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## GEEO ITINERARY

zITALY – Summer

### Day 1: Rome Arrive at any time.

Arrive in Rome at any time. On Day 1, there are no planned activities until your Group Meeting that evening around 6:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m., so check into the hotel – check-in time is approximately 3:00 p.m. – and enjoy the city. Check the notice boards or ask at reception for the exact time and location of the group meeting. After the meeting, you might like to take the option of heading out for a meal in a nearby local restaurant to further get to know your tour leader and traveling companions. Please make every effort to arrive on time for this important welcome meeting. If you are delayed and will arrive late, please inform us. Your tour leader will then leave you a message at the front desk informing you of where and when to meet up. We recommend booking pre-tour accommodation to fully explore this magnificent city. We will be in touch 90 days before departure to take your extra hotel night requests. Please note that if Vatican City is on your must-see list, we highly recommend purchasing your tickets online several weeks prior to your trip. Advance tickets can be reserved online through <https://www.weekendinitaly.com/en/rome>. Same-day entrance to St. Peter's Basilica and the Vatican Museums (including the Sistine Chapel) cannot be guaranteed without advance tickets. We also recommend pre-booking your ticket to the Colosseum to guarantee entrance and avoid long lines. **Please note:** All GEEO trips to Europe use public transportation. This means you will need to have luggage you can easily carry with you up and downstairs, on and off trains and buses, etc.

### Day 2: Rome (B) Enjoy a migrant led walk of Rome before having the rest of the day free to explore this amazing city. Opt to tour Vatican City, cross the river to charming Trastevere, eat some gelato in Piazza Navona, or swing by the Colosseum and Forum.

Learn all about a different side of Rome with a newcomer to Italy as your guide with Migrantour, a social enterprise that trains immigrants to give tours of the city - with their own flair. Our travelers receive a unique experience as guides give them rare insight into Italian society through an immigrant's eyes. From ancient landmarks to the history of migration to Rome, expect this to be a guided tour like no other. There's plenty to see and do in Rome, and we wanted to make sure that you had some time to take it all in. Feel free to relax or try optional activities like visiting the Colosseum, exploring the Pantheon, or sit down to a plate of pasta at a local trattoria. Your tour leader has more ideas if you need them. Just ask! Another option is opt to pre-book the Rome Vintage Vespa Tour. Live "la dolce vita" and hop onto a Vespa! Make your way around the city (like the locals do) on a vintage Vespa scooter. Visit Rome's must-see landmarks with a local guide, who will also be your Vespa driver, on this 3-4 hour afternoon excursion. Opt to add a photography package to your Vespa tour, so you can relax, immerse yourself in this ancient city, and still have all those unforgettable snaps from your classic Roman holiday. We can book this for you 90 days before departure.

### Day 3: Rome/Montepulciano (B) Travel to Montepulciano in the heart of the Tuscan countryside. Explore this medieval and renaissance hill town with an orientation walk.

Travel to Montepulciano in the heart of the Tuscan countryside. Explore this medieval and renaissance hill town with an orientation walk. You will then have the rest of the day to explore on your own. Montepulciano is famous for producing delectable local pork, cheese, "Pici" pasta, and honey. It is also major wine producing area. Take in the stunning vistas, wander cobbled lanes, or opt to sample the local delicacies in small, family-run establishments. We suggest you make your way to the Piazza Grande, the center of day to day life in Montepulciano. You'll find some of the town's most impressive architecture, such as the Palazzo Comunale, and Town Hall. Climb to the tower in the Palazzo Comunale for great views of Lake Trasimeno and Val d'Orcia. This region is known for Vino Nobile di Montepulciano (made with Sangiovese grapes), and the Montepulciano red. Step into one of the quaint wine shops on the hill to

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indulge in a sampling. Another option is renting a bike from a local shop and head out to explore. Approximate travel time: 2.5 hrs by train, 30 minutes by bus.

**Day 4: Montepulciano (B) Spend the day in the Italian countryside. The famous wine-producing region is the perfect place for an optional vineyard tour and wine tasting, or a bike ride in the rolling hills.**

Spend the day as you choose! The Tuscan region is known for natural hot springs, so you may opt to travel further afield to the thermal springs of Bagni San Filippo. Take a 30-minute ride out of town and find yourself in a picturesque setting of calciferous formations, waterfalls, and natural pools; this scene is made more spectacular by the vivid color of the water made bright blue by the effect of the hot springs meeting the cool river water. Sit back, relax, and be healed. Another option is to travel outside of Montepulciano through the rolling vineyards to one of the surrounding wineries, such as the legendary Avignonesi estate or Cantina Fattoria della Talosa. Enjoy strolling through the hectares of greenery, indulging in a sample of local wines, and a guided tour of the cellars.

**Day 5: Montepulciano/Florence (B) Continue on to Florence. Enjoy an evening walk to Piazzale Michelangelo for a fantastic panoramic view of the city.**

Continue to the incomparable Firenze. Join your tour leader for an orientation walk through the city, then spend the rest of the day exploring at your leisure. You may choose to catch a glimpse of the Duomo, Piazza Indipendenza, Piazza della Signoria, and the Ponte Vecchio. This medieval bridge over the Arno River epitomizes the romance of Florence. Jewelers, art dealers, and souvenir shops run the length of the bridge, featured in many master paintings. Continue to Piazzale Michelangelo for the most famous and photographed vista of the city. This green-pink-white marbled 13th-century basilica is one of Italy's largest churches and its brick dome is the largest ever constructed. You may opt to visit the local leather markets and souvenir stalls set up all over the city. Approximate travel time: 2 hrs by local train and bus

**Day 6: Florence (B) With a free day, the choices are endless. Opt to visit the Duomo, David, Uffizi Gallery, medieval Ponte Vecchio, or the Medici Chapels.**

The day is yours to explore. There's plenty to see and do in Florence, and we want to make sure that you have some time to take it all in. Feel free to relax or create your own adventure. Check out the Mercato Centrale or any number of cafés and trattorias. If you came to shop, start at one end of the city and just keep going. There's beautiful architecture, famous museums, Renaissance art pieces, and charming cobblestone streets everywhere. If you wish to go further afield, take a wine-tasting bike tour up to Fiesole and the vineyards of Chianti. For a truly local experience, indulge your inner gastronome on a culinary tour of the city. The GEEO team can help you book this and other options about 90 days prior to departure. If you wish to visit popular museums like the Uffizi and Accademia Galleries, we **strongly** advise reserving tickets in advance to avoid waiting in line for a long time (especially during the high season from May-September, where this can take several hours). Advance tickets can be reserved online through sites like <https://www.weekenditaly.com/en/florence>.

**Day 7: Florence (B) Enjoy a day trip to vibrant Siena. After an orientation walk around this medieval city, opt to visit Torre del Mangia, Battistero, il Campo, or the Duomo or to take a "passeggiata" and meet the Sienese locals. Return to Florence at the end of the day.**

Enjoy a day trip to vibrant Siena. After an orientation walk, wander this medieval walled city where options abound! You may opt to visit Torre del Mangia, Battistero, il Campo, or the Duomo or to take a "passeggiata" and meet the Sienese locals. The Piazza del Campo is the main public square in the center of Siena. One of the best examples of medieval European squares, the architecture of this area is striking. The Torre del Mangia is in the center of the shell-shaped piazza and is worth climbing for the beautiful views it affords. Twice a year, the tiny square is transformed by the ancient Palio horse race. Other optional activities that can be booked through GEEO 90 days before departure include Chianti wine tasting and visits to the Duomo di Siena and the Torre del Mangia. Return to Florence at the end of the

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day. Approximate travel time: 3 hrs by local train (1.5 hrs each way)

**Day 8: Florence/Cinque Terre (B) Visit Pisa en route to the coast. Settle into the colorful, charming town in the Cinque Terre.**

Board a train to Pisa and stop for a visit at the Field of Miracles to see the famous leaning tower (~€18 entrance fee not included). Wander the area and take photos to your heart's content. Opt to enter the Pisa Cathedral, or enjoy lunch at a nearby restaurant. Later, continue to the coastal paradise of Cinque Terre by train. Approximate travel time: 2 hrs by local train

**Day 9: Cinque Terre (B) Walk the coastal path between Riomaggiore and Monterosso or opt to take the train. Visit charming, colorful towns along the way.**

Walk the Cinque Terre coastal path from Riomaggiore to Monterosso (approximately 5-6 hrs of hiking, stopping in the villages along the way), giving you the best taste of the villages and countryside, terraced hills, and vineyards sloping down to the sea. The national park pass and a daily unlimited train ticket are included; opt to take the train if you don't feel like hiking. You'll follow your tour leader along centuries-old footpaths and mule tracks leading through olive groves, vineyards, and orchards on a full day hike, or hop on and off the train, experiencing each town on your own. Choose to rest in each of the 5 villages, sampling delicacies in each place, such as local pesto, espresso, or delicious gelato. Please note that some popular hiking paths along the Cinque Terre have been temporarily closed due to water erosion and damage caused by landslides in 2016. Your tour leader will guide you on the best, most accessible path for the hike. Approximate travel time: 30 min local train, 5-6 hrs hiking

**Day 10: Cinque Terre/Lake Como (B) Travel to Lake Como, a perfectly picturesque region laden with villas and lush gardens. Arrive in the late afternoon and start exploring the town.**

Set out from Cinque Terre on a train journey with a few changes en route, passing through Milan and on to elegant Varenna, located on the shores of Lake Como. On the border with Switzerland, enjoy the spectacular backdrop of the snowy-peaked Alps. Approximate travel time: 5 hrs by local train

**Day 11: Lake Como (B) Spend the day on Lake Como with a day pass for the Lake Como boat. Visit multiple towns along the shores. Opt to take the funicular to Brunate for a fantastic view over the area.**

Lake Como is made up of small towns nestled along the coast of this Mediterranean-Alpine retreat. Take a full-day boat pass and cruise up and down the lake, stopping off at various charming towns. Explore the lake and its many elegant villas and towns, such as Bellagio with its shops, restaurants, and fine residences. In the afternoon, there is plenty of free time for soaking up the elegant atmosphere in one of the lakeside cafés or restaurants. Take some time for shopping — some of the finest Italian designers are to be found in Como's chic boutiques. You may choose to enjoy a funicular ride (€3-6 per person) from Como town to the hilltop village of Brunate. In operation since 1894, the historic lift is the best way to get a bird's eye view of the stunning region. Or, head to the piazza in the historic part of the city to visit one of the most stunning sites in Como, the Como Cathedral. With its ornate and unique architecture, you won't be able to miss it.

**Day 12: Lake Como/Venice (B) Travel to Venice, the "city of canals," and enjoy an orientation walk over bridges and canals and view Piazza San Marco.**

Travel east to captivating Venice, the unique "city of canals," full of magnificent monuments. Enjoy a brief orientation walk with your tour leader, then continue exploring on your own or with others in your group. Your tour leader will give you some tips on finding things like supermarkets, main squares, and ATMs. For more specific or in-depth information, an official guided tour is recommended. There will be

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plenty of time to wander the narrow cobblestone streets and wide piazzas, crossing hundreds of tiny bridges and, of course, getting lost in Venice's labyrinth. Don't miss Saint Mark's Square and Basilica. Enter the picture-perfect Piazza San Marco from one of the many winding alleyways and stare in awe at the grandeur. With the massive, ornate basilica standing tall at one end, pigeons gathering and flying around, and violinists playing a Vivaldi tune at a café table — this is Venice. Wander the square and people watch or duck inside the glittering basilica for more Venetian inspiration. Approximate travel time: 5 hrs by local train

**Day 13: Venice (B) Enjoy a full day to explore Venice as you choose. Feel free to relax or try optional activities like exploring the waterways on a gondola ride, watching a Venetian glass blowing demonstration, or sitting down for a catch of the day meal at a canal-side restaurant.**

Spend the day getting lost in Venice. Opt for a vaporetto (water taxi) ride to the islands of Murano and Burano, take a gondola under the Ponte Rialto (Bridge of Lovers), explore the Doge's Palace and Bridge of Sighs, or get lost in the twisting maze of the city. Your tour leader has more ideas if you need them. Just ask!

**Day 14: Venice (B) Depart at any time.**

We recommend staying an extra day or two to fully experience all this beautiful city has to offer. Want more adventure? Book two or more GEE0 trips in the same year and receive a discount! GEE0 will give you 10% off of the lesser value program(s) (up to 3 programs). If you don't see a program that interests you that pairs with this trip, but still would like to extend your time abroad, let us know. We will work with you to find a non-teacher trip from our tour operator's much larger catalog. Even better, if you are an educator, we can still offer you a discounted price on the trip you choose!