

Rail holidays of Italy

Expressions



Rail holiday to Florence and Tuscany



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10 NIGHTS / 11 DAYS

Zurich and the Gotthard Pass

Lausanne and Lake Geneva

Florence

Chianti



This rail holiday travels to the enchanting region of Tuscany and its majestic capital, allowing you to explore the countryside of Chianti by hire-car and discover the art, history and romance of Florence.

We recommend that you travel by Eurostar to Paris, continue to Zurich by train where you spend the night before travelling through the Gotthard Pass to Florence, one of the world's greatest artistic capitals. After spending three nights in Florence, pick up a hire car and drive to the Chianti region where you stay for five nights. Then for the return journey, you take a sleeper train from Florence to Paris which allows you to take a daytime Eurostar back to London. Alternatively, it is possible to travel out by rail to Florence via Lausanne, instead of Zurich. Stay one night on the shores of Lake Geneva before continuing your rail journey across the Alps through the Simplon Pass, and dropping down past Lake Maggiore on your way to Florence.

PRICES

From £2,310 per person

Price based on two sharing a double or twin room.

First class rail travel can be added for a supplement. Other hotels can be offered in each location upon request.

DATES

This rail holiday can be arranged throughout the year. Timings can vary depending on the month and day of the week. For more information regarding rail services to and within Italy, view our train guide.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Accommodation on bed and breakfast as below

- 1 night in a Standard room at the Hotel Ambassador a l'Opera in Zurich
- 3 nights in a Standard room at the Hotel Bernini Palace in Florence
- 5 nights in a Standard room at the Villa Belpoggio in Tuscany
- Train travel on all trains including the Eurostar (first class can be booked at a supplement)
- Double sleeper compartment on the Thello sleeper train
- Category B hire car for six days in Tuscany
- Private car transfers from Florence Santa Maria Novella station to the hotel

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Optional extra nights
- Meals other than breakfast at the hotels
- Transfers in Zurich and Paris
- Early check in or late check out at hotels - though we can arrange this on request
- Supplements for alternative route options
- Any services not mentioned

OUTBOUND OPTION 1: VIA ZURICH

DAY ONE: Rail to Zurich

Start your rail holiday by travelling on a morning Eurostar from London to Paris. After arriving at around 1pm, you can then take the high-speed TGV Lyria train to Zurich. Arrive at about 6.30pm and check in to the Hotel Ambassador a l'Opera for one night.

DAY TWO: Zurich to Florence by train

Leave Zurich by train at around 11.30am and travel by Eurocity train through the Alps along the Gotthard pass. After passing through the Gotthard tunnel, you descend towards Italy and onwards to Milan Central station. Change train in Milan and continue to Florence by high-speed train arriving just before 6pm, where you stay at the Hotel Bernini Palace for three nights.

OUTBOUND OPTION 2: VIA LAUSANNE

DAY ONE: Rail to Lausanne

Start your rail holiday leaving London St Pancras around midday on the Eurostar, arriving into Paris at 1.30pm. You may have time for lunch in the famous Train Bleu restaurant before continuing your journey on the high speed TGV Lyria service to Lausanne. Arrive here early evening and check in to the Hotel Angleterre et Residence for one night.

DAY TWO: Lausanne to Florence by train

You have the morning at leisure to admire the views of Lake Geneva before boarding a train to Milan at 2pm. A simple change here and you arrive in Florence just before 8pm, where you stay the Hotel Bernini Palace for three nights.

DAYS THREE AND FOUR: Florence

You have two full days to explore Florence, the ancient capital of the Medicis which is home to a selection of Renaissance treasures. A visit to see Michelangelo's David in the Accademia Gallery is high on the list of things to do in Florence, along with the majestic architecture of the Duomo and the beautiful work of the silversmiths that line the Ponte Vecchio. If you would like, we are able to arrange guided visits to many of the main attractions as well as tours of the city to suit your interests.

DAY FIVE: Drive to Chianti

Collect your hire-car and head south into the Chianti countryside towards the Villa



Piazza della Repubblica, Florence

Belpoggio which will be your base for the next 5 nights.

DAYS SIX TO NINE: Tuscany

Use your hire-car to explore the Tuscany region at your leisure. It is a landscape of vineyards and olive groves set against a backdrop of dark forests and bright flowers. The Chianti Classico is this area's speciality, and visits to the local wineries are not to be missed.

DAY TEN: Florence to Milan by rail

Leave the Villa Belpoggio and return the hire-car to Florence. Leave Florence at about 9pm and change onto the overnight train from Milan to Paris.

DAY ELEVEN: Continue to London

After arriving into Paris around 10am, end your rail holiday by travelling on the Eurostar back to London where you arrive at around 1.30pm.

OPTIONAL

It is possible to add extra nights in any of these destinations if you would like to spend more time there.

HOTELS

Details of the hotels in Switzerland and Italy can be found below.

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ZURICH

Hotel Ambassador a l'Opera 4 star

As a member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World group, the Hotel Ambassador a l'Opera prides itself on the high quality of its service, its seasonal and locally-sourced food, and the very particular, serene style of the rooms. It is well-placed for enjoying Lake Zurich, the Limmat River, and the small marina at the end of the street.

LAUSANNE (OPTION)

Hotel Angleterre et Residence 4 star

On the shores of Lake Geneva with stunning view of the Alps, this hotel comprises of five different buildings surrounding the main Reception. The hotel offers contemporary style in a historic setting with parts of the buildings dating back to the 18th century. The 75 bedrooms and Junior Suites are scattered between four buildings, each with their own distinct styles, but all guests will benefit from the same high standards of care from the friendly, professional staff.

FLORENCE

Hotel Bernini Palace 5 star

The Hotel Bernini Palace is a high quality, elegant hotel, perfectly located in central Florence close to the main sights. Built in a classic Florentine style, the hotel, once a 15th-century palazzo, now contains 74 rooms, all of which are individually decorated in a luxurious yet refined manner. Breakfast can be enjoyed in the striking Sala Corsini, the highlight of which is the frescoed ceiling. Guests may also choose to enjoy a cocktail or pre-dinner drink at the hotel's bar before venturing into the city and exploring the many nearby cafes and restaurants.

Helvetia and Bristol 5 star (OPTION)

A small deluxe hotel with plenty of charm, character and high levels of personal service. Its central location on the Palazzo Strozzi makes it extremely convenient for sight-seeing, within easy reach of the Duomo, Ponte Vecchio, Uffizi gallery and exclusive shopping streets. The Hotel Helvetia and Bristol offers an authentic dining experience in the Hostaria Bibendum where guests can choose from a table in the intimate dining room or outside on the glamorous patio-lounge in the Piazza.



Hotel Bernini Palace



Villa Belpoggio

CHIANTI

Villa Belpoggio Historical Residence

Centrally located in Tuscany the Villa Belpoggio is in an ideal location for venturing to Florence, Siena and Pisa as well as exploring rural Tuscany. A boutique hotel offering just 10 rooms and suites the Villa Belpoggio has an authentic Tuscan appeal which is both warm and welcoming. Log fires, wooden furniture, terracotta tiles and an array of antique furniture reflect the charming character of the hotel as well as the high standards of hospitality and comfort.

Castel Monastero 5 star (OPTION)

Surrounded by rolling hills and vineyards the Castel Monastero in Chianti offers an authentic Tuscan experience in the elegant surroundings of a converted monastery. Now a hotel with 74 rooms and suites the hotel has not lost its sense of tranquillity or rustic charm. With a wide range of spa facilities and also cookery courses and wine tasting the hotel truly appeals to those looking for a traditional Tuscan experience.



Hotel Ambassador a l'Opera



Castel Monastero

MAP OF TOUR TRAVEL BY TRAIN TO FLORENCE AND TUSCANY



The map below illustrates the route outlined in this touring itinerary, with overnight stops and places of interest highlighted.



GENERAL INFORMATION

This tailor-made touring holiday is one of several suggested touring holidays we can offer you exactly as it is but also with any alterations you might want including extra nights in one or more places or adding in extra places. All our tours can be extended so that you can include a longer stay in one mountain or lake resort too, perhaps at the end of the itinerary. Do call to discuss the options with our travel consultants.

OUR TOURS

Our rail tours are for individuals travelling on their own or in their own family group. You do not join a group and you are not escorted.

FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENTS

Our arrangements are very flexible in that you choose to travel on any day you want, subject to availability of trains and hotels. As mentioned above, additional nights can be added at any point.

EUROSTAR

A rail holiday to Italy starts with a journey by Eurostar from London St Pancras, Ebbsfleet or Ashford stations in the UK to either Paris Gare du Nord or Lille Europe. In summer months there are direct trains on Saturdays from London St Pancras to Avignon with no change required.

Eurostar offers almost hourly departures every day, allowing you to travel from the centre of London to the centre of Paris on the same train in three hours. Not all trains stop at the Ebbsfleet and Ashford stations in Kent, but parking is plentiful at both stations and it allows you to avoid London.

Check-in is 30 minutes prior to departure, customs formalities are completed before boarding and there is no limit to the amount of baggage that can be taken on board. The Eurostar trains themselves have 8 coaches which are split into Standard Class, Standard Premier and Business Premier as well as 2 cafeterias. Standard Premier customers are served a light cold meal and enjoy a more spacious environment than Standard Class, while Business Premier customers receive a hot meal and unlimited beverages as well as lounge access.

TRAIN TIMES

We have planned our itineraries based on train times that work day by day at the time of planning which can be up to a year before you travel. Usually train times stay more or less the same every day, season by season. The times we have planned will be discussed with you at the time you enquire about the holiday and they are detailed to you in your written holiday quotation. It may be that the timetable changes between the planning of the itinerary and when you come to book but we can always adjust the itinerary to suit the actual train times and any requirements you have for particular times of travel.

FIRST OR SECOND CLASS

We will automatically include travel in second class but lots of our clients do upgrade to first class service. On Eurostar this is called Premier Standard for leisure travellers as it gives you an upgraded on-board service and more spacious seating but without paying for the fully-flexible business tickets. On the Inter-city trains, upgrading to first class gives you more spacious seating with increased legroom. The price of upgrading varies from route to route but is something that is not always proportionately a lot more on the price of the overall holiday, so well-worth considering.

TRANSFERS

Transfers in Paris between stations and from the station to each hotel are not automatically included in the price of the holiday. In Paris most clients choose to take a taxi between the stations rather than go on the Metro but we can arrange a private car with driver to take you in between. This is quite useful if you are a family group that can't fit into one Paris taxi.

PRICE INFORMATION

This tailor-made touring holiday is one of several suggested touring holidays we can offer you exactly as it is but also with any alterations you might want including extra nights in one or more places or adding in extra places. All our tours can be extended so that you can include a longer stay in one mountain or lake resort too, perhaps at the end of the itinerary. Do call to discuss the options with our travel consultants.

OUR PRICES

The sample prices mentioned in this leaflet are generally a 'from' price based on the cheapest season of travel. However, train fares and hotel rates can change (up and down depending on offers), so we give you an accurate price for your holiday when we provide you with a quotation. Our sample prices should be used as an indication of how much a particular combination will cost and to show the differences on average between the hotel categories on offer.

PRICE INFORMATION IN MORE DETAIL

From £2,475 per person for first class rail travel.

From £2,310 per person for second class rail travel.

Prices based on two sharing a double or twin room.

What's included?

First or second class travel on all trains (as above) including Eurostar
Double sleeper compartment on Thello sleeper train

At the hotels:

1 night's bed and breakfast in a Standard Room at Hotel Ambassador a l'Opera in Zurich

3 nights' bed and breakfast in a Standard Room at Hotel Bernini Palace in Florence

5 nights' bed and breakfast in a Standard Room at Villa Belpoggio in Tuscany

Category B car-hire for six days in Tuscany

Private car transfers from Florence Santa Maria Novella station to the hotel.

What's not included?

Optional extra nights

Meals other than breakfast at the hotels

Transfers in Zurich and Paris

Early check in or late check out at hotels - though we can arrange this on request

Supplements for alternative route options

Any services not mentioned

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BOOKING CONDITIONS

Our booking conditions apply to all holidays. A copy can be found on our website and a copy is also sent to you with a written quotation and when you make a booking.

FINANCIAL PROTECTION

Expressions Holidays offers full financial protection for all holidays you book with us. If your holiday includes a flight, the ATOL (3076) covers the costs of the holiday. If the holiday does not include a flight, it is the ABTOT bond that protects the cost of the holiday. We are also members of AITO (the Association of Independent Tour Operators) and ABTA.



Expressions Holidays
Lynx House, Pynes Hill, Exeter EX2 5JL

HOW TO BOOK

To make a booking, just phone us on

01392 441275

and we can take you through the details we need and start the booking process. A deposit is required to confirm the arrangements and this can be paid by debit or credit card over the phone. The level of the deposit will be confirmed at the point of booking and will depend on the ticketing deadlines of the rail tickets involved in your booking.