Northern Italy: Tuscany, the Alps & the Riviera

LAND TOUR

Plus optional extensions in

Rome; Venice

NIT/NIP 2014

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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

We've gathered some helpful introductory information for this Grand Circle itinerary. For detailed and timely information, it's wise to visit appropriate websites and confirm luggage regulations, weather conditions and other variable elements of your trip. If you expect to embark on personal exploration, or wish to discover more about the countries you visit, we suggest that you consult your choice of the many in-depth travel guidebooks devoted to your destinations. Refer to our additional resources section (at the end of the handbook) for other sources of insight.

ABOUT GRAND CIRCLE TRAVEL

Grand Circle Travel, founded in 1958 to serve the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP), is the leader in international travel, adventure and discovery for Americans aged 50 and over. Grand Circle vacations have been recommended by *The New York Times*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Travel+Leisure*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel*, among other publications. But our most impressive reviews come from the more than one million people who have traveled with us and from readers of *Condé Nast Traveler* who placed Grand Circle Cruise Lines, the cruise branch of Grand Circle, in the Top 10 of the World's Best Cruise Lines for eight years — in 2012 ranking Grand Circle Cruise Lines the #1 World's Best River Cruise Line. Grand Circle has earned a spot on the prestigious *Condé Nast Traveler* Gold List for seven consecutive years as well. For 2011 *Condé Nast Traveler* named seven Grand Circle Cruise Line river ships among the 20 best river ships in the world; for 2012 the Grand Circle Cruise Lines was named to their Platinum Circle of top cruise lines.

YOUR GCT PROGRAM DIRECTOR

During your Grand Circle Land Tour, your group of up to 42 travelers will 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. Your Program Director is supported along the way 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 Escort Tour. If you choose to take the optional trip extension in Venice, you will also have the assistance of a Grand Circle Program Director. During the optional trip extension in Rome, you will have the services of Grand Circle's Hospitality Desk Representatives to help you make your stay in that ancient city memorable.

1. PASSPORT, VISAS AND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS



You need a passport for this itinerary.

Note

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:

This recommendation is based on a "worst case" scenario. When you are on this adventure, you might use fewer pages, depending on the whims of the Immigration official on duty that day. Since the consequence of having too few pages can be severe—you could be denied entry into a country—we feel that it's better to be safe than sorry, and we strongly recommend that you follow these guidelines.

• Main trip and extensions: 1 blank "Visa" page.

Please take 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.

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 can renew your passport by mail if it is not damaged, you obtained it within the last fifteen years, and it's in the name you want on your new passport. Many local post offices carry forms for renewing by mail or obtaining extra pages. Allow several weeks for processing your passport. 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

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

You can encounter unaccustomed challenges on even the shortest journey — this land tour, for instance, features an active itinerary with a fair amount of walking, sometimes following steep, unpaved, or cobblestone pathways. Some of the places you visit have not been improved with elevators, escalators, ramps, railings or other aids that you may be used to. If you have difficulty walking in terms of balance or stamina, or are generally inactive in your daily life consider an exercise program to tone up for your trip. For your comfort and safety, we recommend this program only to individuals in good physical condition. If in doubt, consult your physician describing the length and type of rigors you'll encounter. Please note that this trip is not wheelchair accessible; nor can Grand Circle Travel accommodate motorized scooters of any kind.

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.

If you have a condition that requires special equipment or treatment, you must bring and be responsible for all necessary items related to your 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 family 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.



You will feel better on the first days of your trip if, shortly before you leave home, you start to adjust to the different time zone of your destination. Since you will cross several time zones to reach your destination, you may lose many hours of regular sleep. On arrival, your body then will have to suddenly adjust to new sleeping and eating patterns. The result is jet lag. Its symptoms are fatigue—often compounded by insomnia and general restlessness—irritability, and vague disorientation. You cannot totally avoid jet lag, but you can minimize it. Here's how:

- Start your trip well rested. Try to begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave.
- Switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane. Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Try to sleep on overnight flights.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying.
- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane, and make an effort to get up and walk about the cabin a few times to keep your blood circulation normal.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don't push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.



Size, Number and Weight Restrictions

We understand that it might seem early to discuss luggage and packing, but by knowing the current industry standard for international flights, you can start to plan—what type of suitcase to use, how much clothing to bring, etc. Therefore, we offer the following information now to help you prepare. We will remind you to confirm your U.S./international luggage limits (and provide an update on regional limits, if applicable) in your final documents (which you will receive about two weeks before your trip's departure).

MAIN TRIP LIMITS			
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person		
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current standard is 50lbs for checked bags and 15 lbs 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.		
TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS			

The extensions have the same luggage restrictions as the main trip.

REMARKS / SUGGESTIONS

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. We ask that you abide by this limit to avoid inconveniencing your fellow travelers and prevent additional airlines luggage fees (which are your responsibility). Most airlines now charge to check more than one suitcase per person for flights to Europe and other international flights.

Note: Enforcement of published restrictions by countries and airlines is a matter of governmental and corporate policy. Enforcement may include spot checks and may be inconsistently applied. Expect penalties and fines to be imposed immediately, however, when and if enforced. Before you choose to ignore the published restrictions you should ask: *Do I feel lucky?* And, even if you answer yes, you should make sure that you have the ability to pay the fine.

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

Yes, you should still confirm your U.S./international luggage limits directly with the airline(s) a week or so before your departure. You should take this step no matter if your vacation has a lower limit then the average international flight or not. Why? 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 charge to check luggage, sometimes even on international flights. Most airlines will charge a fee if you check a second piece of luggage. 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.

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.

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.

For flights that originate in the U.S:

To reduce the risk of damage to your luggage, do not lock your bags when checking in for flights originating in the U.S. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) is responsible for screening all checked luggage at commercial airports throughout the U.S. TSA baggage-handling agents may need access to your luggage and will break locks if required. TSA "accepted and recognized" locks are widely available: screeners can open and re-lock bags using these locks if a physical inspection is required.

For flights originating outside the U.S.:

On all flights outside of the U.S., we strongly recommend you lock your luggage. This is not a legal requirement but merely a precaution against theft. Have the keys handy, as you may need to open your luggage for a security screening or for customs in the U.S. or Europe.

4. WHEN YOU ARRIVE



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 and at the gate one hour before your departure time (security permitting).

Please note: If you are arriving at your international gateway city via a connecting domestic flight, the Grand Circle 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: On arrival, you must take your luggage off the baggage carousel, carry it or use one of the available carts, which you then will move through customs. (You'll need a one- or two-euro coin for the carts found in Italian airports. You may need to change US dollars to euros—exchange offices are usually close by -- and then use a local change machine to get 5 one-euro coins for a 5 euro note.) When you exit customs, you'll handle your cart until reaching your motorcoach. Your motorcoach driver will load your luggage onto your motorcoach.

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.

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.

Important Note on Name Tags: Please remember to wear your Grand Circle Travel nametag when you exit Customs, upon arrival and when you return to the U.S., so that you are readily identifiable as a GCT traveler.

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

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. Current bank regulations are very restrictive, and most banks will only change currency for regular clients. The best way to get local currency is to withdraw from a local ATM (*Bancomat* in Italy). Cities like Rome, Florence, and Venice offer currency exchanges via a local box office with favorable rates. Some hotels may not change dollars, or if they do they will apply higher rates to cover the commission they must pay to their banks. If you are arriving on a weekend we suggest you get Euros from your U.S. bank prior to leaving to cover initial expenses.

Debit cards give you a reliable payment method and ready access to local currency. We recommend you use a debit card when you need cash, as it will allow you the flexibility of accessing money at your convenience without relying on bank hours for money exchanges. 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.

Currency

The euro is the official currency of 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

There is no need to obtain local currency before your trip (except as noted above). Please note that torn, dirty, or taped bills are generally not accepted for exchange.

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 Saturday and Sunday. 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; many do not exchange money at all or limit changes to bills of \$20 or more. In Italy, money can be changed not only at banks, but also at CAMBIOs (Exchange Offices), General Post Offices, and some travel agencies and hotels. Exchange rates will be most favorable at banks, although banks always charge a commission for the service.

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 display only numbers (no letters) on their keys.

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 you exchange money is at your discretion.

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 the 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 the markets. 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.

Please note: Optional tour payments can be made only by credit card and may take up to 3 months to process. For this reason we ask that you use a credit card that does not expire until at least 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).

Shopping

It is Grand Circle Travel's goal to identify and provide you with shopping opportunities that highlight unique, locally produced products with good value from reliable vendors. For this reason there may be scheduled visits to local shops during your adventure. There is <u>no</u> requirement to make a purchase during these stops, 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.

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, and quality sunglasses.

Florence: Jewelry, suede and leather goods, straw and raffia products, paper goods, handmade lingerie, and embroideries.

Santa Margherita: Lace and handicrafts made from slate, a regional stone.

Bolzano: Thun ceramics (a famous Italian brand that originated in Bolzano; their angel figurines are particularly popular). Many handicraft shops can be found in the town center.

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

Bargaining is **not** common in Italy. Prices in all shops are fixed and include taxes. 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.

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.) 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.

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. Cinecitta Due 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 Conciliazone*, 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 *Rinascente* 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 *Ovviesse* chain has shops all across the city that 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, or even of local manufacture. Do a bit of comparison-shopping first, and know that real Venetian glass is seldom inexpensive.

U.S. Customs Regulations and Shipping Charges

Exemption Amounts

Articles totaling \$800, at fair retail value where they were acquired, may be imported free of charge if you bring them with you. A flat rate of duty—usually a percentage—will be applied to the next \$1,000 worth (fair retail value) of merchandise. The U.S. Customs Inspector determines the value of your items when you enter, and is not bound by your bill of sale. In almost every case, however, a genuine bill of sale will be honored.

Fees on Items Shipped Home

Items shipped home are *always* subject to duty when received in the U.S. There will also be charges for shipping. Although some shops abroad may offer to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the customs facility closest to you and payment of the *export* duties (the fee to remove an item from its country of origin) not door-to-door shipping or *import* duties (the fee the U.S. government charges to bring an item into the U.S.). All additional duties or shipping charges would be the responsibility of the purchaser—you.

Therefore unless the item is small enough to mail or to be sent by a global parcel service (like FedEx) you should be prepared to pay customs duties and for shipping or pick-up from the nearest customs facility. This is why the U.S. Customs & Border Protection service states: "The most cost-effective thing to do is to take your purchases with you if at all possible."

Illegal Items

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. For more information on what you may or may not bring back into the United States, you can obtain the publication "Know Before You Go" from the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection by phone, mail or from their website:

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. If the shop in question was a scheduled stop during your adventure, Grand Circle can assist you by putting you in contact with the vendor. 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. The good news is twofold: we're fresh out of Shakespearean soliloquies, so no thesauri will get hurt here; and the answer the question "to tip or not to tip (and how much to tip if you so choose)" is *always* a personal decision. Tipping is a common practice both at home and abroad and we offer these guidelines to answer requests for appropriate tipping amounts. It can be useful to have this information on site – when the question *must* be answered – and ahead of time for travel budgeting purposes. Tips below are quoted in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency (usually preferred) or in U.S. dollars (personal/traveler's checks should *never* be used 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.

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 the 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: 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 this is *not* a tip. It is customary to tip waiters 5% to 10% depending on the quality of the service. 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. The lists below are suggestions of commonly useful travel items – what you choose to travel with will represent your own needs.

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.

Weather and Altitude: During your trip you will stay in Bolzano for four nights, in the Dolomite Alps region. Your optional tours take you into the Dolomites and Innsbruck, where temperatures can drop quickly due to altitude and weather changes – during **any** season of the year. No matter what season you travel in, we recommend that you bring a variety of layers to accommodate the altitude and any cold weather you may encounter.

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 any fluctuations in temperatures. Your outer jacket should be roomy enough to comfortably fit over your sweater or fleece top.

Summer: For travel during the typically hot 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/or a fleece jacket.

Spring and fall: For travel during these changeable seasons, 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 your month of travel, rainfall is certainly a possibility. We suggest you bring a folding umbrella and waterproof shell. 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. Male visitors to the St. Peter's Basilica and Sistine Chapel in Rome will not be allowed entry unless they are wearing full length (ankle) pants. 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. If you are traveling in cooler months, when it's unlikely that you'll want to put on shorts, the church dress code might not be an issue. However, if it's apt to be "shorts weather" when you travel, we suggest you pack a pair of light trousers and modest knee-length shorts to wear on days when church visits are featured. Women have the option of slipping on a skirt with an elastic waistband over their shorts.

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 will 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 jacket, 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 local street market.

Inner bags: Packing is easier if you use inner bags to help organize your gear. Use plastic bags, nylon stuff sacks, or packing cubes to organize inside your suitcase. Isolate liquids, store camera gear and important papers in heavy-duty Ziploc style bags.

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.

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 plastic bags to protect them from dirt and moisture. With a daypack you can then remove these

papers in plastic bags to protect them from dirt and moisture. With a daypack you can then remove these items on arrival and load your bag with the gear you'll need on walking tours and excursions.

NOTE: Restrictions on what can be included in your carry-on luggage change frequently. To avoid inadvertently packing any restricted items in your carry-on luggage, we strongly suggest that you consult the Transportation Security Administration website, at www.tsa.gov, 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*.

Clothing Options

We've included information below on the climate you can expect for the regions you'll be visiting on your travels. Taking into account the weather you'll encounter and the general suggestions we offer above will enable you to create a flexible wardrobe that's light enough

for sophisticated travel and will guarantee comfort in all the conditions you can expect to encounter. 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 and highly functional.

Travel Gear Suggestions

Though it's often fun to do things as the locals do, it can be frustrating when daily necessities or conveniences from home aren't available. To travel wisely these days you must juggle your personal needs and preferences against the physical constraints of your transportation—whether it's an international airplane, a transfer motorcoach, a small ship or a day-long trek on a camel. You'll have to distinguish between what you **must** have, what you'd *like* to have, whether you can zip your suitcase closed, and what you can reasonably expect to wrestle through the security checkpoints. Consult the list below to create your personal checklist – ignoring what you don't need and making the tough decisions on borderline cases. Remember that many airlines today will charge you extra for added luggage.

What not to pack: do not pack aerosol cans, and avoid packing glass bottles; use plastic containers instead. Leave at home checkbooks and any credit cards not essential for your trip, valuable jewelry, and anything that you would hate to lose.

Consider ...

☐ Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste,	☐ Wide-brim sun hat or visor
floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items,	☐ Pocket-size tissues
deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, shower cap, body soap, etc.	Moist towelettes (packets) and/or anti- bacterial "waterless" hand cleanser
Washcloth (Italian hotels do not provide these)	Flashlight, extra batteries/bulb
Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription	Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards (as well as the originals)
☐ Sunglasses with a neck strap	Extra passport-sized photos
Sunscreen, SPF 15 or stronger	Written prescriptions for any medications
☐ Insect repellent with DEET	For Venice optional extension: rubbers
☐ Travel money bag or money belt	or waterproof shoes
☐ Moisturizer, lip balm	
Compact umbrella	

Medicines	
 ☐ Your own prescription medicines ☐ Vitamins ☐ Cold remedies: Sudafed/Dristan ☐ Pain relievers: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin ☐ Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax 	☐ Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta ☐ Anti-diarrheal: Imodium ☐ Band-Aids, Moleskin foot pads ☐ Antibiotics: Neosporin/Bacitracin
Other Gear	
 □ Travel alarm (or request wake-up calls) □ Compact binoculars □ Toiletry bag with hook and 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: The climate in Tuscany is generally very mild with differences depending on the geography of each area. The weather is considerably milder year-round in Italy than in the north and central United States, but it isn't a region that's easy to categorize. The coast and valleys usually have hotter summers than the hills or mountains. April, May, October, have sunny days but the chances of rain are higher. Winter offers many sunny, mild days but nights are cold, particularly in hilly regions. July and August are generally the hottest months, while June and September offer warm weather without being too hot.

The Riviera: Protected from the cold north winds by the Maritime Alps and the Ligurian Apennines, the climate of the Italian Riviera has exceptionally mild winters and bright, hot summers, and lots of sunshine for most of the year. It rains rarely -- about 60 days a year, and even more rarely snows on the coast. Fall offers the high potential for stormy weather.

Italian Alps: In the Italian Alps, there are great differences between the climate of the valleys and the higher mountains. In winter, the valleys are frequently cloudy and foggy with persistent frost – and the average snowfall is 12 feet. By contrast, the mountains are relatively sunny, though actual temperatures can go as low as zero degrees Fahrenheit. In summer, conditions may be quite the reverse: the mountains shrouded in cloud by day and the valleys basking in warm, clear weather. Evening temperatures will always drop due to the high altitude. A *fohn* wind sometimes blows from the north and raises temperatures by as much as 25° and lowers humidity. **Note**: If you take the optional *Dolomite Mountains* tour, we strongly suggest that you bring a windbreaker/jacket and sweater or fleece with you as the tour will take you to mountain passes and alpine peaks where there can be sudden changes and drops in temperature even in summer.

Rome: (base and optional extension) 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, sometimes averaging in the 90s.

Venice (base and 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. Thunderstorms can pass through in autumn and spring, though they are the exception and not the rule.

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

				WHA	T'S TH	E TEN	IPERA	TURE	?			
	Average highs (taken at 2 pm) and lows (taken just before sunrise) in ${}^{\circ}F$.											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	ост	NOV	DEC
Rome (base and optional extension)												
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
Floren	ice, Ital	y										
High	49	53	60	68	75	84	89	88	81	69	58	50
Low	35	36	40	46	53	58	63	62	58	51	42	37
Santa Margherita, Italy												
High	57	59	59	64	71	78	84	86	80	73	66	60
Low	48	48	50	51	57	64	69	69	68	60	55	51
Bolzano, Italy												
High	42	48	58	64	72	79	84	82	76	64	51	43
Low	25	29	36	43	51	56	61	60	54	44	32	26
Venice (base and 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 only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. 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.

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.

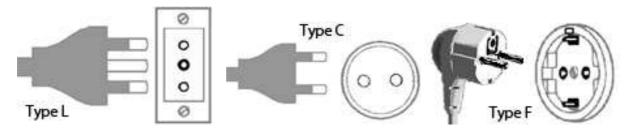


The standard U.S. electrical system — 110V 60Hz current and flat two- or three-pronged polarized plug system — is rare elsewhere. The overwhelming choice for the rest of the world is 220-240V and 50/60Hz current with a variety of plug shapes, sizes, and configurations. Some plugs will work with multiple 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 bring *dual* voltage appliances (widely available) that work on both 110 and 220/240 voltage. Dual voltage appliances are inexpensive and need only plug adapters.

If you bring 110V appliances, such as a hair dryer (note that hotels often supply hairdryers and coffee makers) or shaver, you'll need a transformer (to halve the 220/240V current) in addition to plug adapters. Regional transformer/adapter kits can often 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 uses 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 a good idea to invest in a versatile and lightweight all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. If you use multiple digital devices—cell phone, digital camera, and MP3 player for instance – it's also handy to have a travel power strip, perhaps with a surge suppressor and USB-style port for charging cell phones, MP3 players or e-readers without the use of 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 the apps via 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 some cost. If your phone doesn't support international roaming (most smartphones do), some carriers offer loaners.

App quality, availability and costs vary – as do platforms (iPhone, Android, Blackberry ...), so again you'll need to do some legwork. Apps come in all forms: packing lists, currency converters, language translators, maps, journals, Wi-Fi hotspot finders ... one problem is going to be searching through the vast array of available apps to uncover what works best and what you're likely to use most. Smartphones have a lot to offer, but their small size can be a drawback for some uses (maps, extended reading, etc.)

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 and are less tolerant of photography than others. It's always best to respect local customs. And in some places you may be charged for photography at specific sites, or restricted from any photography at all.

Digital cameras and camcorders are excellent travel companions—and many do dual duty by recording movies *and* still images. Fist 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 good 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. 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 midrange telephoto lens 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.

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 mineral water is sold everywhere in 33 centiliter and 1½-liter clear-plastic bottles. Other choices for water is 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.

Newspapers & Magazines

The *International Herald Tribune*, now also printed in Rome, is available at most newsstands; it often lists major events in Italy in its Saturday "Weekend" section. Issues are usually one day behind the *Tribune*'s original publication date. *Wanted in Rome* is a local publication in English that lists event information and general news; or, speak to your Program Director.

La Repubblica, Corriere della Sera, and Il Messaggero are daily newspapers that list regional events on weekends – but are printed only in Italian. You may find some English periodicals and/or newspapers for sale at local kiosks; your Program Director can direct you to the nearest stand.

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*, called by locals either "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) and it features a wide variety of classical, symphonic, and contemporary music on schedule.

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,** however, closes at 9 pm from Sunday to Friday; on Saturday it closes at 1:30 am. Also, service interruptions may occur in conjunction with the construction of the new **Line C**. Your Program Director will update you on schedule changes or limitations.) 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 *notturno* 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 begins 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; for pickup from the central train station; and on Sundays and holidays. It is customary to tip the taxi driver approximately 10%.

Newspapers & Magazines

La Repubblica, Corriere della Sera, and Il Messaggero are daily newspapers that list local events on weekends; La Repubblica has an interesting Wednesday supplement called "TrovaRoma" that lists the week's events, shows, theater, new movies, and more – in Italian. Wanted in Rome, a useful biweekly publication sold at downtown newsstands, also details the latest happenings – in English.

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 460 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 Mercerier, 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 9 pm. 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 vaparetto or gondola. Remember, Venice has 460 pedestrian bridges.

Vaporetti: These motorboats operate as public waterbuses. 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 the city has 460 bridges with stairs, bicycles are impractical.

Motorboat Taxis: A ride as short as 10 minutes can cost upwards of \$40. Given the small distances of Venice, use of water taxis is a very expensive proposition that can be easily avoided with a little forethought or scheduling.

Newspapers & Magazines
The International Herald Tribune and USA Today are sold at most newsstands and in many hotels. In addition to the Un Ospite di Venezia, the glossy magazine Marco Polo covers special events and cultural issues. Published monthly in Italian and English, it is also available at newsstands and hotels.

10. DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Italy

Area: 116,305 square miles

Capital: Rome

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

Tyrol region (Alps) German is common.

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: From the mountains in the north to the island of Sicily, the geography of Italy varies widely – as does the climate, scenery and culture.

Lazio: (Rome) In central Italy, Lazio is one of the central Italian regions, and the one that encompasses Rome. It is comprised of about 25% mountains (inland) and 75% coastal plains or hill country. It is generically called the Roman *Campagna*. Rome itself is on the Tiber River, about 15 miles inland of the Tyrrhenian Sea – although the present city extends to coastal Ostia.

Tuscany: (Florence) 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.

Liguria: (The Italian Riviera)

Stretching from France to the west, Piedmont to the north, and Tuscany in the east, Liguria lies on the Ligurian Sea. This narrow strip of land sits between the sea, the Alps and the Apennines Mountains. This 200-mile coastline is a thin strip of rapid descents from the mountains to the considerable depths of the Ligurian sea. It features an enviable climate, but minimal access to the lovely Ligurian waters and only two significant harbors – at Genoa and La Spezia.

Trentino Alto Aldige/Sudtirol: (Bolzano) Trentino is among the rare Italian regions with no access to the sea. It is mountainous and includes the majestic Dolomite Mountains as well as many small, pristine lakes. Ruled by Austria for many centuries it is officially bilingual; German is prevalent in the northern region. It is well known for its wines, winter resorts, and the grandeur of its scenery.

Veneto: (Venice) Venice proper is in the coastal zone of the Veneto region – which borders other regions as diverse as the Trentino Alto Aldige (and Sudtirol), Lombardy and Austria proper at its northernmost corner. The region is comprised of about 30% mountains, with the Po River Valley making up much of the rest of the topography – including hills and the coastal region. Venice stretches across 117 small islands in the marshy Venetian Lagoon along the Adriatic, sited along the shoreline between the mouths of the Po (to the south) and the Piave (to the north) Rivers.

Population (2011 estimate): 60,600,000 **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:

12/26

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

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 Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne Holy Roman Emperor. 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 (albris.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 personal 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 portrait 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 Medici's 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 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.

Mans:

Most hotels will provide maps free of charge at the reception desk or in your room. These maps are usually sufficient for our travelers, but if you plan on any independent exploration, you may wish to consider purchasing a map before your departure. This can be especially useful in a country that doesn't use the Roman alphabet as the hotel maps may only be printed in the local language.

Some recommended 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 ½.)

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 (Bernado 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 $5\frac{1}{2}$ hours longs, 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 Nazioccupied 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.



If you have access to the Internet, the following sites offer good travel information:

International health information: CDC (Centers for Disease Control)

www.cdc.gov/travel

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

Tourist information

www.italiantourism.com **Italy** www.visiteurope.com/ **Links to countries** www.inyourpocket.com/free-instant-city-guides.html

Travel books

www.amazon.com www.barnesandnoble.com

World weather

www.intellicast.com www.weather.com www.wunderground.com

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

www.travlang.com/languages

Transportation Security Administration, for current luggage restrictions:

www.tsa.gov

Travel tips: packing light, choosing luggage, etc.

www.travelite.org

Net café guide: 100s of locations around the globe

www.cybercafes.com

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

Tourist Board Addresses

Tourist offices offer free brochures, maps, and pamphlets with information that pertains to many of your destinations. If these materials would enhance your vacation planning, you can write or call the following tourist board offices:

Italian National Tourist Office

630 Fifth Avenue Suite 1565 New York, NY 10111

Telephone: 1-212-245-4822 or 1-212-245-5618

Italian National Tourist Office

401 N. Michigan Ave. Suite 3030 Chicago, IL 60611

Telephone: 1-312-644-0990 or -0996

Italian National Tourist Office

12400 Wilshire Blvd. Suite 550 Los Angeles, CA 90025 Telephone: 1-310-820-0098