Pre-Departure Itinerary

Live the Florentine Life

With Tour Manager Raffaela

11 DAYS: Thursday, February 13-Sunday, February 23, 2020

VISITING ITALY IS ONE THING. LIVING IN ITALY IS QUITE ANOTHER! And with that in mind, we asked one of our most popular tour managers, Raffaela Lan Pellegrini, to plan a trip to Florence that will give a small group of our members the experience of living in Florence like a native. You’ll spend ten days with Raffi visiting her favorite places, shopping, eating at her favorite restaurants, enjoying aperitifs at her favorite watering holes and enjoying the neighborhoods, museums and markets of her favorite city — Florence. Raffaela has also arranged three workshops—one each in paper, photography and drawing. During the week you’ll depart Florence for an overnight stay in the small village of Artimino where you’ll visit the private Medici villa La Ferdinanda and, with a specialized guide, the Medici villa Poggio a Caiano. Capping off this incredible holiday experience will be a performance of *La Traviata* at Teatro Maggio Musicale. "I want the participants of tours I’ve escorted to experience my life!" —Raffaela

Includes

- Round-trip regularly scheduled Lufthansa Airlines flights from Boston to Florence, via Frankfurt and Florence to Boston, via Munich
- Nine nights’ four-star accommodations
- Welcome beverage on arrival, four aperitifs
- Seventeen meals: nine breakfasts, three lunches, five dinners with wine
- Paper workshop
- Photography workshop
- Drawing workshop
- Teatro Maggio Musicale Fiorentino: *La Traviata* performance
- Escort, private, round-trip airport/hotel transfers
- Services of professional local Tour Manager Raffaela

Rates

$4,199 per person double occupancy
Includes round-trip airfare, fuel surcharge and all air taxes and fees. **Single supplement is $625.** Triple accommodations may be available upon request. Fuel surcharge, air taxes and fees subject to change. Passport required. Per person deposit is $300.

Hotel Pierre
Via de’ Lamberti 5, 50123
Florence
Phone: 011 39 055 216218

Stay in the Heart of Florence
The 4-star Hotel Pierre awaits you in a fascinating Gothic style residence, in the splendid artistic and architectural context that has made Florence one of the world’s capitals of culture. Among hotels in the center of Florence, the Hotel Pierre offers the best amenities and furnishings for a perfect balance between modernity and classic taste, rendering each one of its spaces and rooms comfortable and full of charm. Just a short distance from the Duomo, Piazza della Signoria and Ponte Vecchio, the Hotel Pierre is the ideal choice for elegant accommodations in Florence. Set in a stunning 13th-century building, Hotel Pierre is 800 feet from Palazzo Strozzi and 1,300 feet from Florence Cathedral. Its rooms feature a flat-screen TV, air conditioning, and a stylish décor. Internet is free throughout.

Features
Florence guided walking tour, admission to Accademia, excursion to Archaeological Site of Fiesole, olive oil tasting, admission to Uffizi Gallery, admission to Medici villas La Ferdinanda and Poggio a Caiano, visit Sant’Ambrogio market and Santa Croce neighborhood, pasta making class and dinner in a family home.
The rooms have parquet floors, wooden furniture, and a private bathroom. Each room also comes with a complimentary smartphone. Breakfast is served on the 4th floor, in a room with views of the Cathedral. The friendly concierge service is available to answer questions and to propose excursions in and around Florence. Pierre Hotel is 1,000 feet from Ponte Vecchio and the trendy boutiques surrounding it. Santa Maria Novella Train Station is 0.6 mi away.

**Thursday, February 13: Depart Boston**
Depart Boston Logan Airport, on Lufthansa flights to Florence.

**Friday, February 14: Arrive Frankfurt – connecting flight to Florence**
Continental breakfast will be served before landing. In Frankfurt, clear immigration and proceed to our connecting flight to Florence. After passport control and immigration, proceed to baggage claim and retrieve our luggage. We will then pass through customs and meet with Raffaela who will assist with boarding the transfer vehicle to the Hotel Pierre. Enjoy a welcome beverage on arrival and a welcome dinner with wine at a local restaurant. *(D)*
Saturday, February 15
After enjoying our breakfast, Raffaela will lead us on a walking tour orientation of Florence. Afterwards we’ll enjoy lunch at a local restaurant. In the afternoon we’ll take part in a “paper” workshop followed by an aperitif in one of Raffaela’s favorite spots. (B, L)

Sunday, February 16
Today we’ll transfer to Piazzale Michelangelo and participate in a photography workshop followed by lunch. In the afternoon we’ll visit the Accademia to see Michelangelo’s David and finish the day with a refreshing cocktail. (B, L)

Monday, February 17
Today we board a public bus to the area of Fiesole where we’ll visit the famous archaeological site. Later we’ll transfer to Fattoria di Maiano for an olive tasting following by lunch with wine. Return to Florence and enjoy an aperitif with Raffaela. (B, L)
Fiesole: Archaeology & Art
The mystical beauty of Fiesole, less than 10 km outside of Florence, encompasses centuries of history. Largely unknown, this small town hides a wealth of surprises: the massive stones that make up the Etruscan walls, the remains of Roman baths, the green hilltop where Leonardo da Vinci first experimented with the concept of flight. Fiesole was well established as an Etruscan stronghold in the 8th century BC, until the Romans were finally able to dominate, building a thriving town of their own over the remains. For centuries it existed as a powerful rival to Florence, until once again it was subdued and its ruling nobles were forced to take up residence within the walls of the conquering city. In the 14th century it became known as the new living quarters for the rich and famous Florentines looking for new territory to build their villas surrounded by cypress trees and spectacular gardens. The hillside looms 295 meters above Florence, offering a special and stunning panorama of the Renaissance city.

Tuesday, February 18
After breakfast we depart for the Uffizi Gallery. After a coffee break we’ll make our way to our drawing workshop (art supplies provided.) Our day ends with dinner and wine at a local restaurant. (B, D)

Wednesday, February 19
After breakfast our morning is at leisure. In the afternoon we’ll have a private van transfer to the Hotel Paggeria Medicea in Artimino. Enjoy an exclusive visit of the private Medici Villa la Ferdinanda followed by dinner and wine tasting. (B, D) Please note: we will not need to pack or check-out of our Florence hotel for this overnight in Artimino.
Hotel "Paggeria Medicea" **** is a charming structure, the result of a faithful renovation of an elegant building from the early seventeenth century with a rectangular architectural plan. It was owned by the Medici family. It has 37 rooms with Wi-Fi service, TV and minibar, all recently renovated. During the renovation precious original features such as fireplaces, stone sinks, wooden beams and terracotta floors were preserved. In the morning the day starts with a rich breakfast buffet, which includes both sweet and savory, salty food from local and intercontinental proposals. The reception is open 24 hours a day: the staff is at your disposal for concierge services and to meet your needs. The hotel also has a swimming pool and a tennis court.

The Medici Villa of Artimino, also known as “La Ferdinanda”, is in the hills of Carmignano, in the little medieval hamlet of Artimino. This beautiful location, the legend says, was chosen by the Granduca Ferdinando I de’ Medici during a hunting. The building has a rectangular layout and its façade features angular bastions that suggest the shape of a fortress but the military look disappears thanks to the spacious loggia, supported by four columns. The interior, from the vault of the loggia to the little chapel and from the golden hall to the Cristina di Lorena apartment, are decorated with frescoes by Domenico Cresti (known as il Passignano) and Bernardo Poccetti. At the ground floor, you can see the wine cellars and the weapons room. The main characteristic of La Ferdinanda is the sight of the many fireplaces, that’s why it is also called the "Villa dei Cento Camini", or "Villa of a hundred chimneys".
Thursday, February 20
After breakfast we’ll head back to Florence. On the way we’ll visit another Medici Villa – Poggio a Caiano. Enjoy dinner with wine at a local restaurant. (B, D)

The Medici Villa in Poggio a Caiano, also known as Ambra, is one of the most splendid Medici residences in Tuscany, declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The architectural masterpiece by Giuliano da Sangallo was commissioned by Lorenzo de’ Medici and his heirs and was built between 1445 and 1520 to be the summer residence of the noble Florentine family. Today, it houses two museums: one dedicated to the historic apartments and the Museum of Still-Life. The building is the first example of Renaissance architecture, mixing, in a perfect harmony of spaces and styles, lessons of the Classical era with characteristic elements of noble, rural Tuscan architecture. The Villa’s gardens are also worth a visit, where you can admire rare plant species and some terracotta statues, while the Museum of Still-Life displays around 200 paintings coming from the Medici collections.
**Friday, February 21**
Today Raffaela will take us to the Santa Croce neighborhood of Florence and a visit of Sant’Ambrogio Market. Here we’ll have time to enjoy lunch on our own. Later tonight we’ll visit a real Italian family home where we’ll participate in a pasta making class followed by dinner. *(B, D)*

**Santa Croce** -- The art-filled church at the eastern edge of the *centro storico* is the focal point of one of the most genuine neighborhoods left in the center. The streets around the *Mercato di Sant’Ambrogio* and *Piazza de’ Ciompi* have an especially appealing, local feel, and they get lively after dark. The Santa Croce neighborhood boasts some of the best restaurants and bars in the city—*aperitivo* hour is vibrant along *Via de’ Benci*, and there is always something going on along *Via Panisperna* and *Via de’ Macci*.

**Saturday, February 22**
Enjoy a full-day at leisure today to explore Florence on our own. Raffaela will join us for an aperitif before we Transfer to the *Teatro del Maggio Musicale* for a performance of *La Traviata*. *(B)*

**Sunday, February 23**
After breakfast we’ll transfer to the airport and return to Boston, via Munich. *(B)*
Florence, Italy: cradle of the Renaissance

Florence's museums, palaces, and churches house some of the greatest artistic treasures in the world. The most popular and important sites in Florence include the Cathedral, the Baptistery, the Uffizi, the Bargello, and the Accademia. The churches of Santa Maria Novella and Santa Croce are veritable art galleries, and the library of San Lorenzo is a magnificent exhibition of Michelangelo's architectural genius. Wander some of the oldest streets in the city until you reach the Arno River, cross the Ponte Vecchio, and experience the "newest" area of Florence, the Oltrarno. Be sure to set aside time to see the vast and varied art collection housed in the Pitti Palace. When you grow weary of museums and monuments, head outdoors. Spend a day at the Boboli Gardens or climb the hill to the church of San Miniato al Monte to experience an enchanting view of Florence.
What to See in Florence, Italy

Piazza della Signoria and Palazzo Vecchio
Florence's most famous square is Piazza della Signoria, the heart of the historic center and a free open-air sculpture exhibit. The Loggia della Signoria holds some important statues including a copy of Michelangelo's David. The piazza has been Florence's political center since the middle ages and Florence's town hall, the medieval Palazzo Vecchio, sits on the piazza. The palazzo contains elaborately decorated public rooms and private apartments that can be visited (Visiting Information). Around the piazza are cafes and restaurants.

Il Duomo - Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore
Florence's most popular site is its Duomo (cathedral), the Cattedrale de Santa Maria del Fiore. The huge Gothic duomo was begun in 1296, consecrated in 1436, and holds 20,000 people. Its exterior, made of green, pink, and white marble, has several elaborate doors and interesting statues. Inside, Brunelleschi's Dome is a masterpiece of construction.

The Baptistery
The Baptistery of John the Baptist, from the 11th century, is one of Florence's oldest buildings. Its exterior is made of green and white marble and has three sets of amazing bronze doors (reproductions - the originals are in the Duomo Museum, also worth a visit). Inside, you can see some mosaics and a marble pavement of the zodiac. In Piazza San Giovanni, off Piazza del Duomo, open 12:00-7:00 daily except holidays and 8:30-2:00 Sundays

Campanile - Bell Tower
The Campanile, bell tower, is in Piazza del Duomo. The first story was designed by Giotto and it is commonly called Giotto's Campanile. Buy a ticket and climb the 414 stairs (no lift) for great views of the Cathedral and its dome and the city of Florence and surroundings.

Ponte Vecchio
The Ponte Vecchio (old bridge), built in 1345, was Florence's first bridge across the Arno River and is the only surviving bridge from Florence's medieval days (others were destroyed in World War II). The Ponte Vecchio is still lined with shops selling gold and silver jewelry. From the bridge, you'll have a great view along the Arno River and beyond.

Galleria degli Uffizi
The Galleria degli Uffizi holds the world's most important collection of Renaissance art but it's also Italy's most crowded museum so it's a good idea to buy tickets ahead to avoid long ticket lines. The Uffizi holds thousands of paintings from
medieval to modern times and many antique sculptures, illuminations, and tapestries. Artists whose works you'll see include Michelangelo, Giotto, Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Perugino, and Raphael.

**Galleria dell' Academia**
Florence's Galleria dell' Academia holds important paintings and sculptures from the 13th-16th centuries. Michelangelo's David, probably the most famous sculpture in the world, is in the Galleria dell' Academia as well as other sculptures by Michelangelo. You'll also find an interesting collection of musical instruments, begun by the Medici family.

**Boboli Garden and Pitti Palace**
Cross the Ponte Vecchio to the Giardino di Boboli, a huge park on a hillside in the middle of Florence behind the Pitti Palace. Here you'll find beautiful gardens and fountains and a great view of Florence from the Forte Belvedere (picture). Open daily at 8:15 (except some Mondays in winter) with seasonal closing times. The Pitti Palace, Florence's largest palazzo, was once the seat of the Medici family.

**Santa Croce**
Santa Croce, in Piazza Santa Croce, is the largest Franciscan church in Italy and holds the tombs of several important Florentines including Michelangelo and Dante. The vast interior contains some exceptional stained glass windows and frescoes. One of Brunelleschi's most important works, the Cappella dei Pazzi, is in Santa Croce. Admission includes the museum and tours given by volunteers when available. Open Monday-Saturday, 9:30-5:30 and Sunday, 1-5:30.

**Top Squares in Florence**
Florence has several significant squares that are worth a visit. Walking around a piazza is free and many of Florence's squares are like outdoor museums with beautiful works of art. Here are seven squares not to miss:

1. **Piazza della Signoria**
Florence's most historically significant square, the Piazza della Signoria has long been a gathering place for Florentines and visitors. In the shadow of the Palazzo Vecchio, the wide square has been a site for political rallies, festivals, and for the infamous "Bonfire of the Vanities" during the 15th century. Several beautiful statues from the Renaissance era decorate the Piazza della Signoria and it is next to one of Florence's most important attractions, the Uffizi Gallery.

2. **Piazza del Duomo**
This is a rather small square in terms of walking space in that it is largely occupied by the cathedral complex that includes the Duomo, Baptistery, and Campanile. Adjacent to Piazza del Duomo, and often considered part of the square, is Piazza San Giovanni. The Baptistery, one of the oldest buildings in Florence, technically sits in Piazza San Giovanni. Thus, this district of Florence is also known as the San Giovanni quarter.

3. **Piazza della Repubblica**
The Piazza della Repubblica is a vast space surrounded by bustling (and expensive) cafés and chic hotels. The square sits in the historical center of the city, a few blocks from the Duomo and at the intersection of two ancient Roman roads, the Cardo and the Decumanus. Unfortunately, neither the ancient nor medieval remains in this piazza as it was restructured in the 19th century during the short period when Florence became the capital of a unified Italy. A redeeming quality: there is a lovely carousel in the square that kids will enjoy.

4. **Piazza Santa Croce**
East of Piazza della Signoria and not far from the banks of the Arno, Piazza Santa Croce is one of the largest squares in Florence. It regularly hosts festivals, concerts, and rallies, including the terrific Calcio Storico match which has locals playing soccer (football) in traditional dress. Surrounded by medieval buildings with the massive Franciscan basilica of Santa Croce at one end, the piazza been a focal point of civic life since the 13th century.

5. **Piazza Santissima Annunziata**
A rather small square tucked into the northeastern quadrant of the city near San Marco and the Accademia, Piazza Santissima Annunziata is named after the 13th century church of the same name. The piazza is particularly beautiful because both the Santissima Annunziata church and the Ospedale degli Innocenti, a 15th century hospital/orphanage designed by Brunelleschi, are defined by harmonious arcades. The latter, which today contains a small picture gallery on its upper floor, is also decorated with round terracotta reliefs designed by Andrea della Robbia. In the center of the square is an equestrian statue of Grand Duke Ferdinand I by Giambologna and two fountains by Pietro Tacca.
6. Piazza Santo Spirito
Piazza Santo Spirito is named after the Santo Spirito church, but it should derive its name from the spirited cafés and markets that call this square home. Located on the Oltrarno (across the Arno) side of Florence, Piazza Santo Spirito is favored by Florentines because of its daily food market, which is open from 8am to 2pm, and its relatively non-touristy bars, restaurants, and cafés. On Sundays, Piazza Santo Spirito hosts a second-hand market with antiques and other bric-a-brac and in the summers, you can occasionally find live music in the square.

7. Piazzale Michelangelo
High above the city is Piazzale Michelangelo, a required stop for coach tours of Florence. The square contains a fantastic panoramic view of the city and a copy of Michelangelo's David statue. Other than that, the square is littered with souvenir vendors and overflowing with cars and buses.

Michelangelo in Florence: Where to See the Art of Michelangelo in Florence, Italy
Born and raised in Tuscany, Michelangelo Buonarotti has long been associated with the city of Florence, which holds a small trove of many of his masterpieces. Florence is where you will find the sculpture of David, which is one of the great icons of Renaissance art, as well as numerous sculptures, architectural projects, and a painting from the Italian artist. Here is a list of Michelangelo's great works - and where to find them - in Florence.

Michelangelo's Art in the Galleria dell'Accademia
The Galleria dell'Accademia houses the original sculpture of David, considered one of Michelangelo's finest works of art. David once stood in front of the Palazzo Vecchio, Florence's City Hall, as a symbol of the city's independence. There are now copies of David in front of the Palazzo Vecchio and in the center of Piazzale Michelangelo, a hilltop square famous for its panorama of Florence.

A few other Michelangelo works reside in the Accademia. They are "The Four Prisoners," a marble group designed for the tomb of Pope Julius II, and a statue of Saint Matthew.

Casa Buonarroti, Michelangelo's House
Michelangelo once owned this house on Via Ghibellina where the Casa Buonarroti is located. This small museum contains several sculptures and drawings, including two of Michelangelo's early relief sculptures: Battle of the Centaurs and Madonna of the Stairs.

Michelangelo's Art in the Bargello
Florence's premier museum for sculpture, the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, boasts a few Michelangelo sculptures, too. The most famous of these is Bacchus, a statue depicting a tipsy Bacchus (God of Wine) adorned with grapes and holding a chalice. Additionally in the Bargello, there's Michelangelo's "David Apollo," which bears similarity to the David in the Accademia; a bust of Brutus; and the Tondo Pitti, a relief sculpture in the round depicting the Virgin Mary and baby Jesus.

Michelangelo's Art in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo
The Museum of the Duomo, which holds many prized objects from Santa Maria del Fiore (the Duomo), is where you'll find The Deposition, another fine sculpture by the Renaissance master. Also called The Florentine Pietà (Michelangelo's more famous Pietà is in Rome), The Deposition shows the dead Christ being held up by the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, and Nicodemus.

Michelangelo's Art in Palazzo Vecchio
Florence's City Hall is the site of yet another Michelangelo sculpture, "The Genius of Victory." But it is also where Michelangelo was to paint a monumental "Battle of Cascina." This painting was never initiated, though some art historians believe it may be "lost."
PREPARING FOR YOUR TOUR

**Identification**  
U.S. citizens require a valid passport to travel; with at least 6 months' validity beyond the date of your return to the U.S. All non-US citizens should check with the appropriate foreign consulate for additional entry requirements. Passports are the responsibility of each traveler.

Make several copies of your passport. Carry one copy with you and leave one with someone at home. If your passport is lost or stolen, having a photocopy will make replacement easier.

**Money Matters**  
Verify that your credit/ATM cards are valid for the duration of your tour and that they can be used internationally. We suggest that you bring a few days worth of foreign currency with you in case you are unable to get dollars changed or have access to an ATM upon arrival. Notify your bank/credit card companies that you will be traveling abroad so that your overseas purchases are not confused with fraudulent charges.

**Tipping**  
Tips to tour managers, drivers, guides and waitstaff are not included in the price of your trip. Tipping should always be at the travelers’ discretion and should be a reflection of your satisfaction with the service provided. Following are some guidelines for your convenience.

- TOUR MANAGERS: 5€ per person per day
- BUS DRIVERS: 5€ per person per day
- LOCAL GUIDES: 2€ per person
- WAITSTAFF: 10€ per person per week
- TRANSFERS ASSISTANTS (if different from Tour Manager): 5€ each way

**Medications**  
Be sure you have a sufficient supply of prescription medications. Obtain written prescriptions for any medication you will be taking on the trip, and for eyeglasses, should replacements be necessary.

**Packing**  
Enclosed is a packing “cheat-sheet” to help you get started. Be sure to tape your name and address inside your luggage in case your baggage tag is lost.

Layers are essential when sightseeing on tour as the weather can change significantly during the day and over the course of the trip. Be sure to bring comfortable walking shoes.

**Accommodations**  
While The Travel Club makes every effort to ensure special room requests, special requests are at the discretion of the hotel and cannot be guaranteed.

**On tour**  
Generally, longer programs can be filled with long travel days on a coach (rest stops included), and a lot of walking and standing (possibly on uneven surfaces), and some destinations may have altitude or other environmental concerns. Please remember that many historic areas, especially in Europe, cannot accommodate large coaches on their streets and walking tours are the only way to see the area. Whenever possible, we specify such information in your pre-departure itinerary. It is also important to be aware that many sites, especially in Europe, are not designed to accommodate wheelchairs or mobility aids.

**Flights**  
The Travel Club assumes no responsibility for applying frequent flyer miles. Please be aware that some Frequent Flyer Miles may not be applied toward certain classes of service under which tickets have been issued. However, you may contact the airline directly to attempt this on your own. Information on your tickets cannot be obtained prior to departure, so please remember to retain your boarding passes, as you may need to submit that information to the airline to redeem your miles.
Because we reserve GROUP air space, some airlines will not allow you to check on your reservation or make requests directly with the carrier prior to departure. In some cases passengers cannot make seat assignments prior to check-in at the airport. While we make every effort to ensure your requests, we cannot guarantee them. It is at the discretion of the air carrier to fulfill any special requests. In addition, many carriers do not allow seating to be assigned until check in at the airport.

**Travel Insurance**

Protecting yourself against unexpected medical emergencies before traveling (your own, a family member’s, or a travel companion’s) is a smart investment – so we strongly urge you to consider purchasing traveler’s insurance. Show of the Month Travel Club recommends CSA Travel Protection for your travel insurance needs. (A brochure was forwarded to you when you reserved this trip.) PLEASE NOTE: You must contact the insurance company directly to purchase a policy and with customer service issues and questions regarding potential or existing claims. They will provide you with the most comprehensive information and assist you with processing.