

VENICE AND VERONA



Spring 2011

There's no city quite like Venice in the world! Everybody has an idea of what it is like but without visiting this watery wonderland, it's impossible to imagine it – it does however live up to and exceed all expectations.

Walking and boats are the only way of getting around this lagoon city, where main streets are canals and side streets have a labyrinth effect, turning corners but leading nowhere or suddenly coming to an abrupt end – usually signalled by water!

For this reason Venice has one of the most confusing and frustrating layouts of any city. Be prepared to get lost, repeatedly and when you do don't be alarmed! Even the natives get confused – so they simply set off in a general direction and weave their way through the city – and you should do the same. Just go with the flow and you'll discover some unexpected surprises that make Venice spectacular.

Our tour also takes us to fair Verona, which was the setting for Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. Although the Montecchi (Montague) and Capello (Capulet) families actually existed, their ill-fated offspring are entirely fictional. However, this hasn't prevented the Veronese from making the most of the myth. You can swoon beneath Juliet's balcony, visit her tomb, clutch her right breast for luck in love and marvel at the slew of scribbled love graffiti creeping its way beyond the mansion gates and out into the street....



Below is a sample itinerary: (Please note this itinerary is subject to change)

Friday 18th February 2011

AM Depart from Florence by private bus to Verona for a private guided tour of the city with entrance to the ancient Roman arena.

PM Arrive in Venice and check into hotel. Free evening.

Saturday 19th February 2011

AM Private guided walking tour of the city with entrance to the Doge's Palace.

PM Free time to really get to know Venice.

Sunday 20th February 2011

AM Free time in Venice to buy those last minute souvenirs or maybe catch a ride in a gondola!

PM Depart Venice by train for Florence. We aim to be back in Florence by early evening.

The weekend tour to Venice and Verona includes;

Round Trip transport from Florence to Venice, private guides and entrances where specified, 2 night's accommodation in a tourist class hotel on a bed and breakfast basis, Vaporetto travel pass in Venice, service of an AIFS tour manager who will be with the group for the entire weekend. Meals other than those specified will be at student's expense.

The cost of this tour will be approximately **€275**, subject to a minimum enrolment of 25 students. Limited spaces.

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What to see and do...

You don't go sightseeing in Venice – the whole city is special – but here are a few of the highlights.....

Piazza San Marco - a year round carnival is the best way to describe this gathering place which is filled with milling visitors, hungry pigeons and locals. It is the living room of Venice in fact Napoleon dubbed it the 'finest drawing room in Europe'. St Mark's Square is one of the lowest parts of the city, and so is always the first to be covered in water when the acqua alta (high tide) arrives - a magical sight on a moonlit night!



Basilica San Marco – no church in Europe is more lavishly decorated, more exquisitely mosaiced or more glittering with gold! The best view of the Basilica is from the western end of the square – an unforgettable experience!

Palazzo Ducale – (Doges' Palace) The Piazzetta San Marco (little San Marco Square) is overlooked by the exquisite Palazzo Ducale, for centuries the city's political heart. The pink and white Venetian Gothic fantasy housed the doge (duke), the many arms of government and a couple of prisons. It is one of Italy's grandest and most history saturated town halls featuring apartments, staterooms and halls decorated with canvases and frescoes by Venice's greatest artists.



Accademia - The Gallerie dell'Accademia houses Venice's single most important art collection, brilliantly illustrating the progression of Venetian art from the 14th to 18th centuries. Among the highlights here are Paolo Veneziano's *Madonna and Child with Two Donors* and Carpaccio's altarpiece *Crucifixion and Apotheosis*.

Guggenheim – one of the world's top modern art museums offering a comprehensive survey of avant-garde modern art.

Canale Grande & Ponte di Rialto – the Grand Canal loops through Venice passing the splendid façades of the palazzo that crown its banks, testifying to the city's history of immense wealth. The Rialto Bridge that crosses it is an impressive architectural construction that was originally built in wood then redesigned after its collapse in the 1500's. Today shops and vendors crowd the top of the bridge.

Murano – Sleepy Murano has long been famed for its glass production - since the 10th century, in fact, when the secrets of the art were smuggled into Venice by merchants trading in the East. Once ensconced in Murano, the methods of the craft became such a well-guarded secret that it was considered treason for glass-workers to leave the city. Watching the glass-workers in action in factories on the island is fascinating. You can see them in several outlets along Fondamenta dei Vetrai and a couple on Viale Garibaldi. Look for the sign 'Fornace' (furnace). The Museo Vetrario is devoted to the art and history of glasswork, and there are some exquisite pieces on display.

