



## Italian Indulgence 2026

Have you ever met a white peacock, or found a truffle deep beneath the ground? This indulgent Italian adventure reveals a new discovery with every twist and turn. Ignite your imagination as blissful lakes invite you to linger, a sea of vines presents a silky Chianti wine, and terracotta towns dance with Renaissance tales. It's time to slow down and soak it all up – the journey won't last forever, but the memories certainly will.





# About your tour notes

*These tour notes* contain everything you need to know before your tour departs – from where to meet your fellow guests and local guide to what essentials to pack for your journey. We recommend you print this document out and bring it with you on your tour. Give a copy to loved ones at home so they can follow your adventure, too.

**Important:** please refresh this document as close to your departure as possible to ensure you're equipped with the latest information available.

**The Guardian Rome @ 18:00**

Via Palestro, 13, Rome, 00185

**Santa Lucia Station for Hotel NH Venezia**

**Santa Lucia @ 16:00**

Venice

## Worth noting

Thinking about joining us in March or November? Some activities may be unavailable, but you can be sure of a special seasonal alternative!



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## Tour highlights

- ✓ Learn to whip up a delicious Tuscan meal in a traditional countryside villa
- ✓ Join a truffle hunt with a local trifolau and their trusty dog in the sun-kissed hills of Alba
- ✓ Bask in the wonders of Lake Maggiore on a boat tour of the whimsical Borromean Islands
- ✓ Soak up the exquisite scenery and opulent atmosphere of Lake Como

## More inclusions

- ✓ 12 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 4 dinners
- ✓ 12 nights in thoughtfully selected accommodation
- ✓ Luxury minicoach

## Currencies you'll use

- Italy - EUR



## Included meals

Breakfast (B) is included daily.

Some of your lunches and dinners are also included, either in hotels or local restaurants. These are indicated by (L) and (D) in the itinerary.

Please note that drinks will not always be included.

We will do our best to accommodate any specific dietary requirements you may have. Please ensure to make these clear to us before your tour begins so we can communicate them to our hotels, restaurants and suppliers.

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# Your itinerary

## Day 1 | Rome (Italy)

*Benvenuti a Roma!* And welcome to an Italian indulgence in every sense – these next twelve days are going to be a feast for the eyes, the stomach and the soul! We'll start by meeting the small group we're sharing the journey with, before settling in for our first taste of traditional *cucina italiana* (or Italian cuisine). No one's counting how many biscotti you eat, we promise.

### Included today



#### Accommodation

The Guardian Hotel (or similar)



#### Meals

+ Dinner

## Day 2 | Rome – Assisi – Perugia

Did you know that Italian breakfasts are typically light and sweet? The perfect energy boost to begin our first full day together! Once we've dusted off the crumbs of our croissants, we'll get comfy in the minicoach and make our way to the honey-coloured hilltop town of Assisi, famed for being the birthplace of St Francis. Glowing with a gentle warm light, this is a place where time slows down and the spirit of the past lingers in the air.

Our expert Tour Leader will walk us past the sights – including the magnificent basilica – before we have free time for lunch. A *torta al testo* might just hit the spot: a traditional griddled flatbread filled with cold cuts, cheese or roasted veggies.

Why not end the day with a kiss (of the chocolate kind)? We'll finish off the afternoon in medieval Perugia, where Baci Perugina – decadent hazelnut chocolate 'kisses' – were created. Here, our carefully chosen hotel is perfectly located for dining out. Options, options...

### Included today



#### Accommodation

Hotel Fortuna (or similar)



#### Meals

+ Breakfast





## Day 3 | Perugia – Siena – Rural Tuscany

Prepare to step back in time today as our path takes us towards Siena: a grand Gothic city bursting with fabulous architecture. Like a perfectly preserved medieval relic, its narrow, winding streets each lead to somewhere unique – a secret courtyard illuminated by a shaft of sunlight, or an elegant palace whispering tales of times gone by. Once we've explored its treasures together, we'll have free time to discover its foodie delights for lunch; some *ricciarelli* might be in keeping with the historic atmosphere – these chewy, macaroon-style almond biscuits have been enjoyed by the Sieneese since the 14th century!

Bags packed with biscuits, next we'll wind our way through the Chianti region, where meticulously tended vines change colour like chameleons with every season, and the scent of sun-baked earth carries through the breeze. Set in a traditional countryside villa, our refined-yet-rustic Tuscan hotel will become our home for the next two nights – and this evening, we'll dig into some local favourites during our dinner as a group.

### Included today



#### Accommodation

Hotel Relais Boccioleto (or similar)



#### Meals

- + Breakfast
- + Dinner



## Day 4 | Rural Tuscany

Shh... today our hosts are going to spill culinary secrets kept under wraps for generations. Well, some of them anyway! It's time to roll up our sleeves and get stuck into a masterclass led by a friendly local chef. *Andiamo!*

Perhaps a *pappa al pomodoro* bread-and-basil filled tomato soup or a classic tagliatelle will be on the menu? Whichever seasonal speciality we'll be rustling up, you'll want to make notes for when you host back home! We'll finish off by sampling our (naturally delicious) handiwork for lunch – there's truly no better way to get a taste for Tuscan culture than this.

Later on, take a moment to slow down and soak up the beauty of your surroundings. If you fancy a walk, there are plenty of ancient paths to follow amid the softly flowing hills. And a dip in the outdoor pool is the perfect way to end a traditional Tuscan day.

### Included today



#### Accommodation

Hotel Relais Boccioleto (or similar)



#### Meals

- + Breakfast
- + Lunch



## Day 5 | Rural Tuscany – Florence – Lucca

Wave *ciao* to sun-kissed vineyards and olive groves; this morning we're making our way to Florence, the home of David (specifically Michelangelo's masterpiece, but plenty of other Davids too!). Here Renaissance art sings from every corner, and history isn't confined to dusty books, but lives and breathes in the very stone of the city. We'll uncover its secrets on a walking tour with a local guide – strolling past the likes of the Duomo, a feat of engineering still awe-inspiring 700 years later, and the wonderful Ponte Vecchio medieval bridge.

Soaking up all this culture is hungry work, so we'll have free time to enjoy lunch before we leave – the perfect excuse for a crispy, thin-based pizza or a crusty prosciutto roll.

Next, from David's home to Puccini's! Our luxury minicoach will lead us to the lovely walled city of Lucca, the birthplace of one of Italy's greatest composers, where melodies still seem to ring. Here, your evening is free for exploring – why not settle in for a concert at the Church of San Giovanni and Santa Reparata, where a different opera programme is performed every night.

### Included today



#### Accommodation

Hotel Alla Corte degli Angeli  
(or similar)



#### Meals

+ Breakfast



## Day 6 | Lucca – Pisa – Lucca

Will it be pistachio or hazelnut cream on your pastries this morning? Either way, Italians know how to start the morning right! Today there's another treat in store as we pay a visit to the Campo dei Miracoli, where the legendary Leaning Tower of Pisa awaits.

Afterwards, we'll gather inside the Baptistery of Saint John for a unique acoustic experience. Notes sung here last so long it's possible to accompany yourself, and the Baptistery Guards will demonstrate the serene reverberating effect.

We'll return to Lucca this afternoon, where Tuscan charm meets a slower pace of life, and simple pleasures are fully embraced – meaning good food, good wine and good company! There are plenty of options for dinner within walking distance of our thoughtfully selected hotel, set within the historic city walls. Your Tour Leader is sure to have a recommendation (or five!) up their sleeve.

### Included today



#### Accommodation

Hotel Alla Corte degli Angeli  
(or similar)



#### Meals

+ Breakfast





## Day 7 | Lucca - Recco and Portofino – Ligurian Riviera

Sometimes the back roads reveal a land of contrasts, and the spectacular Italian Riviera is certainly that. From dramatic cliffs to hidden coves, vibrant coastal towns and rugged mountains – there's something to capture everyone's imagination today.

Once we've finished off the foam of our cappuccinos, we'll make our way to the delightful fishing village of Camogli. Timeless and utterly present, it's a snapshot of Ligurian life that has played out for centuries. Here we'll have free time to find some creamy *stracchino* cheese-stuffed *focaccia di Recco* for lunch – best enjoyed along the beach watching the fishing boats bob gently in the dock.

Stomach satisfied, the glitz and glamour of Portofino is up next – where sleek superyachts fill the harbour and designer boutiques line snug streets. There's time to explore its cheerful hidden courtyards, overflowing with flowers, or practise your Italian in a local trattoria before we make the journey to our hotel in Rapallo for the night. Housed in an elegant villa a few steps from the seafront and a tiny 16th-century castle, it's the ideal setting to end our day. *Bellissimo!*

### Included today



#### Accommodation

Europa Hotel Design Spa  
1877 (or similar)



#### Meals

+ Breakfast



## Day 8 | Ligurian Riviera – Barolo – Asti – Langhe Region

We've got wine on our mind this morning – with these kind of views, it would be hard not to! Watch as vineyards stretch as far as the eye can see as we venture through the breathtaking UNESCO World Heritage Piedmont region, where the scent of ripening grapes hangs heavy in the air.

After a stop at a beautiful Barolo, we'll get into the *spirit* (we couldn't resist) with a local grappa tasting experience at a family run winery in the Asti wine region. Made by distilling the bits of grape that are left over from pressing wine (like the skin, seeds and stems), this is a mini adventure for the palate. You can expect a bit of a kick (thanks to the high alcohol content) and an intense aroma – ranging from fruity and floral to herby or spicy.

The Langhe region is our home for this evening; a land where feasting is ingrained in the culture. From creamy risottos infused with truffles, to hearty stews simmered with Barolo wine, and delicate handmade pasta tossed with seasonal vegetables – each meal is a celebration of local ingredients and time-honoured traditions. And tonight's group dinner will be just that!

### Included today



#### Accommodation

Hotel Santa Vittoria (or similar)



#### Meals

- + Breakfast
- + Dinner



## Day 9 | Langhe Region – Alba – Lake Orta – Lake Maggiore

Curly fur, eager eyes, a twitching nose... shake paws with today's local guide – a truffle-hunting dog! This morning we'll head out into the forests of Alba to join a truffle hunt with a *trifolau* and their trusty pooch; a tradition as old as the hills themselves. Practically vibrating with excitement, once unleashed our clever canine friend will be off – zigzagging through the undergrowth, sniffing out the precious fungi hidden beneath the soil. Trained since they were pups, no truffle can escape! If you're joining us in the autumn, you might even uncover an elusive white truffle hiding deeper under the earth...

Once we've sampled the fruits of our labour, we'll thank our hosts (perhaps with a doggy treat or two) before making our way to captivating Lake Orta: a tranquil retreat sitting pretty at the bottom of the imposing Monte Mottarone. With an intimate charm and a quiet elegance, Orta invites you to linger and lose yourself in its calm beauty. Then, from one blissful Italian lake to another! Lake Maggiore will be our final stop on today's scenic journey – take it all in as the sun sinks slowly behind the ripples and another idyllic day comes to a close.

### Included today



#### Accommodation

Grand Hotel Majestic (or similar)



#### Meals

+ Breakfast



## Day 10 | Lake Maggiore

It's time to take to the water! Today we're setting sail for the enchanting Borromean Islands, a collection of teeny-but-mightily-beautiful islands nestled in the western corner of Lake Maggiore. As we glide across the lake, keep an eye out for the picturesque villages dotting the shoreline and the snow-capped Alps in the distance.

We'll arrive at Isola Madre earlier than most, stepping into a botanist's dream brimming with exotic plants from every corner of the planet – the air thick with the scent of blossoms and earth. From one whimsical world to another, next we'll explore Isola Bella's opulent palace with a local guide, giving us a chance to discover all the inside stories. You'll even get to meet the island's ethereal white peacocks as they strut proudly through the grounds (rightly so!).

Finally, the Isola dei Pescatori tops off our trio of treasures, where houses were made for the workers that built Bella's palace. We'll admire its pretty harbour and enjoy a light lunch at a local restaurant before heading back to the mainland for the evening. History, horticulture and carefully paced island hopping – what could be better!

### Included today



#### Accommodation

Grand Hotel Majestic (or similar)



#### Meals

- + Breakfast
- + Lunch



## Day 11 | Lake Maggiore – Lake Como – Sondrio

Bid a fond farewell to glittering Lake Maggiore; this morning our path takes us towards the fairytale shores of Lake Como. Watch as winding roads hug the coastline, revealing glimpses of terracotta villages and lavish villas nestled amongst lush gardens – a peek into the world of the rich and famous. You may hear George Clooney’s name whispered within the minicoach once or twice...

As your Italian adventure is distinct from any other, today your Tour Leader will choose their favourite lakeside spot to stop for lunch. And then? We think another tasting is in order! We’ll call in at a Valtellina winery to wet our whistles, sampling a collection of silky reds and dry whites from the region. *Cin cin!*

Later we’ll take the scenic route to Sondrio, where our centrally located hotel offers plenty of nearby restaurants for dining out. You might want to hunt down some *sciatt* crispy buckwheat fritters filled with stringy *casera* cheese (‘sciat’ means ‘toad’ which they’re said to resemble – only in appearance, of course!).

### Included today



#### Accommodation

Grand Hotel della Posta (or similar)



#### Meals

+ Breakfast



## Day 12 | Sondrio – Lake Molveno – Trento

The crisp mountain air on your skin, the scent of pine and wildflowers filling your lungs, a swathe of iridescent blue stretching out before you... You have indeed woken up! This morning's setting is spectacular Lake Molveno, nestled at the foot of the jagged and dramatic Brenta Dolomites. Here we'll have time to stroll its stunning shores and settle into a pizzeria for lunch. You may want to indulge in a *bombardino* – like a warm, boozy hug, this thick and creamy eggnog liqueur is topped with a cloud of freshly whipped cream and a dusting of cinnamon. As the name suggests, it packs a punch!

This afternoon, our path leads us to the gorgeous alpine city of Trento, where our Tour Leader will help us discover its labyrinth of cobbled streets and frescoed buildings. And tonight, our final Italian feast as a group awaits. From white peacocks to white truffles, there will be no shortage of surprises to discuss!

### Included today



#### Accommodation

Grand Hotel Trento (or similar)



#### Meals

- + Breakfast
- + Dinner

## Day 13 | Trento – Verona – Venice

*O Romeo, Romeo!* Our final day chimes with a line that has echoed through the centuries as fair Verona beckons. During an orientation walk, your Tour Leader will fill you in on the story behind Juliet's Balcony – but it's not all feuding families and forbidden love. This is a city steeped in history and romance, from its colossal Roman amphitheatre – the weathered stone worn smooth by gladiators' footsteps – to its vibrant central market, overflowing with fragrant bouquets, tangy *pecorino* cheese and hand-painted ceramics.

Last but certainly not least, we'll settle in our minicoach one last time and head towards our show-stopping finale: the magical floating city of Venice. We'll arrive in the late afternoon, but recommend you stay on a few days more to enjoy this truly bewitching place. As gondolas skim beneath bridges and the soft murmur of Italian voices drift across the water, it's time to say *arrivederci* to our new friends – until we meet again.

### Included today



#### Meals

- + Breakfast





# Travel advice

## Finances

### Changing money

**Cash:** Foreign money can be changed at banks, airports, some railway and tube stations, and at major hotels (though at a less favourable rate).

**Credit cards:** Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted. American Express is only accepted in some larger establishments.

**Cash machines:** ATMS are widely available.

### Tipping

Tipping is entirely at your discretion. If you feel you have received exceptional service, it is recommended that you tip £1-2/€ per day for Drivers and £4- 5/€ per day for Tour Leaders.

## Insurance

Before travelling with Back-Roads Touring, it is compulsory for all guests to take out comprehensive travel insurance. Please ensure your insurance covers medical expenses (including repatriation), cancellation cover, loss or damage to baggage and personal effects, money and personal liability.

We recommend you carry your insurance details with you at all times. You may be asked to provide details of your medical insurance or a payment guarantee in some countries before medical assistance can be provided.

For more information, please see our [FAQ page](#).

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).

## Passports and visas

Please ensure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your tour. Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain



countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your tour's departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling.

Please note: Some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure as requirements do change periodically.

We advise you to either carry a photocopy of your passport (and visa, if applicable) with you while abroad, or to ensure that you leave a copy with relatives back at home. This will enable the local embassy or high commission to arrange a replacement if the original should be lost or stolen. If you do take copies with you on your tour, please ensure that you keep these separate from your original documents.

## Medication and mobility

Whilst on your tour, we want you to have the smoothest journey possible which requires x mobility conditions:

- You must be fit enough to get on and off the vehicle on a regular basis, and to walk around towns and villages or to attractions.
- You must be able to walk up and down stairs and use a shower over the bath.

Please note that, unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate mobility scooter or wheelchair users as we frequently stay in traditional-style hotels and the majority do not have lifts or ground-floor rooms.

If you take medicine for certain conditions, such as diabetes or heart problems, please carry it with you at all times.

Please declare any medical conditions you may have in advance of your tour. If you are in any doubt as to whether our tours are suitable for you, please contact our friendly Customer Service team [here](#).



## Mental health and wellbeing

Culture shock, homesickness and periods of feeling down happen regardless of age. Be rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Tour Leader and Driver will do their utmost to make you smile.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- Call loved ones. Hearing a familiar voice whilst in an unfamiliar destination can help ground you and remind you you're not alone.
- Eat well. Nobody feels their best when they're hungry. There are plenty of nutritious culinary delights to be savoured along the road!
- Integrate with your fellow guests. The more you socialise with the group, the less likely you'll feel homesick.

## Transport

We travel in premium mini-coaches equipped with comfortable seats, air conditioning and large windows for enjoying the view.

With far more flexibility than a standard-size coach, we're able to take the scenic route – winding through beautiful countryside to the heart of tiny villages and coastal towns.

## Will I have regular access to Wi-Fi?

Most accommodation we stay in will offer free Wi-Fi as well as many restaurants and cafes you may visit. If you would like more regular internet access without large roaming fees, you can purchase a Back-Roads Touring eSIM [here](#).



# What to Pack

Based on our experience, the following items are essential.

Please note, this is a general packing list for Back-Roads Touring tours. What you pack will depend on the countries you're visiting as well as the time of year you plan to travel.

## Clothing

- |               |                             |                             |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ✓ Sun hat     | ✓ Long-sleeved tops         | ✓ Light jacket              |
| ✓ Sunglasses  | ✓ Short-sleeved tops        | ✓ Waterproof jacket         |
| ✓ Sleepwear   | ✓ Shorts/skirts             | ✓ Trousers                  |
| ✓ Warm jacket | ✓ Socks                     | ✓ Swimwear                  |
| ✓ Underwear   | ✓ Smart casual evening wear | ✓ Walking/comfortable shoes |

## Other essentials

- |                           |  |                    |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------|
| ✓ Multi-use adapter plug  | ✓ Toiletries   | ✓ Camera           |
| ✓ Batteries               | ✓ Sunscreen  | ✓ Towel            |
| ✓ Umbrella                | ✓ Reusable water bottle                                  | ✓ Insect repellent |
| ✓ Any personal medication | ✓ Basic medical kit (paracetamol, aspirin, plasters etc) |                    |

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## How much luggage can I bring

As we travel in mini-coaches, luggage space is limited. Here's what you can take with you on tour:



1 x suitcase



1 x small carry-on bag  
(backpack or handbag)

If you have more luggage, please make arrangements to store it prior to joining the tour. **We are unable to carry extra luggage on the mini-coach.**

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# FAQs

## What's the weather like?

The weather in central and northern Italy varies depending on the time of year. Generally, summers are hot and dry (slightly cooler as you go further north), and from mid-June to the end of August temperatures can reach 40°C (104°F), so sun hats and sunscreen are essential!

Central Italian winters are cool and wet, and in the north winters can get very cold and snowy (especially in the mountains).

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## Which type of hotels will we stay in?

Our thoughtfully selected accommodation is full of charm and historic details – expect elegant country inns, grand town centre hotels and even the odd castle! For this reason, rooms vary in size, and most hotels don't have lifts – meaning you'll likely need to access your room via stairs. Porterage will be included wherever possible.

Although air conditioning is mostly unavailable in historic buildings, fans will be provided during hot spells. Most hotels have bathtubs with overhead showers (rather than walk-in showers), so you'll be able to enjoy a soak at the end of the day. Kettles and coffee machines aren't usually included in rooms, but there's no shortage of places to grab an espresso!

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## How much walking can I expect to do?

Whilst we do cover ground in our minicoach to maximise our time, the best way to truly discover Italy is on foot! Many of the historic town centres we visit – like Siena – are pedestrian-only, inviting us to freely explore their hidden corners. For that reason, sometimes we'll need to walk 20 minutes or so to and from our minicoach's parking spot. Combined with our guided walking tours, which typically last for around two hours or more, we'd say that's the perfect excuse for an extra gelato at the end of the day!





## Will we get to visit the Duomo?

Will we get to visit the Duomo?

We'll admire the Duomo from the outside during our locally guided walking tour, but entry to the inside is not included.

## Is tap water drinkable in Italy?

Absolutely! Tap water is safe to drink throughout Italy, and public water fountains are common in cities like Rome (where they're known as nasoni or 'big noses'). If you bring a reusable water bottle you'll be able to fill up wherever you wish.

## What are the mealtimes in Italy?

With us, you'll embrace the local rhythm of life – including the dining times! In central and northern Italy, lunch is usually eaten between 1pm and 2.30pm (most restaurants will open around 12pm). Dinner times are typically between 7.30pm and 9pm. Be sure to enjoy an aperitivo beforehand – a pre-dinner drink to whet your appetite!

# That's everything!

We can't wait to welcome you on tour.

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