

Italy 2023 Itinerary

(featuring Lake Como, Saturnia, Puglia and the Amalfi Coast)

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Justine and I have both traveled quite a bit. And this may be our favorite trip we've been on – at least top 3. Italy is beautiful. We've been to Italy at least 3 times and still love it. These cities were places we both had not visited before. And the views in these places were unreal. We flew into Milan, started our trip in Lake Como, then went to Saturnia, Puglia, and the Amalfi Coast, and ended in Rome for our flights back to the US. More info about these places are at the bottom of this document. Our trip was a total of 11 nights, which felt like the perfect amount of time. See our itinerary below, hope it helps you plan your trip!

ADVICE: STRONGLY recommend booking your hotels as far in advance as you can for these cities. There's a limit to nice, reasonably-priced hotels and they get booked up several months in advance. We booked ours about 2.5 months in advance and truly struggled finding the right hotels for us, because so many we loved had no rooms available, or not available for our whole stay in that city. So, within the same city, for different nights, we unfortunately had to stay at different hotels or in different rooms in the same hotel, which made an already pretty busy trip more exhausting.

Mon, 9/25: Lake Como

- Arrive in Milan (MXP)
 - Dolly lands at 11:50 AM
 - Justine lands at 12:00 PM
- *We took a few hour pit stop in Milan to do some luxury shopping, as most of these cities wouldn't give us that opportunity, except Capri (small selection), Bari (very small selection) and Rome.*
- Get to Lake Como
 - Train from MXP to Como Nord (buy ticket at airport)
 - Ferry from Como Nord Lago to Bellagio (don't need to buy ticket in advance)
 - 2 min walk from train station
- Check in at **Hotel Silvio Bellagio** (7 min away from ferry dock)
 - Nice hotel, nothing fancy, but has some amazing views of Lake Como

Tue, 9/26: Lake Como — Bellagio

- Check into **Borgo La Terrazzo Hotel**
 - Stunning hotel, with even better views of Lake Como. Very nice staff.
 - Provide a shuttle to Sorrento town center for 5 euros/day/per person
- Explore Bellagio
 - Villa Melzi Mansion
 - Walk around old town Bellagio
 - Food recs
 - Ristorante La Punta – we had lunch here, was delicious
 - La Laterna
 - Ristorante Billacus
 - La Grotta (pizza)
 - Trattoria San Giacomo
 - Terrazza Barchetta

Wed, 9/27: Lake Como — Varenna

- Ferry from Sorrento to Varenna
- Explore Varenna
 - Passeggiata Degli Innamorati (Walk of Lovers)
 - Villa Monstero
 - Orrido di Bellano waterfall – we didn't make it to here, further inland
 - Private boat tour
 - 1 hr ride, pretty pricey, but highly recommend. Great ride with beautiful views in a classic boat.
 - <https://www.lakecomoboat.eu/product/amore/>
 - Food Recs
 - Alma Bistrot – recommended by our boat driver. No pasta on menu, but risotto was good!
 - Caffè Varenna (stunning location right next to the lake)
 - Osteria Quattro Pass (pricey)
 - La Vista
 - Al Prato
- Como and Menaggio – we didn't actually get a chance to explore Como or Menaggio
 - Como Food Recs
 - Figli Dei Fiori Restaurant
 - Osteria del Gallo
 - Caffè & Bollicine

Thur, 9/28: Saturnia

- Ferry or Taxi from Bellagio to Como
- Train from Como San Giovanni to Florence @ 11:10 AM
 - Arrive at Firenze Santa Maria Novella at 14:04
- Train to Florence airport (runs every 10 mins)
- Rental car pick up Florence Airport
 - We booked our car from Drivalia through Expedia.
 - We picked an SUV, because we were unsure what the roads on the long drive would be like, but I believe all the roads were paved.
- Drive to Saturnia (3 hrs)
- Check in to **Terme di Saturnia Resort**
 - Hotel is expensive, but it is the definition of a luxury resort – worth the money for the night we stayed. Amazing customer service, and beautiful hotel. Hotel also has amazing food. Their breakfast selection was top tier.
 - This hotel also has its own hot spring.
- Dinner at the hotel's restaurant: Restaurant 1919

Fri, 9/29: Puglia

- Hot Springs Cascate del Mulino
 - Open 24hrs, free to enter, pay 2euro/hr to park
 - Gets packed early. We went 30 mins after sunrise on a weekday and there were a good amount of people there already.
 - BRING SWIM SHOES

- Fake and low karat gold jewelry will turn in the sulfur. So recommend removing it before going!
- Drive to Rome (2.5 hrs) — *leave Saturnia by 1:30 latest*
- Return car drop-off at Rome Termini
- Train from Roma Termini to Bari Centrale at 5:00 PM
 - Arrive 9:14 PM.
- Check into **Hotel Excelsior Bari**
 - Nice hotel. Best feature is that it is the great location – next street over from the train station, and plenty of restaurants nearby within walking distance.
- Late dinner at My Dimsum – was craving asian food. Delicious food and open late.

Sat, 9/30: Puglia – Bari + Polignano A Mare

- Pick up rental car at train station, Autovia
 - Autovia rental desk is at the train station, but the actual car park is a 10 min walk from the station, so take that into consideration.
- Check in hotel **Hi Hotel Bari**
 - A little removed from the city center, but beautiful hotel. We also loved that they have a self-serve food station open 24/7.
- Explore Bari
 - We loved Bari, a “cool” city. Spots open late, lively at night.
 - Bari Old Town
 - Piazza Mercantile
- Explore Polignano a Mare
 - About 40 min drive from Bari. MUST visit, so very beautiful. Worth just walking around the city for a few hours.
 - Iconic Lama Monachile beach
 - Even if you don’t plan on swimming, it’s a breathtaking view. Can watch locals cliff jump.
 - We had lunch at Pic Nic – delicious
 - We didn’t do these, but others have recommended
 - Iconic restaurant Grotto Palace (\$190/pp, and food not all that)
 - Can do a private boat tour \$200 for 2 hrs

Sun, 10/1: Puglia – Alberobello + Ostuni

- Alberobello
 - About 50 min drive from Bari.
 - Home of the Trulli houses, mid-14th century dwellings. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/787/>
 - Where we parked: https://maps.app.goo.gl/UovAdJ9QsRvXVDUp9?q_st=ic
 - Will probably spend 2 hrs here, with walking around and lunch.
- Ostuni
 - About 40 min drive from Alberobello, and an hour drive to Bari.
 - Absolutely gorgeous views with all white buildings. Beautiful town to walk around in, also stays lively late. Recommend going a couple hours before sunset, so you can walk around and staying around for sunset views also.
 - Dinner @ Dish at 7 PM
 - Has amazing views. Food was okay, but could definitely get good food elsewhere in town for cheaper. And you can see the views without eating at the restaurant.

Mon, 10/2: Amalfi Coast – Sorrento

- Return car
- Train from Bari Centrale to Naples at 12:45
- Arrive Napoli Centrale at 4:34
- Ferry/train/taxi to Sorrento
 - Ferries end by 5 pm. After that you can take a taxi (\$\$\$) or the train from Napoli P. Garibaldi (which is connected to Napoli Centrale station)
- Check in to **Hotel Corallo Sorrento**
 - Hotel is pricey. We stayed in the deluxe room for one night, which was lack luster, but the executive room was great. The real selling factor is the hotel grounds and the AMAZING views. Great, nice staff. Also, was fantastic having the free shuttle to Sorrento town center.
- Went into the town center for dinner, there's countless restaurants to choose from

Tue, 10/3: Amalfi Coast – Positano

- Ferry from Sorrento to Positano
- Positano
 - Arienzo Beach club - popular black sand beach
 - Pricey, but nice experience and comes with food and drink. Nice music.
 - Book in advance. <https://www.arienzobeachclub.com/>
 - Hike Path of Gods – we didn't end up doing this
- Amalfi
 - We didn't end up going to Amalfi city. Hard to arrange multiple cities in one day with the ferry times, but if you have time, would be nice to visit.
- Dinner at hotel restaurant

Wed, 10/4: Amalfi Coast – Capri

- Ferry from Sorrento to Capri
- Capri
 - Blue Grotto Tour
 - Can book tour once you arrive to Capri. Best to go early, to avoid having a long wait.
 - Gardini di Augusto — has amazing view points
 - Monte Solaro Chairlift
 - Explore Capri town center – restaurants, shopping (with luxury stores)
 - Lunch at Molo
 - DELICIOUS. One of my fav meals on this trip

Thur, 10/5: Rome

- Spend morning exploring Sorrento
- Ferry/train/taxi to Naples
- Train from Napoli Centrale to Rome at 3:55 PM (arrive at 5:05 PM)
- Check into **Adesso Hotel Rome**
 - Nice, recently renovated. Very close to Roma Tiburtina station, across the street.
- Shopping in Rome

- Dinner at Trattoria La Tavernetta Pizzeria

Fri, 10/6

- Train from Roma Tiburtina to Roma airport (FCO)
- If you are doing VAT Tax refund, recommend getting to the airport at least 3 hours before your flight!
- Depart Rome
 - Justine departs at 11:00
 - Dolly departs at 10:00

MISC:

- Lake Como
 - Northern Italy, very close to Switzerland. Very beautiful area with mountain views.
 - There are multiple cities on Lake Como. We found that Bellagio was highly recommended as a home base, and then you can catch a ferry to the other cities.
 - You can actually swim in the lake, but most people do not.
- Saturnia
 - We only visited here for the natural sulfur hot spring, Cascate del Mulino. It is kind of out of the way from other places and requires you renting a car to drive there. It's not a MUST visit, but we are glad we did it. Also the drive was absolutely beautiful, passing rolling hills and vineyards and going through small Italian cities.
 - Do recommend timing your driving to take place when the sun is up, because majority of the drive is open fields and winding hillsides with no lights.
 - There are few, if any, American tourists. And if you're black, you'll be the only ones there and summon some stares.
- Puglia
 - The heel of Italy. Usually not named amongst the top Italian areas for tourists to visit, but man it is breathtaking. A true gem. We loved that there weren't many American tourists.
 - Recommend renting a car to get around the different cities in the Puglia region.
- Amalfi Coast
 - Sorrento is a common home base for the Amalfi Coast, and we enjoyed staying there.
- Website used for train booking: <https://www.thetrainline.com/en-us>
- Dining: we ate breakfast at the hotels every morning, included in our bookings. We found that it made our days easier instead of having to go out and find breakfast every morning.
- Ferries
 - Ferries do not run late, most are done by 5pm or 6 pm. So plan around that.
 - Also in the Amalfi Coast, ferry times you find online may be completely different from what the actual times are.
- Taxis
 - Not very easy getting taxis in Lake Como and the Amalfi Coast. So book ahead if possible, or expect a long wait time. Also taxis are almost impossible to get after 10/11 pm.
- Cars/driving
 - Italians drive on the right side of the road, with the steering wheel on the left like the US, which makes driving much easier.
 - Learn how to drive manual before you go, or make sure you book an automatic car!
- Hotels

- A lot of European hotel rooms are small, so if you are traveling with someone and if your pockets allow, definitely recommend upgrading room to suite so yall have some space.
- Some things on here, we didn't actually do/see, but I kept them on the list anyway
- This was a pretty busy trip, with a lot of bookings and things to organize. It can quickly get overwhelming. I'll share the checklist I made of bookings to do, as it helped me keep track.

BOOKINGS TO DO LIST:

HOTELS

- ☐ Rome hotel 10/5-6
- ☐ Como hotel 9/25-28
- ☐ Amalfi hotel 10/2-5
- ☐ Puglia hotel 9/29-10/2
- ☐ Saturnia hotel 9/28-29

TRAINS

- ☐ Amalfi to rome 10/5
- ☐ Como to florence 9/28
- ☐ Milan to como 9/25
- ☐ Bari to Amalfi 10/2
- ☐ Rome to Bari, Puglia 9/29

RENTAL CARS

- ☐ Rental Car for pickup in Florence drop in Rome 9/28-29
- ☐ Rental car for Puglia 9/29-10/2