

Itinerary

THE GARDENS OF ITALY

(Monday)

Enroute

Depart gateway airport.
Meals served on board the overnight transatlantic flight.

(Tuesday)

Florence/Domini, ITALY

Arrive in Florence, Italy.
Meet private coach and escort, then, transfer to the Hotel Villa Pitiana on the outskirts of Florence. The balance of the afternoon will be free to relax and explore the villa.

_____ pm Welcome dinner at Hotel Villa Pitiana.

Hotel Villa Pitiana
Via Provinciale per Tosi 7
50060 Domini – Firenze
Italy
Tel: 011-39-055-860-259
Fax: 011-39-055-860326
www.villapitiana.com

(Wednesday)

Domini

Breakfast at the hotel.
Depart for the 16th century garden of **Villa Medicea di Castello** made for Cosimo de' Medici. The most extraordinary feature of Castello is the Grotto degli Animali. Its walls are decorated with many animals representing those saved from the Flood.

A light lunch will be planned in a typical osteria.

Continue to **Villa Medici Fiesole** with its breathtaking view of Florence and the Valley of the Arno. The terraces, intended to resemble the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, were devoted to the cultivation of rare flowers and herbs. Our next garden belongs to the **Villa L Pietra**, originally built in 1462. The present grounds were laid out around 1908 for Arthur Acton and the estate was later bequeathed by Sir Harold Acton (Arthur's son) to New York University. The villa now serves as a center for Italian Studies

Return to Hotel Villa Pitiana for dinner.



(Thursday) Domini (Excursion to Siena & San Gimignano)

Breakfast at the hotel.

Depart for an excursion to the hill towns of Tuscany. Our first stop is the beautiful town of Siena. After our guided visit to this medieval city we will stop at the dramatic ***Villa Chigi Cetinale***. The Villa expanded in the 17th century to become a symbol of the power and prestige of the famous banking Chigi family

Continue to ***Villa le Corti***, to visit the oil and wine cellars of this private farm, where we will have lunch.

<http://www.principecorsini.com/english/villa>

Continue in the afternoon to San Gimignano, for free time for independent exploration

Return to Hotel Villa Pitiana for dinner.



(Friday)

Domini

Breakfast at the hotel.

Depart for ***Villa I Tatti***, now owned by the University of Harvard and originally the home of the famous art historian Bernard Berenson from 1900 until his death in 1959. The garden was designed by the young British architect, Cecil Pinsent. The old chapel is where Bernard and his wife Mary Berenson are buried. *Appointment on request.* <http://www.itatti.it>

Return to Florence for independent lunch followed by a visit to the famed ***Boboli Gardens*** built by the family Medici in the 16th century. The garden has grottos, fountains, a pool and many paths to wander.

Tonight our hotel will host a special cooking class. Dinner will be the pasta you have made, accompanied by a local wine.



(Saturday)

Domini(Excursion to Lucca & Pisa)

Breakfast at the hotel.

Discover ***Villa Torrigiani***, a glorious private villa and its garden. You will be received by the owner (his schedule permitting) who will show you the private theater inside the villa. Continue to the nearby walled town of Lucca, where we will have a short guided tour.

Lunch at a restaurant in Lucca.

Continue onto Pisa to see the Leaning Tower, the Cathedral and the Baptistery. Return to Hotel Villa Pitiana for dinner.



(Sunday)

Domini/Florence

Breakfast at the hotel.

Check out of our villa and travel to downtown Florence where we will check into a hotel.

Meet a local guide for a tour of the historical center of Florence. The rest of the day is at leisure to shop and explore the city on your own.

Dinner in a typical Florentine restaurant.

Anglo American Hotel
Via Guiseppe Garibaldi, 9
50123 Firenze, Italy
Tel: 011-39-055-282114
Fax: 011-39-055-286513
www.framon-hotels.com

(Monday)

Florence/Italian Lakes District

Breakfast at the hotel.

Check out of the hotel and travel to the Lake Como region

Independent lunch.

Visit the elegant **Villa Carlotta** ideally situated on a point with magnificent views of Lake Como. Imaginative plantings on the sunny terraces include twining climbers, jasmine and roses. <http://www.villacarlotta.it>
We will then continue to our hotel in Como.

Hotel Barchetta Excelsior
Piazzo Cavour, 1
22100 Como, Italy
Tel: 011-39-031-3221
www.hotelbarchetta.it



Dinner at the hotel

(Tuesday)

Lakes District

Breakfast at the hotel. This morning we take a boat trip across Lake Maggiore to the spectacular **Isola Bella** for a guided tour of the gardens. <http://www.stresa.net/isle/bella>

Independent lunch en route.

This afternoon, we will visit **Villa Taranto**, one of the most beautiful botanical gardens in Europe.
<http://www.villataranto.it>

Tonight we have left the evening free for independent dinner and exploration.



(Wednesday)

Lakes District

Breakfast at the hotel.
Morning at leisure.

Independent lunch.

In the afternoon, travel by boat to the Grand Hotel Villa D'Este, one of the top five hotels in the world, to visit their beautiful gardens. Following our tour, refreshments will be served on the Lake Terrace

A special Farewell Dinner is planned for this evening.



(Thursday)

Lakes District/Detroit

Breakfast at the hotel
Board coach for transfer to Milan Malpensa Airport
Depart Milan Malpensa Airport.