
Tuscany & the Amalfi Coast

LAND TOUR

Plus optional extensions in

Venice; Rome

ACM/ACP 2014

Grand Circle Travel

Tuscany and the Amalfi Coast Handbook

Table of Contents

1. PASSPORT, VISAS AND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS.....	2
Passport Required	2
Visas not Required.....	2
No U.S. Passport?.....	3
2. YOUR HEALTH.....	4
Keep Your Abilities In Mind	4
Health Check and Inoculations	4
3. LUGGAGE REGULATIONS.....	6
Luggage Suggestions	7
Airport Security/TSA.....	7
4. WHEN YOU ARRIVE	8
Your GCT Program Director	8
GCT Air Travelers	8
5. MONEY MATTERS	10
How to Carry Your Money	10
Currency.....	12
Shopping.....	13
To Tip or Not to Tip	16
6. PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP.....	17
In General	17
Packing Your Carry-On.....	18
Travel Gear Suggestions.....	18
7. REGIONAL CLIMATE INFORMATION.....	20
8. TRAVEL AND TECHNOLOGY	22
Regional Electricity	22
Cell Phones	23
Photo Gear	24
9. ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS	25
In General	25
Venice in Brief—Optional Extension.....	27
10. DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORICAL OVERVIEW.....	29
11. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	32
Books, Maps, and Movies.....	32
Grand Circle Community & Useful Websites	36

1. PASSPORT, VISAS AND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Passport Required

U.S. citizens need a passport for this itinerary. Please take a moment to check if your passport meets all of these requirements. If not, you could be refused entry into a country. And if that happens, you might be required by that country to return to the U.S. immediately, **which would be at your own expense**.

Your passport should meet these requirements for this itinerary:

- It should be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- It should have the recommended number of blank pages (see below for details).
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable.

Recommended number of blank pages:

- **Main trip only:** 1 blank “Visa” page.
- **Optional pre-trip extension to Venice:** No additional pages.
- **Optional post-trip extension to Rome:** No additional pages.
- **Both a pre- and a post-trip extension:** A total of 1 page.

If you need to renew your passport or get extra pages:

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit their website at www.travel.state.gov for information on obtaining a new passport, renewing your existing passport, or for additional pages. You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

NOTE: When updating your passport, it is worthwhile to check the prices on all the different services that might apply to you. For example, it might be less expensive to renew your passport than to have pages added, depending on the number of pages you need.

Visas not Required

U.S. citizens do not need a visa for entry into Italy.

No U.S. Passport?

Non-U.S. citizens or non-U.S. passport holders: If you are **not** a U.S. citizen or if you possess a passport from a country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate or embassy about possible visa requirements. For your convenience, we recommend the services of PVS International. Or contact your local consulate.

PVS International
Passport & Visa Services
1700 N Moore Street
Rosslyn Center, suite 310
Arlington, VA 22209
Telephone: 1-800-556-9990
Website: www.pvsinternational.org

Backup Photocopies

The smartest security precaution you can take is to make photocopies of your passport's personal information pages, your air tickets, your traveler's check serial numbers (if you're using them), and your credit cards. Also, bring extra passport-sized photos. Make a list of the phone and fax numbers for reporting lost credit cards, your travel protection plan company (if you have an optional travel protection plan) and medical emergency network. Keep these documents separate from the originals, and they can save you immeasurable time, money, and trouble if your originals are lost or stolen as you travel. In addition, scan these photocopies and email them to your email address; you can then print out replacement copies if necessary.

2. YOUR HEALTH

Keep Your Abilities In Mind

We've worked closely with our local Program Directors and regional associates to identify the aspects of this adventure that you should be aware of, from physical requirements to cultural factors. **Please carefully review the information below prior to departing on this trip.**

Pacing

- 4 locations in 18 days, including 2 single-night stays

Physical Requirements

- Not accessible for travelers using wheelchairs or scooters
- Travelers using walkers, crutches, or other mobility aids must travel with a companion who can assist them throughout the trip
- You must be able to walk 3 miles unassisted and participate in 3-5 hours of physical activities each day, including stairs

Climate

- Daytime temperatures range from 56-79°F during touring season
- June-August are the warmest months
- January-March and November weather can be unpredictable and change quickly within a short period of time, including snow in Chianciano and Southern Tuscany

Terrain

- Travel over uneven walking surfaces, including unpaved paths, hills, stairs, and cobblestone

Transportation

- Travel by 45-seat motorcoach and public transportation that requires ability to stand up and hold onto handles while vehicle is in motion

Cuisine

- Meals will be based on the local cuisine

Health Check and Inoculations

If you have any ongoing medical conditions or concerns about your health, we highly recommend that you schedule a checkup with your personal physician at least six weeks in advance of your departure date. Discuss with your doctor any aspects of your international itinerary that may affect your health and be guided by his or her advice. A loose filling or developing cavity would be difficult to remedy while you are traveling — you may want to have a dental exam before your trip. Feeling healthy and confident of your mobility is essential if you want to fully enjoy your trip abroad. For your comfort and safety, we recommend this program only to individuals in good physical condition.

If you take medications regularly, be sure to pack an ample supply that will last your entire trip, as obtaining refills of your medication can be difficult during your trip. Pack these medications in your carry-on bag, and keep them in their original, labeled containers. To be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications, you should also bring copies of the prescriptions, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name.

Vaccinations

Check with the CDC: To ensure you receive any needed vaccinations we suggest that you check the current recommendations of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the geographical region that you are going to travel. You can contact them at:

Online — if you have access to the Internet, we suggest you visit the CDC's website at **www.cdc.gov/travel**, where you will find comprehensive information about preventing illness while traveling.

By phone—at the CDC's Hotline toll-free at **1-800-232-4636** 24 hours a day. Please note that automated information may be arranged topically by disease, rather than by country or region.

Consult your doctor: After checking the CDC's recommendations we strongly suggest that you consult your physician (at least 6 weeks prior to departure) concerning any vaccinations or medications that you may need on this trip. At the time of print there were no specific vaccinations required for entry into any of the countries on your itinerary.

3. LUGGAGE REGULATIONS

Size, Number and Weight Restrictions

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag; one carry-on bag per person
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current standard is 50lbs for checked bags and 15lbs for carry-on bags .
Size restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (<i>length+width+depth</i>). Generally, 62 linear inches is the checked bag limit; carry-on limit is 45 linear inches .
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.
EXTENSION LIMITS	
The extensions have the same luggage restrictions as the main trip.	
REMARKS / SUGGESTIONS	
<p>One suitcase and one carry-on bag per person: Due to the space limitations on bus transfers, you'll be restricted to one suitcase and one carry-on bag per person. This is to ensure that we have room for everyone's luggage during bus transfers. We ask that you abide by this limit to avoid inconveniencing your fellow travelers and to avoid additional fees from the airlines. Most airlines are now charging fees to check more than one suitcase per person, even for flights to Europe or on other international flights.</p> <p>Note: enforcement of published restrictions by countries and airlines is a matter of governmental and corporate policy. It may include spot checks and be inconsistently applied. Expect penalties and fines to be imposed immediately, however, when and if enforced. Before you choose to ignore published restrictions you should ask: <i>Do I feel lucky?</i> Even if you answer yes, you should make sure that you have the ability to pay the fine.</p>	

Should I confirm luggage restrictions with my U.S./international airline(s) before departure?

Absolutely, confirm them about a week or so before your departure. You should take this step no matter if your vacation has a lower limit than the average international flight or not. Because there may be recent changes, such as new security regulations, or an update to the standard weight/size allowance. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our webpage in the *FAQ* section

You should also check with the airlines on luggage fees—many airlines now charge to check luggage, even on international flights. Others will charge a fee if you bring a second carry-on item, like a purse or a laptop. **These fees are not included in your trip price**; they are payable directly to the airlines. If you are making a connecting flight, you should also confirm if your luggage can be checked through to your final destination. For more information about air travel, see the “Air Travel” section of your *Important Information* booklet.

Luggage Suggestions

Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase for your checked luggage. Due to space limitations on our motor coaches, you are allowed one piece of checked luggage per person. Porterage at airports and hotels is provided for **one** bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags.

Consider a daypack or small backpack as your carry-on bag. It can do double duty during excursions and walking trips. A daypack leaves your hands free and distributes its weight onto your back. Packed with daily travel needs (sweater, camera, rain/wind shell, water bottle, etc.), it will compress to fit the storage space of foreign motorcoaches, and yet still have room for an impulse buy at a street market.

Tip: Bring a second, empty lockable bag folded into your main suitcase, with a luggage tag and small lock. Use this to carry souvenirs home – but remember that you may incur extra luggage fees. If you're traveling with a companion we recommend "cross-packing," i.e., pack 2 outfits of your clothing in your companion's luggage and vice-versa, in case one bag is delayed.

Airport Security/TSA

Restrictions on what can be included in your carry-on luggage may change. To avoid inadvertently packing restricted items in your carry-on, we suggest that you consult the Transportation Security Administration website at www.tsa.gov/public, which keeps a current list of restricted items. From the main website click on *Our Travelers*, then *Air Travel*, and then you will see a link for *Prohibited Items*.

Liquids and your carry on: Follow the **TSA's 3-1-1 rule**: Liquids must be in a 3.4 ounce or less (100ml) bottle (by volume); all bottles must be in a 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag; 1 bag per passenger placed in screening bin. One-quart bag per person limits the total liquid volume each traveler can bring. The 3.4 ounce (100ml) container size is a security measure.

Locking your luggage:

To reduce the risk of damage to your luggage, *either* do not lock your bags when checking in for flights that originate in the U.S. *or* use TSA-approved locks. (These are locks that TSA screeners can open and relock with a special tool, avoiding damage to your luggage or lock if a physical inspection is required. Look for the words "TSA" or "TSA-approved" on the lock's packaging.) Outside of the U.S., we strongly recommend that you lock your luggage as a preventative measure against theft.

4. WHEN YOU ARRIVE

Your GCT Program Director

During your Grand Circle Land Tour, you'll have reliable assistance available at all times from an onsite Grand Circle Travel Program Director. Your Program Director is fluent in English and can give you an inside perspective on your destinations. Along the way your Program Director is supported by local tour guides, who guide you expertly through particular sites and cities.

Many Grand Circle Program Directors are graduates of professional education programs for travel guides. In addition, they receive specialized training directly from Grand Circle, training that is based on what we've learned from thousands of past travelers about how to make the trip most enjoyable. Your Program Director offers both a deep knowledge of the region and a commitment to make this a very pleasant, informative, and rewarding travel experience for you.

Your Program Director will provide sightseeing tips, handle all travel details, reserve optional tours you choose to take, oversee your Discovery Series events, and provide any other assistance you may need. You will be in the company of the Program Director throughout your Land Tour.

GCT Air Travelers

U.S. Departure: If you are among a group of ten or more GCT travelers who depart the U.S. from your international gateway city, it is our goal to have a GCT Representative assist you at the U.S. airport with the check-in of your flight. Unless there are extenuating circumstances beyond our control, the Representative will be at the check-in counter three hours before your departure time. If you are flying domestically before your international flight, the representative will be stationed at the check-in counter for your departing international flight, not at the domestic arrival gate.

Arrival in Italy: At the beginning of your main trip or your optional pre-trip extension, a GCT Representative will meet you at the airport after you exit Customs and escort you to a private motorcoach for your transfer to the hotel. If you are not met upon arrival, we ask that you immediately call our emergency contact at +39-345-9124-799 for assistance.

Important note: *Airport porters are NOT allowed in the customs hall area. On arrival, you must take your luggage off the baggage carousel and load it onto a cart (in Italian airports you'll need a one- or two-euro coin for the cart), which you then will move through customs. When you exit customs, you'll handle your cart until reaching your motorcoach. Your motorcoach driver will load your luggage onto your motorcoach.*

Delays Do Happen – Despite the Best of Plans. Grand Circle Travel is not responsible for flight delays or cancellations. In the unfortunate circumstance that your flight is delayed or changed, please try to reach the GCT local contact in order to make new arrangements for your transfer. Due to airline regulations our staff are not notified of flight rerouting, and our airport representative won't necessarily be aware of your new arrival time. In these cases you will need to arrange your transfer by taxi to your hotel.

U.S. Return: At the end of your base trip or optional post-trip extension, you'll be transferred by motorcoach to the airport for your return flight to the U.S. If you are among a group of ten or more GCT travelers who return to the same U.S. gateway city, a GCT Representative will meet you as you exit Customs and help you find taxis, buses, hotel accommodations, or connecting flights. Again, it is our goal to have our GCT Representative waiting to assist your group. In rare instances, unforeseen circumstances may prevent this service.

Please note: *If you plan on booking your own international flights or arranging with our air department to arrive/depart on an earlier/later date than standard for your program, airport transfers will NOT be included in your program price. Transfers must be purchased separately, as an optional add-on, and are subject to availability. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Traveler Support team at 1-800-321-2835. For more information, please see your Important Information booklet.*

Flying with a Travel Companion

If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.

5. MONEY MATTERS

How to Carry Your Money

The European financial infrastructure is as developed and modern as America's – sometimes even better developed. Currencies vary and banks have different names, but most are allied with global institutions and offer the same services you use daily. You can expect to have ready access to ATMs (to get local currency from your account), to have major credit cards accepted at most popular tourist sites, restaurants, and major stores, and to exchange US dollars for local currencies. There will be localized exceptions and perhaps some limitations on availability and amounts, and don't forget the fees. However, a little forethought can make juggling currencies a fairly painless process.

While there is no need to obtain local currency before your trip, many travelers do exchange \$50 to \$100 or so into the currency of their first destination. This can smooth your arrival should you run into closed banks/exchanges or broken ATMs. Otherwise, rely on a mix of credit/debit cards and ATM use (for ready access to cash) as the best way to manage your money as you travel. U.S. cash should be mixed into the blend, but it's wise to minimize how much you carry. Just as at home, carrying large amounts of cash can be risky. It's generally wise to have spending money in the local currency rather than to rely on American dollars.

You can exchange money at banks, some hotels, and money exchange offices (to do so, you'll likely need your passport). Be aware, however, that torn, dirty, or taped U.S. bills will *not* be accepted for exchange. **New** (in terms of use *and* issue date – post 2004) and large bills (\$100) will *usually* be accepted by banks and onboard ships; **old** \$100 bills (again, in age and condition) will *not* be accepted. Money in smaller denominations is much more universally accepted, but even there, new bills are preferred. Note that U.S. currency is not an accepted form of currency in Europe.

Traveler's checks—*not recommended*: We urge you not to rely on traveler's checks for your personal expenses. They can be difficult to exchange and the commission fee for cashing them is quite high. It's most practical to view any traveler's checks you might bring as a last "cash" resort in the event of a special situation.

U.S. dollars have an advantage over traveler's checks. Cash is more readily exchanged and accepted, and sometimes commands a better exchange rate.

Credit Cards

Though major American credit cards (American Express, Visa, and MasterCard) are accepted abroad, always inquire if your type of credit card is accepted before deciding on your purchase. It is also wise to notify your credit card company that you will be using your cards abroad so that they may remove any security block. When using a major credit card you may receive a different exchange rate than if you pay with cash; inquire about the rate first. Please be aware that credit cards might not be accepted for small purchases or in some restaurants or stores. Note that the Discover credit card is not widely accepted outside the U.S. Keep your receipts in case you have questions about the conversion or exchange rate. Also, keep your receipts as proof of purchase for items to be shipped home.

TIP: Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company or bank that you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure.

You should also double-check what phone number you should call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don't assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1-800 numbers don't work outside of the U.S.!

IMPORTANT NOTE: European countries have been phasing in a new type of credit card technology, called a “smartcard” or a “chip-and-PIN” card. These cards have an embedded computer chip instead of a magnetized strip, and the card owner authorizes a purchase by entering a four digit numerical PIN (Personal Identification Number) instead of signing a slip. Some businesses in Europe have already switched to the new system completely; some can process both smartcards and regular cards; and some haven't switched at all.

This new technology is not common in the U.S., so occasionally there may be machines that can't read U.S. cards. Or the machine can read the card, but asks for a PIN. Although it is not common for U.S. credit cards to have PINs (and some providers will not even be able to provide one at all), requesting one prior to your departure is recommended. In some shops you will still be able to sign a slip as usual if you inform the vendor at the point of sale. And if the shop in question requires a smartcard, you can always try a different form of payment, like a debit card or cash. (U.S. debit cards usually have a PIN, so sometimes they work when credit cards don't.) Since there is no way to predict in advance what each shop will do, we recommend that you bring more than one type of payment when you go shopping. For example, a mix of a couple different credit cards, a debit or ATM card, and some cash is ideal—you'll be prepared for anything.

Please note: Optional tour payments made by credit card may take up to 3 months to process. For this reason we ask that you use a credit card that will not expire until three months following your trip. Because our headquarters are in Boston, charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as "OPT Boston" (depending on your credit card company).

Debit cards: Debit cards are very popular in Europe, and are widely accepted, but will *almost always* require a PIN. Many U.S. banks offer a combined ATM and debit card. Check your ATM card, and if it has a Visa or a MasterCard logo, ask your bank if it can be used as a debit card in Europe. (If there's no logo, then you probably can't use it as a debit card, but your bank will know for certain). If it can be used as a debit card, all you'll need is the same PIN you use at the ATM.

ATMs

When traveling, typically PLUS, Cirrus, and other bank networks are available throughout large cities and small towns. Always notify your bank before you leave home that you are going abroad so that they may remove any blocks on your account, and also ask them about the number of withdrawals you may make abroad. For cash withdrawals, don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's 4-digit PIN (Personal Identification Number), as many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their numeric keys, they only display digits.

Note on ATM use: Many banks have begun imposing a fee ranging from \$1 to \$5 every time you use an ATM in a foreign city. You may want to limit the number of withdrawals that you make. Your Program Director/Hospitality Desk Representative can advise you on locations, but when to exchange money is left to your discretion.

Currency

The euro is the official currency in Italy. Euro banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, and 500
- Coins: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 cents; 1 and 2 euro

Currency exchange rates fluctuate daily. Your Program Director will advise you of the exchange rate upon your arrival. For current exchange rates, please refer to our website, or the financial section of your newspaper. On our website select the region and then click on the country you'll be visiting. A link to the currency converter is included in the menu on the page of each individual country.

Banking Hours

Bank hours are usually Monday through Friday, 8:30 am to 1:30 pm, and 3 pm to 4 pm; banks are closed on Saturdays and Sundays. To exchange cash and Traveler's Checks you will need to have your passport with you. In banks there often is a special counter reserved for exchanging money. Many banks exchange money only in the morning. In Italy, money can be changed not only at banks, but also at CAMBIOs (Exchange Offices), and some travel agencies and hotels. Exchange rates will be most favorable at banks, although banks always charge a commission for the service.

Shopping

There is **no** requirement to make a purchase during stops at local shops or markets, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. **Grand Circle Travel cannot be responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.** If you plan a major purchase, we strongly recommend that you research the prices and quality available at home before your trip. Just one visit to an import shop or gold dealer will put you way ahead when you go shopping. This is the only way to know if you are getting a good price. We recommend that wherever possible you carry your purchases home with you, especially if they are valuable or fragile. (Remember to leave some extra space in your luggage when you are packing for your trip, so you can fit in your vacation purchases.)

Whether it refers to high fashion or Maserati automobiles, "Made in Italy" has become synonymous with style and quality craftsmanship. Among the most popular buys are leather goods, silk ties, knitwear, gold jewelry, ceramics, straw goods and other handicrafts, small cabinets, and jewelry boxes. Each region in Italy has its specialties:

Rome: Designer fashions, silks, artwork, religious items, leather goods of all kinds, quality sunglasses.

Sorrento: Coral, cameos, embroidered blouses, *tarsia* (intricate inlaid wood marquetry), and Capodimonte ceramics.

Venice: glassware, lace, velvet and damask, Carnival masks, silver products, and silks.

In general, the idea that bargaining is the rule in Italy is incorrect. There is no universal policy, but for the most part prices are fixed in the better shops. Where you see the sign *prezzi fissi* (price fixed) you can be sure that there is no bargaining to be done. Shops are generally open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 9 am to 1 pm; they close for lunch and re-open 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm. Individual stores might vary these hours. Some shops are closed on Sundays and Monday mornings during the winter months, while they are closed Saturday afternoons and Sundays during the summer months.

Value Added Tax: In Italy, a Value Added Tax is levied on most articles, services, and meals, and ranges from 17% to 33%. Depending on how much you spend on certain goods in specially marked *Tax Free Shopping* stores, you may be eligible for a partial refund of this tax. Ask the shopkeeper, salesperson, or your Program Director for details. Be sure to save all receipts and the special *Global Tax Refund* forms for Customs, as receipts alone are not enough.

Rome

Rome is a shopper's delight, no matter what your budget. As mentioned before, the best buys are leather products of all sorts, from gloves to handbags and wallets to jackets; silk goods; fashions; and high-quality knitwear. Shops are closed on Sunday and on Monday morning; in July and August, they close on Saturday afternoon as well.

Antiques: For prints, scout the stalls at *Piazza Fontanella Borghese*; at Casali, Piazza della Rotonda 81a, at the Pantheon; and *Tanca*, Salita de' Crescenzi 10, also near the Pantheon. For a stunning array of antiques, browse *Via dei Coronari* and other streets in the *Piazza Navona* area. Some of the most prestigious antiques dealers are located in and around *Via del Babuino*.

Boutiques: *Via dei Condotti* (directly across from the Spanish Steps) and the streets running parallel to and crossing *Via dei Condotti* form the most upscale shopping area in Rome. Prices are high on *Via dei Condotti*. Lower-price fashions and goods may be found at shops on *Via Frattina* and *Via del Corso*.

Shopping Districts: Romans do much of their shopping along *Via Cola di Rienzo* and *Via Nazionale*. Big new shopping malls have cropped up on the outskirts of the city. CinecittàDue is easiest to reach; just take Metro A to the Subaugusta stop. It has 100 shops, as well as cafés and snack bars.

Religious Articles: St. Peter's is the place to go for such items. They are plentiful in the stores around St. Peter's, on *Via di Porta Angelica* and *Via della Conciliazione*, and also in the souvenir shops tucked away on the roof and at the crypt exit in St. Peter's itself.

Department Stores: These are less atmospheric to shop in, but depending on what you are looking for, can offer good value. There is a fairly broad selection of women's, men's, and children's fashions and accessories at the *Rinascenza* stores on Piazza Colonna and at Piazza Fiume, and at the *Coin* department stores on *Via Cola di Rienzo*, *Piazza Alessandria*, and on *Piazzale Appio* (near San Giovanni Laterano). The *UPIM* and *Ovviessè* chains have shops all across the city, which offer medium-quality, low-price goods.

Venice

Popular buys include glassware, lace, velvet, carnival masks, silver products, and silks. Venice's main shopping district is the area directly surrounding and west of *piazza San Marco* or in the adjacent *Mercerie* that leads to the Rialto Bridge to the north.

Most shops are open from 9 am to 1 pm. They close for a long lunch, reopen around 3:30 pm, and remain open until 7 or 7:30 pm.

Note on Venetian glass: *This attractive glass is a seductive item, but not all of it is of high quality. Do a bit of comparison shopping first.*

U.S. Customs Regulations and Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, www.cbp.gov has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.
- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the *export* duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the *import* duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins.

U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20229
Tel. **1-877-227-5511**

www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/

Problem with a Purchase?

The best way to address a problem with a purchase is to not have one in the first place! So don't forget to examine merchandise before paying for it, check contracts or agreements before signing, and review your receipt before leaving the shop. For major purchases, don't hesitate to ask in advance about the return policy—local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up.

But what if you do discover an issue with an item later on? In that case, your best recourse is to contact the vendor directly. For this reason we recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. due to delays in communication, the complexities of international shipping/customs duties, and even cultural differences in how business is conducted.

To Tip or Not to Tip

Sometimes *that* is the question. Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. For those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines. Listed below are our recommendations for the tips that are not included in your tour price. All tips are quoted in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency or in U.S. dollars. Do not use personal or traveler's checks for tips.

GCT Program Director: It is customary at the end of your trip to express a personal “Thank You” to the Grand Circle Program Director or the hotel Hospitality Desk Representative, especially if he or she has provided you with individual assistance. We recommend \$4-\$6 per person, per day. Please note that tips for our Program Directors can only be in the form of cash, and local currency is appreciated.

Airport/Hotel/Pier Porterage & Transfers: If you are using GCT transfer services, tips to hotel, airport, and pier porters are included in the cost of your trip. Tips to the motorcoach driver for your airport/hotel/pier transfers are also paid by GCT.

Local tour guides and drivers: \$2 per person for each half-day tour; \$3 per person for each full-day tour.

Included Group Meals: Your Program Director will tip waiters for included meals when the group dines together.

Public Restrooms: Most public restrooms in this region are manned by a local staff that takes care of cleaning and supplies. It is customary to leave a small tip for the staff—about \$.65 per person (in local currencies).

Time at Leisure: When you eat in one of the Dine-Around restaurants, the tip is *not* included and you are responsible for any tips that are expected for service. Also, during the times that you explore independently, you may dine in a local restaurant, take a taxi, or avail yourself of some other service where tipping is customary. In Italy, restaurant checks sometimes include service charges (*servizio incluso*), but you might consider adding another 5% to 10% for the waiter. Taxi drivers expect about 10%. If the doorman calls a cab for you, the tip is generally about 50 cents euro.

6. PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP

In General

Travel light. A good rule of thumb is to gather together everything you want to bring; then take half of that. Eliminate all but the essentials and start packing a few days before you leave. That way, you'll have time to think—not fret—about what you might be forgetting. To have a varied travel wardrobe, yet keep your luggage light, we recommend you select a color scheme and pack color-coordinated clothing items that can be mixed to create different outfits.

Pack casual clothes. Comfortable, low-key apparel is acceptable at each of your destinations. Basic pants, shirts, walking shorts, sportswear, everyday dresses and skirts, supportive shoes, and functional outdoor clothes that are relatively easy to care for are recommended. At dinner, although it is customary for men to wear long pants (not shorts), you will not need to don “dressy” clothing; men do not need jackets or ties and women do not need fancy dresses. You may want one or two “smart casual” outfits for the Welcome Reception or Farewell Dinner, but it's completely up to you. Even at the opera, formal wear is definitely the exception rather than the rule. You would only need nicer dress if you plan to dine at a deluxe city restaurant on your own.

Winter: For travel during winter months, include clothes for moderate temperatures, but also take some cold weather gear—warm pants, socks, turtlenecks, fleece top or wool sweater, rainproof jacket (ideally with a zip-out insulation layer), gloves, and hat. The most practical travel wardrobe consists of items that you can wear in layers. Then you can easily add or remove a layer according to fluctuations in temperatures.

Summer: For travel during the summer months, pack an assortment of seasonal garments: short-sleeve shirts and comfortable slacks or shorts for daytime; the evenings, however, can be chilly, so bring along a cotton sweater and a fleece jacket.

Spring: For travel during the spring, pack an assortment of seasonal garments: light pieces and cotton sweaters for daytime; and slacks, long-sleeve shirts, warmer dresses, and a heavy sweater or fleece jacket for evenings.

Comfortable, supportive walking shoes: These are essential. Italy's magnificent ruin sites, churches, museums, and shops truly invite exploration by foot. But walking on the country's cobblestone streets and rather uneven sidewalks can be a challenge—even for the most surefooted traveler.

Rain gear: Regardless of when you travel, rainfall is a possibility. We suggest you bring a folding umbrella and/or waterproof shell —depending on your preference. Water-resistant walking shoes are advantageous in case heavy downpours pass through.

Proper attire in churches: To satisfy dress codes for Italian churches, men and women are requested to cover their arms and legs. No shorts above the knees or sleeveless garments please. Women wearing sleeveless blouses can cover their bare arms with a scarf. It's no longer necessary for women to cover their heads. Pantsuits are now acceptable in churches.

Packing Your Carry-On

Using a daypack as a carry-on bag for your flights is a smart solution. We **strongly urge** you to pack your carry-on with at least one full change of clothes, your camera gear, medications, changes of socks and underwear, your important travel documents, and other irreplaceable items, in case your checked bags go astray. Store camera gear and important papers in plastic bags to protect them from dirt and moisture. On arrival at your destination you can remove these items and load your daypack with the gear you'll need on walking tours and excursions.

Clothing Options

The luggage weight and size restrictions imposed by travel realities today have made traveling light an absolute necessity. With modern fabrics – Gore-Tex, Polarfleece, polypropylene, etc. – lightweight packing for comfort and protection through a wide range of weather is easy. A visit to any on-line or local sporting goods/outdoor stores (L.L. Bean, REI, EMS, etc.) will yield a treasure trove of lightweight, specialized, and fashionable clothing and gear that is readily adaptable to your itinerary.

Travel Gear Suggestions

Traveling in foreign countries brings you into new and strange situations, and though it's often fun to do things as the locals do, it can be frustrating when simple daily habits, taken for granted at home, are upset. An ample supply of your favorite toiletries and health remedies are crucial for your personal comfort. To help make your vacation as convenient and pleasant as possible, please review our lists of suggested travel gear on the following pages, and pack accordingly. You might want to visit the website: www.travelite.org for more packing and luggage tips.

What not to pack: do **not** pack aerosol cans, and avoid packing glass bottles; use plastic containers instead. Checkbooks, unnecessary credit cards, valuable jewelry, and anything that you would hate to lose should be left at home.

Consider ...

- Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, shower cap, body soap, etc.
- Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- Sunglasses with a neck strap
- Sunscreen, SPF 15 or stronger
- Insect repellent with DEET
- Travel money bag or money belt
- Moisturizer, lip balm
- Compact umbrella
- Wide-brim sun hat or visor
- Pocket-size tissues
- Moist towelettes (packets) and/or anti-bacterial “waterless” hand cleanser
- Flashlight, extra batteries/bulb
- Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards (and your originals)
- Extra passport-sized photos
- Written prescriptions for your medications
- For Venice extension: rubbers or waterproof shoes

Medicines

- Your own prescription medicines
- Vitamins
- Cold remedies (Sudafed/Dristan)
- Pain relief (Ibuprofen/aspirin/naproxen)
- Laxatives (Senokot, Ex-Lax)
- Upset stomach (Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta)
- Anti-diarrheal (Imodium)
- Band-Aids
- Moleskin foot pads
- Antibiotics (Neosporin/Bacitracin)

Other Gear

- Travel alarm (or rely on wake-up calls)
- Compact binoculars
- Hanging toiletry bag with pockets
- Hair dryer (provided in all hotels)
- Washcloth (**not** a standard amenity in Italian hotels)
- Earplugs
- Hand-wash laundry soap (Woolite), clothespins/travel clothesline/stopper
- Swimsuit, if your hotel has a pool/whirlpool
- Electrical transformer & plug adapters—see “Regional Electricity” below
- Reading materials
- Travel journal/note pad
- Home address book/email address
- Photos, small gift for home-hosted visit
- Phrase book
- Collapsible walking staff
- Pocket calculator for exchange rates
- Basic sewing kit

7. REGIONAL CLIMATE INFORMATION

We can't predict the weather you'll have on your travels – our local weathermen are lucky to get tomorrow right! So, as your departure nears, it's a great idea to visit the *My Account* feature of www.gct.com for a current 10-day forecast of temperatures and conditions at your destinations. Or check Internet weather sites (www.wunderground.com is very comprehensive) for those forecasts and tweak your wardrobe accordingly. You'll find historical averages and general information on local climates below – but, given recent weather extremes, it's even more important to consult up-to-the-minute resources.

Tuscany & Amalfi Coast: The weather is considerably milder year-round in Italy than in the north and central United States or Great Britain. The Amalfi Coast has a typical Mediterranean climate with temperate winters and very hot, dry summers. Spring and fall usher in delightful weather, with plenty of bright skies and pleasantly warm temperatures. In Tuscany, the weather is very unpredictable in autumn and spring, in marked contrast to the settled sunny and hot weather of summer. Winter weather is generally moderate and wet. There are also possible cold spells with snow in December and January.

Rome: The city of Rome, where you may extend your vacation for four more days, has a climate similar to that of Tuscany, with temperatures averaging in the 40s and 50s during peak winter months, and the 60s and 70s in spring and autumn. Winter rains can be heavy, but periods of sunshine are also common. Summer can be very hot.

Venice (optional extension): Venice is situated in the flat, low-lying plains of northern Italy, where the climate features year-round rain and sunshine, hot summers, and surprisingly cold temperatures during the three winter months. Fog, frost, and snow are frequent in midwinter. Thunderstorms can pass through in autumn and spring, though they are the exception and not the rule. While “off-season” travel may involve stints of inclement weather, it rewards you with the chance to explore Venice's museums, piazzas, and canals at a time when they are wonderfully free of the summer tourist crowds.

Here is the data from the weather observation stations closest to our destinations.

WHAT'S THE TEMPERATURE?												
<i>Average highs (taken at 2 pm) and lows (taken just before sunrise) in °F.</i>												
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Rome												
High	55	56	59	63	71	77	83	83	79	71	62	57
Low	39	40	43	47	56	61	66	67	62	56	46	42
Chianciano												
High	46	48	53	60	69	75	82	82	75	64	55	48
Low	32	34	38	44	51	55	60	59	56	49	42	35
Sorrento												
High	53	53	57	62	69	77	82	84	78	69	62	55
Low	44	44	46	50	55	62	66	68	64	57	51	46
Venice (optional extension)												
High	43	47	54	61	70	76	81	81	74	64	52	45
Low	31	33	40	46	55	61	65	64	59	50	39	33

Please note: The data cited here reflect *climate* as opposed to *weather* conditions, and serve as *general* indicators of what you can reasonably expect. A 60 degree *average* high temperature means that days may be as warm as 80 or as cool as 40 – but it's most likely you'll encounter temperatures in the 50 to 70 degree range. The data reflect meteorological trends tabulated over many years and reported by various sources. Data shown are for cities we visit or the nearest regional equivalents.

8. TRAVEL AND TECHNOLOGY

In General

Smartphone, tablet, digital camera/camcorder, MP3 player: travel today can involve technology that didn't exist even five years ago. The usefulness of digital devices is enormous: smartphones can keep you connected and offer up-to-the-minute information via your cell plan or a local Wi-Fi connection. With a tablet (or smartphone) you can store multiple country guidebooks, access maps and connect to the internet in a small, lightweight device. (*Tip: you can download **this** document from the Grand Circle Travel website and import it into your tablet or e-reader, many of which can display PDF files.*)

Compact and lightweight, digital camcorders and cameras take high definition movies and still images of the people you meet and places you visit. For robust use a laptop may be effective; for occasional use it's wiser to rely on Internet cafes or a tablet and hotel Internet access rather than shoulder the heft and size of a laptop.

To use these devices you should first consider the services available at your destinations. You'll encounter a range of electrical standards, varied plug configurations to access the local current, erratic availability (electricity and internet access), and differing technological standards.

You'll need to assess your power and data storage needs, and the accessories required to recharge/connect/use these devices. Finally, it's smart to read the owner's manual *before* you depart. Pay particular attention to electrical, power and storage requirements to ensure that you understand exactly what you need. Thorough preparation is the best guarantee that your devices will work up to their potential.

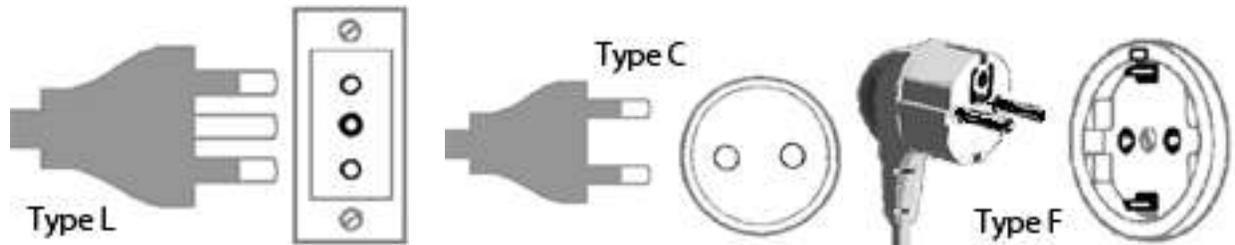
Regional Electricity

The standard U.S. electrical system — 110V 60Hz current and flat two- or three-pronged polarized plug system — is rare elsewhere. The rest of the world overwhelmingly uses 220-240V and 50/60Hz current with a variety of plug shapes, sizes, and configurations. Some plugs will work with multiple receptacles, while others won't. Europe is largely standardized to the Type C "Europlug."

Plugging a 110V U.S. appliance into 220/240V 50/60Hz service will ruin the motor. We suggest that you choose *dual* voltage appliances (widely available) that work on both 110 and 220/240 voltage. Dual voltage appliances need only plug adapters.

If you bring 110V appliances, such as a hair dryer (note that hotels often supply hairdryers and coffee makers) or a shaver, you'll need a transformer (to halve the 220/240V current) as well as plug adapters. Regional transformer/adaptor kits can be found at hardware or online stores but transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave those larger items at home.

The electric current in Italy is 220 V AC, 50 Hz. If you bring small American appliances, Italy use Type C, L and F plugs and receptacles that fit them, so bring a variety of adapters and a transformer for the 220V current in order to operate them.



**Italy uses two variants of the Type L (3 prong with distinct diameters).
The Type C *Europlug* and Type F are also commonly found.**

Because you'll need various plug types on this trip, it may be easier to purchase an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, these can usually be found at your local electronics goods or hardware stores. Sometimes you can buy them at large retailers too, like Target or Walmart. If you forget to bring an adapter, you *might* also find them for sale at the airport when you arrive at your destination.

If you use multiple digital devices—cell phone, digital camera, MP3 player, etc. – it's handy to have a travel power strip, perhaps with surge suppressors and a USB port for charging cell phones, MP3 players or e-readers without carrying device-specific plugs.

Smartphones

It will require some effort to get the most out of your smartphone when you travel. Even with an international roaming plan, costs can add up quickly – those handy apps often pile up download fees. The simplest solution is to shut down all cell phone functions, automatic data feeds and roaming options, and take advantage of your phone via any available Wi-Fi. With an Internet VOIP app (like Skype) you can make inexpensive calls. If necessary, turn international roaming back on and your phone will work as usual – albeit at added cost. If your phone doesn't support international roaming (most smartphones do), some carriers offer loaners.

Cell Phones

If you want to use a standard cell phone while traveling overseas, be sure to check with your service provider (www.verizon.com, www.t-mobile.com etc.) to see if your phone will work outside the U.S. or whether you're better off renting an international phone. The websites www.travelcell.com and www.globalcellularrental.com have good information on rentals. Or, consider buying an inexpensive local phone for your stay.

Phone Calling Cards

If you don't carry a phone, you can use a prepaid calling card to call the U.S. with minimal additional charges. Besides the prepaid long distance charges, you might have a local fee of a few cents and possibly a connection fee if you are using your card at a hotel. Check with the reception desk prior to using it to avoid unexpected charges.

Calling cards purchased locally are usually less expensive than those purchased in the U.S. and are more likely to work with the local system. Note that dialing a U.S. 1-800 number outside the continental United States will incur costly long distance fees, since 1-800 does not work outside the U.S.

Photo Gear

For many people, capturing the highlights of their travel experiences in photographs or movies and sharing them is one of the most enjoyable aspects of the journey. Remember, however: some individuals and cultures are less tolerant of photography than others. It's always best to respect local customs. And in some countries you might be charged for photography at specific sites, or banned from taking any photographs at all.

Digital cameras and camcorders are excellent travel companions—and many do dual duty by recording movies *and* still images. First sized camcorders can capture HD movies and high quality still photos; cameras the size of a deck of cards are great for snapshots and casual movie clips. With an ample supply of high-capacity memory cards you can record your whole trip with a small, lightweight package.

But you must remember the batteries. Recharging batteries is sometimes impossible, cameras can drain batteries *very* quickly, and replacements may be unavailable. Whether you need standard or proprietary batteries, it's wise to have spares. Be sure your charger will work with the local electrical system, and bring more than enough memory cards—they may be hard or impossible to find. Memory cards are small, thin and light: you can never have too much storage.

Compact cameras are impractical for distant subjects and are often weak in dim light. Some models have a zoom lens of up to 120mm, which is good for middle distances. For distant subjects a *megazoom* (with a zoom lens of at least 300mm) or a single lens reflex (DSLR) camera with up to a 300mm telephoto lens are good choices. With a DSLR you can use multiple lenses, though your gear can quickly get complex, weighty and cumbersome. Cameras or lenses that need a tripod are impractical for travel photography. A single mid-range telephoto lens (18-200mm) coupled with a small, fast prime lens (for low light/no flash situations) is an effective, flexible and compact kit. Consider mirrorless interchangeable lens cameras (MILC), which combine small bodies and multiple, small lenses with high quality for both still and HD movie images.

If you use a DSLR or MILC camera, protect the lenses with a UV filter and bring lens caps, covers, cleaning paper and a waterproof bag (a heavy duty Ziploc-style bag is good) to protect your gear. Be sure your camera has a flash that you can turn off, and if it's detachable, remember to pack it. (At many sites and museums, flashes are *not* permitted.)

Consider disposable cameras, as well. They are inexpensive and capable of acceptable photos as long as the light is not too dim or bright. X-rays do not damage the data of digital cameras (in any media format), and so pose no problems for travelers using digital cameras.

9. ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS

We're including some handy practical details and a brief introduction to the places you'll visit on your Land Tour. If you expect to explore in depth on your own, we recommend that you consult one of the many available book-length guides to your destinations. If you have one or two specific sites, museums or features that you're interested in, an internet search is the ideal way to get-up-to-date information and details. And of course your Grand Circle Travel Program Director or Hospitality Desk Representative will be able to assist you with suggestions and arrangements of activities you wish to participate in during your stay.

In General

Cuisine

The ancient Romans were the originators of the first fully developed cuisine of the Western world. Drawing on an abundance of fine, natural ingredients from the fertile Roman countryside and influenced by Greece and Asia Minor, they evolved a gastronomic tradition still felt in kitchens the world over.

Traditional Italian cooking is quite like the Italian people themselves—robust and hearty. Popular ingredients include any combination of tomatoes, garlic, olive oil, onions, celery, parsley, seafood, parmesan cheese, mozzarella cheese, chicken, and, of course, every type of pasta, from spaghetti and fettuccine to penne and ravioli. Seasonal vegetables include yellow, red, and green sweet peppers; eggplant; mushrooms; green and broad beans; zucchini; asparagus; and artichokes.

Drinking Water

Water in Italy is considered safe, but as an added safety precaution against possible stomach upsets, we recommend you drink bottled water as much as possible. Pure spring water is sold everywhere in 33 centiliter and 1½-liter clear-plastic bottles. Other choices for water include mineral water and mineral soda (carbonated mineral water). If you're out of bottled water, hotel tap water is okay to drink, but it may taste unpleasant because of heavy chlorination.

Hotel Courtesy

Italian hotels do not allow food and beverages to be taken from their breakfast rooms, nor is it courteous to eat or drink food or beverages purchased elsewhere in hotel common rooms. In conformity with municipal laws to promote urban decorum, hotels do not allow hanging laundry on room balconies. Travel clotheslines, used in your bathroom, are a more private and effective solution.

Laundry Service

Your Program Director or concierge can assist you with making arrangements for these services.

Rome in Brief—Optional Extension

City Layout and Details

Via del Corso is Rome's principal street. It runs north to south with easy-to-remember landmarks at its end points. At the north is *piazza del Popolo*, with a central obelisk and trio of churches. East of *piazza del Popolo* (and north of *piazza di Spagna*) is *Villa Borghese*, the city's principal park.

Off of *Via del Corso*, about two-thirds of the way between *piazza del Popolo* and *piazza Venezia*, is *Via Condotti*, which runs east to *piazza di Spagna*—the Spanish Steps area. This is the city's chic shopping area. The southern extremity of *Via del Corso* is *piazza Venezia*. You cannot miss it because it is dominated by the massive *Vittorio Emanuele Monument*, referred to by locals as “the wedding cake” or “the typewriter.” Southeast of *piazza Venezia* are the Roman Forum and the Palatine Hill (the centermost of the seven hills of ancient Rome) and, more distant, the Colosseum.

To the west of *piazza Venezia* and stretching toward the river lies Old Rome, an area of narrow winding streets, aging buildings and, generally, excellent restaurants and charming cafés. *Corso Vittorio Emanuele* is the main boulevard in this neighborhood. Across the Tiber (*Tevere*) River is Vatican City and farther south is the mellow *Trastevere* district—for many people the most interesting and colorful corner of the city.

Evening Entertainment

As mentioned before, the *International Herald Tribune* is now printed in Rome and is available at most newsstands; it often lists major events in Rome, as well as the rest of Italy, in its Saturday “Weekend” section. Issues are usually one day behind the *Tribune*'s original publication date.

In addition, the monthly *Carnet di Roma*, available at EPT tourist offices, is free and has an exhaustive listing of scheduled events and shows. The bi-weekly pamphlet *Un Ospite a Roma*, free from your hotel concierge if available, is another source of information, as is *Wanted in Rome*, available at newsstands.

If you want to go to the opera, ballet, or to a concert, it's best to ask your concierge or GCT Hospitality Desk Representative to get tickets for you. They are on sale at box offices only, just a few days before performances. Here's a brief preview of entertainment possibilities:

Opera: The *Teatro dell'Opera* is on *Via del Viminale*.

Film: There are two English-language movie theaters in Rome. One is the *Pasquino* (Vicolo del Piede, just off *Piazza Santa Maria* in *Trastevere*). The other is the *Quirinetta* (*Via M. Minghetti*, 4—*Centro storico*). The daily film program at each theater is listed in Rome's daily newspapers.

Concerts: The new Concert Hall complex opened in 2002. It is called simply New Auditorium—*Nuovo Auditorium* (*Viale Pietro de Coubertin*).

Night Clubs: The best source for an up-to-date list is the weekly entertainment guide “Trova Roma,” published in the Italian daily *La Repubblica*.

Local Transportation

Perhaps the best way to sightsee on your own is to pick a part of the city or a specific sight that you especially want to see, go to it on the bus or Metro, then explore the area on foot. Remember: Many Roman pathways are cobblestone. Before setting out, be sure to don good walking shoes, preferably with thick rubber soles that will cushion your feet. Transportation route maps are sold at newsstands and ATAC information and ticket booths.

Metro: Rome's subway is called the Metropolitana, or Metro for short, and provides the fastest and easiest means of transportation in the city. The Metro begins operating at 5:30 am, and the last train leaves each terminal at 11:30 pm. (Line A closes at 9 pm Sunday through Friday, but on Saturdays it closes at 1:30 am). A big letter M indicates the entrance to the subway. Tickets, which are good on buses as well, are available from vending machines at all stations. But you can avoid standing in line at stations if you buy single tickets or books of five or ten ahead of time at newsstands and tobacco shops.

The Metro has two underground lines: **Line A—distinctive color RED**—goes from the Battistini Station to the Anagnina Station. Important stops on this line are the Cipro Station near St. Peter's and the Vatican Museums, the Spagna Station (the Spanish Steps), the Termini Station, and the San Giovanni Station (the Basilica of St. John the Lateran). **Line B—distinctive color BLUE**—connects to Laurentina, stopping at piazza Bologna, Stazione Termini, via Cavour, the Colosseum, Circus Maximus, the Pyramid of C. Cestius, St. Paul's Outside the Walls, and E.U.R. The A Line intersects with the B Line at the Termini Station, which is also Rome's central train station.

Bus: Silver/orange, silver/green ATAC city buses (and several streetcar lines) run from about 6 am to midnight, with intermittent *notturmo* services on main lines throughout the night. Tickets are sold singly or in books of five or ten at tobacco shops and newsstands. When boarding a bus, remember to enter at the rear and exit at the middle.

Make sure you stamp your bus ticket: When you step onto the bus, you must stamp your ticket in the ticket machine. Any passenger whose ticket is not stamped faces a hefty fine!

Taxis: As in most cities, this is the most expensive way to get around. You can hire a taxi at a taxi stand or arrange for one over the telephone. The concierge can reserve a taxi for you, however you should be aware that the taxi's meter will begin running the minute the driver accepts the call. Use only the official white cabs, and be very sure to check the meter. There are supplements for service after 10 pm, and on Sundays and holidays. It is customary to tip the taxi driver approximately 10%.

Venice in Brief—Optional Extension

City Layout and Details

Venice is about two and a half miles from the Italian mainland and one and one quarter miles from the Adriatic Sea. The city is built on and around 117 islands and islets, separated by 177 small canals. These small land clusters are joined together by some 400 bridges. The three largest and most historically significant bridges are the Rialto, Accademia, and degli Scalzi, each of which crosses the Grand Canal. The city has only one main piazza—San Marco—and it bustles all day long. Most visitors are primarily interested in seeing San Marco, with its St. Mark's Basilica and Doge's Palace, but there's much to see elsewhere if you are game for walking. Shoppers will want to explore along the Mercerie, which leads out of the piazza San Marco and serves as the city's major shopping artery. It eventually leads to the Rialto, site of the market area.

The city is divided into six quarters, called *sestieri*, and these include San Marco, Santa Croce, San Polo, Castello, Cannaregio, and Dorsoduro. Each has its own mood and appeal. The Dorsoduro, for example, has been compared to New York's Greenwich Village. Don't expect to find any order to the tiny streets and winding canals that comprise each sestieri. Street numbers do not follow a logical sequence, and finding a specific address can be baffling. Looking for certain cross streets and posted signs can be more helpful than trying to pinpoint an address by its street number. Regardless of your orientation skills, however, expect to get at least a little lost at some point while exploring on your own. Everybody does—that's part of the charm of Venice.

Across the lagoon from Venice proper is the shoestring island of Lido. This long, narrow sandbar protects Venice from the force of the Adriatic Sea; it is also one of Italy's most fashionable beach resort areas. Venice is connected to mainland Italy via a three-mile bridge that runs from the city across the Venetian Lagoon to the town of Mestre.

Evening Entertainment

Compared to Rome, Venice is a quiet city that shuts down pretty much by midnight. Typical nighttime entertainment includes classical concerts (often featured in various churches), opera performances, art exhibitions, leisurely visits at cafés and bars, and sunset strolls. The tourist office and some hotels distribute the free weekly pamphlet *Un Ospite a Venezia* ("A Guest in Venice"). It is a useful multilingual booklet that lists up-to-date museum schedules, special events, entertainment programs, and other activities, as well as the current rates for gondolas and motorboat taxis.

Local Transportation

There are no cars in Venice, except on the Lido. To get around, you can walk, or take a vaporetto or gondola. Remember, Venice has 460 pedestrian bridges.

Vaporetti: These motorboats operate as water taxis. An *accelerato* boat makes every stop; a *diretto* makes only express stops. They operate from designated piers and run about every 15 minutes. Service is frequent from about 7 am to midnight, then hourly between midnight and 7 am.

Gondola: If you opt for a gondola ride, first agree on the price and the length of the trip. Two major stations at which you can hire gondolas include piazza San Marco and Ponte Rialto.

On foot: By far, the easiest way to explore Venice is on foot. All the locals walk, too. Because there are 460 bridges in the city, it is difficult to use bicycles.

10. DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Italy

Area: 116,348 square miles

Capital: Rome

Languages: In addition to Italian, many of Italy's natives speak French and English.

Location: Italy lies in southern Europe, bordering France in the northwest, the Ligurian Sea and the Tyrrhenian Sea in the west, the Ionian Sea in the south, the Adriatic Sea in the east, Slovenia in the northeast, and Austria and Switzerland in the north. The country includes the Mediterranean islands of Sicily and Sardinia and several other small islands.

Geography: Campania (the region of Naples, Sorrento, and the Amalfi coast) has 220 miles of coastline and is on the southwestern side of the Italian peninsula. Its two famous gulfs, the Bay of Naples and Gulf of Salerno, are enclosed by picturesque promontories, including the Sorrento Peninsula. The town of Sorrento, about 32 miles south of Naples, spreads out along the crest of its fabled cliffs, which offer spectacular views of the Bay of Naples.

The region of Tuscany is a blend of rugged hills, fertile valleys, and long stretches of sandy beaches that curve along the west coast of central Italy and fringe the pine-forested coastal plain of the Maremma. The cities and towns of Tuscany house the centuries-old heritage of culture and art that produced magnificent medieval cathedrals and the marvels of the Renaissance.

Population: 61,482,297 (2013 estimate)

Religion: Roman Catholic 98%, Other 2%

Time zone: All of Italy is on Central European Time, one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (six hours ahead of Eastern Time). Summer hours operate from the last weekend in March until the last weekend in September.

Holidays:

01/01	New Year's Day
01/06	Epiphany
04/20	Easter Day
04/21	Easter Monday
04/25	Liberation Day
05/01	Labor Day
06/02	Founding of the Republic
08/15	Assumption Day
11/01	All Saints
12/08	Feast of the Immaculate Conception
12/25	Christmas Day
12/26	St. Stephen's Day

ITALY HAS A LONG AND COMPLICATED HISTORY. Its earliest recorded civilization dates back to around 2000 B.C., when the peninsula was settled by fair-complexioned Ligurians, ancestors of the Latins. Sometime near the 9th century B.C., boatloads of Greeks landed on Italian shores, and Italy became the site for the myth of Ulysses and other famous legends. The Greeks inhabited southern Italy and Sicily during the 8th century B.C., forming colonies of city-states called Magna Graecia. The Greek civilization prospered in the 6th and 5th centuries B.C., but waned in the 4th century B.C. While the Greeks were busy settling the south, the Etruscans, a highly artistic populace from Asia Minor, built strong communities in central Italy.

The Etruscans ruled until the Roman revolt around 510 B.C. By 250 B.C., the Romans had conquered Italy and established Rome as the seat of their empire. Julius Caesar reigned throughout the 1st century B.C., and his defeat of France made Rome the ruler of the entire Mediterranean world. Under Caesar, Roman culture flourished. Its unprecedented splendor was further enriched by Greek architectural and artistic influences. Caesar was assassinated in 44 B.C. and succeeded by his nephew Octavian, later known as Augustus, who instituted the Pax Romana, two centuries of peace during which the Roman Empire was as mighty as it would ever be. At the end of the 2nd century A.D., the Roman bishop was made head of the new Christian religion—a position that granted him enormous power in the political arena.

Rome's glory during the 200-year-long Pax Romana began to decline in the 3rd century A.D., when a succession of inept and corrupt emperors weakened the city. By the 4th century A.D., Rome had become very divided politically, and new administrative capitals were founded in such cities as Milan and Trier, Germany. In A.D. 395, Constantine moved the Roman capital to Constantinople (Istanbul), which left the city of Rome very vulnerable. During the 400s, it was repeatedly attacked by barbarians and in 475 completely fell to a barbarian chief, who soon after opened regions of Italy to Teutonic settlement.

Italy was briefly reunited in 800, when Charlemagne was crowned Holy Roman Emperor by Pope Leo III. But over the next century, the country disintegrated into contentious kingdoms at constant battle for control of provincial lands. Italy's turmoil continued for an astounding length of time, as different city-states waged war after war up to the early 19th century, when Napoleon took over Italy.

Despite this internal dissension and strife, Italian society and culture reached its peak during the Renaissance in the 15th and 16th centuries. The independent city-states formed a delicate balance of power, and affluent patrons such as the Medici family of Florence greatly supported the arts. This golden age of human endeavor and artistic creation spawned some of the greatest painters, sculptors, and inventors of Western civilization—Leonardo da Vinci, a genius in many vocations, the epitome of the Renaissance man (1452-1519); Michelangelo (1475-1564); Raphael (1483-1564); and the architect Brunelleschi (1377-1466).

After Napoleon's series of invasions, the Italian people sought to squelch foreign domination, which gave birth to the movement for political unity in Italy, known as the *Risorgimento* (Resurrection). Italian nationalism gathered broad support under the popular leader Giuseppe Garibaldi, and Italy was finally united under King Victor Emmanuel II in 1870.

The country was ruled as a monarchy and joined the Allies in World War I. Benito Mussolini rose to power during the early 1920s and ushered in one of the darkest periods in Italy's history. Mussolini ("Il Duce") organized discontented Italians into the Fascist Party to "rescue Italy from Bolshevism"—but what he actually delivered was a totalitarian state controlled by the militia. Mussolini formed an alliance with Hitler and fought against the Allies during World War II. The Italian Resistance Movement fought Mussolini and the Nazis, but their reprisals took a heavy toll: 400,000 people were killed, hundreds of thousands were left homeless, and the economy was sharply disrupted. In 1945, Mussolini was captured in Milan by Partisans and executed.

Italy was declared a republic in 1946, but during the postwar era it was seriously divided by extreme political differences. Dozens of governments rose and fell. The leading parties were the diametrically opposed Centrist Christian Democrats and the Italian Communist Party. In the 1970s, a prolonged outbreak of terrorist acts by the left-wing Red Brigades threatened domestic stability, but by the early 1980s, the terrorist groups had been suppressed.

In the early 1990s, public discontent with the government intensified due to a soaring inflation rate and disillusioning scandals that involved the Mafia and many government leaders. In 1996, Italians elected a new government dominated by a center-left coalition for the first time since the proclamation of the Italian Republic. Italy adopted the euro as its currency in January, 1999. The new bills and coins started circulating in 2002.

11. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Books, Maps, and Movies

If your local store or library doesn't stock the books or movies below, the Internet offers a wide variety of options for finding older or rare stock – try AbeBooks (abebooks.com), Alibris (alibris.com), Amazon (amazon.com) or Barnes & Noble (bn.com) — or any of the smaller websites. Of course, this selection is not meant to be comprehensive, and is offered as a starting point for your research.

Atlas of the Roman World by Tim Cornell and John Matthews (History)

A compact yet thorough illustrated history of the rise, zenith, and decline of the Roman Empire.

History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire by Edward Gibbon (History)

A landmark scholarly work ever since it was written in the 18th century. Coverage extends from the 2nd century A.D. to the fall of Constantinople in 1453.

Julius Caesar: Man, Soldier, Tyrant by J.F.C. Fuller (History)

Insightful portrayal of Caesar as a man, tactician, and leader.

History of Venice by John J. Norwich (History)

The author skillfully manages to compress 1,000 years of Venetian history into one book.

The House of Medici: Its Rise and Fall by Christopher Hibbert (History)

Portrays the Medicis personal lives and political squabbles, and captures the workings of Renaissance city-state politics.

The Italians by Luigi Barzini (Culture)

Barzini's classic book offers readers a refreshingly frank discussion of the history and culture of his homeland, past and present.

The City of Florence: Historical Vistas and Personal Sightings by R.W.B. Lewis (Culture)

A historic portrait with insight into the city's influence on modern Western Culture and its civil legacy from the Middle Ages. Includes commentary on the Arno, Duomo, Ponte Vecchio, Santa Croce, and other landmarks.

Italian Backgrounds by Edith Wharton (Travel Account)

Originally published in 1906, Wharton's travel diary still rings true in its depiction of the Italian people and culture.

Italian Hours by Henry James (Travel Account)

Travel essays by the famous 19th-century American novelist who absolutely adored Italy.

The World of Venice by Jan Morris (Travel Account)

A new edition of a classic book that blends history, social commentary, and personal travel experience.

Within Tuscany: Reflections on a Time and Place by Matthew Spender (Travel Account)

Sculptor Matthew Spender, whose work was featured in the movie *Stealing Beauty*, captures the essence of the Tuscan people, art, and culture in this delightful travel narrative.

History of My Life by Giacomo Casanova (Memoir)

This 1997 translation of the great Venetian adventurer's epic memoir makes his action-packed story more accessible to the general reader.

Guidebooks:

Your Program Director Leader will be happy to provide recommendations and suggestions during the trip, so a guidebook is not a necessity. But a good one can be invaluable as a one-stop reference, so for those travelers who have asked for suggestions, we offer these guidelines. Since different guidebook series each have their own target audience and structure, it is well worth your time to browse your local library or bookstore to find the one(s) you like best. To get you started, here is some general information on the most popular series:

Culture Smart! – Focuses on local customs and etiquette instead of sights, dining, etc.

DK Eyewitness – Innovative visuals make these books easy to use and a nice souvenir once the trip is over. The focus is primarily on the sights and activities.

Fodor's – A classic guidebook with strong information on activities, shopping, and dining. Good mix of upscale recommendations and budget suggestions.

Frommer's – A comprehensive guide series that is known for its restaurant recommendations.

Insight – Offers more information on history and culture than usual, nice visuals, good maps.

Lonely Planet – Practical guides geared towards a more adventurous traveler on a budget.

National Geographic – From the same company that publishes the magazine. Excellent photographs, good information on history, nature, and culture.

Rough Guides –For the independent traveler on a budget. Particularly known for their maps.

Maps:

Most hotels will provide free maps at the reception desk or in your room. While not highly detailed, these maps are usually sufficient for your stay. However, if you plan on any independent exploration, you may want to purchase a map or maps before your departure. If you've brought a tablet (whether Apple or Android based) there's probably an map app, a destination app, and an app for anything else you're interested in — although it might take some searching to find the best available.

Some recommended paper map series include: Rand McNally international maps (especially the StreetWise series), Insight's FlexiMaps, and Rough Guide's destination maps. We suggest that you visit your local bookstore or library to get a better sense of which type of map is best for your needs before making a purchase.

Suggested Movies

Here are few of our favorite movies that are about, or set in, or from the region you'll be traveling. Most are available at movie rental stores and websites—or even your public library. Sometimes films produced outside of the US may be hard to find, but they are usually available online. Lists are highly subjective – and choosing the best of Italy's films in under fifty pages is a fool's errand. If your favorites are missing, start a chat with fellow travelers and you'll likely find even more treasured movies to share.

Italy

La Strada (Federico Fellini, 1954) starring *Guilietta Masina, Anthony Quinn*

Masina was tiny and had an almost clown-like face, like a female Charlie Chaplin. The plot is about a pair of circus performers who travel all over Italy, juggling in the street. Quinn's character is oblivious to the importance of his partner — in both life and work — until too late. One of great tragic love stories it's a lovely film that seems to define the magic of cinema.

La Dolce Vita, "The Sweet Life" (Federico Fellini, 1961) Starring: *Marcello Mastroianni, Anita Ekberg*

An engrossing social commentary, and one of Federico Fellini's masterpieces (though the competition is keen). It's a detailed panorama of Rome's modern decadence and sophisticated immorality, held tightly in focus by the detached, wandering protagonist through whom we see it all. (Other important Fellini films include *City of Women* and *8 1/2*.)

The Bicycle Thief (Vittorio De Sica, 1949) Starring: *Lamberto Maggiorani, Enzo Staiola*

As it follows a man desperate to retrieve the stolen bicycle that is crucial to his family's survival, De Sica's film subtly examines the human condition, society, family, justice, and anguish in the poverty of post World War II Italy. It won an Honorary Academy Award for Best Foreign Language film in 1949. (De Sica's other important films include *Umberto D.*, *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis*, and *Two Women*.)

1900 (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1977) Starring *Robert de Niro, Gerard Depardieu*

Bernardo Bertolucci's epic history follows the lives of two friends (one a peasant, the other a land owner) born on the same day in Italy. Their lives unfold with vivid cinematography and lush imagery of the beautiful countryside. The movie jumps forward, to the end of World War 1, and follows their story until 1945. At 5 1/2 hours long, it rewards patience.

The Conformist (Bernardo Bertolucci, 1970) Starring *Jean-Louis Trintignant, Stefania Sandrelli*

The story of a weak man persuaded by Fascist secret police to assassinate his former university professor, a leading anti-Fascist. The film explores how a totalitarian state manipulates people and how people allow themselves to be manipulated. Technically, aesthetically, and visually, this is a rich film.

Open City (Roberto Rossellini, 1954) Starring *Anna Magnani, Aldo Fabrizi*

Filmed on bits and pieces of scavenged film, Rossellini started this movie as the Allies drove the Nazis out of Rome. The film looks improvised, but actors and screenwriters (including Federico Fellini) were pros. A classic war tale, its semi-documentary camera style and use of actual locations gives the film a very real feeling. The plot involves attempts by the Italian underground to smuggle money out of Nazi-occupied Rome to partisan fighters in the mountains.

L'Avventura (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1960) Starring *Gabriele Ferzetti, Monica Vitti*

One of the early experimental films in modern Italian cinema, this is one of the first thrillers where what happens is never revealed: a woman disappears on a Mediterranean island and is never seen again. Antonioni uses this as metaphor to imply the absence/disappearance of meaning in the lives of the surrounding characters.

Ossessione (Luchino Visconti, 1943) Starring *Clara Calamai, Massimo Girotti*

The first film based on the book *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. Set in rural Italy, it is an earthy exploration of human desire. The plot is the tale of a wandering tramp who has an affair with the wife of a restaurant owner. The two then conspire to murder her husband and attempt to live happily ever after. Often considered one of the first films of the Neo-Realism movement.

Pane, amore e fantasia (Luigi Comencini, 1953) Starring Gina Lollobrigida, Vittorio De Sica

A wonderfully innocent, sexy comedy set in central Italy in a backward and rural village. The plot is simple: a young woman is courted by a lot of admirers, including a local police chief, but the movie embodies the resilient Italian spirit, and plays to the clichés — spaghetti, sun, the cult of love, and feisty women — as it suggests the honest basis for those truisms.

Life Is Beautiful (Roberto Benigni, 1997) Starring Roberto Benigni, Nicoletta Braschi

The Jewish country boy Guido, a romantic in Mussolini's Italy raises a son in the shadow of fascism. He is determined to shelter his son from the evils around them, maintaining a ruse with comic ingenuity, even as the horrors escalate. Despite being a over the top in many instances, this is a moving and poignant tale of a father's sacrifice to save not just his young son's life but his innocence in the face of evil acts.

Summertime (David Lean, 1955) Starring Katharine Hepburn, Rossano Brazzi

A lovely Venetian travelogue-cum-love story with a plot that has Hepburn's spinster character falling out of character and in love with a married man. A deceptively simple romance, Hepburn brings her skills to the fore in a poignant characterization. It doesn't hurt that she's surrounded by the architecture, art, Italian conversation, music, and fine cuisine of Venice.

A Room with a View (James Ivory, 1986) Starring Maggie Smith, Helena Bonham Carter

From Merchant/Ivory and screenwriter Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, this adaptation of E.M. Forster's novel is a comedy of the heart, a passionate romance and a study of the repressions of Britain's manners and mores. The fascination here is with how Lucy (Carter) finally frees herself from those repressions. The film received eight Academy Award nominations, and won the Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay, Art Direction, and Costume Design.

The Wings of the Dove (Iain Softly, 1997) Starring Helena Bonham Carter, Linus Roache

Another Helena Bonham Carter vehicle, based on the Henry James's novel of the same name. Set in London and Venice, it's a tale of passion, temptation and greed. Carter is Kate, a beautiful society woman whose desire for a lowly journalist offers an impossible decision: leave him, or marry — him and a life of poverty. Events take a twist when Kate befriends a lonely young heiress and discovers a secret that offers a tempting, but dangerous, solution.

Roman Holiday (William Wyler 1957) Starring Gregory Peck, Audrey Hepburn

The film that brought Audrey Hepburn to prominence in her first starring role. She's a European princess on an official tour of Rome who slips her handlers and goes on a spree, aided by Peck as a tough reporter. The locations are irresistible, and Hepburn establishes a chic style that would rule through the fifties. She won an Oscar, as did veteran costume designer Edith Head.

Ciao, Professore! (Lina Wertmulla, 1994) Starring Paolo Villaggio, Isa Danieli

A comedy from Lina Wertmulla, this is the tale of an upper-class teacher from conservative Northern Italy who finds himself teaching third-grade truants at a ramshackle school in the south. Along the way, the earnest "professor" becomes the student as he starts to see things through the fresh, vibrant eyes of his scrappy young students.

Tea with Mussolini (Franco Zeffirelli, 1999) Starring Judi Dench, Maggie Smith, Cher

A semi-autobiographical account of Zeffirelli's life in World War II Italy. Luca, Zeffirelli's character, is raised in Florence by his absent father's secretary among a group of British and American women, who must deal with the rise of fascism, the dangers of resistance, and weather dictatorial custody and betrayal.

Grand Circle Community & Useful Websites

If you have access to the Internet, the following sites offer a wealth of information:

Visit the Grand Circle Community website for a world of travel news and information:

www.gct.com/community

Government websites:

International health information: CDC (Centers for Disease Control)

www.cdc.gov/travel

U.S. Customs & Border Protection: traveler information

www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel

Transportation Security Administration (TSA): agency responsible for screening luggage in U.S.

www.tsa.gov/public

National Passport Information Center (NPIC): for passport information

www.travel.state.gov

General travel information websites:

Travel books

www.amazon.com

www.barnesandnoble.com

World weather

www.intellicast.com

www.weather.com

Foreign languages for travelers: basic terms in more than 80 languages

www.travlang.com/languages

Travel tips: packing light, choosing luggage, etc.

www.travelite.org

Net café guide: 100s of locations around the globe

www.cybercafes.com

Electric current and plug types

www.kropla.com/electric2.htm

Foreign exchange rates

www.oanda.com/converter/classic

ATM locators

www.mastercard.com/atm for **Cirrus** ATMs

www.visa.com/pd/atm for **PLUS** ATMs

Country information:

www.italiantourism.com **Italy**

www.visiteurope.com/ **Links to countries**

www.inyourpocket.com/free-instant-city-guides.html