

# VENICE, FLORENCE & ROME

Lecture by Rick Steves

## VENICE/VENEZIA

Europe's best preserved big city

Arsenale

St Mark's Square, glitter

Rialto bridge

Vaporetto, slow boat down Grand Canal fine intro tour

(Rick Steves Audio Europe App self-guided tours)

Doges Palace, Bell tower, St Mark's

Glass blowing, tours just off main square

Great art – Accademia, Scuola San Rocco

Gondola – \$100 for 40 minutes

Traghetti – ferry gondolas, very cheap

Wander, get lost, you're on an island, it's ok; navigate not by streets but by landmarks and signs

Flood in winter "acqua alta"

Carnival, 40 days before Easter, masks

Stand-up-progressive-Venetian-pub-crawl-dinner, see Rick Steves

Italy for step-by-step, cicchetti = bar snacks

Nearby islands:

- Burano (lace and peaceful)
- Murano (glass works)
- Torcello (old church, mosaics)

## CRUISE PORTS

Venice, Florence, Rome, Naples

Rick Steves Mediterranean Cruise Ports guidebook

## FLORENCE/FIRENZE

Birthplace of Renaissance

Duomo = cathedral, center, huge dome by Brunelleschi

Arno River, Ponte Vecchio

Bargello – best sculpture

Santa Maria Novella, Masaccio

Uffizi Gallery – Botticelli, best Italian paintings

Baptistry – Ghiberti's "Gates of Paradise"

David and "Prisoners" at Accademy, Michelangelo

Fra Angelico – in San Marco near Accademy

Science Museum, Galileo's finger

Central Market – now a trendy food court

## EATING

Restaurants – focus on ingredients

Small, hand-written menu in one language

Eat with the season and go local

Antipasto

Local favorite deli, markets

Food tours

Aperitivo (free snacks with drink)

Spritz – happy hour with locals in the squares

Gelato



## MILAN/MILANO

Cathedral, climb onto roof

Galleria

Leonardo's Last Supper, disappointing

Michelangelo's last Pieta

Canal District (Naviglio Grande) trendy dining

## ROME/ROMA

Colosseum, 50,000 numbered seats

Forum, center of ancient city

Pantheon – best look at "grandeur that was Rome"

Ara Pacis, celebrating establishment of Empire

Capitoline Hill – museum open Tues and Thurs eves

Victor Emmanuel Monument, fine view from top

Villa Borghese, Borghese Gallery, fine Baroque museum

(Bernini) and park

Vatican – center of Catholicism, become a temporary

Catholic, climb St. Peter's dome, Vatican museum, Sistine

Chapel, Etruscans

Cappuccin Monastery, bones galore, off Piazza Barberini

Moses by Michelangelo in St Peter in Chains church

near Colosseum

E.U.R. – Mussolini's planned futuristic suburb, museum of ancient city

The evening stroll, Piazza del Popolo down via del Corso

Trastevere – the seedy, colorful side of river

The Ghetto, Rome's Jewish Quarter

Night spots, Trevi fountain, Spanish Steps, Piazza Navona,

Campo di Fiori

Side-trips from Rome:

- Tivoli, Villa D'Este fountains, Hadrian's Villa
- Ostia Antica, Europe's most under-rated site, (Rome's ancient seaport, an easy subway ride from downtown)

# ITALY (BEYOND VENICE, FLORENCE & ROME)

## CINQUE TERRE

5 tiny towns on Riviera between La Spezia and Genoa  
Vernazza is best town (the flood damage is repaired)  
Wine, hiking, swimming  
Cinque Terre better than Portofino or Portovenere

## ITALIAN LAKES DISTRICT

Lago di Como  
Varenna is best town  
Bellagio, classier resort town on lake

## ALPS

Sud Tirol/Alto Adige, Dolomites, bilingual  
Bolzano, Kastleruth – good homebases  
Alpi di Siusi  
Reifenstein Castle near Vipiteno/Sterzing, just south of Brenner Pass (Innsbruck), great castle tour  
Ride mountain lift from Chamonix, France to Valle d'Aosta, Italy  
Lift crosses Alps at Aiguille du Midi, aside Mt. Blanc Aosta, "Rome of the north"

## NEAR VENICE

Padova, Basilica of St. Anthony, university, Giotto frescoes in Scrovegni Chapel  
Ravenna – 6th century Byzantine mosaics, 2 hours south of Venice  
Verona – home town of Romeo and Juliet, fine Roman sights, charming old town

## HILLTOWNS OF TUSCANY AND UMBRIA

Pisa, tipsy tower, one hour from Florence  
San Gimignano – towers  
Volterra, Etruscan museum, alabaster  
Siena – Gothic city, Campo, Palio festival  
Assisi, St Francis' town  
Montalcino, Montepulciano, Brunello wine country  
Agriturismo, Chianina beef  
Orvieto, Duomo  
Civita di Bagnoregio

## NAPLES/NAPOLI AND SOUTH ITALY

Intense urban jungle, 2 hours south of Rome, birthplace of pizza  
Naples life in street, Spacanapoli  
Pompeii, stopped by Volcano Vesuvius in 79 AD – best Pompeii art in Nat'l museum, Naples  
Sorrento – fine town for regional base, one hour from Naples, gateway to treacherously scenic Amalfi Coast and Paestum, the best Greek temples in Italy, tour with a private taxi  
Scenic Isle of Capri, Blue Grotto  
Sicily – night train from Rome/Naples  
+ Taormina, Cefalu  
+ Greek ruins – Agrigento, Syracuse

## LEARN MORE

**Read:** *Rick Steves Italy, Rick Steves Florence & Tuscany, Rick Steves Venice, Rick Steves Rome, Rick Steves Italian Phrase Book & Dictionary, Rick Steves Europe 101: History & Art for the Traveler*

**Watch:** *Rick Steves Italy's Cities Blu-ray/DVD, Rick Steves Italy's Countryside Blu-ray/DVD*

**Listen:** *Travel with Rick Steves radio podcast archives at ricksteves.com*

**Rick Steves Tours:** *Best of Rome in 7 Days, Best of Venice, Florence & Rome in 10 Days, Heart of Italy in 9 Days, Best of Italy in 17 Days (see route below), Village Italy in 14 Days, Best of South Italy in 13 Days, My Way® Italy in 13 Days*



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**EUROPE**