VENICE, FLORENCE & ROME BY RAIL

TRIP OVERVIEW

Our eleven day, ten-night tour combines a voyage through the spectacular mountain scenery of Switzerland with Italy’s most iconic cities. Journey by rail through the legendary Gotthard Pass, witnessing the pristine alpine scenery, sail through the winding canals in Venice and absorb the fascinating history in the charming cities of Florence and Rome.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to Switzerland and Italy. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important information such as airline and hotel details and visa requirements.

Your included meal guide:
B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner,

DAY 1: UK to Basel
Depart London on your scheduled flight to Basel, Switzerland, you will be met on arrival by a local guide and transferred to your hotel, conveniently located close to the train station. The rest of your afternoon is free for you to enjoy the city in your own time. Take a leisurely stroll around the picturesque old town or relax in the hotel’s spa facilities before enjoying a welcome dinner at a local restaurant with your group.

DAY 2: Basel
Following breakfast, enjoy a morning city tour of Basel visiting historic landmarks such as the Marketplatz with its richly decorated red sandstone town hall and the late Romanesque-Gothic Cathedral. The rest of the day is at leisure to explore at your own pace, visit a selection of Basel’s 40 museums, indulge in some traditional Basel honey cake or relax in the botanical gardens by the Rhine. Should you wish to venture a little further afield, we will provide a complimentary travel pass on local transport for Basel and the surrounding areas.

DAY 3: Basel to Milan
After breakfast, check out of the hotel to embark on the highlight of your tour, the legendary Gotthard Pass, one of the most scenic rail journeys in Europe. Travelling across intricate bridges and through loops and tunnels, your journey from Switzerland to Italy showcases the ever-changing landscapes of the Swiss Alps which extend from fir-tree forests to stunning mountains. Upon arrival in Milan it is just a short walk to your hotel, the rest of the day is at leisure to explore this elegant city and enjoy the unparalleled shopping.

DAY 4: Milan to Venice
This morning take the high-speed train to Venice Mestre station and check in to your hotel ideally located near the train station. After a leisurely lunch, take the short train journey to Venice Saint Lucia and embark on a private boat journey through the winding canals of Venice so familiar for its unique transportation of goods as early as 400AD, over 350 colourful gondolas navigate the canal system daily transporting people and merchandise throughout the city. Arrive at St. Mark’s square, one of the most beautiful squares in the world and the city centre for centuries. Begin a leisurely guided tour through mysterious passageways in one of the most alluring cities in the world. Enter St. Mark’s Basilica and absorb one of the finest examples of Byzantine architecture before boarding your boat back to the station for your return train to Mestre.

DAY 5: Venice
Today is free for you to explore the stunning architecture of Venice at your own pace. An optional private boat excursion is available from St. Mark’s square; sail past the island of San Giorgio Maggiore en-route to Murano, famous for its magical glass manufacturing. Continue to the island of Burano and marvel at the brightly coloured fisherman’s houses before sailing to Torcello, the earliest civilisation in the lagoon where only a cathedral and church remain as testament to its former glory.

DAY 6: Venice to Florence
Following breakfast depart by train to the beautiful city of Florence. On arrival check in to your hotel and take the remainder of the afternoon to acquaint yourself with this simply stunning city.

DAY 7: Florence
Following breakfast enjoy a guided tour of Florence; boasting priceless masterpieces, striking Renaissance architecture and winding streets, this historic metropolis still looks as it did during 1550. Stroll over the Ponte Vecchio 14th century bridge, lined with antiquated jewellery boutiques, admire the Duomo cathedral, the terracotta tiled dome is rightly one of Florence’s most iconic sites. Museums, palaces and churches are in abundance which you can enjoy at your own pace in the afternoon. In the evening, why not watch the sunset over the river Arno - a breath taking photo opportunity.

DAY 8: Florence to Rome
This morning is at leisure to finish exploring beautiful Florence, meander through the old streets, view the copy of Michelangelo’s statue of David or climb the hill to the church of San Miniato al Monte for an enchanting final view of the city. In the afternoon board the train to the delightful city of Rome to check in to your hotel.

DAY 9: Rome
Today is free to uncover Italy’s capital city, lose yourself in the tangled streets and savour the beauty of this breath-taking city. Relax in one of the many squares, savour a delicious gelato whilst watching the world go by or sit down to a dish of traditional pappardelle al cinghiale (wild boar ragu) at a local trattoria with a delicious glass of frascati. An optional excursion will be available to discover the Vatican, one of the most beautiful, holiest Christendom sites in the world.

DAY 10: Rome
After breakfast, embark on a walking tour of Baroque Rome’s most iconic sites. Marvel at the Pantheon, dating back to 125 AD, the magnificent ancient temple now converted to a church is one of the city's most spectacular sites. Next climb the ‘Scalinata Spagna’ the Spanish Steps irregular butterfly design takes you to the upper Piazza Trinita deo Monti affording wonderful views with the twin tower church dominating the skyline. The tour ends at the explicitly theatrical Trevi fountain, the largest Baroque fountain in the city and renowned as the most beautiful in the world. Legend has is that if you throw a coin into the fountain you will return to Rome. A coach will take you back to the hotel allowing adequate time to relax before your farewell dinner.

DAY 11: Rome to the UK or extension
After breakfast at the hotel, transfer to the airport for your scheduled flight back to the UK, or remain in Rome for city stay extension.
ON YOUR ARRIVAL

ACCOMMODATION DETAILS & MAP

Hotel information

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<tr>
<th>Basel (2 nights): 4★ Hotel GAIA</th>
<th>Contact number: 0041 61 225 1313</th>
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<td>Centrallahinistrasse 13, 4002 Basel, Switzerland.</td>
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<th>Milan (1 night): 4★ Best Western Hotel Gallerie</th>
<th>Contact number: 0039 02 204841</th>
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<td>Piazza Lima, 2, 20124 Milano, Italy.</td>
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<th>Venice (2 nights): 4★ Hotel Tritone</th>
<th>Contact number: 0039 041 538 3125</th>
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<th>Florence (2 nights): 4★ Hotel Club</th>
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<td>Via Santa Caterina da Siena, 11, 50123 Firenze, Italy.</td>
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<th>Rome (3 nights): 4★ Best Western Hotel Universo</th>
<th>Contact number: 0039 06 4722881</th>
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<td>Via Torino, 127, 00184 Roma, Italy.</td>
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Accommodation

All accommodation is 4★ and features an en-suite bathroom, air-conditioning, a satellite TV and a hairdryer. Sunspot has visited and inspected all of the hotels to ensure that they meet the high standards of service which we require for our clients. If the hotels detailed are not available alternatives will be used of a similar standard.

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Your initial flight is to Basel Airport with British Airways (BA), departing from London Heathrow Terminal 5.

IMPORTANT: Please note that final flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking, lounges or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras Tel. 0871 360 2000, quoting HX513.

ON YOUR ARRIVAL

On your arrival in Basel you will be met by a representative from our local agent, holding a sign displaying: “Sunspot”. The Sunspot/Swiss Travel Centre representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. Your national guide will be on hand 24 hours a day should you have any queries, however if you need to contact your representative during your stay the details are:

Switzerland Travel Centre Ltd
30 Bedford Street, London, WC2E 9ED
Telephone Number: 0044 (0)207 420 4903 (business hours only)

WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

Visas

A visa is not required for your trip to Switzerland and Italy. Further advice should be sought from the applicable tourist authority for other nationalities and for general queries. Visa requirements are subject to change and obtaining a visa is the responsibility of the traveller and not Sunspot. We recommend you check with your destinations’ Tourist Board or Embassy prior to departure for the most up to date guidelines regarding visas and passport validity.

Accommodation/Hotel Voucher

We do not produce a separate Accommodation/Hotel voucher; simply ensure that you take your Confirmation Invoice with you because it doubles as your voucher. If you have not yet received an Invoice please call our Administration Department on 0843 223 0732 or email us using the “Contact us” option on our website: www.mercuryholidays.co.uk. Please note that it is not necessary for you to have an Invoice showing your balance paid; your original invoice will suffice for the hotel.

Tour Guides

This is an escorted tour, meaning you will have the services of an English speaking guide during each excursion ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times.

Tipping

Tipping is completely at your discretion. Tips are accepted in the local currency, however it is asked that if you do not tip in the local currency that you only pay with notes, as coins cannot be exchanged.

Swiss Franc (CHF) and in Italy is the Euro (EUR). We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK, however cash machines are available in all the major cities to withdraw money in the local currency.

Currency Exchange

Personal Expenses

You will need to take some extra money with you to cover any meals not mentioned on your itinerary and personal purchases, such as souvenirs, drinks and snacks. Approximately £400-£500 per person should be sufficient for the duration of your tour. Please also bear in mind that there will be several shopping opportunities throughout your tour.

Group Size

The minimum number of passengers on your tour will be 20, and the maximum number of passengers will be 35. If in the unlikely event your tour does not reach the minimum passenger numbers, then you may be asked to change to a different date. A full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with a good level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves climbing of steep stairs and getting on and off trains, coaches and boats. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties.
Credit Card Information
As normal practice you may be asked for your credit card details on check-in at the hotel in order to cover any extras incurred during your stay. If you do not have a credit card, you may be asked for a cash deposit. MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels.

Itinerary Changes
The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction and/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

Insurance
We strongly recommend that you and all members of your party are suitably insured as soon as you book your holiday. It is a condition of booking that you must have suitable travel insurance. It is important that you purchase travel insurance that suitably covers your participation in whatever activities you may undertake at the time that you make your booking. To assist you with this, we have arranged travel insurance in partnership with Holiday Extras. To arrange your travel insurance with Holiday Extras, please call 0800 781 4237 and quote 'WK830' for preferential rates. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Sunspot will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Health and Vaccinations
It is your responsibility to check any health and vaccination requirements applicable to your booked arrangements. We can only provide general information about this. Health and hygiene facilities and disease risks vary from country to country. You should take health advice about your own needs as early as possible and in good time before your departure. Sources of information include; www.fco.gov.uk, www.travelhealthpro.org.uk, www.hpa.org.uk, your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

WHAT TO PACK
- Insect repellent
- Suncream and a hat with a big brim for sunny days
- Comfortable walking shoes such as trainers
- Sunglasses
- Towel, swimsuit and plastic bags
- Ruck sack or light bag per person
- Personal toiletries
- Light rain coat
- Warm Clothing in the winter months
- A plug adaptor - the electricity supply is 220V-240V. You will need a two pin round plug adapter in Switzerland and Italy.
- Personal first aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

![Average Temperature for Basel](image1)

![Average Temperature for Milan](image2)

![Average Temperature for Venice](image3)

![Average Temperature for Florence](image4)

![Average Temperature for Rome](image5)
TRIP OVERVIEW

Wander into The Colosseum, an engineering marvel considered one of the New Seven Wonders Of The World and enter the Vatican City to gaze up at Michelangelo’s intricate frescoes that adorn the Sistine Chapel’s ceiling. Enjoy the city at leisure in the quaint outdoor cafes that fill picturesque piazzas and sample the delights of authentic Roman cuisine as you experience Italy’s magnificent capital.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your extension in Rome.

Hotel (2 nights)
Your stay in Rome will take place at the 4★ Best Western Hotel Universo on Bed & Breakfast.

Conveniently located close to the Opera House and train station this hotel offers comfortable accommodation with modern facilities.

Welcoming, comfortable and modern standard rooms include FREE Wi-Fi, air-conditioning, mini bar, safe deposit box, telephone, kettle for tea and coffee and LCD flat screen TV with satellite channels.

Hotel Information
Via Torino, 127, 00184 Roma, Italy.
Contact number: 0039 06 472861

Any alternative hotels or board basis will have been confirmed at booking. Please speak to our reservations department if you are unsure.

Please note: the hotels listed are provided for guidance only and final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days before you travel.

Personal Expenses
You will need to take some extra money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs and laundry plus any meals and drinks that are not included.

Tour Guides
Your stay in Rome is not escorted by a tour guide. All internal transfers are included.

Please note
This extension takes place after your main tour.

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.