March 18th

Depart St. Louis (Flight TBD)

March 19th

Arrival in Venice and transfer to your hotel
Upon arrival at Venice airport (flight TBA), you will meet a local hostess for a private transfer to your hotel in the city centre by 2 private motor-launches.
Upon arrival, check-in at your hotel where you will spend 3 nights:

Hotel Bonvecchiati (Or Similar)
San Marco, Calle Goldoni 4488 - 30124 Venice, Italy
3 nights - IN March 19th / OUT March 22nd

The Hotel Bonvecchiati is one of Venice’s oldest 4 stars hotels. “We have been welcoming guests with charm since 1790, in elegant surroundings that are continually updated in line with the latest tendencies, which makes the Bonvecchiati one of Venice’s most well-loved 4 stars hotels. We offer exclusive services in sophisticated surroundings as well as the privilege of having the water door where you can arrive in comfort by water taxi or set off on an enchanting gondola ride”. Just a stone’s throw from St. Mark’s Square at the heart of Venice’s magic atmosphere, the Bonvecchiati is the romantic hotel in Venice you have been looking for!
Located in the heart of Venice, the Hotel Bonvecchiati has the most privileged position of any 4-star hotel in Venice: the hotel is in Calle Goldoni, just a 3-minute walk from Saint Mark’s Square and 5 minutes from the Rialto Bridge; the Rialto stop of the vaporetti that will take you to the Grand Canal and the Venice Lido is also 5 minutes away.

YOUR ACCOMODATION: 8 SUPERIOR ROOMS (6 double, 2 for single use)
Comfortable 18/22m² en suite, Venetian style or contemporary design rooms with a view of a typical Venetian street or the internal courtyard. Suitable for two guests (double or twin).

March 20th 2023
Morning Venice city tour - 3hrs (9.30am/12.30pm)
Your English-speaking guide will pick you up at your hotel in Venice at 9.30 am and together you will start this walking tour, to discover the beauties of Venice.
Venice is called La Serenissima, "the most serene", a reference to the majesty, wisdom, and monstrous power of this city that was for centuries the unrivaled mistress of trade between Europe and the Orient and the bulwark of Christendom against the tides of Turkish expansion. "Most serene" could also describe the way lovers of this miraculous city feel when they see it, imperturbably floating on its calm blue lagoon.

Built entirely on water by men who defied the sea, Venice is unlike any other town. No matter how many times you've seen it in movies or on TV, the real thing is more dreamlike than you could ever imagine. Its landmarks, the Basilica di San Marco and the Palazzo Ducale (tickets included for both),
seem hardly Italian: delightfully idiosyncratic, they are exotic mixes of Byzantine, Gothic, and Renaissance styles. Shimmering sunlight and silvery mist soften every perspective here, and you understand how the city became renowned in the Renaissance for its artists' rendering of color. It's full of secrets, inexpressibly romantic, and at times given over entirely to pleasure.

You'll see Venetians going about their daily affairs in vaporetti (water buses), aboard the traghetto (traditional gondola ferries) that carry them across the Grand Canal, in the campi (squares), and along the calli (narrow streets). They are nothing if not skilled—and remarkably tolerant—in dealing with the veritable armies of tourists from all over the world who fill the city's streets for most of the year.
In 3 hours, we can either focus on the most popular places in town such as: St. Mark’s Square and the Rialto Bridge, and on some other less known places but even of great interest mainly located at Castello district.

We start from St. Mark’s, a large auditorium surrounded by buildings that were the heart of the Republic: the basilica, Palazzo Ducale, the Procuratie and the library. This is the wider open space in Venice and was therefore the appropriate place for the unfolding of the many civil and religious processions, which in time became a real tourist attraction. We move then to one of the oldest campi in the city, Santa Maria Formosa, where the different buildings around us give us the opportunity to become familiar with the elaborate styles of the Venetian architecture. Arriving at Campo Santi Giovanni e Paolo, where there is the greatest building in the city, the monastery church of the Dominicans and beside it you can admire the ancient seat of the Scuola di San Marco with its marble facade.

We take a break near the house of Marco Polo located before the splendid view of the most famous bridge in Venice, Rialto. Over the bridge we enter into commercial and financial heart of the old Republic, Rialto itself: now understood as a market fruit, vegetables, meat and fish and one of the liveliest parts of town.

**Afternoon tour to Ca’ Rezzonico - 2 hrs (2.30pm/4.30pm)**

This tour will make you discover one of the most beautiful museums in Venice: **Ca’ Rezzonico**.
Designed by Baldassare Longhena in the 17th century, Ca’ Rezzonico palace was completed nearly 100 years later by Giorgio Massari and became the last home of English poet Robert Browning (1812-89). Stand on the bridge by the Grand Canal entrance to spot the plaque with Browning’s poetic excerpt, “Open my heart and you will see graved inside of it, Italy ...” on the left side of the palace. Today Ca’ Rezzonico is the home of the Museo del Settecento (Museum of Venice in the 1700s). Its main floor successfully retains the appearance of a magnificent Venetian palazzo, decorated with period furniture and tapestries in gilded salons, as well as Tiepolo ceiling frescoes and oil paintings. Upper floors contain a fine collection of paintings by 18th-century Venetian artists, including the famous genre and Pucinella frescoes by Giabattista Tiepolo’s son, Giandomenico, moved here from the Villa di Zianigo. There’s even a restored apothecary, complete with powders and potions.

Rest of the day and dinner at leisure in Venice.

March 21st 2023
Day trip to Padua

Your English-speaking guide will pick you up at your hotel in Venice and you will be transferred to the train station by private motor-launch. Upon arrival, you will take a direct fast train to Padova. You will have electronic train tickets with reserved seats.

A 30 minutes’ ride, will take you to this charming town.

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Upon arrival, you’ll begin the walking tour with your guide. Though less than an hour from Venice, Padua (Padova in Italian) seems a world away with its medieval marketplaces, Fascist-era facades and hip student population. As a medieval city-state and home to Italy’s second-oldest university, Padua challenged both Venice and Verona for regional hegemony. A series of extraordinary fresco cycles recalls this golden age - including in Giotto’s blockbuster Cappella degli Scrovegni, Menabuoi’s heavenly gathering in the baptistry and Titian’s St Anthony in the Scoletta del Santo. For centuries, Padua and Verona fought for dominance over the Veneto plains. But Venice finally occupied Padua permanently in 1405.

As a strategic military-industrial centre, Padua became a parade ground for Mussolini speeches, an Allied bombing target and a secret Italian Resistance hub (at its university). Even today, Padua remains an important industrial city - its industrial zone employs some 50,000 people - a dynamic university town and an important pilgrimage centre.

Your visit will mainly focus on the historic anatomical theatre in the Palazzo Bo.

The University of Padua, founded in 1222, is one of the most important symbols of culture in Italy... There are lots of places to discover inside! Among the most fascinating, there is undoubtedly the Anatomical Theatre, located in Palazzo del Bo.

It was the anatomist and surgeon Girolamo Fabrici d’Acquapendente who conceived it in 1594. Completed in 1595, the building is the first example in the world of a permanent anatomical theatre, created for teaching anatomy through the dissection of corpses. Designed according to the stylistic canons of the Renaissance, the theatre has not been altered over time, therefore you can still admire the original sixteenth century structure!
Contrary to popular belief, the practice of dissection of corpses was not prohibited by the ecclesiastical authorities, so much so that, at the entrance of the anatomical theatre, you can still see the Latin inscription ‘Hic est locus ubi mors gaudet succurrere vitam’, ie ‘this is the place where death delights to help the living’.

The bodies which were to be used for autopsies were delivered to the University by the judicial authorities: though not exclusively, they were often the corpses of executed people. In order for lessons to be held regularly, so-called ‘stewards’ who had the task of procuring the necessary corpses were appointed. Once executions started to become rare, the Anatomical Theatre ceased to operate.

At the of the tour, you will enjoy some free time on your own in town, for independent exploration and lunch.

Then you’ll go back to the train station, to take the train back to Venice:

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Upon arrival in Venice, you’ll be transferred back to the hotel by private motor-launch.

Rest of the day and dinner at leisure in Venice.

March 22nd 2023
From Venice to Florence

After breakfast and check-out, your English-speaking hostess will pick you up at your hotel in Venice and you will be transferred to the train station by private motor-launch. Upon arrival, you will take a direct fast train to Florence. You will have electronic train tickets with reserved seats.

There is one train every hour, here below you can see some examples, please advise about your preferred one:
Your drivers will pick you up at Florence train station upon arrival and you will be transferred to your hotel in the city center by 2 AC deluxe minivan.

Il Guelfo Bianco ***
Via Camillo Cavour 29, 50129 Florence
4 nights – IN March 22nd / OUT March 26th

Comfort, elegance and sophistication. The Hotel Il Guelfo Bianco is your captivating 3-star residence in the heart of Florence, capital of Italian Renaissance, art and culture. You will be pampered by our friendly staff in original fifteenth century surroundings where the past and present merge in perfect harmony, combining the ancient vaulted and coffered ceilings with an exciting collection of modern artworks. All this just around the corner from Piazza Duomo. The 3-star Hotel Il Guelfo Bianco stands out from other hotels in Florence for its charming renovated rooms, embellished by the large display of valuable artwork, elegant furnishings and original building brickwork.

Staying at this hotel means surrounding yourself with the successful combination of history and modern art from the hotel owners, Luisa and Alessandro Bargiacchi’s private collection. The friendly staff, full of attention, makes our guests feel at home, in the heart of one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

Each common room was attentively designed to make your stay unforgettable and relaxing like in the bar lounge, or reading room, an ideal ‘quiet room’ for you to read the paper or curl up with a good book.
Breakfast at the Hotel Il Guelfo Bianco

The first-class breakfast is prepared with the best ingredients and it is served in a beautiful room with a vaulted ceiling. To name just a few products served at breakfast, on your table you will find "High Quality" milk from the cows grazing on the Mugello hills, Arabica roast coffee selected from plantations from all over the world, the famous natural preserves from the Radici farm which are rich in fruit and low in sugar content and fruit salads prepared every morning with only naturally grown fresh fruit. Guests who prefer savory breakfasts will love the Parmigiano Reggiano cheese aged at least 18 months or the fragrant Tuscan ham, cured with a mix of salt, pepper and herbs, with a unique flavour. Last but not least, you'll find the simple and delicious Bruschetta, oven toasted bread covered with tomatoes and flavoured with natural hand-picked and dried oregano, a specialty excellent with the green-gold glints of the natural extra-virgin olive oil from the Casa al Brandi or Podere La Croce farms located in Reggello.

Location: The Hotel Il Guelfo Bianco is strategically located in one of the oldest streets in downtown Florence, a great place to start discovering Florence's artistic wealth, its magic and charm that still seduces millions of visitors. The Galleria dell’Accademia is just 100 meters from the hotel. Only a short distance away is the Piazza del Duomo, main religious center, dominated by the magnificent cathedral and famous Brunelleschi dome.

YOUR ACCOMODATION: 2 SUPERIOR ROOMS FOR SINGLE USE + 6 DOUBLE DELUXE ROOMS

Sample pictures - all the rooms are different
**Deluxe Room** → Beautiful and spacious room with antique furniture. With couch or armchair, this cozy room offers a pleasant comfort after an exciting day in Florence.
Size: 20 sqm. (occupancy up to 4 people, two single beds or one double bed, additional sofa or armchair beds)
Features and Services: Floors with parquet or marble - Soundproofing - TV - Safe - Minibar - Bathroom with tub and glass shower - Vanity Set - Hairdryer

**Superior Room** → A romantic room for a holiday for two in the heart of the most authentic city of Florence. A cozy room enhanced by ancient and refined furniture that will give your stay an unforgettable atmosphere.
Size: 16 m². (occupancy up to 3 people, two single beds or one double bed, additional sofa or armchair beds)
Features and Services: Floors with parquet - Soundproofing - TV - Safe - Minibar - Bathroom with tub and glass shower - Vanity Set - Hairdryer
March 23rd 2023

Florence guided tour with Uffizi Gallery - 4hrs (9.00/13.00)

Your English-speaking guides will pick you up at your hotel in Florence city centre, for a private walking tour including the Uffizi Gallery. Florence is known all over the world as the city of art, the capital of the Renaissance and one of the most important centers of literary and scientific culture.

You will begin your tour from Piazza del Duomo. The Florence Duomo is dedicated to Santa Maria del Fiore and is typical of Italian Gothic architecture. The present building was designed by Arnolfo di Cambio. The Cupola remained unfinished, and in 1421 the polygonal base was erected. Two architects won the competition to design the dome, Lorenzo Ghiberti (1368-1445) and Filippo Brunelleschi (1377-1446), but it was Brunelleschi who actually built it using remarkable technical knowledge to achieve the uniquely beautiful results we see today. Completed in 1436, the Cupola is the most characteristic feature of the Florentine skyline, symbolising a great cultural tradition and the city's civic awareness.
It will then be time to visit the Ponte Vecchio, the oldest bridge which crosses the Arno at its widest point. It dates back to Roman times and has been re-built on several occasions. After the flooding of 1333 it was re-constructed with a double row of shops, passing from a defensive type of architecture to the current public one. In 1565 the east-facing Vasariano Corridor above the shops was built and the back-shops were added in the seventeenth century giving the bridge its modern-day structure.

It will be time then to reach Piazza della Signoria, which has been the political heart of the city from the Middle Ages to the present day. Its gets its name of course from the most important monument there, Palazzo della Signoria, designed by Arnolfo di Cambio in 1298-99 for the seat of the Republican government and which was later to host the Gonfalonier of Justice and the Priors of the Arts (it was in fact at first called Palazzo dei Priori).

The square however is not just the "civic" centre of Florence, it is also a splendid open-air museum. The square of the Uffizi stretches out on the south side, towards the Arno, with the eye-catching Loggia dei Lanzi, whose late Gothic roof covers 15 statues which also include Benvenuto Cellini's wonderful Perseus holding up the head of the Medusa.

The statues in the square deserve a chapter all to themselves. Apart from the great sculptures lined up in front of the facade of Palazzo Vecchio (among them the copy of David by Michelangelo), we can hardly avoid noticing the Fountain of Neptune by Ammannati and the equestrian statue of Cosimo I de Medici by Giambologna.

The last part of the tour, will be dedicated to the Uffizi Gallery.
Its collection of Primitive and Renaissance paintings comprises several universally acclaimed masterpieces of all time, including works by Giotto, Simone Martini, Piero della Francesca, Fra Angelico, Filippo Lippi, Botticelli, Mantegna, Correggio, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Michelangelo and Caravaggio. German, Dutch and Flemish masters are also well represented with important works by Dürer, Rembrandt and Rubens. The Gallery was created by Grand-Duke Francesco I and subsequently enriched by various members of the Medici family, who were great collectors of paintings, sculpture and works of art.

Rest of the day at leisure in Florence.

March 24th 2023

Day trip to Bologna

Your English-speaking drivers will pick you up at your hotel in Florence and you will be transferred by 2 AC deluxe minivan to Florence train station. Once there you will take a direct fast train to Bologna. You will have electronic train tickets with reserved seats.

Transfer length is approx. 40 minutes and there are several connections. See some examples here below:

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<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Upon arrival in Bologna, you’ll find your local English-speaking guide waiting for you at the train station. Together you will begin a guided walking tour of the city that will lead you to discover Bologna from different points of view.

**MORNING TOUR (3 HRS):** Approaching the historic center, the guide will introduce the history of the city. You will admire Piazza Nettuno and Piazza Maggiore with a short entrance into San Petronio. You cannot miss an explanation of towers and arcades, symbols of the city and now Unesco heritage. Visit to the Archiginnasio building, the first unified seat of the oldest university in the Western world. Explanation of the great Bolognese medical school. Entrance to the Anatomical Theatre and to the rooms of the Medical-Surgical Society, always inside the Archiginnasio (exclusive opening upon request just for this specific group).
Here you can admire the exhibition of the set of surgical instruments by Marcello Malpighi and an original of the Anatomy Treaty by Mondino de 'Liuzzi, great professor of the Bolognese studium.
Free time for lunch break.
AFTERNOON TOUR (2 HRS): passing by a historic pharmacy and the ancient hospital of Santa Maria della Vita, approaching Palazzo Poggi along via Zamboni, in the heart of the Bentivolesco district; entrance to the museum and visit to the anatomical wax rooms.

From Palazzo Poggi the group can easily return to the station, the guide can provide all the information.

Once at the train station, you will take a direct fast train back to Florence.
Upon arrival in Florence, you’ll be transferred back to the hotel by private minivans. Rest of the day and dinner at leisure in Florence

March 25th 2023
Day at leisure in Florence
OR visit to La Specula Museum in case of re-opening

May 26th 2023
Private transfer to Florence Airport
Your English-speaking drivers will pick you up at your hotel in Florence and you will be transferred by 2 AC deluxe minivan to Florence airport in time for your flight.