



Vita Italian Tours

Vita Italian Tours are designed
for the traveller who wants
more than just a holiday

Opera and Food

**1 Aug - 11 Aug 2012
(11 Days/10 Nights) AUD \$4910**

The tour concentrates on the celebrated Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro and the open-air opera season in Macerata in the beautiful Le Marche Region. Between musical performances, there are guided visits to fascinating medieval and Renaissance towns.

The tour begins in Rome highlighted by an afternoon guided walking tour to many of the Capital's landmarks. The next day we travel to Le Marche Region in Central Italy. We will have four days in Macerata to experience its world renowned Opera Festival held at the imposing open air arena: the Sferisterio. After Macerata, we head north to the City of Pesaro situated on the Adriatic Coast, a city proud of its talented and famous son Rossini, born in 1792. Naturally, the city is a centre of musical appreciation with performances at the annual Rossini Opera Festival in August.

The City of Pesaro is rich in culture and historical landmarks. From Pesaro we will visit the famous Renaissance town of Urbino with its Ducal Palace which houses the Galleria Nazionale delle Marche. There are also guided visits to Loreto, Recanati, Gradara, San Marino and Novilara.

The tour includes 4 opera performances. There are 2 performances at the Sferisterio in Macerata and 2 performances at the Rossini Opera Festival of Pesaro.

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1 Rome (D) Your tour leaders Mario and Viny will meet you at the hotel in the centre of Rome at 4.00 PM. Introductions and a small talk on the tour will precede an afternoon stroll through some of the famous 'piazze' of Rome. The guided walking tour will include Piazza della Repubblica, Piazza Barbarini, Piazza di Spagna, Fountain of Trevi, Piazza della Rotonda, Piazza Navona and finally Campo de` Fiori. Then we travel to Trastevere with an early dinner in a family restaurant in this beautiful part of Rome.

Day 2 Rome/Ascoli Piceno/Macerata (BLD) After breakfast we leave Rome for Macerata. We will travel in air-conditioned comfort through some of the most beautiful countryside of the Central Apennines. We make a brief stop at Ascoli Piceno for a tour of the historical part of the City. We will walk around the Piazza del Popolo and the other main square Piazza Arringo. After a quick lunch we then proceed to Macerata for check in at our hotel. Dinner at a local restaurant before an evening at the opera at the magnificent Sferisterio.

Day 3 Macerata (BLD) After breakfast we will spend the morning with a local guide who will take us through the city's famous landmarks and museums. Lunch will be at a traditional restaurant. The afternoon is free for you to stroll through some of the beautiful streets of Macerata. A special dinner is organised at a local restaurant specialising in local cuisine and wines.

Day 4 Macerata/Recanati (BLD) Today we will visit the town of Recanati. This was the birthplace of Giacomo Leopardi, Italy's greatest romantic poet. It is also the home of the world renowned tenor Beniamino Gigli. We then visit the museum in Villa Colloredo-Melson on the outskirts of the town which holds Recanati's greatest art treasures, a room with four of Lorenzo Lotto's finest pictures. The afternoon is free. An early dinner before a performance again at the Sferisterio.

Day 5 Macerata/Loreto/ Pesaro (BLD) After breakfast we leave Macerata and travel to the northernmost part of Le Marche Region and our stay for the next 6 nights is in the City of Pesaro. Pesaro is situated on the Adriatic Coast. On the way we will make a stop at Loreto for lunch, a beautiful hill town second only to Assisi and Rome as a place of religious pilgrimage. The town is a showcase of some of Italy's greatest artists and architects. Dinner at the hotel will be preceded by an optional passeggiata through the historical centre of Pesaro.

Day 6 Pesaro/San Marino (BLD) Today after breakfast at the hotel, we travel just over the border of Le Marche for a day visit to the tiny Republic of San Marino. It is a day for shopping as San Marino is jammed with duty free shops. Apart from souvenirs, you will be able to pick up perfume, watches and leather bags at very reasonable prices. San Marino is also worth a visit for its history and pageantry and its magnificent hilltop setting which offers excellent views of the countryside. A picnic lunch is organised at one of the parks of San Marino. We travel back to Pesaro for a free afternoon. Dinner at the hotel.

Day 7 Pesaro (BLD) After breakfast a local guide will accompany you as we stroll through the streets of Pesaro. We will visit the house of the Gioachino Rossini and the Rossini Conservatoire which hosts many items of Rossini memorabilia. We will explore the ancient centre of Pesaro with its Ducal Palace and Piazza del Popolo. Lunch will be at one of the local *trattorias* just off the Piazza del Popolo. The afternoon is at leisure. Dinner at the hotel before attending a performance at Teatro Rossini, one of the 3 venues used during the festival.

Day 8 Pesaro/Gradara (BLD) Today's visit is to Gradara, a medieval village dominated by its magnificent castle which overlooks the Adriatic Sea. We will tour the castle and the impressive old walled town. Gradara was made famous by the legendary love affair between Paolo Malatesta and Francesca da Rimini as immortalised in the 5th Canto of Dante's *Inferno*. Lunch at Gradara with *piadina* and local wine. In the afternoon you will have time to relax before an optional tour of the Villa Imperiale. Dinner at the hotel.

Day 9 Pesaro/Urbino (BLD) Today we explore the land once ruled by the medieval lords of Montefeltro. We visit Urbino one of Italy's fascinating towns of the Renaissance. It is also the birthplace of Raphael. A conducted tour of the magnificent Ducal Palace which houses the Galleria Nazionale delle Marche with its precious paintings by Piero della Francesca, Tiziano, Paolo Uccello and Raphael. A lunch is organised in a traditional *osteria* in Urbino. An early dinner at the hotel before our second opera performance.

Day 10 Pesaro (BLD) After breakfast we will visit the Civic Museums and several important churches and their art treasures. Lunch is organised at Novilara, a nearby hill town, in a traditional *trattoria* which is famous for its local produce and *pasta e fagioli* on the menu. After a pleasant stroll of Novilara, we travel back to Pesaro. There will be a special farewell dinner in one of the most famous restaurants in Pesaro.

Day 11 Pesaro (B) The tour officially ends after breakfast. Mario and Viny will farewell the group at the hotel.

Items included in the Tour

- All land travel in air conditioned mini buses
- Accommodation for 10 nights in 3/4 star hotels in Rome, Macerata and Pesaro
- **10** breakfasts
- **10** dinners
- **8** lunches (the meals includes special lunches and dinners in traditional local restaurants as detailed in the itinerary)
- Admission to 2 performances at the magnificent Arena Sferisterio in Macerata
- Admission to 2 performances to the Rossini Festival
- Admission to all galleries, museums and historical sites included in the itinerary
- Personally guided tours to all the towns mentioned in the tour
- The services of the tour leader throughout the tour

Items not included

- Airfares
- Travel insurance (we strongly recommend you take travel insurance during your travels)
- Admission fees to places other than those specifically itemised in the itinerary
- Meals on tour except when specifically mentioned in the itinerary
- Drinks outside normal meal times or additional wine in restaurants
- Personal transport costs, phone calls and other personal need

Cost

The cost of the tour is **AUD \$4910 per person** in twin share accommodation. A **deposit** of **AUD \$400** is required to reserve a place on the tour which is not refundable unless the tour is cancelled. **Single** supplements are available at an additional cost of **AUD \$790**. **The full balance** is due 60 days before departure. **The tour** is costed on a minimum of 6 people travelling on the tour with the maximum number of 14 people.

We recommend that you read carefully the conditions applying to Vita Italian Tours

Additional information

The weather: it is summer and it can get quite warm and humid. We recommend light, conformable clothing. You will be staying in comfortable accommodation with air conditioning. On tour the countryside is undulating and hilly. Many of the hill towns have their historical centres closed to traffic and therefore some walking is required. You should expect to stroll leisurely for up to an hour with many breaks for sightseeing, coffee and a taste of the local produce. **The program** appears to be full; however it is mixed with long restful lunches and leisure time for your enjoyment and comfort. You will have plenty of time to enjoy the beach and the sun. An umbrella on the foreshore is available for your use. **If you need to, you can always take time off from the organised program.**

For further information

Visit the web site **www.vitaitaliantours.com** for the full list of tours.

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