

# Medieval, Renaissance & Baroque Art

## Day 1

On arrival at Rome Leonardo da Vinci Airport we will be met and shown to the awaiting deluxe coach which will take us on a brief orientation tour of the principal monuments of the Eternal City. The tour will terminate on the top of the Gianicolo hill with the incomparable view of the city stretching out at our feet. Continue to the hotel and check-in.

Afternoon visit of the principle monuments of Ancient Rome: from the Capitoline Hill, the (ancient acropolis) to the Roman Forum, from the Via Sacra, to the Imperial Fora dominated by Trajan's Column and Markets, concluding with the Colosseum, Arch of Constantine, the Circus Maximus, and the remains of the majestic Imperial residences on the Palatine. Return to the hotel to prepare ourselves to go out for a "Welcome" dinner at a typical Roman restaurant where we will be introduced to the characteristic dishes of the local cuisine.

## Day 2

After breakfast departure for Assisi. In the afternoon we will visit the Basilica of S. Francesco which consists of two churches laid one on the top of the other decorated with the frescoes of Cimabue, Giotto and many other artists. We also visit the cathedral dedicated to San Rufino and the church of Santa Chiara. Dinner and overnight at hotel.

## Day 3

After breakfast we leave Assisi and make our way across the picturesque landscape of the *Crete Senesi* (hills of clay) to Siena, the city that in the 14th century was at the heart of a most original blossoming of the Gothic style. Stroll along the picturesque streets, known as *Banchi di Sopra* and *Banchi di Sotto*, lined by some of the most splendid private palaces. We then visit the *Palazzo Pubblico* which, with its slender *Torre del Mangia* dominates the scenic *Piazza del Campo* and the renowned Fonte Gaia. Inside the Palazzo we admire the famous frescoes by Simone Martini and Ambrogio Lorenzetti, the first Italian landscape painters. We then continue on to Florence. Check-in at our hotel. Dinner and overnight.

## Day 4

This morning we begin our visit to the main sites of this celebrated art center with a guided visit which will include the Galleria dell' Accademia where, amongst other great art treasures, we will admire Michelangelo's powerful creation -the statue of "David" ; the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore with Filippo Brunelleschi's majestic Dome, Giotto's elegant belfry and the Baptistery with Ghiberti's "Gates of Paradise"; Piazza della Signoria a veritable open air museum overlooked by the severe but majestic frame of Palazzo Vecchio and the elegant loggia by Andrea Orcagna. The tour will also include Piazza Michelangelo, which resembles a balcony overlooking the city to enjoy a sweeping view of the skyline of Florence. Time permitting we shall also visit the Churches of San Lorenzo and Santa Croce. Return to the hotel for dinner and overnight.

## Day 5

Guided tour of the Uffizi Gallery, one of the world's leading art collections, which was amassed by the powerful and wealthy Medici family. Free time for lunch and free afternoon for shopping and strolling. Dinner and overnight.

## Day 6

Excursion to Pisa to see the aptly named *Campo dei Miracoli* with the Cemetery, the leaning tower, the splendid complex of the Cathedral, Baptistery. Pisano's sculpted pulpits are to be found inside the last two buildings. Return to Florence with a stop in Lucca to admire a city of truly human dimension and more examples of Pisan-Luccan Romanesque architecture. A climb to the top of the Torre Guinigi offers a splendid panorama of Lucca laid out at your feet. Return to Florence for dinner and overnight.

### **Day 7**

Return to Rome with a stop in Orvieto, a town of Etruscan origins in a dominating position on a tufa spur. Here we will admire the majestic Duomo, testimony of the triumph of Faith and one of the chief glories of the Italian Gothic. It was built to celebrate the miracle which took place at nearby Bolsena in 1263. Arrival in Rome and hotel check-in.

### **Day 8**

Morning visit to the Vatican Museums to visit the Pinacoteca or painting gallery, where, in addition to the tapestries based on Raphael's cartoons and his moving Deposition, we find the works of some of the most important Renaissance and Mannerist artists that worked in Rome. Visit the Chapel of Nicholas V, the Raphael Rooms and the recently restored Sistine Chapel.

In the afternoon we will then visit the square on top of the Capitoline Hill, designed by Michelangelo and the Basilica of San Pietro in Vincoli, with his imposing statue of Moses. Raphael designed the harmonious church of Sant'Eligio degli Orefici. Return to hotel. Dinner and overnight.

### **Day 9**

In the morning we will visit the Farnesina, the residence of Banker Agostino Chigi, designed by Baldassarre Peruzzi, who also designed the decoration together with Raphael and Sodoma. We cross the 15th century Ponte Sisto to reach Palazzo Spada, masterpiece of Mannerist Architecture with its Stucco decorations, and Palazzo Farnese. We stroll along the Via Giulia, the most important street of Renaissance Rome, and at its end we visit the Church of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini.

Afternoon excursion to the town of Caprarola to visit the Palazzo Farnese, one the finest examples of late Renaissance architecture, created by the transformation of a pentagonal shaped fortress and surrounded by a splendid Italian garden. Return to Rome for dinner and overnight.

### **Day 10**

After breakfast, visit to the church of San Luigi dei Francesi, Sant'Agostino and Santa Maria del Popolo, all housing renowned and controversial works by Caravaggio, which were to mark the turning point towards the "light and shadow" painting style, the thrill and passion of the 17th century.

Afternoon completely at leisure for shopping or further personal sightseeing. Farewell dinner followed by an evening stroll in the scenic Piazza Navona with the fountain of the Four Rivers by Bernini, then on to the Spanish Steps and finally to the Fountain of Trevi to throw in the proverbial coin to ensure a speedy return to Rome.

### **Day 11**

Transfer to Fiumicino Airport for return flight home.