures. The Duomo is the prominent landmark of the Florentine skyline and is known for its size, beauty and architectural masterpiece that was ahead of its time.
- Next, we see the **Baptistry of St. John** with its marble façade and intricate interior mosaics, followed by stops in **Piazzale Michelangelo** and **Piazza de la Republica**.
- After some free time for lunch and shopping, we gather one last time tonight for our group **farewell dinner**.

Overnight in Florence (B, D)

Day 10: Tuesday, June 20, 2023: ARRIVEDERCI/VENICE EXTENSION BEGINS

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- We transfer to the airport for our flights home.

OR JOIN OUR VENICE EXTENSION

Extend your tour with us to the city of Venice, highlighted by over 150 canals, 400 bridges, 500 gondolas, the Piazza San Marco and a fascinating history. We'll enjoy two days and nights of touring and exploring one of Italy's most picturesque destinations.

- Following breakfast, we board our bus and travel to **Venice**.
- Upon arrival in this breathtaking city, we will meet our local guide and embark on a **city tour** highlighted by visits to **St. Mark's Basilica** and the **Doge's Palace** to explore the opulent public chambers adorned with masterpieces of Renaissance art. Here, we learn how the powerful doges ruled the Venetian Republic with an iron fist and gain rare entry into shadowy quarters of the **Piombi attic prison**, where Casanova was once locked up. We also walk across the famous **Bridge of Sighs** and share the same view that so many convicts shared as their last look at the outside world.
- Later this afternoon, we check into our hotel and freshen up before taking a stroll (or canal boat) to find dinner on our own.



Overnight in Venice (B)

Day 11: Wednesday, June 21, 2023: JEWISH VENICE

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we begin with a walking tour of the **Venetian Ghetto**. Though it was founded more than 500 years ago, today, the authentic features of this neighborhood are still home to a Jewish community of approximately 450 people.
- We continue to **St. Mark's Square**, where we enjoy an authentic **gondola ride**.
- The remainder of the day is at leisure to explore the many charms of Venice or choose an optional excursion to the **Island of Murano** and tour one of the many glass-making businesses.
- We gather together one last time this evening for our **farewell dinner** at a local restaurant and a chance to reminisce about our Italian adventure.



Overnight in Venice (B, D)

Day 12: Thursday, June 22, 2023: ARRIVEDERCI

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Transfer to airport for our return flights home.

The Memories Last Forever!!

**Itinerary subject to change*