

Rail holidays of Italy

Expressions



Rail holiday to Tuscany and Umbria



Rail holiday to Tuscany and Umbria

9 NIGHTS / 10 DAYS

Florence

Chianti

Panzano

Siena

San Gimignano

Colle San Paolo

Perugia



In this Italian rail holiday you travel to Florence by train and then tour Tuscany and Umbria with a hire car. We have suggested here some of our beautiful hotels that make excellent bases to explore the pretty landscapes of Tuscany and Umbria, before returning back to the UK by rail. Travelling by train is an ideal way to get to Tuscany and Umbria – more relaxing than flying and with great views along the way. There are many different rail routes to Italy that you can choose between. The simplest option which we use in our suggested itinerary is to take the overnight Thello sleeper from Paris to Milan and then continue on to Florence where you arrive in the morning. A stunning alternative is a daytime rail journey which takes you via Zurich or Munich, allowing you to spend one night in a hotel in one of these cities before travelling over the Gotthard or Brenner Passes through the spectacular Alps. We can help select the best rail journey for you depending on your requirements – in this example we use the sleeper train in both directions.

PRICES

From £1,965 per person

Price based on two sharing a double or twin room.

1st class rail travel can be added for a supplement.

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 Bernini Palace in Florence
- 3 nights in a Standard room at the Villa le Barone in Tuscany
- 3 nights in a Standard room at the Villa di Monte Solare in Umbria
- Second class travel on all trains including Eurostar
- Double sleeper compartment on the Thello sleeper train
- Category B hire car for six days (we can arrange a larger car for you on request)

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Optional extra nights
- Transfers in Paris
- Meals other than breakfast at the hotels
- 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

OPTION 1 – DIRECT SLEEPER

DAY ONE: Take the sleeper train from Paris

You begin your rail holiday by travelling out on an afternoon Eurostar service from London St Pancras to Paris Gare de Nord. Following a change of station in Paris continue the rail journey by Thello sleeper train to Milan, where you change trains and then carry on to Florence where you arrive at around 9am. We recommend the two bed sleeper compartments on the Thello train as the most comfortable option. There is a washbasin in the compartments and shared toilets in each carriage.

DAY TWO: Milan to Florence by rail

Arrive in Florence, where you will be met at the train station and taken by a private car and driver to your hotel. We include an early check-in and you have the rest of the day to explore the beautiful city of Florence. You spend one night here, choosing from one of our luxury hotels in Florence – here we have suggested the Bernini Palace.

OPTION 2 – VIA MUNICH

DAY ONE: Rail to Munich via Brussels

Alternatively you can begin your rail holiday by leaving London on a morning Eurostar to Brussels. You change trains here and board the Thalys service that takes you across the Belgian-German border at Aachen. You change trains again in Cologne and head south through the towns of Mannheim and Stuttgart before arriving into Munich around 8.30pm. You check in to your hotel in Munich and spend one night here.

DAY TWO: Over the Austrian Alps to Florence

The next leg of your train journey takes you through the heart of the stunning Austrian Alps. You head south from the Bavarian capital and cross the border into Austria at Kufstein. The railway guides you through high mountain scenery before dropping down through the Brenner Pass, from where you can admire the Dolomites, and onwards through Verona to Bologna. You change trains here and arrive into Florence at 5.30pm. You stay one night at the Bernini Palace.

DAY THREE: Drive to Panzano

Collect your hire car from central Florence. The drive southwards to the heart of the Chianti wine producing area and the Hotel Villa le Barone is about 25 miles and takes around



Villa le Barone

an hour. Spend three nights at Villa le Barone, where views over the vineyards and the village of Panzano are excellent.

DAYS FOUR AND FIVE: Chianti

You have the next two days at your leisure to explore the Chianti region. The hotel is well located to for a day trip to Siena or San Gimignano, or you can use your car to explore the smaller authentic villages close to the hotel. The Villa le Barone provides guests with a pack of possible driving, hiking and walking itineraries for the adventurous. Alternatively, if you're a gourmet-lover why not try your hand at Tuscan cookery with a class at the hotel. Why not talk to one of our Italian specialists about ideas of how to spend your time in Chianti?

DAY SIX: Drive south-eastwards

Depart Panzano and drive to Colle San Paolo about 100 miles and two and half hours away in northern Umbria. Umbria has many similarities to Tuscany, but has a more rustic, less polished and perhaps more authentic feel. Villa di Monte Solare is a small, privately owned country house of 25 rooms.

DAYS SEVEN AND EIGHT: Umbria

Spend two days relaxing in the hotel, or take your hire car to explore the delights of Umbria. The hotel is only 40 minutes from Perugia – a large medieval hill town and Umbria's capital city. Combining a rich history with modern shopping and a lively atmosphere, Perugia has plenty to offer visitors. History-lovers shouldn't miss a visit to the Eruscan Arch or the Rocca

Paolina, whilst the National Art Gallery of Umbria exemplifies the artistic evolution in Umbria between the 13th and 19th centuries.

DAY NINE: Sleeper from Florence

Drive back to Florence, a journey of about two hours, where you return your hire car. You will have time for dinner in Florence before starting the return journey of your rail holiday by catching a train to Milan before transferring to the Thello sleeper train back to Paris at around 11pm.

DAY TEN: Paris to London

On arrival in Paris at about 10am, transfer to Paris Nord station and make the final leg of your train journey by Eurostar to London St Pancras.

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 Italy and Germany can be found below.

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.

TUSCANY

Villa le Barone 4 star

The Villa le Barone is a charming property in a central location in the Chianti Classico wine producing region. In the 16th Century, the villa was the home of the famous Della Robbia family and it is now owned by their descendents. The 28 rooms are scattered across four separate buildings, surrounded by a shady garden with hammocks, terrace and swimming pool. The hotel's restaurant, located in the old winery, serves typical Tuscan food and famous local Chianti wines. The Villa le Barone is a charming and relaxed hotel full of regional flavour, and a perfect base from which to explore the Chianti region.

UMBRIA

Villa di Monte Solare 4 star

This beautiful property is a small privately owned country house set amongst its own grounds of formal gardens, wadded hills, vines and olive groves. Now run as a hotel, there are just 25 rooms offering guests an ambience of warmth, charm and outstanding quality of service. The rooms are located across the main villa and in the four surrounding villas. With beamed ceilings and terracotta floors, antique and original decorations, all of them are utterly in keeping with the regional flavour. The hotel has two breakfast rooms and a restaurant, but all meals are served in the garden in fine weather. The Villa di Monte Solare offers an enticing combination of rustic charm, a beautiful location and charming welcome.



Villa di Monte Solare

MUNICH (OPTION)

Eden Hotel Wolff 4 star

The Eden Hotel Wolff has been one of the leading names in Munich since its foundation in 1890. The Art Nouveau building is ideally located opposite Munich Central rail station, making it the perfect stopover point from which to explore the city. The hotel has 210 rooms and suites on offer to guests in a variety of designs from classical through to elegant modern or Alpine stylings, whilst the hotel's restaurant the Peter & Wolff prides itself on the use of seasonal products from the regions suppliers in its menus.



Terrace at Hotel Bernini Palace



"Historic" room at Villa le Barone



Swimming pool at Villa di Monte Solare

MAP OF TOUR RAIL HOLIDAY TO TUSCANY AND UMBRIA



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 £2,165 per person for first class rail travel.

From £1,965 per person for second class rail travel.

Prices based on two sharing a double or twin room with Thello sleeper.

What's included?

Accommodation on bed and breakfast as below

1 night in a Standard Room at Bernini Palace in Florence

3 nights in a Standard Room at Villa la Barone in Chianti

3 nights in a Standard Room at Villa di Monte Solare in Umbria

First or second class travel on all trains (as above) including Eurostar

Double sleeper compartment on Thello sleeper train

Category B car hire for six days. We can arrange larger cars for you on request.

What's not included?

Optional extra nights

Transfers in Paris

Meals other than breakfast at the hotels

Supplements for alternative route options

Any services not mentioned above



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.