

Tour
Information



Christmas on the Italian Riviera





Travel

Passports

Please ensure your 10-year British Passport is not out of date and is valid for a full three months beyond the duration of your visit. EU, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino or Switzerland valid national identification cards are also acceptable for travel to Italy.

Visas

British and EU passport holders are not required to have a visa.

For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

Italian Consulate-General: "Harp House", 83/86 Farringdon Street, London EC4A 4BL.

Tel: (0)20 7936 5900. Fax: (0)20 7583 9425.

Email: consolato.londra@esteri.it

Website:

http://www.conslondra.esteri.it/Consolato_Londra

Open Mon-Fri 0900-1200



Tickets

You will be issued with a return train ticket.

Please take care not to lose your tickets and please check that the details on your tickets are accurate. Your ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.

Standard Premier on Eurostar tickets is indicated by two asterisks in the class type section in the top right hand corner. A light meal will be served to passengers travelling Standard Premier on Eurostar. Standard class Eurostar tickets do not include any food or drink on board, although there is a buffet car serving drinks and snacks.

TGV tickets do not include any food or drink on board, although a buffet car is available.

Train Seats

On all legs of the journey you have reserved seat and carriage numbers which are shown clearly on your ticket.



Baggage

As with most trains, passengers are responsible for carrying baggage onto and off the train. Baggage can be stored on overhead shelves or at the entrance to the carriages. Trolleys are available at St Pancras and Lille, but bags do need to be carried on to the platform. Porters are sometimes but not always available at St Pancras.

Travel Editions recommends a luggage delivery service called **thebaggageman**, where your suitcase can be picked up from your home before departure and delivered straight to your hotel; therefore removing the worry about carrying your cases onto and off the trains.

For further information:

<http://www.thebaggageman.com>

Labels

Please use the luggage labels provided. It is useful to have your home address located inside your suitcase should the label go astray.

Transfers

On arrival in Nice, transfer over the border by coach to Alassio (approx. 1.5 hours) and Hotel Toscana

Special Requests

If you haven't already, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.



Accommodation

Hotel Toscana, Alassio

Situated in the centre of the town, the 4-star Hotel Toscana has been family owned and operated since 1934. Facilities here include fitness centre, La Piazzetta, wine bar and La Vecchia Maremma Restaurant. The bright, spacious bedrooms include private bath/shower, hairdryer, Satellite TV, telephone, safe, mini-bar and wi-fi. Unfortunately, rooms at the Hotel Toscana do not include coffee/tea making facilities, so we suggest you bring a travel kettle if required.

For more information visit their website
<http://www.hoteltoscanaalassio.it/>



Food

Italian food rivals French in the hearts and taste buds of many gastronomes and the regional cuisine, of which the locals are very proud, wonderfully reflects the climate and local produce. Delicious pizza, pasta and risotto dishes are present everywhere throughout Italy with local specialities and sauces.

Seafood (*frutti di mare*) plays an important role in the Liguria diet – fresh fish, mussels and squid feature in many dishes. Meat is less common, although veal and rabbit are popular. Try *Cima ripiena*, a veal breast stuffed with a vegetable, herb, egg and cheese filling, taken as an antipasti or used as a sandwich filler. The most famous speciality of the region has to be *pesto alla Genovese* (basil, olive oil and pine nut sauce, served with pasta) – Genoa is considered its birthplace. Wheat, chickpeas and chestnut are all used to make flour for both pastas and breads, such as *Focaccia* and *farinata*, taken plain or flavoured with onion, olive oil, herbs or cheese.

A typical Ligurian dessert is *Pandocle Genovese*, a sweet bread made with raisins, nuts and candied fruits. Strong Italian espresso coffee is served after the meal and will be black, in small cups, unless a *cappuccino* is requested.

Table service is common in most restaurants and bars. Usually, a discretionary service charge is added to your bill in restaurants and bars, and no further tipping is required.

Drink

The world's largest wine producer, Italy is home to some of the oldest viticulture regions. The wines are named according to their grape variety or after their village or area of origin. Excellent wines are produced throughout Italy and Sicily, with local wines offering great value and quality. The Liguria wine-making area has several *Denominazione di origine controllata* (DOC), the most famous being the *Cinque Terre DOC*, that produces dry white wines. Also worth trying is the *Colline di Levanto DOC* straw-yellow wines and the sweet *Sciaccheta DOC* white wines. If you prefer a red wine, try the fruity *Rossesse di Dolceacqua DOC*. The *Sciaccheta Rosso* is a good choice for a red dessert wine.

Apéritifs such as *Campari* and *Punt e Mes* are excellent appetisers, while Italian liqueurs include *Grappa*, *Stregga*, *Galliano*, *Amaretto*, *Sambuca* and *Limoncello*.

Meals included in the price of your holiday are:

Breakfast – daily

Dinner – daily set menu (special festive menu on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day)



Destination

A dramatically beautiful, mountain-backed stretch of coastline, this continuation of the Côte d'Azur on the Italian side of the border is just as spectacular and equally fascinating, and has a roguish charm – laidback, lively and oh-so Italian. Enjoy the atmosphere of chic seaside resorts and quaint Italian towns, experience lively markets, explore fascinating historic ports and get a glimpse of the glamour of Monte-Carlo on this Italian Riviera tour.

Places of interest included in the tour:

Alassio

The seaside resort of *Alassio* is well-known for its spectacular natural setting and beautiful views. Along its seafront of sandy beaches you'll find a lovely promenade lined with excellent bars and cafes, and the cobbled streets of the pedestrianized town centre make for a relaxed afternoon stroll. Essential listening is Edward Elgar's concert-overture *In the South* (Alassio) which he composed while on holiday here in the winter of 1903.

For more information about Alassio, visit:
www.alassio.eu/en/

Santa Margherita

Santa Margherita is a small, elegant and picturesque seaside resort set in an inlet. This lovely town is full of grand hotels and palatial villas in lush gardens all looking out over the sparkling blue of the bay. It is a lovely place for a gentle stroll or relaxing in a café enjoying a gelato and watching the world go by. Also worth seeing is the church of *San Michele*, that contains a work by Van Dyck.

For more information about Santa Margherita, visit:
<http://www.comune.santa-margherita-ligure.ge.it/>

Villa Hanbury

An excursion just over the border into Italy takes us to the 100-acre gardens of the *Villa Hanbury* which were laid out by Sir Thomas Hanbury in the mid-19th century. A dramatic site on a promontory, the gardens are planted with an impressive collection of specimens, ranging from succulents to roses and plants indigenous to the site.

For more information about the Villa Hanbury, visit:
<http://www.giardinihanbury.com/hanbury4/>

Monaco

The principality of Monaco may be a tiny 1.9 square km, but you'd be hard pushed to find as much luxury anywhere else. Tax-haven for the super-rich and ruled over by its famous royal family and full of lavish hotels, luxury tower blocks, gleaming super cars and a harbour stuffed with multi-million pound yachts, Monaco is a fascinating place to visit. See the famous *Grand Casino*, the *Hotel de Paris*, the *Fort Antoine*, the *Cathedrale*, the *Palais Princier*, the *Jardin Exotique* and several museums, as well as soaking up the ambiance of extravagance, luxury and glamour.

For more information about Monaco, visit:
<http://www.visitmonaco.com/>

Genoa

Italy's largest port, Genoa has been a prosperous economic centre for centuries, which has created a city full of impressive landmarks and a glorious heritage and earning the nickname 'La Superba'. The city has huge associations with Columbus, whose possible childhood home is here, and he is remembered everywhere - from his statue in *Piazza Acquaverde* to the modern airport! The old town is a medieval warren, part of which is UNESCO-listed, spotted with palazzos that have been converted into world class museums and art galleries.

Highlights include the *Palazzo Ducale*, the striped Gothic *Duomo of San Lorenzo*, the 16th century *Church of Gesu*, the *Porta Soprana* city gates, the lovely *Via Garibaldi*, the *Piazza San Matteo* and the 12th century cloisters of *Sant'Andrea*. There are a wealth of museums and galleries, too, including those at *Sant'Agostino*, the *Palazzo Reale* and *Palazzi Bianco and Rosso* and *Galleria d'Arte Moderna*.

For more information about Genoa, visit:
<http://www.visitgenoa.it/en>

Christmas

It is traditional in Italy for families to have their main Christmas dinner on Christmas Eve. Most shops will be closed on Christmas Day although there will be a limited selection of bars and restaurants open. Your tour manager will have details of opening times and Christmas services.

Tour manager

Your tour manager will be on hand throughout the tour to ensure that everything operated according to plan. If you have any problems or questions please see him or her immediately – it is often possible to resolve complaints or problems very quickly on the spot, and do everything to help you enjoy your holiday.

Reading Suggestions

DK Eyewitness Travel Guide: Italian Riviera.

An excellent guide to the region, with delightful photos, useful maps, detailed descriptions of Liguria's towns, landscapes and must-sees and an introduction to the region's history, culture and cuisine.

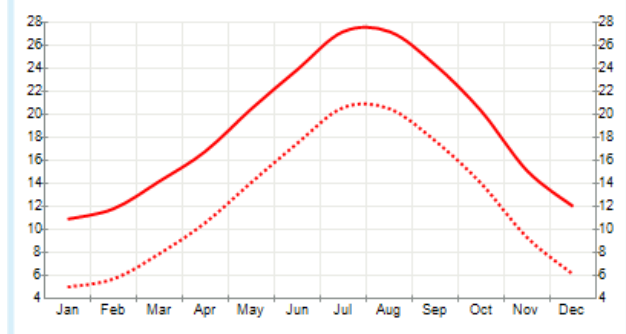
Elizabeth von Arnim, The Enchanted April, 1922.

A charming, light-hearted and enjoyable novel about four Englishwomen, strangers to one another, who rent a medieval Italian castle near Portofino for a month.



The Basics

Climate – The weather in the Italian Riviera at this time of year is likely to be cool and there is the chance of the odd shower. Our best advice is to come prepared.



Time – GMT +2 hours (Summer time Apr-Oct); GMT + 1 (Standard time Nov-Mar).

Language – Italian.

Religion – Roman Catholic.

National holidays – New Year's Day (01 Jan); Epiphany (06 Jan); Easter Monday; Liberation day (25 Apr); Labour Day (01 May); Republic day (02 Jun); Assumption of Mary (15 Aug); All Saints' Day (01 Nov); Immaculate Conception (08 Dec); Christmas day (25 Dec); St Stephens day (26 Dec).

Currency – Euro. €1 = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

Banks – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are located in all towns and cities, as well as airports, major train stations and other spots. They usually offer an attractive exchange rate. Those banks that still exchange foreign currencies into local money will always charge a transaction fee, so withdrawing money from an ATM usually represents the most logical means of obtaining euros.

Credit cards – American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted across the country. If you're eating at a restaurant, check prior to the meal that your card will be an acceptable form of payment. Even in cities, it's advisable to carry a supply of cash with you at all times. Varying amounts of commission can be charged.

Electricity – 220 volt, two-pin continental plug.

Drinking water – Tap water is safe to drink. (Although you'll find a huge amount of bottled water for sale too)

Shops and museums – Department stores are open 0830-1930 Monday to Saturday. Most shops are closed between 1230-1530. Please note that some museums close on Mondays.

Although very common in tourist towns in Italy, please note that street vendors selling all kinds of designer knockoffs are illegal and could land you with a hefty fine. Care should also be taken when buying antiques since Italy is renowned for skilled imitators.

Clothes & Shoes – You may like to bring a warm sweater for cool evenings. Light rain wear for the occasional storm and good grip/flat walking shoes are recommended.

Camera – bring plenty of memory cards/film and any spare camera batteries as these are not always available. Please check with your guide before photographing people.

Bath plugs – The hotel has plugs for basins, but it is useful to carry a 'universal' one with you.

Telephones/mobiles – You should be able to use your mobile phone in France, depending on your operator and contract.

Tippling – To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that when receiving a good service, one does award with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services, but for your guidance about £2-3 per person per day for the tour manager is the norm. We would like to reiterate that tipping is an entirely optional payment and this information is given purely to answer any questions you may have about it.



Health

Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your tour manager if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a doctor.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.



Hospital

Your tour manager/hotel reception will arrange hospital transport.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.

General Health Advice

We suggest you take a good supply of your own individual medicines with you and always keep some in your hand luggage in case you get delayed or your luggage goes astray. General-purpose supplies for bites, stings, or scratches, and your usual medication for headaches, or stomach upsets are always recommended. Oral re-hydration sachets are excellent for topping up salt and glucose levels.

Visit the NHS Fit For Travel website for more generally information specific to the country you are visiting – www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

Inoculations

You should check with your own doctor and take their advice as to which inoculations are required for the country you are visiting, as only they know your medical history and recommendations are liable to change at short notice.



Insurance

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and also telephone the emergency number of your insurance company. You will **NOT** be covered for any claim unless this procedure is carried out. Your insurance company will then decide on the best course of medical attention.

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

The EHIC replaced the old E111 in 2006. Valid in all EEA countries, the card lets you get state healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes for free. It will cover you for treatment that is needed to allow you to continue your stay until your planned return. It also covers the treatment of pre-existing medical conditions.

Please note that the EHIC **is not** an alternative to travel insurance. It will not cover any private medical healthcare or costs such as being flown back to the UK, or lost or stolen property. Therefore, it is important to have both an EHIC and a valid private travel insurance policy. It is also important to note that each country's healthcare system is slightly different, so the EHIC might not cover everything that would be generally free on the NHS.

We strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy when you travel abroad.

For more information about the EHIC please visit:

<https://www.ehic.org.uk>



Emergencies

Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:

00 44 20 7251 0045

Outside office hours (Mon-Fri 0900-1700), telephone our emergency staff on:

00 44 7899 796542 or

00 44 7831 133079 or

00 44 1235 850720

PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.

If you find that you are in need of consular assistance during your holiday:

British Consulate general Milan

Via S. Paolo, 7

20121 Milan

Italy

Tel: +39 (0)6 4220 2431

Fax: +39 (0)2 8646 5081

Italy.consulate@fco.gov.uk

Open Mon-Fri 0930-1230 and 1400-1600. Phone lines open 0900-1700. Outside these hours a consular Emergency Service is in operation and can be contacted on +39 (0)6 4220 2413.

Travel Editions

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