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$14,995 AUD

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Prices valid until
30th December 2024

20 days
Duration

Italy
Destination

Level 2 - Moderate
Activity

Italy Puccini Festival small group Tour

Jul 05 2024 to Jul 24 2024



Puccini Festival Small Group Tour in Italy

Join Odyssey Traveller in this guided small group tour where we attend the Puccini Festival, a summer celebration held in Torre del Lago dedicated to the renowned Italian composer.

In addition to the festival Puccini, we also explore other locations associated with Giacomo Puccini, such as Lucca, his birthplace and the site of a statue that commemorates him. As we move from Rome to Milan to Florence to Venice, with journeys to surrounding villages along

the way, we build a picture of music in Italy. We explore theatres and museums with an aim to appreciate the history of the man and Puccini's work.



Puccini's Early Life



Before he became known as the great Italian composer and proponent of *verismo* (realistic) opera, Puccini already had music in his DNA. He was born in Lucca in 1858 to a musical family. His great-great grandfather, also Giacomo, was *maestro di cappella* of the Cattedrale di San Martino in Lucca, and was succeeded by generations of Puccini men. In all, the family occupied the position of *maestro di capella* for a total of 124 years. It was expected that Puccini would continue this tradition, but this was prohibited by the early death of his father when Puccini was only six. He nonetheless participated in the church's music, as a choir member and organist.

Later, Puccini studied at the Milan conservatory. Aged 21, he composed his *Mass*, which gestured towards his family's long association with church music in Lucca.

Puccini and the Opera



But Puccini progressed quickly to operas, commencing with *Le Villi* in 1885. His second opera, *Edgar* (1889), met with a lukewarm reception. Puccini had attracted negative attention as well for eloping with his married former piano student, with whom he would go on to share a tumultuous relationship. His music publishers, G. Ricordi & Co. supported him to produce a third opera: *Manon Lescaut* (1893). It was an acclaimed production, with Puccini heralded as the most likely heir of Verdi, whose 1853 opera *La traviata* paved the way for the *verismo* movement (characterised by operas concerning ordinary people and everyday life) in Italian opera.

His greatest successes, however, were yet to come. *La Boheme* followed (first performance 1896), and was performed in opera houses across Europe, Britain and the United States. Next was *Tosca* (1900).

Having seen *Tosca* performed as a play, it's said Puccini was inspired to produce an opera without elaborate spectacle. Distinctive musical signatures were attached to characters and emotions. Some have compared it to Wagner.

Puccini in Later Life

In 1901, Puccini was seriously injured in a car accident. While his wife and son escaped harm, Puccini was pinned beneath the vehicle. As a result of his subsequent medical treatment, doctors discovered he was also suffering diabetes.

Madama Butterfly premiered in 1904. This opera was not well received at the time. This is attributed in part to inadequate rehearsals (compounded, perhaps, by the composer's illness), and an incident in which the star's kimono accidentally lifted during a performance. Puccini withdrew *Madama Butterfly*. But he continued to revise it, up until 1907. The 1907 version is the version we know and love today.

In December of 1918 in New York's Metropolitan Opera Puccini premiered his *Il Trittico*, collection of three one-act operas: *Il tabarro, Suor Angelica,* and *Gianni Schicchi*. He didn't attend the performance in America, but went to the production in Rome, Italy the following January.

Turandot was Puccini's final opera. He died from complications from throat cancer treatment in 1924. It is said the news arrived to Rome midway through a performance of *La Boheme*, and the orchestra stopped immediately to play Chopin's *Funeral March* in his honour. *Turandot* was left unfinished, but has been completed by Franco Alfano using Puccini's sketches. Puccini has said of the style of his operas: " *Poetry, poetry, ardent affections, flesh, searching, almost surprising drama, fireworks finale*". Fans of his work will likely concur with the characterisation.









The Puccini Festival Small Group Tour Itinerary

From 1891, Puccini spent most of his time in his beloved Torre del Lago, a charming hamlet near Viareggio, drawn to its picturesque lake. He was welcomed enthusiastically by its residents. In fact, after his death, the town was renamed Torre del Lago Puccini. This town now hosts the Puccini Festival – the only festival in the world that is solely dedicated to the composer and in an outdoor theatre.

This festival takes place each summer, during July and August. Since its inception in 1930, it has continued to grow in prestige. It showcases the local places that inspired Puccini throughout his life. Stagings of his great works feature the stars of the opera world. The Great Open Air Theatre leads onto Massaciuccoli Lake, and is set amongst gardens dotted with contemporary sculpture. And, to complete the experience, you can even see Puccini's house: the place where he composed his masterpieces.

To complete our discovery tour, we will also visit Rome, Siena, Florence, Lucca, Viareggio, Genoa, Milan, Verona, and Venice.

You can browse our Italy country profile for more information. For more details about this tour, click the 'Top 5' or 'Itinerary' buttons above! If you're keen to experience this tour, please call or send an email.

Other Odyssey Tours to Italy

We also have other tours in Italy that might be of interest:

- Odyssey Traveller's Lakes and Landscapes of Northern Italy short tour takes you through this diverse craggy and pastoral region of northern Italy and its mountainous borderlands.
- In the Italian renaissance small group tour we take the time to explore the five independent cities and the families that ruled them: The Medici of Florence, the Montefeltro of Urbino, the Este

of Ferrara, the Gonzago of Mantua, and the Sforza of Milan.

- Our Northern Italy tours begins in the cosmopolitan city of Milan. From the Northern Italian city of Milan the tour ventures up into two of the region's lakes – Garda and Maggiore. From here a five day stop in Cividale del Friuli allows the traveller plenty of time to explore. You then head west again towards a highlight the Cinque Terre tours.

We have several articles concerning Italy, which you can read here as well as an article about planning a trip to Italy. We have articles about preparing for walking tours here and here. Other articles of possible interest is this two–part post filled with travelling tips for seniors, an article on the many nifty gizmos and gadgets you can bring on your trips, and an important article about practising responsible travel.

Tour Notes

- Puccini festival concerts are based on 2022 schedule. For 2023 departures festival schedule will be released in Sep/Oct 2022.
- Concerts listed are subject to be amended pending final tour schedule and availability

Highlights

1. View an opera at the Puccini Opera Festival in Torre Del Lago
2. Experience a private concert at the Villa Medici Giulini, Milan
3. Visit Chigiana Academy, a prestigious music institution in Siena
4. Take a behind-the-scenes tour of the Teatro Alla Scala
5. Explore the enormous Parco della Musica, Europe's most visited music complex.

Itinerary

Day 1

Locations: Rome

Overview:

We make our way to the hotel individually, before meeting for a group dinner.

(D)

Accommodation:

Albergo Ottocentro or similar

Day 2

Locations: Rome

Overview:

This morning we visit the Colosseum and Roman Forum, a sprawl of impressive ruins that were once the centre of the ancient city.

The afternoon is at leisure, to explore the streets of sunny Rome.

(B)

Accommodation:

Albergo Ottocentro or similar

Day 3

Locations: Rome

Overview:

Today we visit the Museum of Music Instruments, which houses over 500 items. We check out the Auditorium Parco della Musica, which was designed by the Italian architect Renzo Piano. It is Rome's largest public music complex, and features three indoor concert halls, and impressive gardens. This is Europe's most visited music facility, and the second most visited in the world (behind Lincoln Centre in New York).

We visit the Archive of the oldest Italian music academy. Then, we have entrance to the Vatican Museum, including the breathtaking Sistine

Chapel.

Tonight, we eat dinner together in a local restaurant.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Albergo Ottocentro or similar

Day 4

Locations: Rome to Siena

Overview:

Today we travel to Siena by coach. Siena is located in the picturesque Tuscany region. Its medieval brick buildings and distinctive fan-shaped central square endear it to visitors. Its historic centre has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Our local guide will show us the city's main attractions. We'll have entrance to the Cathedral, and visit Chigiana Academy – a prestigious music institution established in 1923.

We'll enjoy dinner in a local restaurant tonight.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Hotel Athena or similar

Day 5

Locations: Siena to Sam Gimignano

Overview:

Today we enjoy a full day excursion to San Gimignano. Our local guide will introduce us to this beautiful village located in Tuscany. It boasts a skyline made up of medieval towers. We will sample local produce and

wine during lunch at an agritusmo.

The afternoon will be free for us to explore charming San Gimignano, before we return to Siena.

We have dinner tonight in a local restaurant.

(B,L,D)

Accommodation:

Hotel Athena or similar

Day 6

Locations: Siena to Florence

Overview:

Today, we travel to Florence. On arrival, our local guide will show us the city's many historic attractions. We will visit the Duomo Complex, with the opportunity to explore it from both the outside and inside. The complex includes the Baptistery, Campanile and of course, the distinctive dome engineered by Filippo Brunelleschi.

We share dinner in a local restaurant tonight.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Rivoli Boutique Hotel or similar

Day 7

Locations: Florence

Overview:

We spend today at leisure in Florence, before transferring by coach in the late afternoon to Chiesa Di Santa Monica. On arrival, we will have

dinner at Trattoria Napoleone (TBC).

Then, this evening, we will experience an Opera at Chiesa Santa Monica (TBC).

Afterwards, we return by coach to Florence for the night.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Rivoli Boutique Hotel or similar

Day 8

Locations: Florence to Lucca to Viareggio

Overview:

Today, we make our way by coach to Lucca – Puccini's birthplace. We will stop in at Caffe di Simo, which was Puccini's favourite cafe.

We will arrive at our hotel in Viareggio, before our evening transfer to Torre Del Lago. This is the location of the Puccini Opera Festival!

We have dinner in a local restaurant tonight.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Hotel Europa or similar

Day 9

Locations: Viareggio

Overview:

Today is set aside for your experience of the Puccini Opera Festival. Explore the locations that inspired the man to produce his masterpieces.

In the evening we attend Madama Butterfly opera at the festival.

(B)

Accommodation:

Hotel Europa or similar

Day 10

Locations: Viareggio

Overview:

Today you may continue your experience of the Puccini Opera Festival, or remain in coastal Viareggio during the day if preferred. The Festival hosts many performances of Puccini's great works.

In the evening we'll attend the opera Tosca at the festival.

(B)

Accommodation:

Hotel Europa or similar

Day 11

Locations: Viareggio

Overview:

Today is our final day at leisure in Viareggio, and last opportunity to visit picturesque Torre Del Lago: site of the Puccini Opera Festival.

(B)

Accommodation:

Hotel Europa or similar

Day 12

Locations: Viareggio

Overview:

Today we take a day excursion to Bologna, a UNESCO Creative City of Music. We enjoy a self-guided walking tour with our Odyssey Program

Leader and explore the main sights of the city.

We enjoy dinner in a local restaurant, before returning to Viareggio tonight.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Hotel Europa or similar

Day 13

Locations: Viareggio to Genoa

Overview:

We travel to Genoa this morning. With the services of a local guide, we get behind-the-scenes access to the Carlo Felice Theatre. We explore this sparkling, sea-port city, before transferring to our hotel.

We meet for dinner in a local restaurant tonight.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Hotel Continental Genoa or similar

Day 14

Locations: Genoa to Milan

Overview:

This morning, we make our way to Milan, arriving late morning.

We visit the Villa Medici Giulini, where we will experience a private concert. The remainder of the day is free for your to explore on your own.(d

(B)

Accommodation:

Hotel Sanpi Milan or similar

Day 15

Locations: Milan

Overview:

This morning, we visit Teatro Alla Scala – an Opera House that was inaugurated in 1778. We have entrance to the Teatro Alla Scala museum, and we experience a behind-the-scenes tour.

Tonight, we enjoy an Opera here, before returning to our hotel in Milan. (Concert details to be confirmed).

(B)

Accommodation:

Hotel Sanpi Milan or similar

Day 16

Locations: Milan

Overview:

This morning we take a coach to Cremona, where we visit a local violin maker. We also visit the Stradivari Museum.

We return to Milan this evening and enjoy dinner in a local restaurant.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Hotel Sanpi Milan or similar

Day 17

Locations: Verona

Overview:

This morning, we travel by coach to Verona. We view the city's main sights, including Juliet's house and entrance to the Arena.

The Arena di Verona is a Roman amphitheatre famed for its large-scale opera performances. The building was begun in AD 30, and, despite damage caused by events such as the 1117 major earthquake, remains

a very well-preserved ancient structure.

Dinner will be at a local restaurant tonight.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Hotel Colomba D'Oro or similar.

Day 18

Locations: Venice

Overview:

Today, we travel to Venice by private boat. Once we arrive, we have time to explore it at leisure, before meeting at la Fenice Opera Theatre for a guided tour. Afterwards, we stroll to our hotel.

Dinner is at a local restaurant tonight.

(B,D)

Accommodation:

Ca Dei Conti or similar

Day 19

Locations: Venice

Overview:

Today, we experience a walking tour of Venice. We visit the main sights, including the Music Museum. We also take an Antonio Vivaldi tour.

We spend our final evening at leisure in picture-perfect Venice.

(B)

Accommodation:

Ca Dei Conti or similar

Day 20

Locations: Venice

Overview:

Our tour concludes after breakfast.

(B)

Inclusions / Exclusions

What's included in our Tour

- 19 nights of accommodation.
- 19 breakfasts, 1 Lunch and 12 dinners as listed on the itinerary.
- Entrances and tipping as per itinerary. Including 2 operas at Puccini Festival.
- All travel is in modern, air-conditioned coaches.
- Services of a Tour Leader for the duration of tour.
- Detailed information booklet.

What's not included in our Tour

- Comprehensive international travel insurance.
- International flights.
- Items of personal nature such as table drinks, laundry, telephone calls, and medical expenses.

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.