Swisstalia: Zurich, Lucerne & the Alps into Venice, Florence & Rome

ZURICH

10D 9N | 25–30 PAX | STARTS ZURICH | NOT INCLUDED

Travel from Switzerland's Alpine landscapes into Italy's great cities over ten seamless days. Begin in Zurich and Lucerne with Mount Pilatus, then visit the Bernese Oberland, Iseltwald, Interlaken, Lauterbrunnen and Rhine Falls before crossing into Milan. Continue south through Venice by waterbus, Florence's Renaissance centre and Pisa's Campo dei Miracoli, ending in Rome and Vatican City with a local guide. Nine nights' accommodation, breakfasts, dinners, airport transfers, coach travel, water transport, mountain excursions, a gondola ride, guiding and tipping are included. Flights are arranged independently, arriving in Zurich and departing Rome. This route suits travellers who want Swiss scenery and Italy's essential cultural cities connected in one efficient overland journey.

DAY

01

ZURICH · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 1

Arrive Zurich — the Alps begin tomorrow

You arrive at Zurich Airport (ZRH) and a private or shared transfer brings you to the hotel. Check-in from 14:00. Zurich is Switzerland's financial and cultural capital — if you arrive with time before dark, the old town and the lake are both within walking distance of the centre.

Airport Transfer — Private or SIC. Your tour leader meets you on arrival.

Note on flights — Flights are not included. Arrange your own arrival into Zurich (ZRH) and departure from Rome (FCO or CIA). This tour starts in Switzerland and ends in Italy.

OVERNIGHT

Tailormade Hotel IDEA Spreitenbach

DAY

02

LUCERNE · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 2

Lucerne and Pilatus Mountain — cable car to 2,128m above the lake

Lucerne is Switzerland's most visited city — the old town sits at the edge of a lake with the Alps rising behind it, and the medieval Chapel Bridge is one of the most photographed wooden structures in Europe. The morning orientation covers the main landmarks before the coach heads south to Kriens for the Pilatus cable car ascent.

Lucerne Orientation — Photo stops at the Lion Monument, the Chapel Bridge (Kapellbrücke, built 1333) and Lake Lucerne. Brief free time for Swiss chocolate, watches and souvenirs.

Pilatus Mountain Excursion, Kriens — The cable car from Kriens ascends to 2,128 metres on the Pilatus massif. On a clear day the panorama takes in 73 Alpine peaks. Network of summit paths for those who want to walk. Cable car descent back to Kriens. Excursion included.

MEALS

Breakfast · Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Zurich

DAY

03

LAUTERBRUNNEN · OVERNIGHT 2 OF 2

Iseltwald, Interlaken and Lauterbrunnen — the Bernese Oberland day trip

A day trip into the Bernese Oberland, based out of Zurich. The three stops — Iseltwald, Interlaken and Lauterbrunnen — are within an hour of each other and operate in completely different registers. Packed halal dinner is collected before the return to Zurich.

Iseltwald — A small village on a peninsula jutting into Lake Brienz, best known internationally for the jetty scene filmed for the Korean drama Crash Landing on You. Photo stop at the waterfront. The lake reflects the surrounding mountains; good light in the morning.

Interlaken — The resort town between Lake Thun and Lake Brienz, the standard base for Jungfrau excursions. Free time at Hohematte Park and the town centre.

Lauterbrunnen Valley — A flat valley floor enclosed by 300-metre vertical rock walls with 72 waterfalls dropping from the cliffs. Staubbachfall — 297 metres of free-falling water — is visible from the valley floor and accessible by a short walk. The church at the valley entrance is the standard photo stop.

MEALS

Breakfast · Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Zurich

DAY

04

MILAN · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 1

Zurich and the Rhine Falls — then south into Milan

The morning covers Zurich's old town and the Rhine Falls before the coach crosses the border into Italy. Zurich's historic core — the Grossmünster, the Frauenmünster, the town hall and the lakeside quays — is compact and covers well in two hours. The Rhine Falls at Schaffhausen, 45 minutes north, is a worthwhile detour: the largest waterfall in Europe by volume, 150 metres wide and 23 metres high.

Rhine Falls (Rheinfalls), Schaffhausen — Photo stop at Europe's largest waterfall. The viewing platforms on both banks are accessible on foot. Allow 30 minutes.

Zurich Old Town Orientation — Photo stops at the Swiss National Museum, the Grossmünster (the twin-towered Romanesque cathedral), the Zurich Town Hall (Rathaus) and the Frauenmünster (known for its Chagall and Giacometti stained glass windows). Free time to explore the Niederdorf quarter.

Drive to Milan — Approximately 3.5 hours southwest through the St Gotthard Tunnel or over the Gotthard Pass depending on the season.

MEALS

Breakfast · Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Esperia Hotel

DAY

05

MILAN · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 2

Milan — the Duomo, the Galleria and the Sforza Castle

Milan is Italy's northern engine — the financial and fashion capital, built over a Roman settlement and shaped by centuries of Visconti and Sforza rule before becoming the industrial centre of unified Italy. The orientation today covers the main sites in the historic core before the coach continues east to Mestre.

Sforza Castle (Castello Sforzesco) — The 15th-century fortress of the Sforza dukes of Milan, now housing a complex of museums including Michelangelo's last unfinished sculpture, the Rondanini Pietà. Photo stop from the exterior courtyard.

Duomo di Milano — The Gothic cathedral begun in 1386 and completed in 1965 — the largest in Italy and the third largest in the world. The façade has 3,400 statues; the roofline is a dense forest of spires and pinnacles.

Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II — The 19th-century glass-and-iron shopping arcade connecting the Duomo to La Scala. One of the oldest covered galleries in the world. Photo stop.

Statua di Leonardo da Vinci & La Scala — The bronze statue of Leonardo in the Piazza della Scala, facing the opera house built in 1778. Photo stop.

Shopping time, Piazza del Duomo — Free time before the coach heads east to Mestre.

MEALS

Breakfast · Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Mestre

DAY

06

VENICE · OVERNIGHT 2 OF 2

Venice — San Marco, Murano glassblowers and the back canals by gondola

Venice is reached by waterbus from Tronchetto Pier — the approach across the lagoon is the best introduction to the city. No roads, no coaches, no streets wide enough to move quickly. The San Marco district is the formal half of the day; the gondola takes you through the quieter back canals that most visitors never reach on foot.

Tronchetto to San Marco by Waterbus — Return transfer included. The approach from the water gives you the city's scale immediately.

San Marco Orientation — Photo stops at St Mark's Basilica (exterior, five domed bays and gold mosaic), the Campanile, the Torre dell'Orologio, the Doge's Palace, the Bridge of Sighs (from the embankment) and the Colonna di San Marco.

Murano Glass Factory — The island of Murano has produced glasswork since 1291. The factory visit includes a live glassblowing demonstration. Shopping opportunity follows; no purchase obligation.

Venice Gondola Ride — A shared gondola through the side canals. The back canal routes pass through the quieter residential sestieri.

Rialto Bridge — The oldest of the four Grand Canal bridges. Market stalls along the top; the best canal view is from the bridge itself.

Note: Hard Rock Café Venice is included in the itinerary as a dining option.

MEALS

Breakfast Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Mestre

DAY

07

FLORENCE · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 1

Florence — Ponte Vecchio, Piazza della Signoria and the view from the hill

Florence is where the Renaissance happened — the Medici spent the 15th and 16th centuries funding the artists who rebuilt the visual language of Western Europe, and the results are still mostly where they were left. The drive from Mestre takes approximately 2.5 hours. The afternoon covers the main piazzas and the river crossing on foot.

Pierotucci Leather Workshop — A Florentine leather workshop near Santa Croce, founded in 1972. Live hand-crafting demonstration included; shopping opportunity follows. No purchase obligation.

Piazzale Michelangelo — The hilltop terrace south of the Arno with the panoramic view over the entire city: the Duomo, the Palazzo Vecchio tower and the hills of Fiesole. The best photograph of Florence is taken from here. Allow 20 minutes.

Ponte Vecchio — The medieval bridge over the Arno lined with goldsmiths' shops, the only bridge in Florence not destroyed by the retreating German army in 1944.

Piazza della Signoria — The civic centre of Florence, flanked by the Palazzo Vecchio and the Loggia dei Lanzi open-air sculpture hall.

Florence Duomo (Santa Maria del Fiore) — Brunelleschi's dome defines the city skyline. Exterior and piazza are the standard stop.

San Lorenzo Market — The outdoor leather and souvenir market north of the Duomo. Independent browsing time.

MEALS

Breakfast Dinner

OVERNIGHT

B&B Hotel Firenze Novoli

DAY

08

ROME · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 1

Pisa — the Campo dei Miracoli, then south into Rome

Pisa is a focused 60-minute stop on the drive south to Rome. The Campo dei Miracoli is one of the best-composed public spaces in Italy — four major medieval monuments on a single field. The return shuttle bus is included. The drive to Rome from Pisa takes approximately 3.5 hours.

Campo dei Miracoli, Pisa — UNESCO World Heritage Site comprising the Leaning Tower (Torre di Pisa), the Cathedral, the Baptistery and the Camposanto. The tower leans at 3.97 degrees. Exterior photo stop included; tower entry requires a separate timed ticket not included in the tour. Return shuttle bus to the coach included.

Drive to Rome — Approximately 3.5 hours south on the A1.

MEALS

Breakfast

Dinner

OVERNIGHT

The Cross Hotel

DAY

09

ROME · OVERNIGHT 1 OF 1

Rome & Vatican — with a local guide who knows the Eternal City

Rome gets a full day with a local English-speaking guide — the one city on the itinerary where you have someone who knows the site rather than an orientation walk. Within a square kilometre of the Colosseum, you have 2,000 years of continuous urban history visible above ground.

Colosseum (Anfiteatro Flavio) — The Flavian Amphitheatre, completed in 80 AD, capacity 50,000–80,000. The exterior and the guide's context are the standard stop; interior entry requires a separate timed ticket not included in the tour.

Roman Forum (Foro Romano) — The civic centre of ancient Rome. Visible from the Palatine Hill overlook.

Trevi Fountain (Fontana di Trevi) — Baroque fountain at the junction of three ancient aqueducts, completed in 1762. Allow 20 minutes.

Spanish Steps (Scalinata di Trinità dei Monti) — 135 steps connecting Piazza di Spagna to the Trinità dei Monti church, built in 1725. The surrounding streets are where the luxury fashion district begins.

Vatican City & St Peter's Basilica — St Peter's Square and the Basilica facade are included. Interior access to the Basilica is free; the dome climb and Vatican Museums require separate tickets not included.

Via Condotti — Rome's main luxury shopping street, running from the Spanish Steps toward the Tiber.

MEALS

Breakfast Dinner

OVERNIGHT

Rome

DAY

10

ROME

Check out Rome — airport transfer and departure

After breakfast, check out and a private or shared transfer takes you to Rome's Fiumicino (FCO) or Ciampino (CIA) airport for your departure flight. The tour ends at the airport. Ten days, two countries, one Alpine peak, one car-free lagoon city, and a dome that has been standing since 537 AD.

MEALS

Breakfast

YOUR TRIP AT A GLANCE

What's Included

DEPARTS FROM	FLIGHTS	GROUP SIZE
Zurich	**Not included**	**25–30 pax**

INCLUDED

- check 9 nights accommodation at 3-star hotels
- check 9 daily breakfasts at hotels
- check 8 dinners at restaurant or packed meal
- check Private or SIC return airport transfers
- check Long-distance coach from Day 2 to Day 9
- check Return boat transfer Tronchetto Pier to San Marco Pier, Venice
- check Return shuttle bus in Pisa
- check English-speaking local guide in Rome
- check Orientation tours by Tour Leader in Lucerne, Zurich, Milan, Venice, Florence and Pisa
- check Pilatus Mountain excursion by cable car
- check Murano Glass Factory visit
- check Venice Gondola ride
- check Hard Rock Café Venice
- check Pierotucci Leather Factory visit
- check Tipping for guide and driver
- check City and tourist taxes
- check Tour Leader throughout

NOT INCLUDED

- Air ticket (unless stated as included)
- Travelling visa
- Dinner on first and last day
- Lunch daily
- Personal and travel insurance
- Attraction entrance fees (unless stated as included)
- Porterage
- Personal expenses