

# VITORITALY®

Italy with Italians

## TRAVEL WITH MARCELLO

### ITALY IN 10 DAYS SHARED TOUR

Venice, Florence, Rome and the Amalfi Coast

September 30<sup>th</sup> – October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024

## PROGRAM



From magic Venice to Florence, the cradle of Renaissance, then Rome, the Eternal City and finally the charming Amalfi Coast, to relax and enjoy stunning views! Ten days around Italy, to admire the extraordinary beauty of its most beautiful cities and be seduced by its enchanting landscape!!

## TOUR SUMMARY

- Group size: from 4 to 12 people
- Tour Start Date: September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- Tour End Date: October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2024
- Duration: 12 days and 11 nights
- Tour starts in Venice and ends in Naples

## TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Venice, when merchants ruled the Mediterranean
- Florence, an open-air museum
- Pisa, how can it stand?
- San Gimignano and Siena, power in the Middle Ages
- Val d'Orcia, where Man and Nature blend in harmony
- Rome with the Coliseum and Imperial Fora, Caesars and gladiators
- The Vatican, Popes and power
- The Amalfi Coast, where divas were at home
- Pompei, the Roman city fixed in lava



## ITINERARY SUMMARY

DAY	ACTIVITIES INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAM
Day 1 Mon, Sept. 30 <sup>th</sup> <b>Venice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>OPTIONAL Pick-up and transfer to your accommodation in Venice</b></li> <li>- Welcome Dinner at a selected restaurant in Venice city centre</li> </ul> <p><i>Overnight in Venice city centre</i></p>
Day 2 Tue, Oct. 1 <sup>st</sup> <b>Venice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3-hour private walking tour of Venice city centre with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u> - Admission to Saint Mark's Basilica and Palazzo Ducale</li> <li>- Half-hour gondola ride</li> </ul> <p><i>Overnight in Venice city centre</i></p>
Day 3 Wed, Oct. 2 <sup>nd</sup> <b>Modena</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transfer by private water taxi to Venice Pier + Transfer to your accommodation in Florence - Stopovers in Modena and Maranello</li> <li>- Visit of a Balsamic Vinegar of Modena producer with tastings</li> <li>- Admission to Museo Ferrari in Maranello</li> </ul> <p><i>Overnight in Florence city centre</i></p>
Day 4 Thu, Oct. 3 <sup>rd</sup> <b>Florence &amp; Pisa</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3-hour private walking tour of Florence city centre with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u> - Admission to Galleria dell'Accademia (Michelangelo's David)</li> <li>- Half-day private excursion to Pisa - Admission to the Leaning Tower</li> </ul> <p><i>Overnight in Florence city centre</i></p>
Day 5 Fri, Oct. 4 <sup>th</sup> <b>Siena &amp; San Gimignano</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Full-day private excursion to Siena and San Gimignano - Free time</li> <li>- Drop off at your accommodation in Val d'Orcia area</li> </ul> <p><i>Overnight in Val d'Orcia area</i></p>
Day 6 Sat, Oct. 5 <sup>th</sup> <b>Val d'Orcia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Full-day private excursion in Val d'Orcia area</li> <li>- 3-hour private walking tour of Montepulciano city centre with a <u>Sommelier Guide</u>, with tastings of Vino Nobile, Pecorino cheese and truffle</li> <li>- Visit of a Supertuscan Brunello di Montalcino wine cellar with tastings</li> </ul> <p><i>Overnight in Val d'Orcia area</i></p>
Day 7 Sun, Oct. 6 <sup>th</sup> <b>Castelli Romani</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Private transfer to your accommodation in Rome- Stopover in Castelli Romani area</li> <li>- Visit of a Frascati wine cellar with tastings</li> </ul> <p><i>Overnight in Rome city centre</i></p>
Day 8 Mon, Oct. 7 <sup>th</sup> <b>Vatican City</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Private transfer from your accommodation to the entrance of the Vatican Museums</li> <li>- 3-hour private walking tour of Vatican City with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u> - Admission to the Vatican Museums with the Sistine Chapel</li> <li>- Private transfer from your accommodation to the location of the Cooking Class and back</li> <li>- 3-hour Roman Cooking class</li> </ul> <p><i>Overnight in Rome city centre</i></p>
Day 9 Tue, Oct. 8 <sup>th</sup> <b>Rome</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3-hour private walking tour of Imperial Rome with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u> - Admission to the Colosseum and Imperial Fora Archeological Area</li> <li>- Private transfer to your accommodation on the Amalfi Coast</li> </ul> <p><i>Overnight on the Amalfi Coast</i></p>
Day 10 Wed, Oct. 9 <sup>th</sup> <b>Amalfi Coast</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Full-day private excursion of the Amalfi Coast: Amalfi, Ravello, Positano - Free time</li> </ul> <p><i>Overnight on the Amalfi Coast</i></p>
Day 11 Thu, Oct. 10 <sup>th</sup> <b>Pompei</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Private transfer to your accommodation in Naples - Stopovers in Pompei</li> <li>- 2-hour private visit of Pompeii Archeological Area with an <u>Authorised Tourist Guide</u></li> <li>- Free time in Naples city centre</li> <li>- Farewell dinner at a selected restaurant in Naples</li> </ul> <p><i>Overnight in Naples city centre</i></p>
Day 12 Fri, Oct. 11 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>OPTIONAL pick up and transfer to any destination in Italy</b></li> </ul>



## QUOTATION

**TOUR PRICE / PAX:** € 6,290.00

- Price based on double occupancy
- Single supplement upon request

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- **Accommodations in Classic Double Room with Continental Breakfast (\*):**

- Days 1 & 2: 4\* Hotel Donà Palace - San Marco 391, Venezia - <https://www.donapalace.it/en/home-en/> - Ph. +39 041 520 2089
- Days 3 & 4: 4\* Hotel De La Ville - Piazza Antinori 1, Firenze - <http://www.hoteldelaville.it/en/home.html> - Ph. +39 055 2381805
- Days 5 & 6: Relais Grazianella UNA Experience - Via Grazianella 5 - Acquaviva di Montepulciano (SI) - <https://www.gruppouna.it/en/esperienze/relais-villa-grazianella> - Ph. +39 0578 767722
- Days 7 & 8: 4\* Hotel Nazionale - Piazza Montecitorio 131, Roma - <https://www.hotelnazionale.it/en/4-star-hotel-rome/> - Ph. +39 06 695001
- Days 9 & 10: 4\* Hotel Villa Maria Pia - Via Roma 17, Praiano (SA) - <https://www.villamariapia-praiano.com/en/hotel-praiano/> - Ph. +39 089 9840032
- Day 11: 4\* Hotel Palazzo Decumani - Via del Grande Archivio 8, Napoli - <https://www.palazzodecumani.com/en/index> - Ph. +39 081 4201379

(\*) The Hotel list is indicative and subject to final confirmation

- **Transfers (\*\*):**

- Day 3: Transfer by private water taxi to Venice Pier + Private transfer to your accommodation in Florence - Stopovers in Modena and Maranello
- Day 7: Private transfer to your accommodation in Rome city centre - Stopover in Castelli Romani area
- Day 8: Private transfer from your accommodation to the entrance of the Vatican Museum
- Private transfer from your accommodation to the location of the Cooking Class and back
- Day 9: Private transfer to your accommodation on the Amalfi Coast
- Day 11: Private transfer to your accommodation in Naples - Stopover in Pompei

(\*\*) All transfers by private minivan (4 to 7 pax) / minibus (8 to 12 pax)

- **Private Guided Visits / Tours / Activities (\*\*\*):**

- Day 2: 3-hour private walking tour of Venice city centre with an Authorised Tourist Guide - Half-hour gondola ride
- Day 3: Visit of a Balsamic Vinegar of Modena producer with tastings
- Day 4: 3-hour private walking tour of Florence city centre with an Authorised Tourist Guide - Half-day private excursion to Pisa
- Day 5: Full-day private excursion to Siena and San Gimignano - Drop off at your accommodation in Val d'Orcia area
- Day 6: Full-day private excursion to Val d'Orcia area - 3-hour private walking tour of Montepulciano city centre with a Sommelier Guide, with tastings of Vino Nobile, Pecorino cheese and truffle - Visit of a Supertuscan Brunello di Montalcino wine cellar with tastings
- Day 7: Visit of a Frascati wine cellar with tastings
- Day 8: 3-hour private walking tour of Vatican City with an Authorised Tourist Guide - Roman Cooking class
- Day 9: 3-hour private walking tour of Imperial Rome with an Authorised Tourist Guide
- Day 10: Full-day private excursion of the Amalfi Coast: Amalfi, Ravello, Positano
- Day 11: 2-hour private visit of Pompeii Archeological Area with an Authorised Tourist Guide

(\*\*\*) All tours by private minivan (4 to 7 pax) / minibus (8 to 12 pax)

- **Admission Tickets to:**

- Saint Mark's Basilica in Venice
- Palazzo Ducale in Venice
- Museo Ferrari in Maranello
- Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence
- Leaning Tower in Pisa
- Colosseum and Imperial Fora Archeological Area in Rome
- Vatican Museums and Sistine Chapel in Rome
- Villa Rufolo in Ravello
- Pompeii Archeological Area

- **Meals:**

- Day 1: Welcome dinner at a selected restaurant in Venice city centre
- Day 11: Farewell dinner at a selected restaurant in Naples city centre

- Internet access
- Full emergency assistance 24 hours/day by our Back Office
- All taxes and entrance fees

## NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

- All transfers and other services not specifically mentioned in the above program
- Meals, wine and beverages
- Camera or Video fees
- Tipping for local guides and drivers
- Laundry, telephone calls and other expenditures of personal nature
- Travel / Vacation insurance

## OPTIONS

- Day 1: pick up and transfer to your accommodation in Venice city centre
- Day 12: pick up and transfer to any destination in Italy

## BOOKING THE TOUR

- Departure is guaranteed with 4 (four) travellers.
- Bookings will be accepted until 60 days before departure.
- To book the tour, a Reservation Fee of 10% is required; the balance is due within 60 days from departure upon confirmation by VITOR Italy that the tour will take place.
- If, for any reason, the Trip does not meet the minimum required participation of 4 (four) travellers, VITOR Italy will reimburse the amount already paid by the traveller.

## TOUR MAIN FEATURES

### VENICE

Benvenuti in Italia, welcome to the “unique” Venice, the “city on the lagoon”! You will be astonished by its beauty and charm!

We will start our visit with **Piazza San Marco** (St. Mark’s Square) and the Basilica interior, a 900-year-old marvel of architecture! The church is unique in Italy for its golden Byzantine and Medieval mosaics, intricate stone and marble trceries and exuberant Middle Eastern domes. Near St. Mark’s Basilica is **Palazzo Ducale**, the most impressive secular

building in Venice and once the official residence of the supreme authority of Venice, the “Doge”. A masterpiece of Gothic architecture, the Doge’s Palace is an impressive structure composed of layers of building elements and ornamentation, from its 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>-century original foundations to the significant Renaissance and opulent Mannerist adjunctions.

Then, we may visit **Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari** (Saint Mary’s of Friars), striking for its colossal size and the quality of its works of art, including masterpieces by Titian, Giovanni Bellini and Donatello, and several splendid tombs. Also, we may explore the streets and savour everyday life in an intricate maze of ancient narrow alleyways,



lively squares with magnificent buildings and meandering canals, and finally, walk on the Rialto Bridge, Venice’s busy “heart”. Last but not least, we will enjoy a Gondola ride on the city’s canals: a jump back in time when Venetians moved only on the water.

At lunch, we will savour Venice's finger food, the famous "cicheti". There is tremendous variety, and options include anything from simple cheese or salami to almost any kind of seafood, fried and grilled vegetables, sweet and sour sardines, creamy codfish and much more!

Rich in traditions, Venice offers a wide selection of unique artisan products. In the city of the Italian carnival, the typical Venetian masks are a must. The cost of the original ones is relatively high, but it is really worth it! Also, don't miss an authentic Murano glass object: each product is made and painted by hand, but be sure you buy an original product from Murano, guaranteed by a label or a signature (and the seller), not a Chinese copy!

Finally, at dinner, you will be delighted by the flavours of the regional cuisine of Veneto, boasting delicious recipes such as "Sarde in saor" (marinated sardines), Risotto with seafood, or the typical "Baccala' mantecato", to finish with a fantastic "Bussolà", the ring-shaped and cinnamon-flavoured cake! (read more about Venetian cuisine in our [BLOG](#)).

## MODENA AND THE MOTOR VALLEY

Modena is renowned worldwide for the famous people - Enzo Ferrari and Luciano Pavarotti above all - who were born and lived here, and for some of its gastronomical products. The city is the capital of the so-called "Motor Valley": actually, the factories of the famous Italian sports car makers Ferrari, De Tomaso, Lamborghini and Maserati are located here.

In Maranello, we will visit **Museo Ferrari**, not just a collection of the past but an extraordinary experience of the world of Ferrari and sports car racing! How exciting to see the most beautiful cars in the world, exceptional artworks made by modern mechanic artisan masters.



Afterwards, we will move to the estate of a **Balsamic Vinegar of Modena** Producer, to delight in the unique, enticing taste of traditional balsamic vinegar. Balsamic Vinegar of Modena is obtained from partially fermented, cooked and concentrated grape must. The grapes come exclusively from the area's vines, and the most critical processing phase is refinement inside containers of fine wood, such as oak, chestnut, oak, mulberry and juniper. Want to know more about this unique delicacy? Read the [article](#) in our **BLOG**.

## FLORENCE

Welcome to Florence, the land of Giotto and Dante!

Despite its international fame and greatness, Florence is also a small city whose history has been interwoven with that of its passionate citizens for more than one thousand years.



In Piazza Duomo, you will be astonished by the **Duomo** with the incredible Brunelleschi's dome, a masterpiece of art and architecture whose building techniques are still covered by a veil of mystery. Beside it, Giotto's Campanile (Belltower) and the Baptistery, one of the oldest buildings in the city, with its famous bronze doors made by Giambellino and Ghiberti in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. In Piazza della Signoria, we will walk in the middle of bronze and marble masterpieces by Giambologna and Cellini inside the marvellous **Loggia dei Lanzi**, and will admire the imposing **Palazzo Vecchio**, one of the symbols of Florence and still the seat of government of the city. We will also spare some time to relax, visiting a typical market for shopping, strolling



through the city's pedestrian streets, and crossing the oldest bridge in Florence, "**Ponte Vecchio**" (Old Bridge), rich in jewellery shops.

Your itinerary includes **Galleria dell'Accademia**, hosting Michelangelo's David, the most famous sculpture in the world. The David was uncovered and shown to the Florentines on September 8, 1504, and with its height of 4 meters, the impeccable physical features and the political significance that the iconography of David had taken over the previous century left the Florentines of the time speechless and has done the same ever since with visitors from all over the world.

Florence is also the main Italian centre for the production of **high-quality leather goods**. Florentine artisans are so famous that many fashion brands have opened factories in the city or close to it due to their high skill and the continuous inspiration designers take from the town's masterpieces. The area around Piazza Santa Croce, in particular, hosts numerous leather shops and workshops.

Thanks to the tradition of Tuscan tanneries, there is no better place to find **shoes for all tastes** than Florence: from the creations, designed and produced by hand by skilled craftsmen, to the extensive collections available in stores, renewed every season. Above all, Ferragamo (also worth seeing the museum), Gucci and Prada for refinement and elegance. If you prefer a simpler style, many shops across the river Arno specialise in handmade shoes and sandals.

At lunch, you may enjoy "Panino con Lampredotto" at a typical Florentine market. At dinner, you'll taste the simple yet unforgettable recipes of the Tuscan tradition, such as "**Crostini**", "**Panzanella**", and "**Pepeoso**". And remember, Florence is the home of "**Fiorentina**" steak! In case you are a vegetarian, don't worry: Tuscan cuisine offers tasty alternatives like "**Pappa al Pomodoro**" or "**Ribollita**" (read the article in our BLOG to know more about Tuscan Cuisine).

## PISA

Pisa is famous worldwide for its "Torre Pendente" (Leaning Tower), but its wonderful square, **Piazza dei Miracoli**, set over an ample greenfield, hosts three other whiter-than-white masterpieces of exquisite Medieval art: the Cathedral, the Baptistry and the "Camposanto" (Graveyard). They are so unique that their creation originated a new style, "Pisan Romanesque".

This area was chosen to construct the **Duomo of Santa Maria Assunta** strictly for its centrality; founded in 1064, it was intended to celebrate the grandeur of Pisa during the Marine Republic's epoch of power. "The temple of marble white as the snow"; that's how the structure is described on the gravestone of its architect, Buscheto di Giovanni Giudice. Consisting of five naves with its transept divided into three naves, it is surmounted by a splendid dome encircled by a loggia. The Duomo's façade and exterior lateral sections feature elaborate decoration in marble (which can also be seen on its interior), mosaics, and bronze.



In front of the Cathedral stands the **Baptistry**, also in a particular version of the Romanesque style. Initiated in 1152 by Diotisalvi, the Baptistry was finally completed in the 14<sup>th</sup> century; Gothic elements were added then. Of cylindrical form and circled by arcades of columns, this structure in white marble even boasts impressive acoustics.

The **Camposanto** closes the northern end of the complex's piazza. This monumental cemetery, begun in 1278, is bordered by a marble fence and houses a cloister at its centre. Unfortunately, most frescoes that once coloured its walls were destroyed in a fire in 1944 during the battle for Pisa.

Ultimately, the true symbol of Pisa is the **Campanile**, the Leaning Tower, which completes the image of this city. Because of land sinkage beneath it, the Tower stands at a significant incline. Its construction started in 1173, but the Tower was not completed until the second half of the 1300s. In cylindrical form, the blind arcades of its lower part mutate into six floors of loggias, repeating motifs from the Duomo. Inside, a spiral staircase of 294 steps leads to the heights of one of

the most famous towers in the world, where the lovely belfry and a spectacular view of the surrounding landscape await.

## SIENA AND SAN GIMIGNANO

In Siena, the city of the Palio, we will walk on the famous **Piazza del Campo**, the concave square where horses run twice a year in a dangerous race that symbolizes the city's freedom. On the days of the Palio, the whole town goes crazy; read about it in our [BLOG](#).



Indeed, you will not forget the colour of frontages and roofs, the renowned colour "**Sienna**", a pigment first produced during the Renaissance, that makes the city lovely and warm. And don't forget to taste the **Senese sweets**: "*cantucci*" (biscuits with toasted almonds), "*ricciarelli*" (soft biscuits with icing sugar), "*panforte*" (cake with fruit nuts and spices) and "*cavallucci*" (biscuits with honey, walnut, candied fruits and spices). Travellers who love dessert will be delighted!

In the afternoon, we will stroll with our heads upwards along the streets of one of the most beautiful cities in Tuscany, **San Gimignano**, also known as the "Medieval Manhattan", thanks to its

old and impressive 14 towers that dominate the town skyline. Initially, the towers were 72, built by patrician families, probably to demonstrate their wealth and power. Seven of San Gimignano's towers are around Piazza del Duomo; the tallest one is **Torre Grossa**, 54 meters high, dating back to 1298.

## VAL D'ORCIA

Val d'Orcia is one of the most fascinating places in Italy, included by UNESCO in the list of World Heritage Sites. Its landscape is a part of the agricultural hinterland of Siena, redrawn and developed when it was integrated into the city-state's territory in the 14th and 15th centuries to reflect an idealized model of good governance and create an aesthetically pleasing picture. The landscape's distinctive aesthetics, flat chalk plains with almost conical hills and fortified settlements on top, inspired many artists. Their images have come to exemplify the beauty of well-managed Renaissance agricultural landscapes.

Our first stop will be in **Pienza**, "Pio's town": here, Pope Pius II decided to build the perfect palazzo for his papal court according to the project of an "Ideal City" drawn up by artists such as Piero della Francesca. From the loggia of the Palace, you will enjoy a breathtaking panorama of the valley. Pienza is also the area of the typical "Pecorino di fossa" cheese, an absolute delight to the palate!



In **Montepulciano**, our friend Francesca will lead us to discover this beautiful town full of stories, legends and thousand flavours, introducing you to the excellent products of this unique land: olive oil, pecorino cheese and Vino Nobile di Montepulciano.



Then, we will get to **Montalcino**, one of the prettiest hill towns in Tuscany. Around the village, rows of olive trees, precious grapevines and yellow fields create an enchanting landscape. Here, we will visit a Brunello winery to taste the most famous Supertuscan wine, probably the best Italian red!

## ROME

Here we are in Rome, where ancient history, excellent art and religious icons mix uniquely!

We will start with the 2,000-year-old **Colosseum**, the most famous amphitheatre in the world, and the Imperial Fora, the administrative and monumental centre of the Roman Empire. On the Palatine Hill, the majestic ruins of the Palaces of Augusto, Tiberius and Domiziano still dominate the **Circus Maximus** valley, 50-meter-high structures giving a unique view of the city.



Close to the Colosseum, inside the Church of San Pietro in Vincoli, we may see the famous Michelangelo sculpture of "Moses". Supposedly, Michelangelo, admiring his *Moses*, enraptured by the so realistic shapes of the imposing statue, was struck by a violent outburst of anger and exclaimed the famous phrase "Perchè non parli?" (Why don't you speak!?)

From Piazza Venezia, we will head inside "Baroque" Rome, starting with the **Pantheon**, dedicated to worshipping every god (Pan-every Theon-divinity), now the memorial chapel of great Italian people of the past. After that, we will not miss the Church of **St. Louis of the French**, famous for the cycle of paintings of the great **Caravaggio** at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Then, **Piazza Navona**, the splendid oval area corresponding to the underground Domitianus' Stadium, with the gorgeous Fountain of the Four Rivers by Lorenzo Bernini in the centre of the Piazza. And finally, **Fontana di Trevi**, the city's biggest and most famous fountain, a Rome icon renowned worldwide: here, statues of travertine marble stand over the cliff and the broad basin in an epic representation of the Kingdom of the Oceans.

At the end of the day, we will sit down at a local "**trattoria**" or "**fiaschetteria**", the typical home-style restaurant, to taste authentic Roman cuisine in a popular and cheerful atmosphere (for an overview of Roman cuisine, see our [BLOG](#)).

## VATICAN CITY

On the other side of River Tevere, Vatican Hill is the home of the tiny state of Vatican City. The immense St. Peter's Basilica dominates the extraordinary Piazza framed by the magnificent four-column-deep colonnades designed by Gian Lorenzo Bernini. The Basilica is an extraordinary casket for some of the world's most beautiful works of art, such as Michelangelo's "[La Pietà](#)" and Bernini's "[Baldacchino](#)", along with works of the most important artists of the Renaissance, from Raphael to Canova.

Inside the Vatican Museums, you will be astonished by the exquisite and unique **Sistine Chapel**, the "Sancta Sanctorum" ("Holy among the Holiest" in Latin) of the Roman Catholic Church,



where cardinals gather to elect the new Pope! The Sistine Chapel takes its name from Pope Sixtus IV della Rovere (pontiff from 1471 to 1484), who had the old Cappella Magna restored between 1477 and 1480. The decoration of the walls was done by a team of painters, Pietro Perugino, Sandro Botticelli, Domenico Ghirlandaio, and Cosimo Rosselli, assisted by their respective shops.

Julius II della Rovere (pontiff from 1503 to 1513), the nephew of Sixtus IV, decided to partly alter the decoration, entrusting the work in 1508 to Michelangelo Buonarroti, who painted the Ceiling and, on the upper part of the walls, the lunettes. The nine central panels show the Stories of Genesis, from the Creation to the Fall of Man, to the Flood and the subsequent rebirth of humanity with the family of Noah. Again, towards the end of 1533, Clement VII de' Medici (pontiff from 1523 to 1534) asked Michelangelo to paint the Last Judgement on the altar wall. How could he refuse? And, in fact, he did not, but painted his vision of the Judgement, with a powerful and furious Jesus Christ.

## THE AMALFI COAST

Welcome to the Amalfi Coast!

Costiera Amalfitana is Italy's most scenic stretch of coastline, a landscape of pastel-coloured villages terraced into hillsides, steep panoramic roads, luxuriant gardens and enchanting vistas over turquoise waters and green mountains. Considered by UNESCO "an outstanding example of a Mediterranean landscape, with exceptional cultural and natural scenic values," the coast has been a World Heritage Site since 1997. We will go from town to town at the discovery of



Amalfi, Positano, and Ravello, three of the most beautiful villages in Southern Italy, world-famous for their charm and colourful architecture.

**Amalfi** typically has Mediterranean architecture with lanes and characteristic white houses piled one upon the other. In the Middle Ages, it was one of Italy's four powerful maritime republics (with Venice, Pisa, and Genoa). All sea trade in the Mediterranean was once governed by the 12<sup>th</sup> century "Tavole Amalfitane", one of the world's oldest maritime codes. A must-see in Amalfi is the Duomo di Sant'Andrea, fronted

by an intricately patterned façade, redone in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Founded in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the Cathedral's subsequent alterations have spared its principal glory, the main portal's 11<sup>th</sup>-century Byzantine bronze doors. Next to the church lies the Chiostro del Paradiso (1268), or Cloister of Paradise, whose serious Romanesque tone is animated by the Arab elements in its sinuous columns. To escape the bustle of Amalfi, let's take the famous walk along the "Valle dei Mulini", a steep-sided valley dotted with ruined watermills – "i mulini" - once used to make paper, an industry for which Amalfi was, and still is, famous.

**Positano** sits in a splendid panoramic position on one of the most beautiful stretches of coastline. Its enchanting town centre of delightful pastel-coloured houses surrounds the parish church of Santa Maria Assunta; its streets are lined with quaint, colourful shops, and its numerous beaches are world-famous.

**Ravello** is more elevated than the other pearls of the Amalfi Coast, boasting exceptional views of the coast and its marvellous villas and gardens. French novelist André Gide said they are "closer to the sky than the sea". Here, we will visit Villa Rufolo, built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, which hosted popes and kings, and Richard Wagner, who composed part of his opera Parsifal here in 1880. Views from its idyllic gardens are magnificent!

A trip to **Cetara** is an absolute must. The village is renowned for a particular gourmet speciality, "colatura di acciughe" (anchovy sauce), produced according to an ancient procedure for generations. Spaghetti with colatura di alici is the area's typical recipe, a dish you will remember forever. Discover the secrets of the liquid gold of the Coast in the [article](#) in our BLOG.

At dinner, don't miss Spaghetti with clams in olive oil and garlic sauce, or Seafood Risotto, with a glass of excellent Greco di Tufo white wine.

## POMPEII

Pompeii, the Roman city excavated from the ashes of Vesuvius, has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1997!

In 62 AD, the city was partially destroyed by an earthquake. As its reconstruction was still ongoing, on August 24, 79 AD, the eruption of Vesuvius covered the city and its suburban villas with a thick layer of stones, ashes and lapilli (thick, glassy lava). On the other hand, Herculaneum disappeared beneath a flood of volcanic mud.

The ruins of the ancient Roman cities offer an unparalleled window into the quotidian life of classical antiquity. Here, you will understand how the Romans of the 1st century AD lived: from brothels and lavatories to posh dining rooms and bathing establishments, including modern spas, health clubs and gyms. The eruption of Mount Vesuvius destroyed the town in 79 AD, and the debris ejected by the volcano covered more than 3,000 people from the volcano.

Due to its healthy climate and pleasant scenery, Pompeii was a holiday resort for wealthy Romans. It is now famous for its civic buildings lining the streets, which are still intact today. The **Surgeon's House**, the House of the Faun and the House of Chaste Lovers are exceptional examples of the epoch's architecture. Another unique building is the **House of Mysteries**, deriving its name from the murals depicting the Dionysian cult's initiation rites (i.e., the mysteries).

A peculiar characteristic of Pompeii is the florid graffiti covering the walls in just about every building; when the volcanic eruption happened, Pompeii was set to carry out elections in the days ahead – hence the writings and ideograms, which feature both political and sexual content.



The tour is over, but the memories of a fantastic journey will accompany you for a lifetime!

See more about your destinations on our website at <https://vitoritalytours.com/video.html>

Arrivederci for another tour with **VITOR, Visit Italy on the Road**.