



Bologna- What traditionally was the most communist of all the Italian cities, ironically it's also the most prosperous. Its people work hard, play hard, and love good food. The architecture is austere but handsome, the shops are elegant, and the food in Bologna, and throughout the region of Emilia Romagna, is widely regarded to be the best in Italy, which to some of us means the best in the world. In the 13<sup>th</sup> Century the town authorities decreed that new buildings had to have covered porticoes where people could walk, sheltered from the sun and the rain. It now has an urban network of thirty kilometers of them. To our knowledge, no one has yet come up with a better system.

**Venice-** Wherever else you go, do not miss Venice; there is no urban environment in the world to compare with it. Like all Italian cities, it abounds with museums, churches and art treasures, but the real experience to be had is just to be there, to hear the sounds of footsteps and conversation instead of traffic noise. We find Venice to be more expensive than Rome, although some of our friends disagree. If you want to hold down expenses on

a trip to Venice, take the overnight train with couchette from Rome. You'll arrive early in the morning and will have saved the price of a night in a hotel. Eat and sleep in the part of the city nearer the RR Station and further from the expensive St. Mark's Square area. You can eat inexpensively near St. Mark's at "città di Vittorio", San Marco, Frezzaria 1591. It's a noisy place where you'll find more Venetians than tourists and the food is OK. For higher priced accommodation, the Hotel Luna is pleasant and the Gritti Palace is the best of all.

**Ravenna-** The major repository of Byzantine art and architecture in Italy, famous for its ancient ceramics.

**San Marino-** Visit three countries in one while you're in Italy: Italy, the Vatican, and this little city state. It's known for jewel, coins, and stamps.

**The Adriatic coast-** For people who like to go to the beach without getting their hair wet, this is perfect. The sea is calm and flat and you can walk practically to Croatia before the water gets deep. Frankly, we're not fond of the coast from Rimini to Pescara but Italians and Germans seem to be. It gets very crowded in the summer. Cattolica is hilly and therefore a little more attractive than most of its neighbors. Fano is an old town with Roman walls and thus some character. Most of the towns vaguely resemble Rockaway Beach, although some of the new amusement water parks are more in the spirit of Disney World. The road from Rome to Fano, Via Flaminia, passes through a place called the Gola di Furlo. Italy is full of cultural wonders. This is one of its natural wonders, a mountain pass where road and river slice through the rock between very dramatic cliffs.

**Grottoes of Frasassi-** Near Fabriano, which is about 50 kilometers inland from Ancona, you will find another natural wonder, these beautiful caverns, which compare favorably with any of the largest in the USA.

**Florence-** Either go with a guide or read a book or two on Florence before you go. The amount of major art and architecture in Florence is overwhelming, so give yourself enough time and preparation. Florence is really the world's largest and richest museum and as such can be too much to digest in a short time.

We recommend:

- Grand Hotel Minerva, in Piazza Santa Maria Novella
- Hotel Lungarno- along the river only a few steps from Ponte Vecchio.

Note: Two recommended places to eat between Florence and Siena are:

- Il Pozzo at Monteriggioni
- L'Amoroso at Sinalunga

**Siena-** The second best place in the world for pedestrians (after Venice), this city has parking lots arranged around its perimeter and they are connected to the center by stairs, escalators and elevators. The Duomo is spectacular and the main piazza, where the palio is run in July and August, is one of the most beautiful in the world. In addition to the palio, the city is known for sweets, cheeses, and wine. The horse race is lively but it's

extremely crowded and lasts about three minutes (although it takes about an hour to get it going) so we suggest you visit when the palio is not being run and you can enjoy this jewel of a city at a leisurely pace. The surrounding countryside is also impressive.

**Naples**- The city has produced some of our absolute favorite Italians, from Totò, Italy's all time best comic, to Sofia Loren, to Pino Daniele, the best popular musician of the past three decades. While Neapolitans have a particular charm and certainly the most musical dialect in Italy, the city is not one that you must see at all costs. If you do go, be somewhat on guard, or the cost may in fact be somewhat higher than planned. However, don't miss the **Amalfi Drive**, Italy's most spectacularly scenic road. It winds through Sorrento and around the peninsula to Amalfi, passing through **Positano**, one of the world's truly beautiful spots. We recommend the Moresca Hotel in Positano. Good food and lodging are reasonably priced. August is the highest high season and to be avoided.

**Pompeii**- A fascinating place which can be fairly exhausting to see thoroughly. They keep digging up new things and while the ruins are fascinating, be warned that it gets very hot here in the summer. The new parts of town aren't anything special so we suggest you stay in Positano or elsewhere and see Pompeii enroute to or from Rome.

**Caserta**- While this city seems to suffer from the worst air pollution in Italy, it is the site of the Royal Palace, the Kingdom of Naples answer to Versailles.

**Southern Italy** has less of cultural interest than the north, but its scenery is breathtaking, whether it be in the mountains or along the shore. The Ionian coast in Calabria is lovely. The Tyrrhenian coast south of Salerno has suffered the most from shoddy and often illegal development but is still beautiful in spots. Sicily, Sardinia and the Gargano peninsula in Puglia all have scenic coastal zones with clean water and attractive beaches.

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