



A Six-Day Getaway: Florence

Alumni Program



Florence, Italy's Renaissance city has been for centuries one of the principal centers of learning and art and can truly be considered an open-air museum. It's striking buildings, the city's elegant appearance, it's skyline with russet rooftops and lofty domes, contributed to Florence's role of importance in Italian culture and the arts.



ROUND-TRIP AIR TRANSPORTATION: Round-trip flights from New York (JFK) on Delta Airlines or similar carrier.

FIRST CLASS ACCOMMODATIONS: Hotel accommodations for five nights, at the centrally located four star Baglioni Hotel or similar including hotel tax and service charge.

SUPERB CUISINE: Seven meals including buffet breakfast each day and a welcome and farewell dinner.

WELCOME RECEPTION: Welcome to Florence, Italy cocktail party with hors d'oeuvres.

SIGHTSEEING TOUR PROGRAM: Including a city tour of Florence with entrance to museum of choice, full day excursion to the Chianti region including a light lunch and wine tasting.

MEETING ROOMS: We have a meeting room available for one hours use on two separate days.

COMPLIMENTARY PLACES: We have complimentary places for faculty on all our group departures.

PROFESSIONAL TOUR MANAGER: Services of a professional tour manager daily on the program upon arrival in Florence through departure.

FIRST CLASS MOTORCOACHES: First class motorcoaches and experienced drivers for all transfers, tours, and guided excursions.

LUGGAGE HANDLING AND TRANSFERS: Round-trip airport to hotel transfers in each city including luggage handling for one checked bag per person.

LOCAL TAXES AND SERVICE CHARGES: These charges are on all included features and all applicable entrance fees and admission charges.

MARKETING PACKAGE: To assist in getting the message out we will provide brochures, e-brochures, Web PDFs and brochure placement costs.

FUNDRAISING: All our group departures offer fundraising amounts for every paying passenger.

EXPERIENCE AND ADVICE: ABC Destinations holds over 45 years of experience in the travel industry offering assistance and advice in group travel programs.

FOR PRICING AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT ABC DESTINATIONS AT 1-800-227-5858

Day 1: Depart the U.S

From New York (JFK) for Italy.

Day 2: Arrival to Florence

Upon arrival in Italy, proceed to the baggage claim area. After exiting the airport, meet your ABC Destinations guide and driver and board our deluxe motorcoach for a city orientation bus tour to see firsthand Florence's breathtaking views and architecture. From its physical beauty to its unique spirit, Florence offers something magical to each and every visitor. Whether exploring the city's narrow alleyways and backstreets, visiting famed museums such as the Uffizi or Accademia (Academy of Fine Arts), or enjoying the diverse and traditional Florentine cuisine—every minute of your Florentine experience is sure to be wondrous. After checking into our hotel, the remainder of the day is at our leisure. Tonight includes a welcome cocktail party with a variety of Florentine flavor.

Day 3: Florence/walking city tour

After breakfast today, enjoy a guided half-day walking tour of Florence. See the Duomo, the city's geographical and focus point, Giotto's Bell Tower and the Baptistery. The duomo is an essential Florentine experience. Florence's duomo has the third longest nave in the world, just after St. Peter's in Rome and St. Paul's in London. Its complex exterior design merits a walk around the church to fully appreciate the surprising contrast with the church's minimalist interior. Together, the baptistery, the bell tower, and the duomo make up Florence's Piazza del Duomo, the city's religious center. Onwards our next essential stop is the Piazza della Signoria, a 13th-century square home to the Palazzo Vecchio on the east side and the Uffizi Gallery just to the south. Piazza della Signoria came into existence as a result of the Guelph-Ghibelline struggles, when many Ghibelline homes were destroyed to create space destined for civic use. Still Florence's civic and political center today, the piazza is adorned with many famous sculptures, such as Ammannati's Fountain of Neptune, colloquially referred to as Il Biancone; a copy of Michelangelo's David; and, within the 14th-century Loggia dei Lanzi, Cellini's bronze Perseus and Giambologna's Rape of the Sabine. Afterwards enjoy the rest of the afternoon at leisure to explore the city on your own or to stop at one of the many quaint shops atop the oldest bridge, Ponte Vecchio. This evening we will have a welcome to Florence dinner at the hotel. (Breakfast, Dinner)

Day 4: Florence/Chianti region

During the morning you will depart for a Tuscan landscape excursion of the Chianti region. The beauty of this territory, known for its wineries, lies in the perfect equilibrium between the soft forms of slopes and the thousand nuances of color and the crowded woods populated by ancient castles, secular parishes and beautiful villas. The Chianti Classico region covers an area of approximate 100 square miles. Within the collective Chianti region more than 8 million cases of wines classified as DOC level or above are produced each year. Today, most Chianti falls under two major designations of Chianti which includes the basic level Chianti, as well as that from seven designated sub-zones, and Chianti Classico. Enjoy a wine tasting followed by a light lunch. (Breakfast, Light Lunch)

Day 5: Florence/free day/ Siena and San Gimignano optional tour

Today you may wish to devote your free time to discovering the true heart of Florence. Explore Florence's art and architecture, its numerous museums and interesting neighborhoods, it's time to experience traditional Florentine cuisine, which rivals any of Italy's famous regional cuisines. The streets of Florence are lined with osterias, trattorias and ristoranti serving such classic dishes as bruschetta al pomodoro, ribollita, and bistecca Fiorentina. Famed Chianti wines will not be hard to find, and afterwards, countless gelaterias offer a perfect finish to a classic meal. Not surprisingly, shopping is a favorite past-time in a city that boasts centuries-old craft traditions. Look for hand-made leather goods, ceramics, top-quality textiles, artisan marbled paper, perfumeries and high-end boutiques. The Mercato di San Lorenzo is a must for those in search of leather products, while the chic designer shops and boutiques along Via Tornabuoni, together with the exquisite jewelry shops lining the Ponte Vecchio, form an itinerary to satisfy any shopper's desires. The day is yours to enjoy! If you wish to travel outside Florence we offer you an optional tour to Siena and San Gimignano. Siena is a cultivated, proud Gothic town which welcomes visitors from all over the world with the charm of its past and the wonders of its nature. Vineyards and olive trees characterize the landscape, exalting the local gastronomy, and creating the so called "slow food" culture. The territory around Siena is actually the best example of Tuscan regional identity, rich in natural resources and productivity, beginning with the famous "Chianti-shire" which extends north from Siena with its precious vineyards. Terraced hills and valleys rich rivers, castles, churches and wonderful buildings dot the countryside. One of the most charming and picturesque of all the Tuscan hill towns, San Gimignano is famed for its medieval towers. The towers dominate the town in the way that skyscrapers dominate modern cities. Originally there were more than 70 towers built as symbols of wealth and as a security precaution by the town's prosperous merchants. Today only 14 remain today but they give you a feel of the wealth and grandeur of the town's history. In recent times, the citizens of San Gimignano have realized they owned an authentic, valuable, open-air, artistic heritage. With all of its medieval structure still intact, the council has been recently added to the list of UNESCO-protected heritages sites. (Breakfast)

Day 6: Florence/tour of the Academy of Fine Arts

Today is a day we explore with a local licensed guide at the Academy of Fine Arts. The Academy of Fine Arts owes its popularity to several sculptures by Michelangelo including his 'Prisoners', 'Saint Matthew' and the 'David' which was moved there in 1873, upon completion of a scenic gallery. Adjacent spaces, re-adapted from two ancient monasteries, host important works of art from the 19th century. They came from the Drawing Academy, the Academy of Fine Arts and several suppressed convents. This collection of paintings largely represents religious subjects and they were created by masters working in Florence and the surrounding areas from the second half of the thirteenth century to the end of the sixteenth century. In the halls on the first floor, you can admire a magnificent collection of late Gothic polyptychs. Don't miss viewing the works of nineteenth century sculptors Lorenzo Bartolini and Luigi Pampaloni and the gallery's collection of Russian icons. The rest of the afternoon is free for any remaining shopping, additional sightseeing or to relax before your farewell dinner at a local Tuscan restaurant. Florence is often considered the birthplace of the Italian Renaissance; in fact, it has been called the Athens of the Middle Ages. This great city is arguably the last preserved Renaissance city in the world and is regarded by many as the art capital of Italy. (Breakfast, Dinner)

Day 7: Florence - USA

Depart to Pisa or Florence airport for your return flight to USA. (Breakfast)

Please note: Though rare, it may be necessary to substitute hotels and adjust itineraries due to local conditions. Every attempt has been made to produce this information accurately. We reserve the right to correct errors.

2011 DEPARTURE DATES: NOV 2-8, 9-15, 16-22, 23-29

2012 DEPARTURE DATES: OCT 31-NOV 6, NOV 7-13

