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From
$11,543 USD

Single Room
$13,056 USD

Twin Room
$11,543 USD

Prices valid until
30th December 2025

21 days
Duration

Italy
Destination

Level 2 - Moderate
Activity

Four Italians: Genoa, Mantua, Orvieto and Bologna

Image not found

Oct 04 2025 to Oct 24 2025

Italy has so much to offer that it is impossible to see everything the country has to offer, probably even for Italians. This escorted, small group tour for senior couples and mature solo travellers, takes you away from some of the better known tourist cities such as Rome, Venice, Milan, Naples, Florence for example, and allows you to explore some extraordinary places that are not on the usual tourist route. This tour won't take you to Rome, Florence, Venice, Verona, Padua or Cinque Terra and so much more, instead we concentrate on four cities that have history, art, architecture and beauty to compare with any of their

better known, more visited, rivals.

This 21 day tour is particularly for the senior traveller who may have visited Italy before, but now wants to experience something a little different. We take an in-depth look at just four cities, each with an amazing past, and each with something different to reveal. This tour will appeal equally to the solo traveller, or those travelling with a companion, as we search out some lesser known treasures from Italy's long and often turbulent past. On this tour you can expect to see phenomenal artworks, visit ar165chitectural masterpieces from across the ages, taste some fabulous culinary delights, and discover a number of the greatest underrated cities in Italy.

Orvieto

Perched dramatically on a tufa rock, displays its long past better than almost any other city in Italy. Here we can go underground into the tunnels that honeycomb the rock on which the city sits. These tunnels are at least two and a half thousand years old and, along with the tombs outside the old city, tell us much about the Etruscans who built them. Orvieto has a medieval cathedral, a Renaissance well and a 19th century theatre, along with modern shops and great restaurants. While in Orvieto we'll take a trip out into the local wine growing region and visit the neighbouring town of Todi. We'll also have time to wander through the twisting streets, and walk along the medieval walls with fabulous views down into the valley below.

Genoa

Is a large modern city with a long history. For many it is simply a jumping off point for the Italian Riviera, but Genoa itself has much to offer the senior traveller with an interest in more than lazing on the beach. The city's architecture speaks of its former glory as the "Most Serene Republic of Genoa" which ruled much of the Mediterranean in the 12th and 13th centuries. Genoa has more than 100 palazzi, all attesting to the wealth of the city's ruling class in the 16th and 17th centuries when this was one of Europe's most successful trading nations, and many of these are open to the public. There is also a busy

modern port, which has been recently transformed by local architect Renzo Piano. The museums are crowded with art, but not with other tourists, and the city is a maze of medieval streets just waiting to be explored. The stories are rich and diverse, from the beginings of Banking, to Marco Polo in jail, Christopher Columbus's family home, to who does have the best pesto!

Mantua

Provides a great contrast to bustling, crowded Genoa. The city, along with neighbouring Sabbionetta, was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2008 because of its Renaissance heritage. Mantua is deeply entwined with the history of the Gonzaga family who, during their reign between 1328 and 1707, made the city a Court of great splendour. The city is small, and little changed from its glory days under Gonzaga rule. The artificial lakes surrounding the city have limited its size, and it is still possible to walk from one side to the other in little more than twenty minutes. In Mantua we concentrate on the amazing Renaissance art and architecture of a town which receives surprisingly few international tourists.

Bologna

Is another large city with a long and illustrious past. This is a city with much more to recommend it than its meat sauce (though the food in Bologna is outstanding), and in our time in the city we'll uncover some amazing facts and amazing places. Bologna has Europe's (and possibly the world's) oldest university. It was founded in 1088 as a law school, and had its first woman graduate in 1732. Bologna is still a university city with a lively student population. This is a beautiful city, with many medieval and Renaissance buildings to admire as we wander the maze of old streets, many covered with UNESCO protected porticos. We'll visit the early theatres, galleries, and museums, but we'll also have time

to eat the food, drink the wine, and just soak up the atmosphere.

Remember that Italian cities are often best explored by foot, so don't forget your walking shoes!

You can learn more about Italy with our country profile which also lists all other tour departures. For more details, view the 'Top 5' or 'Itinerary' for this tour! If you're keen to experience this tour, please call or send an email. Or, to book, simply fill in the form on the right hand side of this page.

Highlights

1. Visit Genoa's rejuvenated port and historic area.
2. Explore the galleries of Genoa, funded by the accumulated wealth of merchants.
3. Marvel at the frescoes in Mantua's palaces.
4. Explore the fascinating underground tunnels of Orvieto.
5. Wander Bologna's medieval maze of streets, and visit Europe's oldest university.

Itinerary

Day 1

Locations: Orvieto

Overview:

Make you way to Orvieto (there are good train connections from either Rome or Florence) and meet up with you programme leader in your

Orvieto hotel in the late afternoon.

Meet the rest of the group for a tour briefing, then adjourn to a nearby restaurant for a welcome dinner.

Accommodation:

TBA

Day 2

Locations: Orvieto

Overview:

This morning we take a guided tour of the city, including a visit to the cathedral.

The afternoon will be free to continue your exploration of the city, or linger over a long lunch.

In the evening you might like to take a stroll along the city walls for spectacular views across the countryside.

Accommodation:

TBA

Day 3

Locations: Orvieto

Overview:

We start with a visit to the underground tunnels for a guided tour. These tunnels have been in continuous use for the past 2500 years, first by the Etruscans, and then right through to the present day.

After our tunnel tour we'll continue the Etruscan theme, with a visit to the ancient Etruscan necropolis below the tufa rock upon which the city stands.

We'll take a break for lunch and then there will be time to visit the exceptionally fine National Archeological Museum.

Accommodation:

TBA

Day 4

Locations: Orvieto

Overview:

We leave the city this morning and take a wine and regional food tasting tour.

We return to the city in the afternoon with some free time.

Accommodation:

TBA

Day 5

Locations: Orvieto

Overview:

Back in the city this morning we visit St Patrick's astonishing medieval well. Built on the orders of Pope Clement VII in the 16th century, the well shaft is sixty two metres deep and thirteen metres wide. To reach its depth, two completely separate spiralling ramps, a sort of double helix, were built one over the other into the wall of the well, so that those going down for water with their mules, who not meet those already on their way back up.

Thus afternoon we tour the 19th century Neoclassical Teatro Mancinelli. The rest of the afternoon will be yours to visit some of the other museums, churches, galleries or shops. Alternatively you might just like to get a drink in a bar or café, and watch the world go by.

Accommodation:

TBA

Day 6

Locations: Orvieto

Overview:

Today we visit **Todi,** another spectacular hilltop town. Perched on tall two-crested hill overlooking the east bank of the River Tiber, it

commands spectacular views in every direction.

Todi has one of central Italy's most photographic piazzas, the Piazza del Popolo which is enclosed by the 13th century Palazzo del Capitano and Palazzo dei Priori. Surveying it from one end is the rose window of Todi's Romanesque- Gothic Cathedral. Below the square are vast Roman cisterns, built in the 1st century BC, and over 80 metres long. The cisterns were part of a rainwater storage and drainage system that carried water from the Forum to the valley below.

There is much to see in Todi and we'll have the day there to explore the city, before returning to Orvieto for our last night.

Accommodation:

TBA

Day 7

Locations: Genoa

Overview:

This morning we take a coach to Genoa, stopping at the small medieval town of San Gimignano along the way.

San Gimignano is a walled village which has been recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since1990. The town is famous for its fascinating medieval architecture and the towers that rise above all the other buildings. At the height of its glory, San Gimignano's noble families built around 72 tower-houses as symbols of their wealth and power. Although only 14 of the towers remain, San Gimignano still retains much of its medieval appearance.

We will take a guided tour of the town and have time for lunch before continuing to Genoa.

Accommodation:

TBA

Day 8

Locations: Genoa

Overview:

This morning we take a guided tour of the city's medieval centre, including a visit to the 12th century cathedral Di San Lorenzo.

This afternoon visit the Palazzo Rosso and/or Palazzo Bianco.

Accommodation:

TBA

Day 9

Locations: Genoa

Overview:

Today we concentrate on Genoa's Porto Antico. We have a guided tour of Genoa's rejuvenated old port which has been transformed by architect Renzo Piano. He designed the new aquarium, a Biosphere with a botanical garden, and the "Bigo" Crane. The Galata Maritime Museum, the largest and most innovative maritime museum in the Mediterranean, lies close to the aquarium, and as no visit to Genoa would be complete without a visit to the Maritime Museum, we will spend the rest of the morning there.

This afternoon we take a cruise upon the harbour, possibly as far as Portofino, for great views of the city.

Accommodation:

TBA

Day 10

Locations: Genoa

Overview:

This morning we have a guided tasting tour of the old city to explore different aspects of the city's culinary delights.

This afternoon you have free. You might like to visit some of the other Heritage listed palazzi in the city such as the Palazzo Ducale or the

Palazzo Reale. The Palazzo Ducale, right in the heart of the old town, was yet residence of a number of the doges who ruled the city from 1384 to 1515. The Palazzo Reale, built by the Balbi family in the early 17th century, has a grand ballroom, stucco ceilings and some wonderful works of art, including Van Dyck's "Crucifixion".

Accommodation:

TBA

Day 11

Locations: Genoa

Overview:

Today is a day to explore Genoa at your leisure.

Accommodation:

TBA

Day 12

Locations: Mantua

Overview:

We leave Genoa after breakfast and drive towards Mantua. On our way to Mantua we stop in Parma for a guided city tour. In the Cathedral, we look up to see the huge fresco of the "Assumption of the Virgin" painted in the dome by Correggio, the premier artist of the Parma School during the Italian Renaissance. It is a truly astonishing sight as, skirts flying and legs kicking, the Virgin rises towards heaven.

We arrive in Mantua in the afternoon, with time to take a stroll through the city before dinner.

Accommodation:

TBA

Day 13

Locations: Mantua

Overview:

Our day begins after breakfast with a guided walking city tour that includes a visit to the cathedral and the Rotonda Di San Lorenzo.

In the afternoon we visit the ducal palace and the famous Mantegna frescoes.

Accommodation:

TBA

Day 14

Locations: Mantua

Overview:

This morning we leave Mantua temporarily to visit Sabbioneta, the 16th century UNESCO listed city built for Vespasiano I Gonzaga. It was planned as a perfect example of how a fortified town should be laid out, and retains many of the palazzos and buildings, as well as the layout, from the time.

Our tour of Sabbioneta will include a visit to the Ducal Palace (now the town hall), the Gallery of the ancients, and the Teatro Olimpico. This beautiful theatre, built at the end of the 16th century, is a rare Renaissance example, the first free standing theatre to be built anywhere in the world.

We return to Mantua in the afternoon and the rest of the day will be free to wander.

Accommodation:

TBA

Day 15

Locations: Mantua

Overview:

Overnight in Mantua.

The Palazzo Te is the highlight this morning. This amazing pleasure palace is a masterpiece conceived by Giulio Romano as a place for Prince Frederick II Gonzaga and his friends to enjoy “the sweetness of doing nothing.” It is the frescoes covering the walls inside the palace which are so remarkable, particularly in *The Room of the Giants* and *The Room of Cupid and Psyche.*

After lunch we visit the Neoclassical Palazzo D’Arco, and the Teatro Bibiena.

Accommodation:

TBA

Day 16

Locations: Mantua

Overview:

Today we visit Cremona for a guided tour of the city including a visit to the Museo del Violino, the cathedral and the 16th century palace containing the art museum, the Museo Civico Ala Ponzone.

We return to Mantua for our last night in the city.

Accommodation:

TBA

Day 17

Locations: Bologna

Overview:

We leave Mantua and travel to Bologna in the afternoon, with the morning free to take a last stroll around Mantua.

On arrival in Bologna there will be time to get your first impression of the city.

Accommodation:

TBA

Day 18

Locations: Bologna

Overview:

This morning we take a guided city tour. We visit the Archiginnasio, once the main building of the university, and dating back to the 16th century. Here we visit the Teatro Anatomico, an ornate anatomical theatre and lecture room built in 1636 entirely from wood and decorated with

In the afternoon we visit Santo Stefano, an unusual complex of churches known as Sette Chiese (Seven Churches) because it is a merger of buildings erected in different eras.

Accommodation:

TBA

Day 19

Locations: Bologna

Overview:

Today we take the train to Rimini, not for the golden beaches which entice most Italian tourists, but for its historic centre. Rimini has fascinating Roman remains, as well as many buildings from the

medieval and Renaissance periods.

Taking pride of place at the end of Corso d'Augusto, the Arch of Augustus is the main historical structure that stands in the centre of Rimini. Constructed in 27 BC, the arch was built as part of the Flaminia defences, and was named in honour of Caesar Augustus

Day 20

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The Tempio Malatestiano, the cathedral of Rimini, was begun in the 9th century, with work stopping in the 1400s, though the building was not actually complete. The church in its current form was constructed in 1447 at the behest of the notoriously ruthless military commander, Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta. Malatesta was part of the dynasty which ruled Rimini during the Renaissance period. Inside are works by important Renaissance artists including Giotto, Piero Della Francesca and Georgio Vasari.

The Museo Della Citta, situated in an old convent, contains a staggering 15,000 artefacts and relics dating back to the prehistoric era. The stunning Roman mosaics, ancient coins and glassware on display here are among the best in Italy.

Return to Bologna tonight and take our farewell dinner in a local restaurant.

Day 21

Locations: Bologna

Overview:

Tour concludes after breakfast.

Level 2 - Moderate

Participants must be able to carry their own luggage, climb and descend stairs, be in good health, mobile and able to participate in 3-5 hours of physical activity per day, the equivalent of walking/hiking up to 8 kilometres on uneven ground.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.