VERSILIA, ON TUSCANY’S NORTHERN COAST, is a stretch of lovely beach resorts and charming villages. Our home base is Viareggio, known for its lively seaside promenade, Liberty-style architecture, shops, cafés and restaurants—perfect for the traditional evening passeggiata. We've included an excursion to a marble quarry in Carrara, before heading to historic Pietrasanta—a refined art town of tiny galleries and artisan workshops—for a visit and lunch. Visit Pisa's famous Campo dei Miracoli (Field of Miracles) with its graceful Duomo, cupcake-like Baptistry, and the (in)famous leaning bell tower; elegant Lucca with its handsome piazzas and shady promenades; and Livorno—with a colorful history and cosmopolitan heritage. “Intense beauty, great cuisine and amazing aromas...” That's how NYTimes.com describes the wildly charming Cinque Terre where we'll have lunch and a wine-tasting on this full-day visit. Capping off this holiday is an excursion to off-the-beaten track Pistoia—with its old walls, striped churches, frescoes, medieval watchtowers and arcaded piazzas—everything we're looking for in an old Tuscan city.

Includes

- Round-trip regularly scheduled Alitalia Airlines flights from Boston to Pisa, via Rome
- Seven nights’ three-star accommodations: Hotel Katy, Viareggio
- Fourteen meals: seven breakfasts, four lunches while touring, three dinners with wine at local restaurants
- Escort, private, round-trip airport/ hotel transfers
- Services of professional local Tour Manager

Rates

$3,319 per person double occupancy
Includes round-trip airfare, fuel surcharge and all air taxes and fees. Single supplement is $325. We have a limited number of single supplements available at just $250. Call to reserve. Triple accommodations may be available upon request. Fuel surcharge, air taxes and fees subject to change. Passport required. Per person deposit is $300.

DAILY ITINERARY

Day 1: Overnight Flight
Depart Boston on an evening Alitalia Airlines flight to Rome. Dinner will be served on board. Relax and enjoy the in-flight entertainment.

Accommodations

Hotel Katy
Via Flavio Gioia 12/14 - 55049 Viareggio (LU)
Telephone: +39 0584 45518
Hotel Katy is a completely renovated 3 star hotel located near the Viareggio promenade – close to the sea. The hotel offers its guests very comfortable rooms, all equipped with air-conditioning, colour tv, fridge, safe and telephone. Guest amenities include: Lift, Bar, Buffet breakfast, Wi-Fi wireless Internet

Features

Day 2: Arrive Rome – connecting flight to Pisa – transfer to Viareggio
Continental breakfast will be served before landing in Rome. Clear immigration and passport control and proceed to the connecting/domestic flight to Pisa. Upon arrival retrieve our luggage and clear customs and meet our local representative who will assist with the transfer to the Hotel Katy in Viareggio. Check in and receive room assignments. The rest of the day is at leisure to get acquainted with the hotel and surroundings. Enjoy a welcome dinner, with wine, this evening at a nearby restaurant. (D)

Day 3: Excursion to Lucca
Today’s half-day excursion is a lovely treat. In the morning we’ll head to beautiful Lucca, the only medieval town in Italy still surrounded by its original 14th century walls. Lucca is a town filled with ancient Roman ruins, as well as great furniture, jewelry and antique shops. Enjoy a guided walking tour. Continue on to Montecarlo, a medieval village in the beautiful Tuscan countryside where you’ll visit Fattoria il Poggio for lunch with wine. (B, L)

Most of the attractions in Lucca today show its ancient history: from the trace of the Roman amphitheater that can be seen in the shape of the Piazza dell’Anfiteatro to the archeological remains under the 12th century church of Saints Giovanni and Reparata (the first city cathedral, located just around the corner from the present-day cathedral of San Martino), to the various towers and villas from the 12th to 16th centuries. Extraordinarily, as the city grew and modernized, the walls that surrounded the old town were maintained which was not the case for many other cities in
Tuscany, including Florence. As the walls lost their military importance, the top of the walls became a pedestrian promenade, today one of Lucca's main attractions. The area around the walls is well taken care of, with green grass and trees everywhere along the walls. They have in essence become a park that surrounds the city and blocks out more modern life. Here you can enjoy a bike ride around the entire perimeter, a stroll as you enjoy a gelato or simply a period of rest from sightseeing on one of the many shaded benches that line the main walkway.

**Day 4: Excursion to Pisa and Livorno**
This morning we'll start the day with a drive to Pisa and Piazza dei Miracoli where we'll admire the Leaning Tower, Baptistry and Cathedral on a guided tour. From here we'll make our way to Livorno and enjoy a guided tour. Dinner with wine will be at a local restaurant in Viareggio. *(B, D)*

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**Pisans claim that Campo dei Miracoli** is among the most beautiful urban spaces in the world. Certainly, the immaculate walled lawns provide a gorgeous setting for the Cathedral, Baptistry and Tower. Forming the centrepiece of the Campo’s Romanesque trio, the candy-striped Cathedral (Duomo), begun in 1063, has a graceful tiered facade and cavernous interior. The transept’s bronze doors are by Bonanno Pisano, and the 16th-century entrance doors are by Giambologna. To the west, the cupcake-like Baptistry was started in 1153 and completed by Nicola and Giovanni Pisano in 1260. Inside, note Nicola Pisano’s beautiful pulpit. But it’s to the campanile, better known as the Leaning Tower, that all eyes are drawn. Bonanno Pisano began building in 1173, but almost immediately his plans came a cropper in a layer of shifting soil. Only three of the tower's seven tiers were completed before it started tilting – continuing at a rate of about 1mm per year. By 1990 the lean had reached 5.5 degrees – a tenth of a degree beyond the critical point established by computer models. Stability was finally ensured in 1998 when a combination of biased weighting and soil drilling forced the tower into a safer position. Today it’s almost 4.1m off the perpendicular. Flanking the Campo, beautiful Camposanto cemetery is said to contain soil shipped from Calvary during the Crusades. Look out for the 14th-century fresco The Triumph of Death on the southern cloister wall.

**Livorno:** Declared a free port in the 17th century, Livorno (Leghorn in English) attracted traders from across the globe, who brought with them new customs and habits, exotic goods, slaves and foreign forms of worship. The result was a city famed throughout Europe for its multiculturalism. Today its seafood is the best on the Tyrrhenian coast, its shabby historic quarter threaded with Venetian-style canals is full of character, and its elegant belle époque buildings offer evocative reminders of a prosperous past. *Lonely Planet*
Day 5: Excursion to The Cinque Terre
Today we’ll travel to the Ligurian Seacoast to enjoy some of Italy’s natural masterpieces. The Cinque Terre, or Five Villages, are located on eleven miles of rocky coastline with terraced hills and vineyards sloping steeply down to the sea. The villages are built into the rocks between the beach and the hills. Centuries-old footpaths, 500 to 1000 feet above the sea, lead through olive groves, vineyards, orchards and chestnut woods. Each village has its own distinct character. Nearly inaccessible by road, the villages are linked by railway. We’ll transfer to La Spezia where we meet our local guide and have an orientation tour. We’ll continue by coach and enjoy the breathtaking views of the coast with the terraced vineyards. We’ll stop above Riomaggiore to take photos and continue to Manarola and Vernazza. After a visit we’ll board the train and continue to Monterosso al Mare where we’ll enjoy light lunch and wine tasting. In the afternoon we return by train to Levanto and coach return to Viareggio in the late afternoon. \((B, L)\)
The Cinque Terre, on what is known as the Gulf of Poets, was the later home of Lord Byron, Percy B. Shelley and many others. The landscape and quaint villages exude an inspirational charm that undoubtedly drew these writers to the region. Charles Dickens, in *Pictures from Italy*, wrote: “There is nothing in Italy, more beautiful to me, than the coast road between Genoa and La Spezia: a landscape consisting of sea and land, terraced vineyards and olive oil, the enchanting flora of the Mediterranean scrub and sweet fragrances.”

**Day 6: Excursion to Carrara and Pietrasanta**

Today we’ll head for Cararra and for a visit to a marble quarry. Later we’ll transfer to Pietrasanta, where we’ll have free time and enjoy lunch with wine at a local restaurant. **Pietrasanta** is a small medieval town that grew to importance during the 15th century. Today, artists and sculptors are drawn to Pietrasanta from all over the world. Their studios mingle with small elegant shops amid the ochre-washed buildings in the alleyways that radiate from the **Piazza del Duomo**. We’ll enjoy lunch at a local restaurant and enjoy a guided walking highlights tour. *(B, L)*

When driving along the west coast of Tuscany just north of Pisa, you will see jagged alps rising steeply from the narrow strip of land, glistening majestically. These are the Apuan Alps, mountains that gleam as though cloaked with snow all year round. But the pristine white is not snow, it is the marble of the bare quarried faces of the mountains –
the snow the gods made eternal. The effect is so surreal it would not be out of place in a mural in an Indian restaurant, but this breathtaking view belies a multi-million euro a year industry and the source of some of the most famous sculptures in the world – including Michelangelo’s Pietà and David.

Pietrasanta is a small town in the province of Lucca and is one of Italy’s most famous towns for the production of marble sculpture. The name of the town, literally translated means "sacred rock", and with good reason. Pietrasanta has served as a sanctuary for international sculptors and artists for six centuries and it was here, in the lofty quarters of the city’s palazzi, that Michelangelo, Henry Moore, and, more recently, Fernando Botero chose to set up their residence, in part due to the town’s proximity to the marble quarries of Carrara.

There are more than 15 contemporary art galleries in Pietrasanta—including Galleria La Subbia (11 Via Padre Eugenio Barsanti; 39-335/586-4558) and Galleria Tega (56 Via Provinciale Vallecchia; 39-0584/793-940), where you can see works by renowned Tuscan artist Sandro Chia and avant-garde duo Christo and Jeanne-Claude—have opened in the town’s historic neighborhood.

Day 7: Excursion to Pistoia
After breakfast we’ll head for Pistoia, a lively old Tuscan town, surrounded by medieval walls, located halfway between Florence and Lucca. Amidst scenery of hills and valleys, this area is known for the cultivation of plants and flowers. Our guided visit includes the large Piazza del Duomo dominated by the Cathedral of San Zeno and lined with other medieval buildings and Palazzos. Next we’ll head for Vinci and have lunch with wine at the Villa Dianella. In the afternoon we’ll visit the Leonardo da Vinci Museum. (B, L)

Pistoia: the hidden jewel of Tuscany
Pretty Pistoia sits snugly at the foot of the Apennines. A town that has grown well beyond its medieval ramparts, its centro storico is tranquil, well preserved and guardian to some striking contemporary art. On Wednesdays and Saturdays a morning market transforms Pistoia’s vast main square, Piazza del Duomo, as well as its surrounding streets into a lively sea of blue awnings and jostling shoppers. Otherwise, from Monday to Saturday you’ll find open-air stalls heaped with seasonal fruit and vegetables on tiny Piazza della Sala, west of the cathedral. This amazing little city will surprise the visitor with its charm, history and art. The guided walking tour will explore the city centre through the amazing narrow paved streets, medieval palaces, churches and squares. Pistoia is famous for its sugar-almond dragee called “Confetti di Pistoia”.

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Day 8: Day at leisure in Viareggio
The day is ours to enjoy the sights in Viareggio. This evening we’ll have a farewell dinner with wine at a local restaurant. (B, D)

Day 9: Return to Boston
Enjoy breakfast and depart the hotel for the transfer back to Pisa airport and your return flight to Boston, via Rome. (B)

VIAREGGIO

The town of Viareggio is the second largest within the province of Lucca and is a popular, up-market seaside resort. It is a major part of the Tuscan Riviera, known as Versilia, which has a sandy beach stretching for more than 20km. The other side of the road is lined with Viareggio hotels facing the sea. Viareggio is one of the most traditional and famous seaside resorts in Tuscany. It has, for a long time, been a popular holiday destination for both Italians and foreign visitors. An elegant 3km promenade runs alongside the beach and is lined with an amazing array of liberty style buildings housing shops, bars, restaurants, nightclubs, cinemas, theatres and art galleries.

There is certainly never a shortage of things to do in Viareggio, even just stroll along this promenade during the day is a wonderful experience. You can stop off for a coffee or to eat, browse around the unusual shops, pop into an art gallery and just generally soak up the lively, bustling atmosphere. In the evening you can join in the traditional Italian 'Passeggiata' (meaning walk or stroll) and saunter slowly up and down with both locals and holiday makers alike. Versilia is famous for its chic piano bars and lively discos and you will be spoiled for choice. Bars and restaurants are open well into the night and there are always crowds of people strolling up and down the promenade.

The town centre is more modern and set out along an American 'grid style' arrangement. The shopping centre has pedestrian only streets and has some excellent and unusual shops. There are many designer clothes and shoe shops, craft and gift shops and many more bars and restaurants. There is also a permanent market with some interesting stalls. Most of the historic buildings in Viareggio were destroyed during World War II. The most significant building remaining is Torre Matilde dating back to 1541. This was once on the coastline, before it withdrew, and the tower was built to protect the town against the constant invasions by pirates.
Proof of Citizenship is required for all trips outside the United States. U.S. citizens require a valid passport to travel; with at least 6 months' validity. All non-US citizens should check with the appropriate foreign consulate for additional entry requirements. Passports are the responsibility of each traveler.

PLEASE NOTE: This pre-departure itinerary is designed to give you an idea of how this itinerary is structured. We reserve the right to make any changes to your final itinerary if deemed necessary, at any time prior to departure.

PLEASE NOTE: This is not your final itinerary. You will receive final documents (itinerary, tickets (if applicable), etc.) approximately 2–3 weeks prior to departure. Although we try our best to ensure that information is accurate at the time of publication, we are not responsible for any error, omission, misprint or liability that results from the use (or misuse) of this information.
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.

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: 5E per person per day
BUS DRIVERS: 5E per person per day
LOCAL GUIDES: 2E per person
WAITSTAFF: 10E per person per week
TRANSFERS ASSISTANTS (if different from Tour Manager): 5E 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.