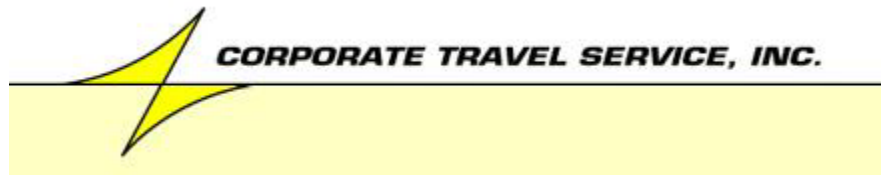




HOLY LAND
PILGRIMAGES
HOSTED BY STEVE & JANET RAY



with



GENERAL TRAVEL INFORMATION

Rome and Assisi Italy

Pilgrimage vs. Vacation

Please remember this is a pilgrimage and though we will try to make you as comfortable as possible at all times, a pilgrimage also may have some hardships such as early mornings, new foods, restrooms not up to American standards, etc. So please keep this in mind and offer any small difficulties up to God with a song and a prayer.

Passport

A valid U.S. Passport is required of all passengers. Make sure to have it in your possession at all times while on tour. It must be valid for 6 months *following the return date* of the trip. Also, it is suggested that you make two copies of the information page. 1) Keep one copy in your carry-on luggage at all times *and* 2) leave a copy at home with a relative or friend. You will need to keep your passport with you as we may need them at hotels. Keep the copy of your passport separate from your actual passport. Your Passport *must* be signed.

Entry Visa

American citizens do not need a Visa to enter Italy. If you are traveling to Italy from outside the USA, please check with your government to see if a Visa is necessary.

Entry Forms

There are no forms to be filled out for entering Italy. You will need to fill out Customs Forms for return to the United States. These can be viewed in advance on the below website.

U.S. Customs

All luggage is subject to search and inspection by U.S. and Italian Customs and Security officials. You are allowed a duty-free exemption of \$800 (U.S.) per person. It is recommended that you keep sales receipts for large ticket items handy for declaring your

purchases upon returning to the U.S. Visit www.customs.ustras.gov website for specific questions. Be sure *not* to carry any forbidden objects on the plane or in your carry-on. No food, plants, animals, or other such things are allowed entrance into Italy of the USA.

Baggage

Checked baggage is limited to one bag per person. There can be no exceptions. Your one checked bag is limited to **50 pounds and 62 inches** (length + width + height) or excess charges will be collected by the airline at the airport. You may also bring a *small* carry-on bag that will fit under an airline seat and on the small parcel racks of the motor coach, which average about 8 inches high by 18 inches deep. It is best if your carry-on bag is soft sided as the parcel racks on the motorcoaches are small. Do *not* lock baggage you intend to check in at the airport.

Luggage is sometimes diverted or lost. Be sure to pack essentials in your carry-on. It is wise to bring a change of clothes, all medicines, and any other essentials with you. You should plan for the worst and hope for the best 😊

New Restrictions for Carry on Bags (subject to change):

- Travelers are allowed to transport only small amounts of liquids, gels, lotions, aerosols or similar items on their person or in their carry-on luggage. This includes items such as hairspray, toothpaste and shampoo.
- Bottles are to be travel sizes of 3 ounces or less. These bottles must be carried in a one quart zip-lock bag.
- Beverages may be purchased once inside the secured area of the airport and carried on the aircraft.
- Prescription medicine with a name that matches the name on the passenger's ticket and essential non-prescription medicines, NOT TO EXCEED 4 ounces per container, are allowed. Additionally, liquids or gels (including juice) for diabetic passengers to address their medical condition, NOT TO EXCEED 5 ounces per container, will be allowed. These items must be presented for inspection at the security checkpoint.
- Essential non-prescription medicines allowed now include contact eye saline solutions and eye care products such as eye drops and contact lens solution.
- Duty Free items may be transported in the cabin of the aircraft if they are delivered to the passenger immediately before boarding or onboard the aircraft.

Medical Coverage

Medical care in Italy is modern and advanced like in the United States. Optional "Travel Guard" insurance is available. This is to help protect your travel investment in the event of unforeseeable circumstances. You may want to purchase International Medical Insurance. Check with your insurance company to see if you are covered while out of the country. Mail the form directly to "Travel Guard" if you decide to buy coverage.

Smoking

All flights are non-smoking. The Touring Coach is also non-smoking. Please be aware that smoking in Italy is still very popular. Even though there are non-smoking areas, it is common to see people smoking anyway.

Restrooms

Restrooms can usually be found near holy sites, in restaurants, gas stations, souvenir shops, large department stores and other places of interest to visitors. The Vatican has restrooms on either side of the colonnades and inside the Vatican Museum. Most churches do *not* have restrooms. Restrooms may not have toilet paper and not be as clean as in America. So, carry a few Kleenex or a small roll of toilet paper with you at all times. You may want to carry a small bottle of Hand Sanitizer in your purse or backpack. Restrooms in our hotels are modern and clean.

Calling Home

If you plan to call home, check with your local long-distance company before you leave the U.S. to find out how to make the call. Also, calling cards are available from many retailers for 5 Euros which give you about 300 minutes to the USA. Many cell phones can be set up for international calling through your carrier. To call the United States you need to dial 001-xxx-xxxx.

Dress

Casual clothing is fine (including jeans). We have no occasions planned requiring formal clothes. Light or medium weight clothing with a light rain jacket is recommended. Bring layers so you will be prepared for temperature changes. A compact umbrella is suggest. Dress conservatively and respectfully for holy sites. Churches do not accept halter-tops, sleeveless blouses, or shorts (no one wears shorts in Italy). Comfortable, worn-in walking shoes, sneakers, or sandals are recommended.

Head Coverings and Hats

Head coverings are not required for women anywhere. Men must remove hats when entering any church. Brimmed hats or visors are recommended to shade the sun.

Laundry

Janet and I usually bring “travel gear clothing” which we can wash by hand in the sink in the evening. However, hotels usually have next-day laundry service for an additional charge.

Climate

The Average High Temperature is 72 F with a historical range of 60 F to 86 F. The Average Low Temperature is 56 F with a historical range of 32 F to 68 F. Check this website for more weather information. Check this website for more information: <http://www.wunderground.com/tripplanner/index.asp>. Prepare for a possible rain shower or two.

Souvenirs

We will have plenty of time for shopping along the way. You will also have free time to visit shops and stores near St. Peters. We discourage shopping while touring because if everyone stops off at shops it will take us forever to get through our itinerary. Please cooperate to help the group move smoothly. We will plan good shops with time for shopping.

Language

The main languages in Italy is Italian. English is spoken at least a little bit by just about everyone, especially at hotels, shops and restaurants. We will teach you some basic words like *thank you*, *hello*, *yes*, and *no* which will endear you to the locals.

Electricity

Italy's electric current is 220/240 V/50Hz. Most hotels provide 110-V outlets for shavers only. Dual voltage appliances are recommended. You will need a converter and an adapter plug if you plan to use electrical appliances. Most luggage stores carry converters and adaptors. A typical converter for Israel can be found by searching for the "Converter for Motorized Appliances" at www.magellans.com.

American plugs have flat prongs; Israel and Europe have round prongs.



Computers

You may bring your laptop if you wish. Both hotels should have computers where you can access your e-mail or the internet in your free time. Rooms have high speed internet connections. There are also plenty of internet cafes in the area.

Hair Dryers

It is always safe to bring your own international hairdryer, but the Michelangelo has hair dryers in each room.

Money

Euros are the common currency. You can change money at the airport, at the hotel, or at the many banks and money changers. You will need cash for most street vendors and smaller shops, but most larger establishments accept major credit cards. One Euro is equal to about \$1.40 as of September 25, 2007.

Credit Cards, ATM

Your ATM and credit cards are a convenient means of payment with the best conversion rates. Since ATM machines are available everywhere. Bring some cash but you can get money readily from ATMs and banks. Travelers Checks are OK if you wish, but not necessary for small amounts of cash.

Check with your bank to see if your ATM and credit cards will work abroad. Many credit card companies add a 2% currency exchange fee. Inform them of your travels so they are prepared for oversea's purchases.

Dining

The meal choices are many. Italian food is probably the best in the world and we have never had a bad meal in Rome. You will be responsible for buying your own lunches and drinks, but breakfast and dinners are provided.

Water

Like any foreign country, not all stomachs easily adapt to the local water. Water in Italy is delicious and safe to drink everywhere. It is recommended that you bring Imodium or other anti-diarrhea medicine just in case.

Safety

Rome is a generally safe place to travel. However, you should be aware of con schemes and pick-pockets. Both are plentiful. Pick-pockets are usually gypsies—often women and children. Do not let any of them get close. Often a woman carrying a baby will bump up close or children will come up to sell you something. While you innocently look at them, they are going through your bags or pockets.

When we tour Rome, take only what you need and keep your valuables in a safe place or hidden pockets. We will keep an eye open for you and warn you if we see the likely suspects. Do not fall for any con artist trying to sell you things or asking you for help. Beggars are everywhere and you can give to them or not as you wish. Most of them are frauds and have more money than you do.

Time Difference

Italy is 6 hours ahead of Eastern Time, 7 hours ahead of Central Time and 8 hours ahead of Mountain Time and 9 hours ahead of Pacific Time. If it is noon in Rome it is 6 AM in New York.

Religious Customs

Sunday is a holy day and many shops are closed. Churches are usually open. Men must remove hats in Christian churches.

Hotels

We will be staying in the very fine Starhotel Michelangelo Hotel which is only 10 minutes from St. Peters Square on foot. It is one of the finest hotels with the most EXCELLENT location. It has all the amenities including internet, TV, laundry service, breakfast (covered in your ticket) and more. You can see in on the internet at http://www.starhotels.com/hotel/michelangelo_roma/starhotels_michelangelo.php?idalb=15

Hotel Porters

Baggage handling to your room has been prepaid. No need to tip the porters.

Tips

For all meals that are included for the group, the tip has already been paid. For meals on your own (example lunches) waiters expect a 10% tip.

Tips are an important part of the income of guides and bus drivers. All tips and gratuities for your hotel, drivers, guides, porters and for breakfasts and dinners have already been paid. You are free to give more if you wish. Tips are expected for lunches.

Washcloths, Soap, Shampoo:

In Europe items we take for granted are often in short supply. Among these items are washcloths, soap and shampoo. It is recommended to bring these items from home.

Suggested Reading

Most of the following books can be found in your local bookstore or on the internet at www.amazon.com. They are all moderately priced and would be excellent to read beforehand and to have in your backpack.

If you want to learn more, especially the historical, archaeological and biblical background to sites we will visit, I would recommend [*The Oxford Archaeological Guide to Rome*](#) by Amanda Claridge. Another good book for overall info and wonderful maps, pictures and diagrams is DK [*Eyewitness Travel: Rome*](#) by DK Publishing.

If you enter the words “Guide to the Italy” or “Rome” into the search engine at www.amazon.com you will find many other helpful books.

Helpful Websites

Steve Ray’s Pilgrimage Page on his website www.JerusalemJones.com

Sacred Destinations: <http://www.sacred-destinations.com/italy/rome.htm>

Lonely Planet Travel Guide:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/destinations/europe/italy/rome/>

Travel Gear and Info: <http://www.magellans.com>