



Rome to Rome Hidden Italy, the Lands of the Etruscans

Discover the idyllic town of Pienza, "Under the Tuscan Sun"

Savour lunch on a shady terrace with spectacular views over the Lazio countryside.

A hidden land with ancient Etruscan cities and frescoed tombs, spectacular perched medieval towns, catacomb labyrinths, water cascades, a colossal man-made waterfall, and a park full of giants and monsters. Visit perfect Pienza, 'Under the Tuscan sun' Cortona, dine in amazing locations, explore the undulating Tuscan Hills of the Val d'Orcia which so inspired the Renaissance painters. So different – so absolutely delightful!



Travel in a first-class air-conditioned touring coach



Welcome drink Rome

15 meals including breakfast daily (B), 1 lunch on a tree shaded terrace overlooking the Lazio countryside (L) and 5 evening meals including one in a labyrinth of ancient Etruscan caves, one in a Val d'Orcia farmhouse and private farewell dinner in a vineyard (D)



Free WiFi at hotels

Hotel portorage of 1 bag per person (where available)

9 nights specially selected hotel accommodation



Personal audio system whilst on tour (where available)

Fully escorted by our experienced Tour Manager

ALL tips for your Tour Manager, Driver and Local Guides



Hand Selected Albatross Experiences including the underground Etruscan tombs, Villa Lante cascading gardens, Parco dei Mostri, Civita di Bagnoregio experience, Etruscan Via Cava walk, Val d'Orcia wine and Pecorino cheese tasting and the amazing Marmore Falls

ALL excursions, scenic drives, sightseeing and entrances as described



Rome welcome

Day 1



Best Western Premier Hotel Royal Santina



D

Your tour commences this evening in the eternal city of Rome. Join us tonight for a welcome drink before dinner in a local trattoria. This is an ideal chance to meet, and get to know, your Tour Manager and fellow travellers.

Etruscan Necropolis, Villa Lante & Orvieto welcome dinner

Day 2



Hotel Palazzo Piccolomini, Orvieto



B,D

We travel north along the Mediterranean Coast, past the cruise port of Civitavecchia, to Tarquinia. Here we are joined by an expert local guide, who will show us around the UNESCO World Heritage site of Tarquinia's ancient Etruscan Necropolis. This is where we step back to pre-Roman times and learn about the very special Etruscan civilisation that thrived around 2,500 – 3,000 years ago. On a landscape scattered by ancient burial mounds, we will descend stairways to look inside the tombs, complete with colourful paintings and frescoes. Later, in the town of Tarquinia, we will also enjoy a tour through the National Etruscan Museum with its ancient sarcophagus, statues and artefacts. The artwork of this ancient civilisation is beautiful. The Etruscans are a people many of us have heard of, but know little about. So these visits are an excellent introduction as, over the next few days, we will continually encounter cities, sites and legacies of this amazing civilisation.

Lunchtime will be at leisure in Tarquinia. Continuing, we drive through the undulating hills around Viterbo, to a small town called Bagnaia, to visit the 'Mannerist' style gardens of Villa Lante - an amazing, cascading set of water gardens created by the Duke of Bomarzo in the 17th century. Despite being voted one of the top gardens of Italy, due to its remote location, it is so peaceful and virtually without tourists. Delightful!

Our destination for the next three nights is the ancient Etruscan clifftop city of Orvieto. Access to the middle of the pedestrianised old town, and our hotel, is via an elevator up through the cliffs. In the evening we will enjoy a superb, private dinner somewhere very, very special. Whilst the food is all homemade and delicious, the highlight will be accessing a system of ancient, Etruscan catacombs and caves via a stairway inside the restaurant. The caves are absolutely fascinating, and the food is terrific. What an amazing introduction to Orvieto!

Walking tour & 'My Time' in Orvieto

Day 3



Hotel Palazzo Piccolomini, Orvieto



B

A leisurely start before we are joined by a local guide who will take us on a walking tour of Orvieto. We have included a visit to the magnificent Cathedral. The carved detail, and colours on the exterior stonework, make this arguably the most beautiful Cathedral you will ever see. Inside, the statue of the 'Pietà' is astounding. The rest of your day and evening is free in Orvieto, perfect for relaxing in the cafés or doing some shopping amongst the ancient streets and alleys. Make sure you visit, and walk down the amazing 72m deep, St Patrick's Well. Called the 'Pozzo di San Patrizio', this engineering marvel, is about 500 years old. Once inside, the light bouncing off the walls, coming in from the natural opening at the top, is stunning.

Park of Monsters and a lazy lunch

Day 4



Hotel Palazzo Piccolomini, Orvieto



B,L

A very relaxing day. First stop is at the Sacro Bosco in Bomarzo. Otherwise known as the Parco dei Mostri - or the Park of the Monsters. Designed in the 16th century the shaded pathways are filled with weird and wonderful sculptures, hewn from volcanic boulders scattered through a woodland park. You will be immersed in the surreal experience of a 'monster world' created 500 years ago. Here you will see Neptune, the gods, enormous dragons, a war elephant, a huge tortoise, and two angry giants tearing each other apart. There is a tilted stone house, serpents, monsters and enormous heads with mouths agape, appearing to scream at you. You can even walk inside that mouth! Hungry by now? It is time for a long, leisurely lunch, enjoying great food in the Lazio countryside.

Later we return to Orvieto and the rest of your day and evening is free. Maybe climb the great tower, or walk to the massive fortified ramparts. An absolute must is the highlight of enjoying an evening aperitif in front of the gorgeous Cathedral as dusk approaches. The surrounding square is so peaceful and quiet, and the golden light bathing the colourful church façade is sublime.

Civita di Bagnoregio, Pitigliano and the 'Via Cava'

Day 5



Grand Hotel Excelsior, Chianciano Terme



99 B,D

Be prepared for a fascinating day as we go well off the beaten track. First stop will be at a mysterious town called Civita di Bagnoregio. A thousand years ago, an absolutely picture-perfect, walled citadel was built on a rocky pinnacle in the middle of the 'Badlands'. The land around eroded and subsided and eventually access was only possible by a skinny unstable ridge. Bridges were built, and then collapsed. Now there is a strong, 300 metre long stone and steel viaduct connecting this striking medieval, hilltop town with the rim of the huge crater. Probably the most striking hilltop town in all Europe. Inside are picture-perfect stone buildings, squares, flower boxes, cafés and magnificent views.

Next we visit the ancient Etruscan city of Pitigliano. You will love the winding streets, dark shady alleys, and the buildings which ooze history. The Jewish quarter is famous, and one of the oldest in Europe. Afterwards, we will pop just outside of town to one of the extraordinary 'Via Cava' - carved walkways which once linked Pitigliano with other nearby Etruscan cities. Amazingly, even now historians and Etruscan archaeologists do not know what their true purpose was! Up to 15 metres deep, walking along inside them is a very surreal experience. Later, we continue to the spa town of Chianciano Terme where we settle in for the next four nights. Dinner tonight is in the hotel.

Perugia, the Rocca and Collegio del Cambio

Day 6



Grand Hotel Excelsior, Chianciano Terme



99 B

Perugia is an ancient city, high on a hill and the historical heart of it is wonderful. It is often bypassed because in order to get a fully rewarding visit you need quality time. And that is what we have! On arrival, a local guide will take us on an escalator up into the dramatic 'Rocca'. The subterranean ruins of this 500-year-old fortress contain the structures of the stone villas of the Perugian nobles that were converted into the foundations. Nowadays they are buzzing with commuters using these ancient passageways to cross the city to work. Fascinating! Coming up to the surface, we continue our walking tour through this splendid historical town. A highlight will be our visit to the glorious frescoed Collegio del Cambio and the colourful Cathedral. Lunchtime will be at leisure in this city, famed for its rich chocolate. On our return journey, we will enjoy an afternoon stop for coffee or gelati at one of the towns beside Lake Trasimeno. The rest of the day and evening is free in Chianciano Terme. Maybe enjoy a stroll through the parklands, or visit the quiet old town.

Hilltop Cortona and dinner with an extraordinary view

Day 7



Grand Hotel Excelsior, Chianciano Terme



99 B,D

A leisurely start this morning as we visit another, but very different hilltop town, Cortona. The centre of town is car free, and the cobblestoned streets radiate out from the picturesque central square. You will have 'My Time' to explore, shop, relax and find a charming café or al fresco trattoria to enjoy lunch. Your afternoon is free back in Chianciano Terme. This is a spa town and there is a terrific Spa and Wellness Centre just a few hundred yards away from your hotel. Mud bath anyone? This evening we have included a wine and Pecorino cheese tasting at a nearby farm house in the Val d'Orcia. Their Val d'Orcia Pecorino is famous. Afterwards, dinner will be on their wonderful terrace with stunning views of the surrounding valley. This restaurant is part of a 600 acre homestead and all the food and wine comes from its own land.

Pienza, Montepulciano and Val d'Orcia

Day 8



Grand Hotel Excelsior, Chianciano Terme



B

The glorious landscape around us is called the Val d'Orcia. This whole valley has been listed by the UNESCO Heritage Organisation because of its unique character, beauty and the fact that it has remained unchanged for 600 years or more! The countryside has wide open vistas of farmland, broken up here and there by cypress or umbrella pine trees lining zig zag roads, up the rolling hills to charming farmhouses. The beauty was celebrated by Renaissance painters and some of the scenes from Ridley Scott film 'Gladiator', and the film 'The English Patient' were filmed here.

Our morning will be spent exploring stunning Montepulciano with its 14th century Palazzo Comunale and Duomo on the Piazza Grande. They love their food here, and you have time to visit the wine cellars, olive oil and local food and produce shops, as well as enjoy the shopping.

Lunchtime will be at leisure in beautiful Pienza. In the 15th century this non-descript, poor village was the birthplace of Pope Pius II. When he became Pope, he patronised this town and with his enormous wealth, transformed the town into what you see today. And that is why it is on the UNESCO heritage list! The compact, central Piazza Pio II is surrounded by 15th century buildings, such as the Pienza Cathedral and Piccolomini Palace, his summer residence. The views down to the valley are vast, and the city just bursts with flower filled window boxes and quaint walkways, shops and cafes. Utterly delightful!

Later we follow the Via Francigena, an ancient pilgrimage route, to Bagno Vignoni. This peaceful little town is unique in that the whole flooded central square is one giant thermal water lake. From the arcaded walkway at one end you can see the earth's hot water bubbling into the surface, filling the huge pond. Time to take your shoes off and bathe your feet in the hot water channelled through a gully in the centre of a street.

Medieval Todi & Marmore Waterfalls

Day 9



Park Hotel Villa Potenziani, Rieti



B,D

After a leisurely start, we enter Umbria to enjoy lunchtime in the picturesque town of Todi. Overlooking the River Tiber, as it flows on its way towards Rome, the central Piazza del Popolo is surrounded by the three palaces and is often used as the set for movies.

Later, we visit a very special set of waterfalls. The Romans actually created these 'Cascata delle Marmore'. In doing so they became Europe's highest man-made waterfalls. 450 years ago, to avoid flooding, an 'on/off' switch was installed, and we will be there when it gets switched on. It is a remarkable experience to witness the dribble of water turn into a cascading, raging torrent! Make sure you follow the walkways up along the hillside, beside the falls, for the excellent views. So impressive. Moving on, we stay our last night on the outskirts of Rieti.

To celebrate, we have arranged a tour and wine tasting in the 600 year old cellars of a local vineyard before enjoying a superb farewell dinner, paired with the local regional wines of Lazio, in a nearby restaurant.

To Rome

Day 10



Park Hotel Villa Potenziani, Rieti



B

After breakfast on the rooftop terrace, we have included a morning group transfer to the centre of Rome, near the central station and also to Fiumicino International Airport.

We recommend you book flights that depart after 2.00 p.m.

Hand Selected Experiences

These are just a few of the very special hand selected experiences that will really make your touring experience exceptional and unique, and don't forget, with Albatross they are always included.



Civita di Bagnoregio
Hilltop town



Etruscan Necropolis
Guided tour



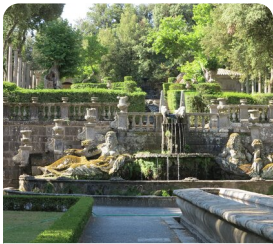
Sacro Bosco
Park of the Monsters



Waterfalls of Marmore
Europe's highest man-made waterfalls



Val d'Orcia
Stunning countryside and open vistas



Villa Lante
Amazing cascading set of water gardens



Orvieto Cathedral
Walking tour



Perugia
Local guided tour



Bagno Vignoni
Peaceful little town

Dates and Prices

Correct as of 21:09 on 16th May 2024

Start Date	End Date	Twin Price	Solo Price	Guaranteed to Depart	
01 Jun 2024	10 Jun 2024	NZD\$5,816	NZD\$6,586	✓	● Sold Out
31 Aug 2024	09 Sep 2024	NZD\$5,816	NZD\$6,454	✓	● Space Available
14 Sep 2024	23 Sep 2024	NZD\$5,816	NZD\$6,586	✓	● Space Available
31 May 2025	09 Jun 2025	TBC	TBC		● Pre-Register
30 Aug 2025	08 Sep 2025	TBC	TBC		● Pre-Register

* The itinerary and hotels featured are based on 2024 tour departures and may be subject to change. Any questions, please contact our European Tour Specialists for further details.

Tour Suitability

Our tours require a moderate level of fitness due to the unique places we visit and stay. This tour is not suited to anyone who has mobility issues.

- ✈ In mid-summer, the heat may be energy sapping.
- ✈ This tour visits a larger number of ancient hilltop towns and villages. Fortunately, the hardest, highest ones like Orvieto, Perugia, Todi all have either escalators or lifts up to the top of town.
- ✈ One city visit is quite taxing. It is the very nature of the difficulty which make the visit amazing. Civita di Bagnoregio is a medieval gem of a hilltop town accessed by a huge pedestrian viaduct. We drop you at the Belvedere lookout and from there you have about a 300 metre downhill walk to the viaduct and then about a 300 metre walk across the viaduct. In itself it's not hard, but the last 100 metres of the viaduct up to the old city entrance gets quite steep. Take your time and you can do it. Whilst this is the only way into town and it is a standard pedestrian walkway, we flag this because it can be quite hard if you have fitness challenges. If you don't want to do it, then the perfect alternative is to stay up on the shaded terrace of the Belvedere. You will get the absolute best views of the perched city from here, and you can relax in the café and gelato bar terrace. This is a splendid alternative.
- ✈ Two other cities stand out as having harder access. Cortona is accessed by uphill, cobbled streets about 200 metres in length.
- ✈ Montepulciano has a much longer uphill street. But here, if you want, you can catch a bus to the top and back down again. You have the choice. From experience you will take your time (and you have easily enough time!) to enjoy the uphill walk as this main semi pedestrian street is so enjoyable with its rows of wine cellars, shops, cheese and produce houses and cafes.
- ✈ The Via Cava- the carved Etruscan roads outside Pitigliano - are fascinating but being over 3,000 years old, the surfaces are uneven and heavily rutted! The total walkway is about 1 km each way, but the good news is the best bit is an easy walk along the first 200 metres. Again, you have choices.
- ✈ Marmore waterfalls – it is very straight forward to get to the main viewing area. An easy walk. If you want you can walk up alongside the waterfalls, which includes wooden steps and boardwalks, which can be slippery.

Please refer to our Tour Suitability section for more information.

Terms & Conditions

- Information provided is true and correct at time of issue. Airfares not included. For further details please contact your consultant or full terms and conditions may be found at www.albatrosstours.com.au/booking-conditions. Albatross Tours ABN 45 010 585 143. ATAS Accreditation No: A11341. CATO Accreditation No. 69562707