

Architecture of Italy, Sicily and Malta

An exploration of 2,000 years of civilization: across three richly diverse cultural destinations. This trip combines several informative master classes delivered by an architectural expert with a fascinating journey through the cultural heritage of these beautiful Mediterranean towns and cities.

Itinerary at a Glance

- A tour of the magical city of Rome including the Trevi Fountain, the Pantheon and the Spanish Steps
- Visit the Vatican City; the Basilica di San Pietro, the Sistine Chapel and the Vatican Museum
- Further exploration of Ancient Rome; The Forum. San Pietro in Vincoli and the Coliseum
- A fast ferry journey from Naples and visit to the beautiful island of Capri
- A full day at the great archaeological site of Pompeii
- Overnight ferry to Palermo. Sicily
- Sightseeing in Palermo; highlights include the magnificent 12th century Norman Cathedral Monreale and the catacombs in the Capuchin convent on Piazza Cappuccino
- Visit Agrigento and the Valley of the Temples and a tour of ancient Syracuse.
- Finally to Malta with its unique architecture in Valletta to see the Upper Barrakka Gardens, St. John Co-Cathedral and the National Museum of Archaeology with a final visit to the picturesque island of Gozo

Full Itinerary

Day One: Welcome to Italy

Meet the professional Tour Manager who is an expert in Architecture at Rome airport and transfer to the hotel with a brief tour en route of some of the architecture of the city including, Baroque, Gothic and Renaissance. After some time to relax, meet for a walking tour of the city. visit the Baroque Trevi Fountain: don't forget a few coins to make a special wish. Designed by Nicola Salvi in 1732, its water is supplied by one of Rome's earliest aqueducts. Continue to the Pantheon, the best-preserved building of Ancient Rome. The original temple was built by Marcus Agrippa and dedicated to the planetary gods. The final visit will be made to the famous Spanish Steps. Welcome dinner at a restaurant in the city.

Day Two: Vatican City

A morning visit to the Vatican City. A City within Itself, the Vatican has its own post office, newspaper, radio station and tram station. Visit St. Peter's Basilica, the largest basilica in the world to see works of art including Michelangelo's 'Pieta', sculpted when he was only 25 years old, and the only work to have his signature. The Basilica was originally built where the Apostle Saint Peter was believed to have been buried. Visit the Vatican museum which contains an incredible collection of art and treasures. The masterpiece though is the Sistine Chapel, with Michelangelo's frescoes of the Creation on the high vaulted ceilings and the Last Judgement on the far wall.

Day Three: Rome City

Continue with the exploration of Rome, the first stop will be at the Forum: the commercial, political and religious centre of Ancient Rome, then the Coliseum, Construction began in 72AD and it held up to 80,000 spectators. Then to St Peter in Chains, built in the fifth century at the request of the Empress Eudossia, who wanted to keep custody of the chains that Saint Peter bore during his Imprisonment in Jerusalem, the church was rebuilt under Hadrian I, in about 780. The interior holds the mausoleum of Julius II, built by Michelangelo under commission to the Pope and the famous statue of Moses by Michelangelo.

Day Four: To Naples and Capri

Take the fast train to Naples, arrive and transfer to a fast ferry to Capri one of the most famous and beautiful islands in the world. Popular since the Roman times when the Emperors built their villas here. you can still see the Capri that the ancient Romans fell in love with 2000 years ago, free time, then return to Naples.

Day Five: Pompeii and Sorrento

Depart Naples to visit the great archaeological site of Pompeii. This truly unique site is the only place in the world offering such a vivid insight into how ancient civilization lived. Aspects of life of 2000 years ago, preserved by the volcanic ash that were thrown from Vesuvius in the great eruption of 79 AC continue to Herculaneum. The legend is that Hercules founded this Greek settlement.

Day Six: Naples

Master classes held in the morning, followed by a guided walking tour of the town; the San Carlo Theatre, the famous Piazza Municipio, Royal Palace, Piazza del Plebiscito, Castel dei'Ovo, San Francesco di Paola church and an inside visit of the Naples Museum. Here you will see a vast collection of Roman-Greco artifacts, including those discovered in Pompeii and Herculaneum. Late afternoon transfer to the port to board the overnight ferry to Palermo.

Day Seven: Palermo

Arrive in Palermo, Sicily, with a guide for a half day visit to the Cathedral Monreale, a magnificent 12 century building that is a mixture of Norman, Arab and Byzantine. The central doorway has bronze doors and the interior is covered with dazzling gilded mosaics. Outside is the entrance to the cloisters where there are 228 twin columns decorated with different motifs including plants & animals.

Day Eight Palermo

Visit the 'Quattro Canti' a splendid example of Baroque architecture, Palazzo dei Normani and its superb Palatine Chapel, Piazza Pretoria and Its fountain, Church of San Giovanni degli Eremiti and Cathedral and the catacombs in the Capuchin convent on Piazza Cappuccino. See the mummified bodies and skeletons of Palermitans from the 17 – 19 centuries, including the mummified body of two year old Rosalina Lombardi, who looks as if she could be sleeping.

Day Nine: Palermo and Agrigento

Drive to Agrigento a medieval town overlooking the Mediterranean and spectacular Valley of the Temples.

Day Ten: Agrigento

Master classes in the morning. An afternoon tour of the Valley of the Temples where you will see Doric Temples. First stop is the Temple of Hercules, built towards the end of the 6 century BC and believed to be the oldest of all the temples in the valley. The most intact temple is the Temple of Concordia, built in 440 BC. The temple of Juno stands high on the edge of the ridge. Part of its colonnade remains and is an impressive sacrificial altar.

Day Eleven: Syracuse

Depart towards Syracuse. Once a powerful Greek city, Syracuse is said to be the highlight of Sicily. Founded in 734 by colonists from Corinth. A visit to Ortigia Island, where you will see the cathedral, the fountain of Artemide and Temple of Apollo. Dinner in a typical Sicilian restaurant.

Day Twelve: Syracuse

Morning at leisure. Afternoon visit to the Archaeological Park, with its white 5 century BC Greco Theatre. Cut from rock, the theatre could seat 16,000 people. Onto the Garden of Paradise; it is here that the Greeks operated a rock quarry, where prisoners cut blocks of limestone for architectural use. In the garden is the Ear of Dionysus, a grotto 23m high and 65m deep, in the shape of an ear. Another site is the 2 century AD Roman Amphitheatre. Take the evening fast ferry to Valetta, arriving directly into the stunning harbor.

Day Thirteen: Valetta, Malta

A visit to the National Museum of Archaeology, to see a collection of megalithic pottery, sculpture and adornments from Malta's temples and historic sites. Moving on to the Palace of the Grand Masters. Completed in 1574, and the original Magisterial Palace of the Knights. Visit the former council chamber and Hall of St Michael, St. George and the Ambassadors displaying some excellent frescoes and paintings. The next stop is the St. John Co-Cathedral Designed by Maltese architect Gerolamo Cassar in 1577 for the Order of St. John it contains frescoes by Calabrian artist Mattia Preti, intricate marble burial tombs, Caravaggio's The Beheading of St. John and a series of Flemish tapestries. The final visit of the day is to the Upper

Barrakka Gardens, with a magnificent view over the harbor including the Fort St. Elmo and the Quays of Marsa.

Day Fourteen: Gozo

Cross Mhar harbor to Gozo, a little paradise. Visit the Citadel 'Gran Castello', built in the 15 century by the Knights to provide refuge and defense against the numerous attacks by the Turks and Corsairs. The Cathedral Museum houses many sacred vestments and silver and gold items use for sacred services. The Archaeological Museum contains various periods in the cultural history of the island. Return to Valletta to enjoy a farewell dinner.

Day Fifteen: Return Home via Rome

Catch a flight to Rome and then an onward flight home.