



ITALY

ITINERARY (subject to change)

WITH DR. MARC SHAPIRO
JULY 15-23, 2025

TUESDAY: ROME

Arrival in Rome airport, followed by transfer to the hotel. Begin sightseeing (from the hotel) at 1 PM in the former ghetto area of Rome. Rome is the oldest Jewish community in the Diaspora, and its ghetto remained longer than anywhere else in Europe. As part of our tour, we will see the Jewish Museum, the Great Synagogue, and the Trastevere, where there is evidence of the medieval Jewish community. We will also visit the Campo Di Fiori where, on Rosh Ha-Shanah 1553, the Talmud was burned. In the evening, enjoy a welcome dinner

WEDNESDAY: ROME

Breakfast. This morning begins with a visit to the Arch of Titus and its famous Menorah that, as we will learn, does not correspond to other ancient descriptions. We will then visit the Colosseum, with its legacy of horrors and bravery as slaves fought for their lives to the roars of spectators cheering and booing. This massive structure was actually built with slaves brutally seized after putting down the Jewish Revolt in Eretz Yisrael. Continue to the ruins of the Roman Forum, an international center filled with great palaces and all the pomp that we connect with names like Caesar, Nero and Cicero. Later, drive to the Spanish Steps and soon find yourself in the romantic setting of the glorious Trevi Fountain, beloved spot for many great films made in "Roma." After lunch, enjoy the afternoon at leisure to explore Rome on your own or join an optional tour of the Vatican Museum. In the evening, meet for dinner.

THURSDAY: ROME, PITIGLIANO, FLORENCE

Breakfast. Depart Rome this morning and drive towards the hills of Umbria and Tuscany. En route, visit the remote town of Pitigliano, where Jews settled in the 16th century as anti-Jewish sentiment became stronger in the Papal States. Pitigliano became known as "Little Jerusalem" as the Jewish community grew increasingly prosperous throughout the following centuries. Visit the former ghetto, synagogue and Museum. Lunch boxes are provided this day. Continue along typical Tuscan roads to Florence and upon arrival, stop on the hillside Piazza Michelangelo for an amazing panoramic view of the city below. Even the dome of the synagogue is visible. Check-in at the hotel. Dinner.

FRIDAY: FLORENCE (*Shabbat dinner*)

Breakfast. Begin your walking tour of Florence with a visit to the Academy of Fine Arts (Accademia), home of Michelangelo's statue of David. Later, continue to the extraordinary synagogue whose dome punctuates the skyline of the city. Visit the attached Jewish Museum with its fine collections. After lunch, continue on the walking tour and be inspired by the beauty of Florence as you walk the charming streets and great squares. Visit the Uffizi Gallery. Return to the hotel in the afternoon. Celebrate Shabbat in Florence. Attend services followed by Shabbat Dinner.

SATURDAY: FLORENCE

Breakfast. Attend services this morning. After lunch, choose to relax or join a short walk to Piazza Delle Signoria. Your tour will take you by the famous Duomo. Dr. Shapiro will also offer a class in the afternoon dealing with an Italian Torah theme. Later, Seudah Shlishit is served.

SUNDAY: FLORENCE, PISA, SIENA

Breakfast. Begin the day by driving to Pisa, the town associated with Galileo (and, of course, the Leaning Tower). It was also the site of important Jewish scholars and even a printing press. Today, traces of the Jewish past can be seen right near the Leaning Tower. Unlike most other Italian towns, Pisa never had a ghetto; its Jewish population lived in different areas of the city. At one time the nearby port city of Livorno belonged to Pisa and was the home of many important figures, including R. Hayyim David Azulai and R. Elijah Benamozegh, about whom we will learn. From Pisa we will visit a kosher winery where we will have lunch. We will then drive to Siena where we will see the town square and the fascinating synagogue.

MONDAY: FLORENCE, VENICE

Depart Florence and drive north towards Venice. Upon arrival in the floating city, transfer to a small boat and travel in this romantic way to our hotel. After lunch, tour the Jewish Ghetto (Europe's first official ghetto). The tour will include the various synagogues and the Jewish Museum. At one time, Venice was a world power; and its Jewish community was one of the most important in the world, with noted rabbis, poets, merchants, and actors. Return to the hotel for check-in and time to rest. Later, dinner is served at the ghetto.

TUESDAY: VENICE

Breakfast. Today, enjoy the unique flavor of Venice as you sightsee in this legendary city. Begin by traveling to Lido for an exclusive visit to the Jewish cemetery, which was in use for hundreds of years but only "rediscovered" at the beginning of the twentieth century. From there, travel to Murano Island to see how they make the beautiful glass. After lunch, we will see the area of Piazza San Marco (which houses the Doge's Palace) and continue via Venice's characteristically narrow streets and alleys to the Rialto Bridge, which spans across the Grand Canal of Venice Island. Along the way we will see many wonderful, and sometimes hidden, sights. Farewell Dinner.

WEDNESDAY: VENICE, HOME

Breakfast. Transfer by boat to the airport for your flights back home.