

Day 13 Friday 10 May

Venice to Verona & Lake Garda
Depart Venice after breakfast for the historic centre of Verona. Here you might sip coffee alongside the 2000 year old Roman Amphitheatre, photograph Juliette's balcony and wander through the authentic 16th century Giardini Guisti on the hillside above the winding Adige River. In the afternoon it's a short drive to the pretty town of Garda on the large and beautiful lake of the same name where you check in to your hotel and have dinner arranged.
Overnight Garda
Breakfast • Dinner



Day 14 Saturday 11 May

Lake Garda & Sirmione
This morning you take a boat cruise on the southern waters of Lake Garda past Isola del Garda to Gardone and return. After lunch you drive around the lake shore to the delightful town of Sirmione situated on a small peninsula. Roman mosaics and the ruins of Grotto di Catullo attest to the Romans being charmed by this gorgeous location. You have a tour of the Grotto and some free time to wander around the old core where the most notable landmark is the 13th century Scaligero Castle before returning to Garda.
Overnight Garda
Breakfast



Day 15 Sunday 12 May

Lake Garda to Stresa
After breakfast you continue to the famous lakes district and to grand and gorgeous Stresa on the shores of Lake Maggiore. Tour Villa Taranto in Pallanza en-route, one of northern Italy's most scenic villas, then check in to your wonderful Art Nouveau hotel for the next four nights. This is refined hotel is your base as you explore this enchanting region.
Overnight Stresa
Breakfast • Dinner

Day 16 Monday 13 May

Stresa & the Islands
Wake this morning to views over Lake Maggiore and tiny islands floating on the water. Ferry to Isola Bella first to explore its romantic Italianate, flower-filled terraces then ferry to magical Isola Madre where peacocks strut amongst the exquisite Botanic Gardens. These jaw droppingly beautiful islands have been owned by the Borromeo family since the 17th C.
Overnight Stresa
Breakfast

Day 17 Tuesday 14 May

Bellagio & Lake Como
Drive to stunning Lake Como today. Your touring includes the gardens at Villa Melzi where beautiful sculptures enhance nature with elements of art and history and free time in Bellagio where narrow cobbled streets, promenades planted with Oleander and Lime and fin-de-siecle hotels painted in shades of butterscotch, peach and cream, nestle between the waters of Lake Como and the steep slopes of the European Alps. You also take a local boat ride.
Overnight Stresa
Breakfast • Dinner



Day 18 Wednesday 15 May

Lombardy
Take a scenic drive after breakfast to Villa Cicogna near the Swiss border for a captivating tour of this living museum with its owners. See the superbly restored interiors, terraced gardens, arcaded courtyards and spectacular water staircase. Originally a hunting lodge built in 1400 by the noble Milanese Mozzoni family it was later modified to a Renaissance villa. Continue on to Porto Ceresio on the shores of Lake Lugano for lunch at leisure before returning to Stresa to overnight.
Overnight Stresa
Breakfast

Day 19 Thursday 16 May

Stresa to Milan
Depart Stresa for the elegant style hub of Milan where you have guided walk through the centre of this impressive city. See the imposing cathedral, the Vittorio Emanuele Galleria and the opera house Teatro Alla Scala. You then check in to your hotel and enjoy an end of tour dinner this evening.
Overnight Milan
Breakfast • Dinner

Day 20 Friday 17 May

Milan to Doha & Adelaide
Transfer to Milan's Malpensa airport early this morning for your Qatar Airways flight to Doha. Here you connect in the evening with your Adelaide bound flight.
Overnight in flight
Breakfast • Meals in flight

Day 21 Saturday 18 May

Arrive in Adelaide today in the late afternoon.



Italian Gardens Lakes & Villas

28 April - 18 May 2024



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PLEASE NOTE: It is essential to be fully fit to undertake this tour. Exploration of cities, sights and gardens is all done on foot. Chat to our friendly Travel Office if unsure.

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...enriching lives through cultural exchange

**Rome • Villa D'Este • Castel Gondolfo • Ninfa Gardens • Villa Lante • Siena
Montalcino • Bagno Vignoni • Pienza • Florence • Lucca • Venice • Verona
Lake Garda • Sirmione • Lake Maggiore • Stresa • Isola Bella & Isola Madre
Lake Como • Bellagio • Milan**

Indulge in a magical exploration of some of Italy's most beautiful gardens, lakes and villas with your garden specialist and tour leader Carolyn Travers who loves to divide her time between Adelaide and Tuscany. Beginning in Rome and ending in elegant Milan you travel in relaxed style with four nights in the eternal city, four nights on exquisite Lake Maggiore and stays in Siena, Florence, Venice and at Lake Garda. Visit the two thousand year old Roman amphitheatre in Verona, fabulous Tuscan hilltop towns, the astonishing Romanesque Abbey of Saint Antimo, the masterpiece of Italian gardens Villa D'Este, and the Pope's summer residence Castel Gandolfo. Enjoy boat trips to jaw droppingly beautiful islands on exotic Lakes Garda and Como and eat in local trattorias with your friendly leader. This tour is a wonderful appreciation of the cultural and architectural integrity Italy has gifted humankind.

Tour Leader: Carolyn Travers is a garden designer and horticulturalist. She is also an enthusiastic and caring tour leader with many years experience leading tours and a passion for gardens, art and culture.

Inclusions: Flights Adelaide to Adelaide • Full Escort • All sightseeing as per itinerary • Local Guides • All Hotel Accommodation (average 4 star) • All meals as per itinerary • All Entrance fees as per itinerary • All transfers and transport • Pre and Post tour get togethers • Study Notes



21 Days \$11,980 Twin Share
Plus Airline taxes \$385 (July 2023) • Single Supplement \$2355
Balance Due 06 February 2024

Day 1 Sunday 28 April

Adelaide to Rome
Depart Adelaide this evening with Qatar Airways via Doha to Rome.
Overnight in Flight
Meals in Flight

Day 2 Monday 29 April

Arrive Rome
Arrive in Rome in the early afternoon and transfer to your hotel which is your base for the next four nights. The remainder of the afternoon is free to rest and relax or you might like to join your tour leader for an exploratory walk around the local campos and piazzas. Many of the main sights are within walking distance.
Overnight Rome
Meals in Flight

Day 3 Tuesday 30 April

Rome & Tivoli
Your day begins with the beautiful Villa D'Este, the most quintessential Italian Renaissance Villa, World Cultural Heritage listed and renowned for its magnificent gardens and water features. Fully restored to its 16th century glory it is a masterpiece of Italian garden design with the use of



gravity-fed water features just mesmerizing. In the afternoon you visit Hadrian's Villa, an exceptional complex of classical buildings built for the great Roman Emperor Hadrian in the 2nd century AD. Tonight a welcome dinner has been arranged for you in a local restaurant.

Overnight Rome
Breakfast • Dinner

Day 4 Wednesday 01 May

Rome & Villa Borghese
Join your local guide on a walking tour of Rome this morning which includes the beautiful Villa Borghese. What differentiates Villa Borghese from Europe's other large urban parks is its perfect harmony of natural beauty and Roman art. It is home to numerous intriguing architectural elements, sculptures, monuments and fountains created at different times by famous artists and is ideal place to relax, look out over Rome and contemplate its magnificence.

Overnight Rome
Breakfast

Day 5 Thursday 02 May

Ninfa & Pope's Palace
Today you visit Giardina Ninfa, a dreamy romantic garden that rambles along streams and over remnants of ancient walls and towers rejoicing in the watery conditions. The medieval town itself deserted in the 13th century and has crumbled in to a mystical ruin. You also visit Castel Gandolfo the Pope's 12th century residence and place of escape from the heat of mid-summer Rome. The palace was ceded to the Catholic church to settle

1596 and the gardens were added in 1626. They were restored in 1929 and the scale and perfection of these Imperial gardens is grand even by today's standards. They are impeccably maintained right down to the olive groves, vineyards and Pontifical farm which supplies fresh produce to the Pope's table.

Overnight Rome
Breakfast

Day 6 Friday 03 May

Rome to Siena
Travel through beautiful Umbria and Tuscany today to the exquisite small city of Siena. On the way you visit a landmark in the history of Italian gardens Villa Lante at Bagnaia. This is a lovely example of a Renaissance garden which has remained unchanged in size and structure since the 16th century. Arranged on four levels along a main axis and emphasized by fountains with perfect symmetry, there are two parts divided by a flowing water parterre forming a water chain. There is a wonderful sense of tranquility here. Join your tour leader this evening for dinner in a local trattoria and the Italian ritual of an evening stroll known as passeggiata.

Overnight Siena
Breakfast • Dinner



Day 7 Saturday 04 May

Montalcino, Bagno Vignoni & Pienza
Take a road less travelled through pure Tuscany today delighting in some of the most quintessential Tuscan towns and landscapes. These are the unspoilt gems of the UNESCO Val d'Orcia Natural Park of Cultural and Natural Heritage. Highlights include the idyllic hamlet of Bagno Vignoni on the ancient Via Francigena pilgrimage route to Rome, and delightful Pienza, a small township with a huge papal palace and wonderful old city walls from where you truly have some of the finest vistas in all of Tuscany. Visit the palace, its petite garden and the authentic pedestrian precinct before arriving at the astonishing nearby

alabaster Abbey of Saint Antimo. An absolute jewel of mysticism it is one of the most significant and starkly beautiful Romanesque structures standing today. Home to a small number of Olivetan Benedictine monks Saint Antimo's setting amongst vineyards, Cypress and Poplar trees is picture book. You also explore fabulous hilltop Montalcino noted for its rich red Brunello wines, ancient city walls with breathtaking views, fine cobbled centre and delectable and pastry shops.

Overnight Siena
Breakfast



Day 8 Sunday 05 May

Siena to Florence
This morning you walk with a guide to appreciate the history and substantial treasures of Siena. See the colossal medieval Cathedral and the Piazza del Campo, Italy's finest and most beautiful central plaza and an idyllic example of cultural and architectural integrity. Continue to Florence to visit the Uffizi Gallery one of the great museums of the world which houses a treasure trove of Italian Renaissance artworks by masters such as Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Titian, Caravaggio and Botticelli. Check in to your hotel here as your comfortable base for the next three nights and have dinner in an authentic trattoria with your tour leader.

Overnight Florence
Breakfast • Dinner

Day 9 Monday 06 May

Florence
Explore Florence with a local guide in the morning then have the remainder of the day to enjoy this glorious city at your own pace. You may wish to browse the leather and trinket markets on the Ponte Vecchio, visit one of the myriad treasures or simply rest and relax. After dinner you are welcome to join your tour leader for an evening stroll to take in the ambiance and maybe a gelato.
Overnight Florence
Breakfast



Day 10 Tuesday 07 May

Lucca
Visit the delightful walled city of Lucca today and take a walk with your tour leader around this much loved medieval gem she knows so well. It is picture perfect with its Renaissance city walls, well preserved artistic and cultural heritage, ancient towers, piazzas and monuments. There is ample leisure time to explore the town, browse and shop and to walk along the old town walls or around Market Square. After lunch you visit 16th century Villa Torrigiana, a superb historic mansion surrounded by romantic gardens, fountains and grottos.

Overnight Florence
Breakfast

Day 11 Wednesday 08 May

Florence to Venice
Depart Florence this morning visiting one last jewel Villa Gamberaia for morning tea. Nestled amongst groves of olives and grapes this harmonious blend of hillside, ochre rendered house and garden is praised for its simplicity of composition and is idealized as the perfect Italian villa. Continue to Venice and your hotel in the floating city's heart before dinner together this evening.

Overnight Venice
Breakfast • Morning Tea • Dinner

Day 12 Thursday 09 May

Venice
Appreciate the rich architectural and artistic heritage of this unique city with a Venetian guide and see Saint Mark's Square and the 10th century Saint Mark's Basilica. The afternoon is free to take a gondola or vaporetto along the magnificent Grand Canal or to visit some of the restored palaces which are now museums and galleries filled with priceless artefacts. Visit the local produce market or ride a local ferry to the outer islands to see artisans and glassblowers at work in the brightly painted fishing villages.
Overnight Venice
Breakfast

