

# *ITALY: The Places In Between*

September 15-21, 2021



Inspired by the travel guidebook of the same title, our tour *Italy: The Places in Between* focuses on cities in the **Emilia-Romagna** and **Veneto** regions — cities that are almost always passed over as tourists zip from Florence to Venice. There's a plethora of worthy sights around here, and we're very glad to bring you this program — *our ninth unique itinerary* and 24th tour overall in this country that never ceases to impress!

This in-depth exploration of North-Central Italy's marvelous urban centers will take us to the "must-see" highlights as well as off the beaten track for some less common and engaging sights and activities. This is an area with an exceedingly rich art history, lavish natural beauty, stunning ancient towns, and of course, a renowned cuisine — widely considered the best in Italy — that is *molto deliziosa!*

## **VentureOut**

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## ITINERARY

The following is our planned itinerary, which is being published more than a year in advance. We reserve the right to modify some of the specific sights visited during this program.

### Day 1 — Meet in Bologna September 15, 2021 -- Wednesday

We will come together at our very central 4-star hotel in Bologna in the early evening for a welcome *aperitivo* before walking to our carefully chosen restaurant for an excellent dinner in the center of this handsome city.

*Meals included: Welcome Drink,  
Welcome Dinner  
Overnight in Bologna*



{**Please Note:** We can arrange an extra night or two for you at our group hotel in Bologna before our tour begins depending on your travel plans. See “Arrival & Departure Logistics” towards the end of this program for further information regarding arrival into Bologna.}



### Day 2 — Bologna

One of the best-kept secrets in northern Italy, our first of two bases is **Bologna** — a very handsome city (and such a pity that its name in English evokes the less-than-appealing American food product). Indeed, some would argue that, after Venice, Bologna is among the most attractive cities in Italy. Home to the world’s oldest university, Bologna lives on its red-brick towers and stately colonnades and is almost universally considered to be Italy’s gourmet capital. The sidewalks in the city center are covered in intricately decorated porticos — some 25 miles of them if you were to string them all together. The feeling of a university city permeates the air, and Bologna feels full of Italians in a way that many other cities in Italy, thronged with tourists, do not.

Our exploration of Bologna will be all on foot. Highlights include:

- Piazza Maggiore — the city’s gorgeous central *piazza*, including the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Neptune Fountain styled by Giambologna; the Palazzo Comunale (city government building); and the church of San Petronio – one of the finest Gothic brick buildings in Italy and originally intended to be larger than St. Peter’s in Rome.
- Food Market — a grouping of stalls and shops that makes for one of the city’s most enticing sights and provides proof positive of Bologna’s gourmet proclivities.
- Santa Maria della Vita — with its outstanding *pietà* by Nicola Dell’Arca – seven life-sized terracotta figures that are among the most dramatic examples of Renaissance sculpture.
- Teatro Anatomico — the original medical faculty dissection theater, part of the oldest university in Europe.
- Basilica of Santo Stefano — a marvelous complex of religious edifices spanning the ages, beginning from the 5<sup>th</sup> century, and presiding over an equally marvelous piazza.

*Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch  
Overnight in Bologna*

### **Day 3 – Parma**

Today we head to the stately historic center of **Parma**, which shows its prosperity, along with its well-dressed residents and immaculate piazzas. The residents of Parma are generally considered to be the most elegant people of Italy. Bursting with gustatory delights, Parma draws visitors for its sublime world-famous cured ham, *prosciutto crudo di Parma*. The pale-yellow *Parmigiano-Reggiano* cheese produced here is the original — and best — of a class known in America as “Parmesan.” The city is also a mecca for opera lovers. Giuseppe Verdi was from here, and his operas echoed through the *Teatro Regio*, which is today jam-packed during the season. We’ll also see some of the greatest Romanesque buildings in northern Italy: the 11th-century cathedral with fine works by Correggio and Parmigianino and the 12th-century Baptistery with its superb sculpture work. The Farnese Theater is in our program too, a jewel box dating from 1618, evocative of Palladio’s theater in Vicenza and made entirely of wood.

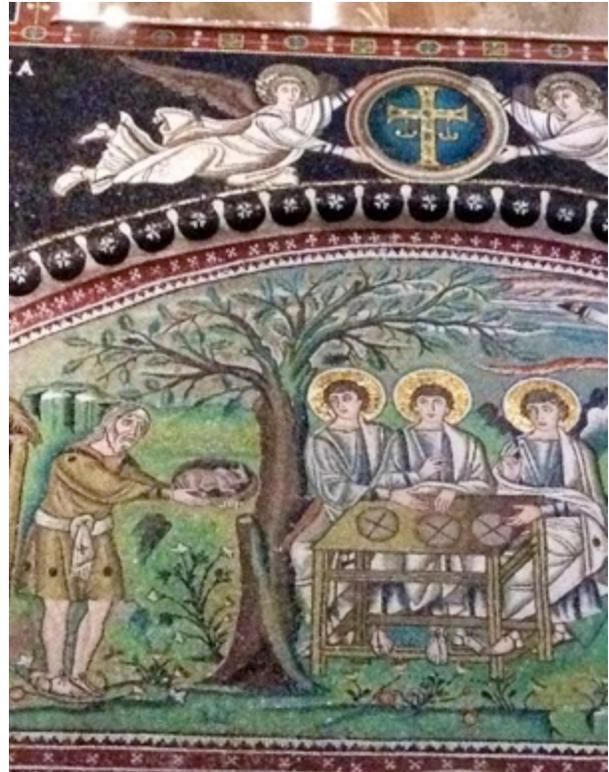


After a wonderful lunch we’ll return to our home base of Bologna. Dinner is open this evening. No shortage of good restaurants to choose from!

*Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch  
Overnight in Bologna*

#### Day 4 — Ravenna

Today we head in the opposite direction — to Ravenna. One of the greatest cities of the Mediterranean from the fifth to the eighth centuries — it was the capital of the Western Roman Empire, the Visigoth Empire, and the Byzantine Empire — **Ravenna** has brick palaces, cobbled streets, and spectacular Byzantine-period mosaics. Churches and tombs with the most unassuming exteriors contain within them walls covered with these sumptuous mosaics. These beautifully preserved works of art — all with dazzling colors — place great emphasis on nature, which you can see in the delicate rendering of sky, earth, and animals. The mosaics have been recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage site, and they rival what you'll find in Istanbul. Our visits include the Basilica of San Vitale; the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia; the Sant'Andrea Oratory; and the Neoniano Baptistery.



We return to Bologna for a final evening in this handsome city.

*Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch  
Overnight in Bologna*

#### Day 5 — Modena & Travel to Verona

**Modena** vies as Italy's wealthiest city and can boast the UNESCO World Heritage sites of its 12th-century cathedral, tower, and adjacent main piazza evoking a glorious past. A must-see and one of the glories of the Romanesque in northern Italy, the cathedral (or "Duomo") was founded in 1099.

The city is also famous for local products: Maserati, Ferrari, opera star Luciano Pavarotti — and not least of all it's also home to the *true* traditional Balsamic vinegar, which is little understood and often badly misused. We'll learn what makes this product so special — some of it aged up to 40 years — and taste various types at one of the area's artisanal producers. This property is also where we'll enjoy today's delicious lunch, which will feature, not surprisingly, dishes that incorporate their esteemed product.



After this unique lunch we'll then move north to the lovely city of Verona where we'll check in at our other hotel base for this trip. Dinner is open this evening.

*Meals included: Breakfast, Balsamic Vinegar Tasting, Lunch Overnight in Verona*

### **Day 6 – Verona**

Founded by the Romans in the 1st century A.D., the enchanting city of **Verona** is dotted with very attractive *palazzi*, elegant squares, and medieval gems. Architectural remnants of the Roman era are also a real draw, most notably the famous Arena, which is home to a world-renowned summertime opera festival. It is perhaps the best-preserved Roman amphitheater in the world — and the most famous after the Colosseum in Rome. Dubbed the “City of Love,” romance is most definitely in the air in fair Verona. The city’s most famous (although fictional) residents, Romeo and Juliet, seemed to think so anyway. Our walking tour of Verona this morning will take in the Arena as well as the Piazza delle Erbe and the Piazza dei Signori with their striking buildings and lively atmospheres.



Verona sits on the Adige River, which comes tumbling down from the Italian Alps, and indeed just outside the city is hilly terrain and the location of some excellent wineries and their vineyards. We'll have the pleasure of visiting a beautiful property in the **Valpolicella** zone close to the city, where we'll enjoy a tour of this impressive historic property as well as a wine tasting accompanied by a light lunch.

After our delightful visit in Valpolicella we'll return to Verona where you can have some free time to explore the city further according to your interests. You might like to see, for example, the Basilica San Zeno Maggiore, a very impressive Romanesque-era building with extraordinary artistic creations. Verona is great for shopping, too.

This evening is our farewell dinner where we'll have a chance to recount all the wonderful sights and meals we got to experience in this lovely corner of Italy!

*Meals included: Breakfast, Light Lunch with Wine Tasting, Dinner Overnight in Verona*

## **Day 7 – Departure**

**September 21, 2021 -- Tuesday**

After breakfast you can depart any time that suits your onward travel schedule. See “Arrival & Departure Logistics” further on for information regarding departure options out of Verona.

PLEASE NOTE >>> If you’d like to extend your stay at our excellent hotel in Verona we can set up extra nights for you. Verona is close to other noteworthy cities to which one can do daytrips such as as Mantova (Mantua), Lake Garda, Vicenza, Padova (Padua), and Venice (although we think Venice is best done with a few overnights).

*Meals included: Breakfast*

## **ACCOMMODATIONS**

The following are the hotels that we plan to use for the tour at the time of publishing this itinerary. We reserve the right to make changes to the accommodations.



### **Bologna – 4 nights**

The 4-star hotel we’ve selected enjoys a very central location in the heart of the city on a pedestrian-only street, easily walkable to Bologna’s impressive historical attractions, great restaurants, and good shopping. Set in a magnificently restored 15th century palazzo, elegantly designed construction conserves architectural elements of various periods. The beautiful lobby has a real wow factor thanks to a large skylight that floods

the pretty space with light. A number of different architectural styles are on display in the hotel yet it all combines to create a whole that’s elegant in an old-fashioned, genteel way. Fresco work and paintings date back to the building’s aristocratic origins.

The 40 rooms come with nice little touches such as fresh fruit, robes, and slippers along with kettles and minibars, beautifully hand-embroidered bedside rugs, and marble bathrooms.

In the lounge the evening starts out with an *aperitivo* service which provides a small buffet of several pre-dinner appetizers with the purchase of one drink. A top-notch breakfast includes an array of homemade cakes, plus prosecco, freshly squeezed juices, and egg dishes made to order.



## Verona – 2 nights

Occupying a historic 14th-century palace, our selected 5-star hotel is a member of the Leading Hotels of the World and is situated in the heart of Verona, within easy walking distance of all the main sights. The superb quality of the furnishings in its 89 rooms and the professional service are highly valued by its loyal international clientele who patronize

the hotel during opera season and other times of the year. Extensive recent refurbishments have yielded a fresh facade, contemporary touches, a new dining room, a lovely interior courtyard, and a panoramic terrace with great views of the historical city center where you can dine or enjoy a drink. Rooms and suites are appointed with period furniture, hand-crafted marble in warm tones, mosaic decorations, and refined textiles. Renaissance-era frescoes and historical artifacts grace several spaces in the hotel.

### TOUR COST and IMPORTANT TRIP DETAILS

\$3,695 per person (with 14-15 participants)

\$3,895 per person (with 12-13 participants)

\$3,995 per person (with 8-11 participants)

Tour pricing is based on double occupancy.  
Single supplement: \$695

*A note about tier pricing:* There are certain fixed costs involved with operating a trip of this nature regardless of the number of participants who have signed up. With a smaller number of group members, the fixed costs (per person) are higher. In order to cover those fixed costs for a smaller-sized group, we prefer to charge a bit extra in order to ensure that the trip can run rather than have to cancel a trip due to a low number of sign-ups

Costs are based on double occupancy of a room. If you are traveling solo and wish to share a room, we will match you with a roommate if one is available. Otherwise, the single supplement fee will apply.



**Tour Cost Includes:**

- Accommodations for 6 nights in carefully selected 4- and 5-star properties (see descriptions above)
- Abundant breakfast each morning in the hotels
- Lunch every day (except the arrival and departure days)
- Welcome and farewell dinners
- Mineral water and limited regional wines with group meals
- Welcome drink
- Entrance fees for all sights mentioned in the itinerary
- Licensed private tour guides for all cities mentioned in the itinerary
- Winery tour and tasting; Balsamic vinegar tour and tasting
- Venture Out tour escort accompanying the group throughout the trip
- Ground transportation in a private comfortable bus

**Tour Cost Does Not Include:**

- Airfare
- Four dinners
- Gratuities for drivers, porters, and restaurant staff
- Additional hotel nights pre- or post-tour that may be desired or required by flight schedules or other factors
- Airport or train station transfers at the beginning and end of the tour
- Travel insurance
- Passports and other expenses of a personal nature such as minibar charges, laundry, telephone calls, etc.

**Currency Exchange Rates:** Our costs to operate this tour are tied directly and entirely to the exchange rate between the Euro and the Dollar. Over the past few years the value of the U.S. dollar has fluctuated in quite a volatile manner against the Euro. *We reserve the right to alter the trip pricing indicated here should there be a significant fluctuation of the dollar.* Please read the Terms & Conditions that accompany the Trip Enrollment Form.

**FACTORS TO CONSIDER:**

*The cities that we visit have to be explored on foot. We cannot drive through them on our bus (even on a smaller bus) as the roads in the city centers are from medieval days. In general, adding it all up, you should be comfortable walking a total of about 2 miles each day (but not all at once) and standing while visiting many of the sights. Occasionally there are places to take a seat. Please check with us if you have any concerns in this area.*

We have structured the days in this program in the most logically flowing way in order to keep driving times to a minimum. However, some days will see more driving than others. None of the driving is done at long, uninterrupted intervals. We stop throughout the day for our visits, thus breaking up the day's activities. Our transportation will be in a comfortable small tour bus, and at no time will it feel like an endless road trip. Day 5, when we transfer from Bologna to Verona, will involve the most road time: about 2½ hours in total but broken up by our visit to Modena and lunch in the area. Driving time on the days that we go to Parma and Ravenna is about 2½ hours round-trip for each day.

**ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE LOGISTICS**

At the time of publishing this program Bologna's airport is served by nonstop flights coming in from Rome, Frankfurt, Munich, Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam, London, Madrid, Barcelona, and some minor European airports.

Additionally, Italy has an extensive network of high-speed trains, and Bologna is well connected to Rome, Milan, Florence, Venice, etc.

Verona's airport is served by nonstop flights departing to Rome, Frankfurt, Munich, Paris, London, and some minor European airports.

Verona is also well connected via high-speed rail to all points in Italy and beyond.

Sample high-speed train travel times to Bologna from:

- Rome – 2¼ hours
- Florence – 35 minutes
- Milan – 1 hour
- Venice – 1½ hours

Sample high-speed train travel times from Verona to:

Rome – 3 to 4 hours

Florence – 1½ to 2½ hours

Milan – 1½ hours

Venice – 1¼ hours

### **CAVEAT**

While as accurate as possible at the time of printing, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities, trip routing, and meals, rather than an inflexible schedule of events; it is subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. We reserve the right to maintain flexibility in order to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities. This trip is subject to the Limitation of Liability and all the Terms and Conditions as detailed in the Trip Enrollment Form.



To realize the maximum enjoyment from your Venture Out trip, we encourage participants to have flexibility, a sense of humor, curiosity and enthusiasm about new people and places, and an openness to the unexpected. With a spirit of adventure and positive attitude, we're sure you will have a very special travel experience. If you are uncertain about the level of comfort, difficulty, or any of the activities described in this itinerary, please email us or call Venture Out at 415-626-5678 to discuss your concerns.

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