



## WESTERN EUROPE

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DAY 1

### START OF TOUR IN ROME – VENICE

Welcome to your first day on tour! After meeting up with your tour leader and group it's time to hit the road! Sit back and enjoy the scenery as we make our way from Rome to Venice! Vineyards and orchards flash in front of a majestic mountain backdrop as we drive. The diversity of the Italian landscapes will continue to impress. Venice is a unique city, perched across 118 islands, and known for its canals, gondolas, Venetian masks, piazzas, art and traditional glass and lace making. Your tour leader will introduce you to the city with an orientation walk so you can use your free time in the early evening to explore. See the world-famous St Mark's Square, Grand Canal and Rialto Bridge. The evening is yours to enjoy authentic Italian delights, with hundreds of fantastic local restaurants and bars to choose from. After an espresso, explore Venice the traditional way - from the canals. Take a gondola ride optional which gives you a completely different perspective and appreciation for the amazing structure of this supremely unique location. Please note - for 2021 departures the Rome Optional Free Day takes place at the beginning of the tour, rather than end.

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DAY 2

### INNSBRUCK - MUNICH – BAVARIA

Arrivederci, for now till later on in the tour! Heading north toward Germany, you will encounter some of the most beautiful countryside in central Europe. The famous Brenner Pass will appear before you, and simply take your breath away, as we make our way to Austria for a comfort stop to get a taster of Innsbruck and its dramatic mountain backdrop. Arriving in Munich in the afternoon, there is plenty of time for an escorted walking tour of the city centre. With much of the city having to be restored after WW2, the modern and ancient history of Munich is fascinating, and the appreciation of the effort to rebuild the German city is gilded with respect. Munich plays host to one of the most famous beer festivals in the world - Oktoberfest! To give you a taste, this evening you will dine in a traditional beer hall, and enjoy a local beer on us! Prost!

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DAY 3

### BAVARIA - RHINE VALLEY

Your German adventure continues, heading to one of the most picturesque sections of the famous Rhine River. Once we arrive in the Rhine Valley, relax on board a Rhine riverboat as we head to our hotel in the heart of this picturesque region. This is the most concentrated stretch of castles in all of Europe, and it also features vineyards, charming medieval towns and lofty cliffs. Learn the story of the castles, many of which are now in ruins since the river barons left long ago. Once the cruise is over we'll visit a local wine merchant for an included wine tasting - if the harvest has been good, you may even get to try eiswein (ice wine), a very sweet dessert wine that is produced in very small quantities as it can only be harvested when the temperature drops below freezing.

A decorative background illustration at the bottom of the page features a stylized map of Europe in shades of blue and green. Overlaid on the map are various European landmarks and symbols, including the Statue of Liberty, Big Ben, the Eiffel Tower, a hot air balloon, and a traditional European building. The illustration is rendered in a soft, watercolor-like style.

DAY 4

### **RHINE VALLEY - AMSTERDAM**

This morning you will say your goodbyes to Germany, and continue your Europe tour into the Netherlands. With your Expat Explore tour leader giving you a run down on local traditions and culture, you will indulge in three of the most iconic Dutch products - cheese, clogs and windmills! A very entertaining cheese and clog making display, will have you fascinated and wanting to taste and 'klomp' (klompen is the Dutch word for 'clogs'). Checking into your hotel you have a chance to freshen up, and then you'll head to the centre of Amsterdam for a twilight canal cruise. You will gain an alternative perspective of this eclectic and bohemian city whilst drifting past famous landmarks. Afterwards, you are free to explore the city to your heart's content. The cafés, restaurants and bars will be buzzing with activity and atmosphere.

DAY 5

### **AMSTERDAM - GHENT – PARIS**

Today it's Vaarwel to the Netherlands as we head to the Belgian city of Ghent. This picturesque port city is a cultural hub, and is known for its medieval architecture, which remains intact and is remarkably well preserved. Grab a waffle, stretch your legs and enjoy a stroll through the pedestrianized city centre. Leaving Ghent behind us, we make our way to Paris, the 'City of Lights'. We'll take you on a driving tour of the French capital; get your cameras ready - you'll be seeing some of the city's most treasured landmarks, including the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame and the Arc de Triomphe! After the driving tour we'll enjoy dinner at a restaurant in the Latin Quarter, an eclectic, bohemian and historic neighbourhood.

DAY 6

### **PARIS: FREE DAY**

Enjoy a full free day to explore the French capital! The Seine River is the backbone of the capital, and flows through the heart of the city. Why not choose a cruise, and sail past the Notre Dame Cathedral, to the epic Eiffel Tower? You can explore on your own or join a full day of exploration in Paris! The Paris excursion will take you to all the iconic sights including the Tuileries Gardens, the Louvre Pyramid, and much more! Paris Disneyland is perfect for the 'young at heart', and is only a short distance away. Your Expat Explore tour leader is brimming with ideas and local knowledge for you to make the most of your time here.

DAY 7

### **PARIS - BURGUNDY - SWISS ALPS**

Au revoir Paris! Today we sample a taste of small-town France with a lunch stop in Burgundy. In the town of Beaune you can visit the beautiful Hospices de Beaune, or try the famous wine. After lunch we take a long scenic drive



across the border into Switzerland. Welcome to the Swiss Alps, your home for the next two days! You are now completely surrounded by nature's beauty. Literally, you can turn in any direction and you will see snow-capped peaks, clear-blue lakes and perfect hiking trails. Breathe in the fresh air and enjoy your time in this idyllic place.

DAY 8

### **SWISS ALPS: OPTIONAL FREE DAY**

The Swiss Alps has some of the highest peaks in the world! Surrounded by these peaks and glaciers you have the opportunity to feel on top of the world... Take a train or gondola to the top for magnificent mountain vistas. You have picture-perfect beauty all around you and endless photo opportunities. For those wishing to spend their free day exploring the local sights, you can feast on Swiss cheese fondue or do a spot of sightseeing. If you're looking for keepsakes, there are great local places for shopping Swiss Army knives and watches. Or wander through the villages and breathe in that crisp, fresh, Alpine air! What more could you want on your free day?

DAY 9

### **LAKE COMO - PISA – TUSCANY**

Today, we leave the Swiss Alps and wind our way toward Italy, stopping for lunch at the famous Lake Como. An enormous expanse of water fringed by picturesque scattered villages, it's perhaps not surprising that one of the villages, Laglio, is where George Clooney has a luxurious villa. Next stop, Pisa! Capture your iconic shots at the Leaning Tower of Pisa! A World Heritage UNESCO Site, The Leaning Tower is visited by tourists from every corner of the globe and is one of the most popular cultural European landmarks. Onwards to the exquisite Tuscan region - famous for wine, food, art and architecture. You will settle in Montecatini Terme, a spa town north-west of Florence. Time for a local wine or two.

DAY 10

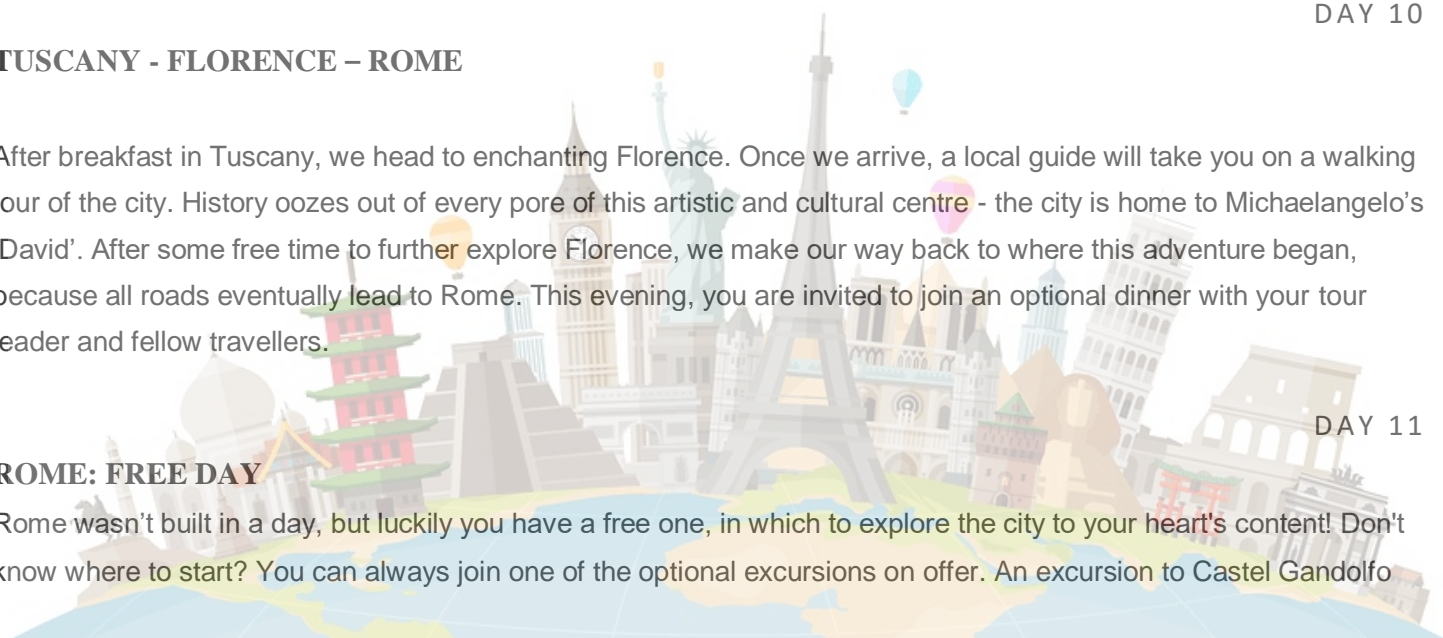
### **TUSCANY - FLORENCE – ROME**

After breakfast in Tuscany, we head to enchanting Florence. Once we arrive, a local guide will take you on a walking tour of the city. History oozes out of every pore of this artistic and cultural centre - the city is home to Michaelangelo's 'David'. After some free time to further explore Florence, we make our way back to where this adventure began, because all roads eventually lead to Rome. This evening, you are invited to join an optional dinner with your tour leader and fellow travellers.

DAY 11

### **ROME: FREE DAY**

Rome wasn't built in a day, but luckily you have a free one, in which to explore the city to your heart's content! Don't know where to start? You can always join one of the optional excursions on offer. An excursion to Castel Gandolfo



provides an interesting glimpse into how the Roman Catholic Pope of the 17th century spent his summers. After visiting the Palace you will have a delicious lunch on a hilltop with breathtaking views of Lake Albano. This is not to be missed. Alternatively, you have the option to visit Pompeii. Buried under the ash of Mount Vesuvius for hundreds of years, Pompeii offers its visitors a real look at life in the 1st century. A local guide will accompany you around this UNESCO World Heritage Site, telling you more about the history and introducing you to the artefacts and ruins on display. Later this afternoon you can join a local Roman chef on his mission to showcase the lesser known gems that form part of the city's gastronomy. The tour includes an espresso tasting as well as a visit to a prestigious bakery and a local delicatessen.

DAY 12

## END OF TOUR IN ROME

Your Europe Escape adventure comes to an end after breakfast.

