

### **Venice to Rome: Top to Bottom**

#### **Day 1**

Arrive Milan's Malpensa airport.

A driver will meet you when you clear customs and take you to the Hotel Leon D'Orta in Orta San Giulio. His services are prepaid. A tip when he finally leaves you in Venice would be much appreciated.

Your hotel, the Leon D'Oro, is in the center of town and on the edge of the lake. Today is a chance to rest up, stroll about, and take a short boat ride to the lovely island just off shore. Boatmen make regular excursions. It will be easy to get your bearings.

I like your hotel for its location and charm, but not for its restaurant. I do not recommend eating any meal other than breakfast there. The Restaurant Olina, an easy walk from the hotel, is sophisticated and very good. Modern décor in an old building. I would also recommend the restaurant in the main piazza, just across from your hotel. The Villa Crespi 1.5 k out of town has a very fancy restaurant. The Villa itself is also most intriguing. It could be fun if you're in the mood to splurge. I haven't eaten there myself.

#### **Day 2**

Excursion to Lago Maggiore.

Your driver will pick you up at ten in the morning, unless you tell him otherwise. (Ten-thirty, he says, will also work.) It is a beautiful drive to Lago Maggiore. Once there, your driver will show you how to buy tickets, etc., to tour the three islands: Isola Bella, Isola Madre, and Isola Pescatori. Each is wonderful in its own way. I suggest you have lunch on Isola Pescatori at the Ristorante Casabella. Very good food and not touristy. Turn right as you get off the boat. Tel.: 0323 33471. It might be wise to book ahead if there are crowds.

#### **Day 3**

Depart Orta San Giulio for Venice with your car and driver. (You can establish directly with him the meeting time.) I am guessing the drive will take about six hours. But ask your driver. He'll know better.

He will leave you in Venice's Piazzale Roma, the furthest pointing Venice to which you can go by car. From there, I suggest you take a water taxi.

#### **Day 4**

Meet Sandie in your hotel lobby at 9:00 for a morning introduction to Venice. Her fee is prepaid but there will be entrance fees for the various sites you visit. Please be prepared to pay for these as you go. She will not expect a tip unless she does way more than a half day tour. Afternoon free.

#### **Day 5**

Morning visit to the Doges' Palace. Sandie has booked the "secret itinerary" for you at 9:55.

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Sandie will meet you at the end of your tour and take you to the islands. She'll organize a water taxi for about euro 60. (You will find offers of free water taxis to Murano, but there is no free lunch. They will make you look at glass trinkets until you finally break down and buy lots of things you do not want. Better to pay the water taxi and be a free agent.)

### **Day 6**

Train to Florence. Take a taxi to your hotel. Make sure it is a real taxi from the taxi stand. You are staying at the Hotel Tornabuoni Beacci on via Tornabuoni.

### **Day 7**

Explore Florence. (I assume you have booked entrances to the Uffizi and the Accademia museums.)

### **Day 8**

Day trip to Siena.

### **Day 9**

Meet Elaine, your guide for the morning, at the column in Piazza della Repubblica (you can't miss it) at 9:30 am.

### **Day 10**

Train to Rome. Again, take a taxi from a real taxi stand to the Hotel Santa Chiara on via Santa Chiara.

### **Day 11**

Nancy DeConciliis will meet you in the lobby of the Hotel Santa Chiara at 9:30 for a walking tour of Ancient Roman sites. It's nice, after the tour, to take Nancy to lunch. You will eat far better with her than you would on your own. And she is terrific company.

### **Day 12**

Nancy will arrive at your hotel in a taxi at 10:30 and together you can ride over to the Vatican for your 11:00 entrance. Maybe sure you have a good snack ahead of time. There is lots to see. The tour usually takes three hours.

### **Day 13**

Depart Rome. Tell the concierge when you need to be at the airport and he will order your taxi accordingly.

For further details:

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