



THE GREAT GARDENS OF ITALY TOUR

14 - 28 APRIL 2025





Giardino Torrigiani

OVERVIEW

AUD 10, 730
(PER PERSON, TWIN SHARE)

AUD 12, 770
(PER PERSON, SOLO TRAVELLER)

Since 2007, Italian Tours has specialised in crafting immersive itineraries for those enchanted by Italy and its cultural tapestry. Our small group sizes (maximum of 12 people) and thoughtfully curated tours ensure a delightful and authentic experience.

The Great Gardens of Italy tour attracts both avid gardeners and those looking to enrich their Italian adventure through the beauty of its famed gardens. Embracing the art of "slow travel," our tours avoid the rush, featuring leisurely starts, stays of at least three nights in each location, and ample free time tailored to your interests.

This tour is not just about gardens; it's a deep dive into Italian culture and history. Whether exploring the urban delights of Florence, Verona, or Rome, we provide expert local guides to enhance your experience of Italy's storied landscapes.

On this tour, we stay in four locations: four nights in Rome, four in Florence, three in Verona, and three in Bellagio by the picturesque Lake Como. Our selected hotels are chosen for their central locations and comfort. The tour includes five lunches and five dinners, allowing you to savour authentic Italian food and wine in good company.

While there are no age restrictions for our participants, a moderate level of physical fitness is required. The expansive nature of the gardens we visit means you should be comfortable walking (at a decent pace) for up to three hours at a time.

"Thank you, our Italian hosts and guides, for a wonderful, bespoke and well-organized tour. Our agenda was a mix of historical solemnity, floral whimsy, hydraulic innovation, and artistic beauty. We had great fun discovering the variety of species collected and showcased through the northern countryside and were humbled by the gracious hospitality of the private estate tours. It's a fabulous tour for all the senses, with good walking shoes"
Pauline and Suzette 2023





Villa d'Este, Tivoli

ITINERARY

DAY 1 - ARRIVE IN ROME

Welcome to Rome! Upon arrival, please make your way to our centrally located hotel. This evening, gather for a delightful welcome dinner at a traditional Roman trattoria, a short stroll from our accommodation.

Overnight: Rome

DAY 2 - GIARDINO DI NINFA AND CASTEL GANDOLFO

This morning, we set off southwards from Rome towards Castel Gandolfo, the Pope's summer residence. Here, we'll explore the exquisite gardens of Villa Barberini with an expert guide. There will be time for a light lunch in the picturesque town of Castel Gandolfo.

In the afternoon, we continue to the enchanting Garden of Ninfa. Once a thriving medieval town, Ninfa was abandoned in the 14th century. Rediscovered in the 20th century, it has been transformed into what is often considered the world's most romantic garden, weaving through the ruins of the town's ancient structures.

We'll return to Rome in the late afternoon, giving you the evening to relax or explore the Eternal City at your own pace.

Overnight: Rome

DAY 3 - TIVOLI - THE GARDENS OF AN EMPEROR AND A CARDINAL

This morning, we drive north to Tivoli to explore two of Italy's most iconic gardens, nestled close together yet distinct in their historical significance. First, we visit Villa Adriana, the sprawling palace of Emperor Hadrian built in 117 AD.



Rediscovered in the 15th century, its classic ruins have inspired generations of Renaissance architects.

After lunch, we continue to Villa d'Este, Cardinal Ippolito d'Este's masterpiece. This villa is famed for its sophisticated Renaissance gardens, an ensemble of fountains, grottoes, and verdant beauty that invites leisurely exploration.

Overnight: Rome

DAY 4 - CENTRAL ROME AND FREE TIME

Begin the day with a walking tour of the centre of Rome, to discover the history of the Eternal City.

The afternoon is yours to enjoy Rome at your own pace; perhaps visit the Pantheon, indulge in some shopping along Via del Corso or visit one of Rome's excellent museums.

Reconvene for dinner at a local trattoria to share the day's experiences

Overnight: Rome

DAY 5 - VILLA LANTE AND ON TO FLORENCE

Departing Rome, our journey brings us to the enchanting Villa Lante at Bagnaia. Here, the Renaissance spirit comes alive in its water games, formal parterres, and terraced gardens designed in the 16th century by Jacopo da Vignola.

After lunch, we proceed to Florence, where you can settle in before we embark on our Tuscan adventures.

Free time for the evening.

Overnight: Florence

DAY 6 - GARDENS OF FLORENCE

Our exploration today focuses on two of Florence's most celebrated gardens.. We begin at the magnificent Boboli Gardens, directly behind the Palazzo Pitti. Originating in the 16th century, this historic garden is an open-air museum landscaped with a collection of sculptures, including Roman antiquities and works by Renaissance artists. The gardens are a prime example of "green architecture" and are decorated with caves, ornate fountains, and wide avenues that lead to sumptuous statues and hidden nooks.

Enjoy a break for lunch before continuing to the Giardino di Bardini. Though less frequented than the Boboli, it offers a tranquil retreat with spectacular views of the city. This garden showcases a variety of styles including an Italianate garden famed for its Baroque staircase, an English woodland, and agricultural terraces. As you ascend the garden's paths, lined

with wisteria and hydrangeas, the view expands to a panorama of Florence's historic skyline, crowned by the Duomo.

Overnight: Florence

DAY 7 - GARDENS OF FLORENCE

Today we visit the private Torrigiani Garden, a hidden gem that is one of the largest private gardens within a European city. Here, amidst ancient trees and elaborate sculptures, you can easily forget you are in a crowded city and lose yourself in the quiet beauty.

The afternoon offers free time to explore the city's rich artistic landscape or enjoy some downtime. Florence is home to some of the best museums in Italy, including the Uffizi, the Accademia and the Bargello.

Overnight: Florence

DAY 8 - RENAISSANCE AND OTHER SPLENDOURS OUTSIDE FLORENCE

Venture into the rolling hills surrounding Florence with visits to two remarkable villas. Begin your journey at Villa Castello, home to one of the earliest and finest examples of a Renaissance garden. Designed under the patronage of Cosimo I de' Medici, this garden showcases meticulous geometric layouts and a collection of sculptures that enhance its lush, carefully curated vegetation.

After a morning steeped in the Medici legacy, travel to the enchanting Villa Gamberaia in Settignano. Nestled on a hill-top with panoramic views over Florence, Villa Gamberaia is renowned for its perfect integration of architecture with water and garden design. The garden is celebrated for its formal parterres, its ornamental water features, and the limonaia, set against the backdrop of Tuscan hillsides.

Overnight: Florence

DAY 9 - TRADITIONAL BALSAMIC VINEGAR AND ON TO VERONA

Today's journey northwards to Verona includes a delightful stop outside Modena, the heart of Italy's balsamic vinegar production. Discover the age-old methods that produce this 'black gold' and enjoy tasting the vinegar as we visit a traditional balsamic vinegar producer,

We then continue to Verona, arriving in time for the late afternoon passeggiata (the Italian promenade).

Overnight: Verona

DAY 10 - VERONA AND GIARDINO GIUSTI





Villa Melzi

This morning, you have time to recuperate and wander through the heart of Verona at your own pace.

After lunch, meet with our local guide, who will lead you through the charming city. Your guide will share insights into Verona's rich history, from its Roman roots to its Renaissance prosperity and its famed literary association as the setting of Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet."

Continue to the Giardino Giusti. Perfectly preserved, the garden is structured with trimmed hedges, elegant statues, and fountains, embodying the ideals of Renaissance symmetry and order. The garden's layout encourages peaceful contemplation, with its cypress-lined paths leading to a stunning belvedere offering panoramic views over Verona.

Overnight: Verona

DAY 11 - VILLA ARVEDI AND VILLA POJEGA

Start your day with a visit to Villa Arvedi, a stunning example of 17th-century Venetian architecture nestled in the lush countryside of Verona. This majestic villa, known for its historical significance and beautifully preserved gardens, offers a

picturesque setting against the backdrop of the Lessini Mountains.

In the afternoon, you will head to Villa Pojega, famous for its classical Italian garden and striking Green Theatre. This garden is truly a natural stage, set against the vineyards that define the landscape.

Overnight: Verona

DAY 12 - FRANCIACORTA WINE AND ON TO LAKE COMO

We head to Franciacorta, known for its exceptional sparkling wines, which are comparable to the finest champagnes. We'll visit one of the smaller quality producers in the area, who also have an agriturismo. We'll stop to visit the vineyard, taste the wines and have lunch.

In the afternoon, we travel to Bellagio, your base on the scenic Lake Como. You'll arrive in time for a lakeside wander or to choose a bar for aperitivi overlooking the lake

Overnight: Bellagio





Isola Bella

DAY 13 - LAKE MAGGIORE AND THE BORROMEAN ISLANDS

Today, we journey to the neighbouring Lake Maggiore, where we explore Isola Madre and the stunning Isola Bella, the crown jewel of the Borromeo Islands. In the 16th century, Carlo III Borromeo chose this island to construct his elaborate Baroque palace and expansive gardens. The island's unique geography allows for a garden arranged in dramatic, multi-level terraces, offering breathtaking views at every turn. Keep an eye out for the vibrant white peacocks, known for their spirited displays and enchanting presence.

Overnight: Bellagio

DAY 14 - VILLAS AND GARDENS OF LAKE COMO

On our final day, we navigate the serene waters of Lake Como, visiting some of its most enchanting villa gardens. Our destinations include the renowned Villa Melzi and Villa Carlotta, gardens born from a friendly rivalry between Francesco

Melzi d'Eril and Giovanni Battista Sommariva. Their competition to surpass each other has resulted in a pair of stunning landscapes that showcase the pinnacle of horticultural artistry and grandeur.

Overnight: Bellagio

DAY 15 - DEPARTURES

Today we make our way to Milan for departures from Malpensa Airport or Milano Centrale station. We arrive at Milan Malpensa by 11am and Milano Centrale by 12pm. Should you wish to extend your stay or require personalised travel arrangements, we are happy to assist.

Overnight: NA

PLEASE NOTE

Occasionally, due to circumstances beyond our control, it may not be possible to visit a garden as planned in our itinerary. Should this occur, we will endeavour to provide a comparable alternative that aligns closely with the spirit of the original activity.





Giardino Torrigiani



Luca and Philippa



Ninfa

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

STAY

- ❖ 4 nights in Rome, in a wonderful 4-star hotel right in the historical centre
- ❖ 4 nights in Florence in a charming family-run hotel just 400m from the Duomo
- ❖ 3 nights in Verona, in a wonderful historic hotel just around the corner from Piazza Bra and the Arena
- ❖ 3 nights in Bellagio with stunning lake view rooms

INCLUSIONS

- ❖ Group transfer to Milan Malpensa (arrive 12 noon) or Milano Centrale station (arrive 1pm) at the end of tour
- ❖ Tour leader on hand for duration of tour
- ❖ Breakfast daily 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 (we also utilise the ferry service on Lakes Como and Maggiore)
- ❖ Entry fees to all attractions listed in the itinerary
- ❖ Expert, local guides at many of the gardens

EXCLUSIONS / ADDONS

- ❖ City tax - which is payable directly at each hotel
- ❖ Additional night in Rome pre-tour (for those who want to arrive early)
- ❖ Airport transfer from Rome Fiumicino to our hotel

PHYSICAL FITNESS

Our Great Gardens of Italy tour requires a moderate to high level of fitness. This tour includes more walking than our other tours, mostly due to the size of the gardens. We don't place any age limitations on the tour however, you must be able to walk unassisted over uneven circumstances and to walk at a decent pace around the gardens. If you do not meet these requirements, the tour leader may have to exclude you from certain visits for safety reasons and so as not to negatively impact the group.

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.

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