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Giotto's stunning frescoes in Padua's Scrovegni Chapel
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"JEWELS OF NORTHERN ITALY"

Ferrara - Bologna - Ravenna - Padua – Vicenza - Verona – Lake Garda – Bolzano

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A cultural tour offered in collaboration with Guelph Arts Council

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15 days, from Thursday, April 15, to Thursday, April 29, 2027

This leisurely tour of Northern Italy features magnificent landscapes such as the Dolomites and the shores of Lakes Garda and Como, as well as some of the country's most attractive and interesting urban jewels, many of them classified as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including Bologna, Ferrara, Padua, and Vicenza. Highlights will include the superb Byzantine mosaics of Ravenna, great frescoes by Giotto, and impressive palaces by Palladio, the prince of Renaissance architecture, plus . . . the finest food and wines of Italy! The tour is offered in collaboration with Guelph Arts Council and is conducted by Jacques Pauwels, PhD, author of books such as "Beneath the Dust of Time: A History of the Names of Peoples and Places"(2025) and many other books published in ten languages.

Tour Price in Canadian dollars, based on double occupancy, from Toronto: $6,895.00
Land Only (from/back to Milan Malpensa Airport on 16/04 – 29/04): $5,695.00
Single Room Supplement: $1,185.00

PROPOSED ITINERARY:

Day 1 - Thursday, April 15: Afternoon flight from Toronto to Montreal and connecting non-stop flight to Milan, Italy, with Air Canada.

Day 2 - Friday, April 16: Mid-morning arrival in Milan, and transfer by private coach to Emilia-Romagna, a prosperous region tucked between the Po River, the Apennine Mountains, and the Adriatic Sea, famous for its gastronomy, featuring "superstars" such as Parmigiano cheese, Parma ham, and spaghetti Bolognese! Our destination is the beautiful and historically important city of Ferrara, where we will stay for four nights in the 4-star/first-class Hotel Orologio, conveniently located just outside the historical city centre. Free time to settle in and relax after your overnight flight. Welcome dinner in the restaurant of our hotel.

Day 3 - Saturday, April 17**:** After breakfast, leisurely walking tour of the historical centre of Ferrara, a city usually ignored by tourists but in reality one of the great attractions of northern Italy classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site! Highlights will be the superb Romanesque-Gothic cathedral, the impressive castle of the Este Family, who ruled this city during the Middle Ages, the fine Renaissance-style Palazzo Schifanoia, and the so-called Palace of Diamonds. Afternoon free to enjoy the city on your own. The Este Castle will be included in our morning tour, but you may want to visit one or more of the palaces mentioned above and the city's numerous art galleries and museums, including the National Museum of Italian Judaism, focusing on Ferrara's particularly rich Jewish history. This evening, our dinner in a typical ristorante will feature Ferrarese culinary specialties!

Day 4 -Sunday, April 18: Full-day excursion to Ravenna. This ancient city, situated very close to the Adriatic coast, was once the home base of the Roman Navy and temporarily served as capital of the Empire; it is famous above all for its superb Byzantine architecture and mosaics, preserved in glorious churches such as San Vitale, San Apollinare in Classe, and the so-called Tomb of Galla Placidia; this fabulous collection of late-Roman monuments is classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site . Other local attractions include the mysterious Tomb of Theodoric and the Tomb of Dante. Return to Ferrara in late afternoon. No group dinner this evening.

Day 5 - Monday, April 19: Full-day excursion to Bologna, one of Italy's (and Europe's) greatest intellectual and artistic centres, home of one of Europe's oldest universities; Bologna is also famous for its wonderful food! Our city tour includes all the major sights, such as the two leaning towers, San Petronio Basilica, the Neptune Fountain, the Palazzo del Podesta, and Santo Stefano, an intriguing complex of very ancient churches; and of course the city's famous porticoes, classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site! There will also be some free time to enjoy lunch, shop, and/or visit the city's art gallery, featuring works by members of the so-called Bologna School. Return to Ferrara and dinner in the hotel.

Day 6 - Tuesday, April 20: Departure from Ferrara after breakfast. Heading for the region around Venice, known as the Veneto, we must cross the vast Po Delta, classified, together with the city of Ferrara, as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. En route, we will enjoy dropping into a trio of quaint old towns: Comacchio, a colourful "little Venice" crisscrossed by canals; Adria, the former Etruscan seaport that gave its name to the Adriatic Sea; and Chioggia, a picturesque historic fishing port on a small island at the southern entrance to the Venetian Lagoon, connected by causeways to the mainland. Then we turn inland and head for Vicenza, one of the delightful urban "jewels" of the Veneto Region and of northern Italy in general. We will stay in a fine first-class/four-star hotel, the Palazzo Scamozzi, an historic building along the Corso Palladio, main street and heart of the magnificent historic city centre, but please note that tour members needing *twin rooms* will be accommodated in the Palazzo Scamozzi's nearby sister hotel, the Antico Hotel Vicenza. Dinner in a typical ristorante.

Day 7 - Wednesday, April 21: Morning sightseeing tour (on foot) of wonderful Vicenza, a city closely associated with the prince of Renaissance architects, Andrea Palladio. The previous day, before our arrival in the city, we will have viewed his magnificent Villa Rotonda, a perfectly symmetrical hilltop manor and one of the most copied buildings in architectural history, located in the countryside. Today, we visit his

equally famous Olympic Theatre, the world's oldest enclosed theater (completed in 1585) and admire his so-called "Basilica", a civic building on the Piazza dei Signori, featuring a rooftop terrace with incredible views over the city and its surroundings. Vicenza and its Palladian monuments are classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Centre. The afternoon is free to enjoy Vicenza on your own. No group dinner this evening.

Day 8 - Thursday, April 22: Excursion to the nearby city of Padua, one of the oldest cities in northern Italy and home of one of Europe's oldest universities. Here we visit the fabulous Scrovegni Chapel, featuring superb frescoes by Giotto, another UNESCO World Heritage Site, as well as the huge Basilica del Santo, dedicated to the immensely popular Saint Anthony, and admire one of Donatello's masterpieces, the equestrian statue of Gattamelata, in the middle of the square in front of this great church. After some free time for lunch and individual exploration, we return to Vicenza. This evening, group dinner in a typical restaurant.

Day 9 - Friday, April 23: Free day in Vicenza. Things to do: Optional excursion to Venice! Whether you have already been to Venice or not, it is always a thrill to travel by vaporetto down the Grand Canal, pass underneath the Rialto Bridge, and disembark at St. Mark's Square to view its great Basilica and Campanile as well as the Doges' Palace and the Bridge of Sighs. Those staying in Vicenza may want to take a taxi or Uber to visit another one of Palladio's fabulous creations, the famous Villa Rotonda, situated in the countryside at a short distance from Vicenza; we will already have *viewed* the Villa on the day of our arrival here.

Day 10 - Saturday, April 24: After breakfast, a drive of about one hour takes us from Vicenza to Verona, the romantic city associated with Romeo and Juliet, yet another UNESCO World Heritage Site. Walking tour of the historic city centre, featuring all local "must-sees": the monumental Roman amphitheatre, better preserved than Rome's Colosseum and home of the city's famous Opera Festival; the Balcony of Juliet; historical Piazza delle Erbe with its colourful market; and the impressive tombs of the Scaligeri Family, rulers of Verona during the Middle Ages. Afterwards, plenty of free time to explore on your own, shop, and enjoy lunch, perhaps with a glass of one of the famous wines of the area, such as Valpolicella, Bolla, Bardolino, or Amarone. Then we take the autostrada and motor northward through the valley of the Adige River to a little-known but charming and historically important old town that may be described as Italy's gateway to the Alps, Trent(o). Dinner and overnight (for 4 nights) in the very comfortable traditional first-class hotel Grand Hotel Trento, located within walking distance of the city centre.

Day 11 - Sunday, April 25: Full-day exploration of scenic Lake Garda and the picturesque towns along its shores, including Riva and Bardolino. Return to Trent in mid-afternoon and leisurely walking tour of the historical city centre, focused on the Cathedral and the piazza surrounding this historically important edifice. We also visit the historic Ferrari winery and taste their excellent sparkling wine made from mountain-grown Chardonnay grapes – *alla salute*!

Day 12 - Monday, April 26: Full-day excursion in the part of the Italian Alps known as the Dolomites, with impressive sights such as Val Gardena, a valley surrounded by towering mountain peaks as well as green meadows, picturesque villages such as Ortisei, and the upscale winter and summer resort of Cortina d'Ampezzo, known as the "Queen of the Dolomites," which hosted the recent Winter Olympics. Return to Trento in late afternoon and dinner in the restaurant of our hotel.

Day 13 - Tuesday, April 27: Full-day excursion to Bolzano, the very attractive capital of the German-speaking region of Northern Italy, known as South Tyrol or Alto Adige, a successful fusion of Mediterranean and Alpine cultures! Our program there features a walk through the attractive old town and a visit to the local archaeological museum, whose pride and joy is "Iceman Oetzi," a prehistoric hunter whose 5,000-year-old mummified body was discovered in 1991 on a glacier high in the Alps. Also free

time for individual exploring and shopping, and return to Trent in late afternoon. No group dinner this evening.

Day 14 - Wednesday, April 28: Departure from Trento after breakfast. We enjoy spectacular scenery as we make our way westward, first through the Valtellina Valley, stretching through the high Alps along the Swiss border, and then along the shores of famous Lake Como, past fine resorts such as Bellagio and Cernobbio, quaint villages, lush gardens, luxury hotels such as the Villa d'Este, and the palatial villas of George Clooney and other jet-setters. After a leisurely walk through the beautiful town of Como, we continue to the first-class/four-star Hotel Bussola in the city of Novara, situated close to Milan's Malpensa Airport. There will be some free time before we enjoy our arrivederci-dinner in the Michelin-recommended restaurant Cravero in the nearby village of Caltignaga.

Day 15 - Thursday, April 29: After breakfast, short transfer to Milan's Malpensa Airport and return flights to Toronto via Montreal, with Air Canada. Arrival in Toronto around 6 PM.

Tour Price in Canadian dollars, based on double occupancy, from Toronto: $6,895.00
Land Only (from Milan Malpensa Airport on 16/04 and back on 29/04): $5,695.00
Single Room Supplement: $1,185.00

Included in the tour price are:

- Return air transportation from Toronto to Milan via Montreal, including one checked suitcase per person
- Accommodation, based on double occupancy, in first-class/4-star hotels; the single room supplement is: $1,185.00, but only a limited number of single rooms are available
- Breakfast daily and *eight* dinners (or full lunches)
- Overland transportation by private coach
- All visits and sightseeing as outlined in the itinerary, including admission to museums and monuments mentioned
- Gratuities for driver(s) and local guide(s)

Not included are:

- All items of a personal nature
- Beverages with dinners and meals other than those outlined above
- Travel Insurance, available upon request