



## Venice and the Veneto

**Specially prepared for**

*Venice, the serene Serenissima is one of the most romantic cities on earth. But there is more than simple romance in store for the visitor to this fair city. Stroll down quiet side streets, alongside narrow canals, over enchanting bridges and through the spacious*

Please note that your final itinerary may vary slightly from this one as we continuously research and develop each trip, customizing your experience to match your interests and tastes. Inclement weather—though we'd like to think there won't be any—may also necessitate minor alterations.

*campi where the only sound is the ripple of children's laughter, the velvety echo of Venetian dialect, and the occasional squeak of an overhead laundry line. Charming locals, luscious food, extraordinary architecture, and the great wines of the Veneto all play a part in this delightful trip through the breathtaking beauty of Venezia. You follow on to discover Friuli and Venezia Giulia, the most northeastern of the Italian region, with its own peculiar language, culture and food traditions. Trieste is one of the most elegant European cities, with its own, unique cosmopolitan charm, airy and bright and during you stay you'll learn about Collio, a small half-moon shaped hilly countryside bordering Slovenia is the place to go if you are passionate about the great whites. From Dolegna del Collio to San Floriano del Collio, past Cormons, it is a barely 50 km road on rolling clad-vine hills where at each corner lies a small, family-run yet top-notch winery.*

## Day 1:

Welcome to Italy! We will meet you at the Venice airport, after you collect your luggage your guide will be there holding a sign with your name on it. From here you will hop in your private water taxi and be escorted to your hotel as you experience a wonderful display of one of the world's most unique cities. Check in and some time to settle and freshen up before rejoining your guide for your introductory walking tour of Venice.

Activity: 2hrs walking tour

Meals: none

## Day 2:

After breakfast, start your exploration of the most authentic Venice with your guide. You'll walk towards the quiet yet lively neighborhood of Canareggio and you'll start your first adventure for the day: become a true gondolier! We'll first introduce you to our traditional batelina, once one of the most prolific in the city. Now extremely rare, they make an exceptional first time rowing boat: stable and comfortable. For your lesson, we'll first concentrate on the basic stroke for rowing a prua (at the prow), in the boat without moving. We'll then depart, and each rower in turn will get used to the stoke as we glide along a wide, quiet canal. We'll then cross then into the expansive, open lagoon, where you'll be encouraged to try rowing a poppa — steering the boat yourself at the stern, just like a gondolier!

After lunch you'll walk to the neighbourhood of Dorsoduro and visit a gondola boatyard: you'll meet Elena, daughter of Roberto and fifth generation from Domenico Tramontin, who founded the boatyard in 1884. This *squero* (boatyard) is one of only 2 remaining gondola manufacturers survived in the city

and it is way beyond considered the best producer: for a gondolier to possess a Tramontin gondola is like being the happy driver of a Ferrari!

Activity: 2 hr rowing + a great amount of walking

Meals: Breakfast at hotel | Lunch at Osteria da Rioba



### Days 3:

This morning you will meet your guide in the hotel lobby this morning and after a short ride by taxiboat to the lido, we'll explore the many aspects of Venice's lagoon on two wheels. After a boat ride to the island of Lido we pedal south along the coastal islands. At the south end of Lido, we board a ferry boat to an utterly 'un-modern' island of Pellestrina - an authentic spot still inhabited by fisherman, small, sleepy villages with occasional tiny stores bordering the streets (no "Gucci" or "Armani" here, in delightful contrast to Venice). You'll have lunch at our favorite spot, after which back to Venice on pedals. Return your bike at Santa Maria Elisabetta and take the vaporetto back to Venice.



\*\*\*[in case of inclement weather we'll have an extensive walking tour in Venice with a private visit of the Guggenheim Collection and the visit of the solitary island of San Lazzaro degli Armeni, with its library of 170.000 manuscripts and books accounts for one of the oldest in the world]

Activity: FD biking tour of Lido and Pellestrina on flat very quiet roads (40 km)

Meals: Breakfast at hotel | Lunch da Celeste Pellestrina



## Day 4:

This morning, after breakfast, with your chaperon, you'll hop on the vaporetto (the public boat) and get on exploration of the Northern Lagoon: Crossing the 'open waters' of the northern lagoon you will

reach the island of Torcello to visit the extraordinary little jewel of the Cathedral of St Maria Assunta. This church dates back to 7<sup>th</sup> century and the amazing golden mosaic of the interior (look especially for the Last Judgment) are a testimony of the wealth of Torcello, from trading salt extracted from the lagoon, which made this lost northern island more powerful than Venice. Back on our boat to hear for Burano, the happiest and colorful of fishermen islands. Lunch will be at the extraordinary little osteria of Venissa wine estate, located in Mazzorbo island. Back on the vaporetto we head for Murano, where you'll enter a glass blowing workshop and see the masters who transform sands and oxides into the most beautiful art pieces: from a shapeless hot glass paste to a beautiful sculpture, all in front of your eyes. Murano was a commercial port as far back as the 7th Century, and by the 10th Century it had grown into a prosperous trading center with its own coins, police force, and commercial aristocracy. Then, in 1291, the Venetian Republic ordered glassmakers to move their foundries to Murano because the glassworks represented a fire danger in Venice, whose buildings were mostly wooden at the time. It is here you get to discover the secrets of glass blowing dating back to the Roman Empire. Soon after back on vaporetti to head for Venice for the rest of the afternoon at leisure.

Activity: FD walking tour of Murano, Burano, Torcello

Meals: Breakfast at hotel | Lunch at Venissa Osteria Contemporanea

## Day 5:

Today you bid farewell to this magical city. A private taxi boat will take you to Piazzale Roma and with the assistance of your guide you'll board then on our private van. Your next hotel is located in Trieste. But before reaching the city of winds we will detour for a bike day, starting in Palmanova. Built in 1593 by the Republic of Venice, Palmanova, with its perfect nine-pointed star shape, monumental entrance gates and the three circles of fortifications from the 16th, 17th and 19th centuries, Palmanova is at the same time a model Renaissance city and an example of military architecture that reveals in concrete detail to the visitor the technical developments of the science of fortification construction in the modern era. After a quick cappuccino, we will start biking directly from the city hearth, the Piazza Grande, and as we exit the city, we hop on the Alpe Adria Trail, a bike and walking path that start in the city of Mozart, travel through Austria and Slovenia, it ends up in Grado, a charming fishermen village by the Adriatic Sea. After lunch in Grado we will hop on our van and head to Trieste. Check in at the hotel, a bit of time for freshen up and we meet up with our guide for a walking tour of Trieste historical city center.

Activity: a 30 km bike ride on flat bike path [in case of cold or inclement weather we will organize a walking in the Karsik plateau at the door of Trieste] + a walking tour of Trieste

Meals: Breakfast at hotel | Lunch in Grado



## Day 6:

This morning we start our walking straight from the hotel as we reach Piazza Oberdan where the old tram starts its climb to Villa Opicina: The slope's inclination reaches a maximum 26% before going down to 8% after the carriages are out of the shield and back on regular track towards the town of Opicina. After a short ride with beautiful views on the Gulf of Trieste, we will head towards the start of our walking, on the so called "Napoleon trail" or *Via Vicentina*. The walk is easy and on mostly flat, at certain point flanked by the high Karsik walls, a natural climbing frame, a true paradise for climbers. We soon reach the small village of Prosecco, where we stop for a quick drink at a local *Osmize*, a peculiar inn which serves local wine with cheese, ham and local food. We follow on on local quiet roads towards the beautiful Castle of Miramare, built from 1856 to 1860 for Austrian Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian and his wife, Charlotte of Belgium, when he settled in Trieste after he was appointed in 1854 Commander in Chief of the Imperial Navy. We will walk the extensive (54 acres) of Miramare park, styled with a whole romantic fashion typical of the English gardens of the era. After the park we will walk few km on the pedestrian promenade along the sea, until we reach Barcola, the village which hosts the Società Velica di Barcola e Grignano, a very



important sea club, organizer of the Barcolana, the biggest regatta in the world. Lunch in Barcola and then a short transfer to hotel. Rest of the day is for you at leisure.

Activity: 12 km walking mostly flat or downhill

Meals: Breakfast at hotel | Lunch at Tre Merli in Barcola



## Day 7:

This morning, we bid farewell to Trieste and embark on the exploration on bike of the best kept secret in the white wine world: the Collio. This small portion of Friuli Venezia Giulia is an enchanting hilly area, located on the border with Slovenia and only recently becoming famous all over the world for its excellent wine production, where the vintage white wines stand out. But the Collio is also famous for its amazing landscape, which is unmistakably made up of green hills covered by rows of vines that in spring become even more beautiful with the colours of the blossoming cherry trees, with the outlines of the scattered houses and of the white boroughs built around pointed bell towers. We will start in Capriva del Friuli and will follow on to reach Cormons, Dolegna del Friuli. We will eat at one of our preferred spot of the area. We will follow on after lunch in visiting one of the best producer before reaching our hotel in the bay of Sistina for the evening.

[in case of inclement weather, we will substitute the biking with a walking in the same region]

Activity: 46 km bike climb with 400 mt elevation gain [alternatively a 9 km walking with about 200 mt elevation gain on rolling hills]

Meals: Breakfast at hotel | Lunch at La Subida

## Day 8:

Today, after breakfast we leave for a short transfer to San Giovanni in Duino, where our hike will start. We will begin with an easy walk on flat, quiet roads until we reach Duino and its castle on the rock above the Adriatic Sea. From there we will start an easy climb on the carsick cliffs, reaching and elevation of 114 mt above the sea. Our hike will follow on with the trail going into woods and then going back on to the sea cliff limit, with amazing views of the Gulf of Trieste: the Miramare Castle, Trieste and the Istrian coast on the back. After about 9 km we will reach your hotel in Portopiccolo after lunch, which will be served at a beautiful wine estate above the sea which is also an *osmiza* (you learn what this mean). Rest of the day is for you to leisure at the Spa or at the fitness club.

Activity: a 9 km walking with about 115 mt elevation gain

Meals: Breakfast at hotel | Lunch at Skerk *osmiza*



## Day 9:

After breakfast, you have a transfer organized to Venice or Verona airport. *Arrivederci!*