



TASTES TOUR - PIEDMONT AND VALLE D'AOSTA

01 - 15 OCTOBER 2017

AUD 7,970 PER PERSON (TWIN SHARE)

AUD 8,960 PER PERSON (SOLO TRAVELLER)





OVERVIEW

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Since 2007, we've been designing itineraries for people who are, like us, fascinated by Italy and believe that a holiday is best experienced in good company. We travel at a relaxed pace so that you can make the most of your time in Italy without racing from one city to another. There is plenty of free time so you can explore that museum that really interested you or just put your feet up and enjoy your holiday.

Gorgeous lakes, pristine mountains, authentic food and a fascinating insight into a period of Italian history ruled by the latter day equivalent of oligarchs and magnates – our Piemonte and Valle d'Aosta offers it all. It is a fantastic introduction to an area that is less visited, and definitely off the well-trodden path of the 'Grand Tour' that most people follow when they first visit Italy.

The tour will also appeal to those who are interested in exploring a sophisticated wine and food culture that goes well beyond the 'red sauces' that most people identify with Italian cuisine. The Slow Food Movement started in Piemonte and its philosophy has now spread to many other parts of the world. We'll explore the Langhe, an area with its own agricultural traditions that date back centuries and home to the renowned Barolo and Barbaresco wines. We'll be trying many regional dishes and visiting some local producers of cheeses and other products.

We'll be staying in just four hotels over the 15 days to ensure we minimise the time spent packing and moving. Our bases for the tour are Turin (4 nights), the Langhe (3 nights), Aosta (3 nights) and Lake Maggiore (4 nights).

There are 5 lunches and 5 dinners included in the tour in restaurants chosen for their high quality food and wine that is typical of the area we're visiting. And we are always on hand to enjoy a meal together on other occasions.

"We have visited Italy previously, once with a large group and twice independently, but Italian Tours was definitely the most enjoyable. The carefully chosen hotels, cultural visits and local food and wine experiences, combined with a small friendly group, were decidedly a bonus"

Paul (Milan and Lakes 2013)





ITINERARY

DAY 1 - ARRIVE IN TURIN

The tour begins in Turin, where you can check into the hotel during the day to rest up for the excitement ahead or get a head start on the sightseeing. In the early evening, we meet in the hotel lobby for an aperitivo, before heading out for dinner at a local restaurant.

Overnight: Turin

DAY 2 - CENTRAL TURIN

We will spend the morning visiting Turin's historical centre with a local guide. We start in Piazza Castello, the heart of the city, admiring its many palaces and churches before venturing into Palazzo Madama. The principal architect for the Savoy court was Filippo Juvarra, a Sicilian whose talent blossomed here and who later moved to Spain. We will see many works attributed to Juvarra this morning.

Food lovers will enjoy the fact that the Torinese were the first to develop a means of solidifying chocolate, which they combined with drinking coffee: a match made in heaven. We spend the afternoon visiting one of the historical chocolate houses and learning how their chocolates are made. And tasting them of course.

Overnight: Turin

DAY 3 - TURIN'S MARKETS AND SOME FREE TIME

This morning we rub shoulders with the locals as we visit Porta Palazzo, the largest open air market in Europe. There'll be time to browse through stalls that offer spectacular fresh produce, from fruit and vegetables to meat and fish, cheeses, fresh flowers and general house hold necessities. We'll combine our market trip with coffee and cake at another historic café and perhaps a visit to a historical church if there is time.

The afternoon is yours to visit one of the many other attractions in Turin or to



put your feet up.

Overnight: Turin

DAY 4 - A ROYAL HUNTING LODGE AND APERITIVI IN TURIN'S HISTORICAL CAFES

On the outskirts of the city, the Savoy had a number of hunting palaces, one of the biggest and most extraordinary of which is La Venaria. It expresses beautiful extravagance with its endless rooms and vast gardens and will keep you absorbed for the morning.

We return to Turin in the afternoon, where there will be some time to relax, before we meet up for a late evening stroll to admire some more of the splendid Baroque architecture of Turin, before we find a spot on one of Turin's many piazze to sit and watch the people go by.

Overnight: Turin

DAY 5 - TOWARDS THE LANGHE

Today we leave Turin and make our way towards the Langhe, the hilly area that is synonymous with good wine and food.

Before uncorking a bottle of the local red, we stop in the small town of Alba. Many of the towers that once crowded its mediaeval skyline have long since gone, but the layout remains. It is easy to wander and appreciate this city: a pleasant agricultural centre, famous for its wine, hazelnuts and white truffles. As with so many Roman towns, Alba is built over Roman ruins; we will be stopping along the way to see some of the them.

Overnight: Langhe

DAY 6 - HAZELNUTS, MEET THE LOCALS AND THE SCENERY

Our first full day in the Langhe has to be about food and wine, though, for good measure, we'll throw in some exceptional uncontaminated natural scenery and a lunch with a local hazelnut producer and his family to mix things up. The local variety of hazelnut, the Tonda Gentile delle Langhe, is particular to these lands and part of its gastronomical culture — it's Nutella's principal ingredient. In the morning, we visit a farmer of hazelnuts, who also happens to be a pastry chef, so we can try his finished product as well!

In the afternoon, we return to our lovely country hotel, where you can contemplate the views over the rolling hills with a glass of wine, have a swim or catch-up on your journal writing!

Overnight: Langhe

DAY 7 - CHEESE, BAROLO AND A PRETTY VILLAGE

Today we visit a cheese producer in the higher area of the Langhe near Murazzano. Murazzano cheese is produced with the milk of the local breed of sheep (the Langhe sheep). It is only produced in a small area, by small independent farmers and it is delicious.

In the afternoon, we visit a cantina (winery) that produces the famed Barolo wine and stop to visit the town of Monforte d'Alba, a charming little village to wander around.

Overnight: Langhe

DAY 8 - TOWARDS THE VALLE D'AOSTA

We move on, towards Valle d'Aosta, one of the smallest and least known regions of Italy. Ninety percent of the area is mountainous and the only road in our out follows the river valley, making it an extremely picturesque drive. Before we make it to the valley, we stop to visit the monastery that inspired Umberto Eco's novel *The Name of the Rose*. La Sacra di San Michele has looked out over the Susa Valley since 983, harbouring pilgrims and lost souls alike, and is a beautiful location for a moment's quiet meditation.

We drive on to Aosta, arriving at our new base in the afternoon.

Overnight: Aosta

DAY 9 - AOSTA

We will spend the morning getting to know the town of Aosta with a local guide. Aosta, a little gem of a city, which is sometimes called the little Rome of the Alps, with its eye catching Roman ruins, mediaeval towers and churches and inviting cafes and boutiques. In the afternoon, our bus will take us out into the Valley to visit one of the local wineries where they specialise in a little know variety, the Blanc de Morgex.

Overnight: Aosta

DAY 10 - GRAN PARADISO NATIONAL PARK

Valle d'Aosta is not only the most mountainous Italian region, it is also one of the most naturally stunning. This morning we will stop to admire a Roman aqueduct before following the Cogne Valley to its main village that goes by the same name. Cogne sits on a swathe of green grass surrounded by majestic mountains. It's a lovely resort town and serves as an access to the Gran Paradiso, the oldest national park in Italy. The Park was once the King's hunting grounds, but paradoxically has now become a sanctuary for chamois and ibex, natives of this area. We will take an easy walk towards Lillaz a smaller mountain village and feast





our eyes on its splendid series of waterfalls.

The afternoon is free time for you to relax or spend some more time wandering around Aosta.

Overnight: Aosta

DAY 11 - A CASTLE, A ROMAN BRIDGE AND THE LAKE

We will leave the Valley today, but not before visiting the Renaissance castle of Issogne, one of the most appealing in the area, and stopping to see the Roman bridge at Pont Saint Martin. It was used until the 1880s when motorised vehicles became too large for its narrow structure. We will reach our new base by Lake Maggiore in the early afternoon in time for aperitivi and a lakeside promenade.

Overnight: Lake Maggiore

DAY 12 - LAGO D'ORTA

Just a short drive from Lake Maggiore, Lake Orta is one of the smallest and possibly the most charming of Italian lakes. We will visit the main town on the lake, Orta San Giulio, with its narrow lanes, proud buildings and enchanting promenade that look out onto the island of San Giulio. We'll also see its Basilica, one of the most important Romanesque (9th century) style buildings in Piemonte. After lunch we'll take a lovely walk with views over the lake to visit the Sacro Monte, the shrine devoted to Saint Francis, before heading back to Lake Maggiore.

Overnight: Lake Maggiore

DAY 13 - BETTELMATT AND SOME FREE TIME

This morning, we drive from the shores of Lake Maggiore up into the mountains surrounding the lakes to learn about the production of another famous Italian cheese, Bettelmatt. There will be time to taste the different types of cheese, before we head back to our hotel for an afternoon of free time.

Overnight: Lake Maggiore

DAY 14 - THE BORROMEAN ISLANDS

Today is a whole day dedicated to the Borromeo Islands on Lake Maggiore. In the 1600s Cardinal Carlo Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan set out to make two islands on Lake Maggiore a floating cornucopia of style and beauty. They are still owned by the Borromeo family and successive members have all contributed to their development over the centuries right up to the 1950s. We take our private boat to Isola Bella, to visit the Palace, where even Napoleon was tempted to stay, and the ostentatiously baroque gardens.

Overnight: Lake Maggiore

DAY 15 - LAKE MAGGIORE AND FAREWELLS

Our tour ends after breakfast today. Stay for another relaxing morning on Lake Maggiore or take the transfer back to the Milan's Malpensa airport. We are more than happy to help those who wish to stay on in Italy organise the rest of their trip or book a transfer to other destinations.





Luca and Philippa



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ◆ Tour leader on hand for duration of tour from the start of the tour in Turin to the final day
- ◆ Transfer to Milan's Malpensa airport at the completion of the tour
- ◆ Accommodation (on a twin-share or double basis) in 3 or 4 star hotels
- ◆ All breakfasts and 5 lunches and 5 dinners (wine, or something softer if you would prefer, is included with all lunches and dinners)
- ◆ All land travel in Italy in private, air-conditioned mini-coach
- ◆ Entry fees to all attractions listed in the itinerary
- ◆ Expert, local guides at many attractions
- ◆ All gratuities and local taxes

WEATHER

Mid-Autumn is a fascinating time to visit North-Western Italy. The changing of the seasons will bring brisk mornings, pleasant day temperatures (between 12° and 18°) and cooler nights, so make sure you have a warm jacket and a heavy jumper.

PHYSICAL FITNESS

We don't place any age limitations on the tour and welcome anyone with a moderate level of physical fitness. Specifically, you should be comfortable on your feet for up to 3 hours with short breaks and confident on the cobblestones and uneven surfaces. We will always do our best to accommodate everyone, including offering alternative arrangements where possible for people who for some reason cannot take part in an activity.

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

We try to keep our single supplement as low as possible. For this tour the supplement is \$990.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is compulsory when travelling on one of our tours. Please contact us if you need help arranging travel insurance.

BOOKING

If you would like to book a place on this or any other tour, or if you have some questions about the itinerary, please don't hesitate to contact Luca or Philippa at Italian Tours.

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