

ITALY & GREECE: History

(Note: This is only a sample tour)

Day 1: Depart for Florence.

Day 2: Arrive **Florence**.

Day 3: Florence Italy. The Renaissance began in Florence and the city has more sights to visit within one square kilometer than any other city in Europe. Meet guide for a guided orientation walking tour. See the gorgeous **Duomo, the Bell Tower, Pont Vecchio** the medieval district, and a central bustling food market. The remainder of the afternoon is free to shop in San Lorenzo Market or visit the Santa Croce area where Galileo, Michelangelo and Dante have their monuments. Spend time on Pont Vecchio, Piazza Vecchio, Piazza della Signoria, and Mercato Nuovo.



Day 4: Transfer to **Pisa** for a look at the architectural project gone terribly wrong, the **Leaning Tower**. See the beautiful Campo dei Miracoli Square with its famous group of Romanesque buildings, the Duomo, the Baptistry and the Leaning Tower. This afternoon you may wish to visit both the Leonardo da Vinci Museum and the Musee Galileo. Witness the life sized inventions of Da Vinci in operation mode as well as reproductions of his most important paintings including the Last Supper, the Mona Lisa and the Annunciation of the genius Da Vinci. Alternatively visit the **Uffizi Gallery**, a museum the result of a process of acquisition, selection and rearrangement stretching over several centuries and consist mostly of antique sculpture and paintings ranging from the 13c to 18c.

Day 5: Transfer to **Rome**. Enroute stop in **San Gimignano**, a spectacular medieval city that has the feel of a museum. From a distance, the towers of this 13th century town that were symbols of power and wealth of the city's medieval families, dominate the lush landscape of wheat fields, olive groves and vineyards. Later this afternoon spend some time in Piazza Navona originally built as a stadium in the first century for athletic contests and chariot races. Now it is lined with luxurious cafes and is the home to three lavish Baroque fountains.



Day 6: Morning guided visit to **Vatican**. The Vatican is a city unto itself with its own postal service, radio station, newspaper and army. Visit **St. Peter's Basilica and Square, the Vatican Museum and the Sistine Chapel**. Later stroll through the major archaeological monuments. See the **Spanish Steps, Trevi Fountain, the Pantheon**. For shopping head to Piazza del Popolo, Via del Corso and the Via Condotti.

Day 7: Guided morning visit to the **Colosseum, the Forum, Capitol Hill**, Victor Emmanuel Monument and Piazza Venezia. Later possible visits to the numerous Catacombs of Rome or underground burial places. Begun in the 2nd Century, they were not only a place for persecuted Christians to bury in secret, but also for pagan and Jewish burials. Many have kilometers of tunnels, with up to four stories or layers. Or possibly Borghese Gallery. Or if you are more interested in visiting some of Rome's other interesting neighborhoods you could cross the Tiber River for Trastevere for a look at medieval village Rome.

Day 8: Visit **Pompeii**, the sumptuous town that was buried under lava during a volcanic eruption of Vesuvius that started in August 24, AD 79. In Pompeii the fascination lies in the glimpses of everyday life frozen in time. Today you will have a guided visit. Later transfer you to Brindisi for your ferry for your overnight transfer to Greece.

Day 9: Arrive in Patras **Greece**. Meet your guide and transfer to ancient Olympia for your visit. Although the ruins are not especially well preserved, the site's colossal size remains impressive. Visit the Museum of **Olympia** where amongst other famous classical treasures is the Hermes of Praxiteles – the prize of Olympia. Later transfer to Nafplion. Enjoy this beautiful old city with its glorious Venetian architecture, fortress, and pebble beach and hillside stairways. Wander the stone walkways of Old Town.



Day 10: Guided visit to ancient **Mycenae**. The bulk of the ruins dates from 1280 B.C. and is among the most celebrated archaeological discoveries in modern history. Mycenae was known as the center of the great Helladic civilization as the capital of the all-powerful Agememnon. See the handsome Lion Gate, the portal to the ancient city, the Treasure of Atreus and the Tombs of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra and the palace and the Royal apartments. Later visit the spa at Epidaurus to see the ancient theatre and visit the museum. En route to Athens, stop at Corinth and marvel at the genius of modern man who created the amazing canal.

Day 11: Athens. The capital of Greece took its name from the goddess Athena, the goddess of wisdom and knowledge. Morning guided sightseeing tour of Athens. Tour includes the **Royal Palace, the Olympic Stadium, the Temple of Jupiter, Hadrians Arch and Constitution Square**. Constitution or Syntagma Square has a long history. It seems every major event in Greece's modern history has either been mourned or celebrated here. See The **Tomb of the Unknown Soldier** guarded by the elite soldiers chosen for their height and strength and time permitting, the changing of the guard. Visit the **Acropolis to see the Parthenon**. Built between 447 and 438 BC, it is the most important and characteristic monument of the ancient Greek civilization and still remains its international symbol. Discover the old quarter, the **Pláka**, which is huddled at the foot of the Acropolis and is the oldest section of the city and is a hodge-podge of narrow winding alleys, flower-filled courtyards, old balconied houses and marvelous lively cafés that is closed to automobile traffic. The streets are crammed full of the tourist shops and great restaurants.

Day 12: Today, you bid farewell to Greece.

TOUR INCLUSIONS

- Return airfare to Florence return from Athens
- Coach transfers
 - o Florence – airport transfer
 - o Half day visit to Pisa
 - o Transfer Florence to Rome with stop in San Gimignano
 - o Transfer Rome to Brindisi with stop for visit Pompeii
 - o 2 days coach with transfer Patras to Athens with stops according to itinerary
 - o Athens – airport transfer
- Assistance upon arrival in Brindisi
- 9 nights accommodation with private facilities
- 1 overnight ferry Italy – Greece with sleeping compartment
- 10 breakfasts
- 5 dinners
- Guided tours
 - o Florence walking tour
 - o 2 walking tours Rome
 - o Pompeii
 - o Olympia
 - o Mycenae
 - o Epidaurus
 - o Acropolis
 - o Athens – coach and walking
- Entrances
 - o Museum entrance in Florence – Uffizi or Leonardo da Vinci Museum and the Musee Galileo.
 - o Vatican
 - o Coliseum and Forum
 - o Pompeii
 - o Olympia & the Museum
 - o Mycenae
 - o Epidaurus
 - o Parthenon

