ODYSSEY TRAVELLER

# Tour of Northern Italy s Lakes and Alps

Recommended reading for your journey

01

## The Italians

John Hooper

Sublime and maddening, fascinating yet baffling, Italy is a country of endless paradox and seemingly unanswerable riddles. John Hooper’s marvellously entertaining and perceptive new book is the ideal companion for anyone seeking to understand contemporary Italy and the unique character of the Italians. Looking at the facts that lie behind - and often belie - the stereotypes, his revealing book sheds new light on many aspects of Italian life: football and Freemasonry, sex, symbolism and the reason why Italian has twelve words for a coat hanger, yet none for a hangover.

02

## The Pursuit of Italy: A History of a Land, its Regions and their Peoples

David Gilmour

Visiting a villa built by Lorenzo de Medici outside Pisa, David Gilmour fell into conversation about the unification of Italy with a distinguished former minister: '"You know, Davide," he said in a low conspiratorial voice, as if uttering a heresy, "Garibaldi did Italy a great disservice. If he had not invaded Sicily and Naples, we in the north would have the richest and most civilized state in Europe." After looking cautiously round the room he added in an even lower voice, "Of course to the south we would have a neighbour like Egypt."' Was the elderly Italian right? Was the unification of Italy a mistake? The Pursuit of Italy traces the whole history of the Italian peninsula in a wonderfully readable style, full of well-chosen stories and observations from personal experience, and peopled by many of the great figures of the Italian past, from Cicero and Virgil to Dante and the Medici, from Cavour and Verdi to the controversial political figures of the twentieth century. The book gives a clear-eyed view of the Risorgimento, the pivotal event in modern Italian history, debunking the influential myths which have grown up around it. Gilmour shows that the glory of Italy has always lain in its regions, with their distinctive art, civic cultures, identities and cuisine. The regions produced the medieval communes and the Renaissance, the Venetian Republic and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, two of the most civilized states of European history. Their inhabitants identified themselves not as Italians, but as Tuscans and Venetians, Sicilians and Lombards, Neapolitans and Genoese. This is where the strength and culture of Italy still comes from, rather than from misconceived and mishandled concepts of nationalism and

unity. This wise and enormously engaging book explains the course of Italian history in a manner and with a coherence which no one with an interest in the country could fail to enjoy.

03

## The Borgias

Christopher Hibbert

The name Borgia is synonymous with the corruption, nepotism, and greed that were rife in Renaissance Italy. The powerful, voracious Rodrigo Borgia, better known to history as Pope Alexander VI, was the central figure of the dynasty. Two of his seven papal offspring also rose to power and fame - Lucrezia Borgia, his daughter, whose husband was famously murdered by her brother, and that brother, Cesare, who served as the model for Niccolo Machiavelli's The Prince. Notorious for seizing power, wealth, land, and titles through bribery, marriage, and murder, the dynasty's dramatic rise from its Spanish roots to its occupation of the highest position in Renaissance society forms a gripping tale. Erudite, witty, and always insightful, Hibbert removes the layers of myth around the Borgia family and creates a portrait alive with his superb sense of character and place.

04

## The Land Where Lemons Grow: The Story of Italy and its Citrus Fruit

Helena Attlee

Travellers have always been thrilled by the sight of citrus in Italy, where dark leaves and bright fruit seem to charge the landscape, making the trees symbols of a sun-soaked, poetic vision of the country. Citrus also holds a special place in the Italian imagination, and in The Land Where Lemons Grow, Helena Attlee sets out to explore its curious past and its enduring resonance in Italian culture. The Land Where Lemons Grow is a heady mixture of travel writing, history, horticulture and art; a unique journey through Italy's cultural, culinary and political past. Helena Attlee is the author of four books about Italian gardens, and others on the cultural history of gardens around the world. Helena is a Fellow of the Royal Literary Fund and has worked in Italy for nearly 30 years.

05

## The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy

Jacob Buckhards and Peter Murray

For nineteenth-century Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt, the Italian Renaissance was nothing less than the beginning of the modern world - a world in which flourishing individualism and the competition for fame radically transformed science, the arts, and politics. In this landmark work he depicts the Italian city-states of Florence, Venice and Rome as providing the seeds of a new form of society, and traces the rise of the creative individual, from Dante to Michelangelo. A fascinating description of an era of cultural transition, this nineteenth-century masterpiece was

to become the most influential interpretation of the Italian Renaissance, and anticipated ideas such as Nietzsche’s concept of the ’Ubermensch’ in its portrayal of an age of genius.

06

## Art in Renaissance Italy

John T. Paoletti and Gary M. Radke

With a freshness and breadth of approach that sets the art in its context, this book explores why works were created and who commissioned the palaces, cathedrals, paintings, and sculptures. It covers Rome and Florence, Venice and the Veneto, Assisi, Siena, Milan, Pavia, Genoa, Padua, Mantua, Verona, Ferrara, Urbino, and Naples. Chapters are grouped into four chronological parts, allowing for a sustained examination of individual cities in different periods. "Contemporary Scene" boxes provide fascinating glimpses of daily life and "Contemporary Voice" boxes quote from painters and writers of the time. Innovative and scholarly, yet accessible and beautifully presented, this book is a definitive work on the Italian Renaissance. This revised edition contains around 200 new pictures and nearly all colour images.

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