



Jillian Bessette

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CURAC/ARUCC - Italy's Treasures: Culinary and Wine Tour

Oct 4, 2027 - Oct 17, 2027

\$8999 CAD double occ. | \$10,599 single occ. per person

Member Benefit: BOOK & SAVE \$300 CAD! | Reg Price: \$9299 | MEMBER RATE \$8999 CAD

Join this CURAC/ARUCC Group Exclusive Departure! Open to family and friends of members.

Optional Pre-Extension to Venice and Post-Extension to Rome coming soon.

Experience the best of Northern and Central Italy on this unforgettable journey through the Italian Lake District, Emilia-Romagna, Liguria, and Tuscany. From the serene waters and picturesque towns of the Lakes to the culinary treasures of Parma and Bologna, the colorful villages of Cinque Terre, and the glamorous coastline of Portofino and Santa Margherita Ligure, every stop offers a feast for the senses. Explore the Renaissance splendor of Florence, wander the medieval streets of San Gimignano, and immerse yourself in the rolling hills of Tuscany, where centuries-old wineries and traditional kitchens invite you to taste, cook, and savor authentic Italian flavors. This tour blends breathtaking scenery, historic cities, hands-on cooking classes, and winery experiences, creating a perfect balance of culture, cuisine, and unforgettable memories.

Highlights

Italian Lakes & Northern Italy

- Welcome dinner at Lake Como.
- Half-day guided food and walking tour in Como: Duomo, Broletto, San Fedele Church, local enoteca wine tasting, olive oil and balsamic tasting, gelato experience.
- Day tour of Lake Maggiore: Stresa town visit, boat ride to Isola Bella, explore Baroque gardens, free time for lunch.
- In Parma, visit Prosciutto di Parma production, Parmigiano Reggiano tasting, light lunch with local specialties.

Emilia-Romagna Highlights

- Bologna walking tour: Piazza Maggiore, Asinelli Tower, Basilica of San Petronio, Neptune Fountain.
- Local food tasting: Parmigiano Reggiano, Mortadella, Crescentina bread, Pignoletto wine.

Liguria & Italian Riviera

- Full-day Cinque Terre tour
- Portofino & Santa Margherita Ligure: Boat ride to Portofino, visit main square, Church of San Giorgio, Brown Castle; walking tour of Santa Margherita with pesto tasting.

Tuscany & Florence

- Tuscany wine region; enjoy rolling hills, vineyards, villa stay.
- Florence walking tour
- San Gimignano visit: Explore medieval hilltop town, Tuscan winery visit with wine tasting and lunch.
- Hands-on cooking class at Tuscan villa with Mamma Paola; prepare traditional Tuscan dishes and enjoy your creations for dinner.

Rome & Umbria Stop

- Travel to Rome via Perugia: Visit the House of Chocolate, factory and museum tour, free time in Perugia city centre.

Activity Level

This tour includes moderate physical activity. The itinerary blends some longer days with shorter days and more leisure time. Walking tours, as well as walking slightly longer distances, up stairs, or on uneven walking surfaces should be expected. If you have mobility issues and need a walker and you need to rest frequently this tour is not for you.

Total Meals

22

Included

- Accommodations
- Meals (as per itinerary)
- Sightseeing (as per itinerary)
- Tipping/Gratuities
- Local English Speaking Guide(s)
- Transfers – Arrival & Departure
- All Taxes

Not Included

- International Airfare
- Optional Tours
- Travel Insurance
- Any other items not mentioned in the included section

Terms & Conditions

Base Tour:

Deposit: \$100 CAD per person due at time of booking (non-refundable), remaining \$400 CAD deposit due at 10 months prior to departure | If booking within 10 months of departure - \$500 CAD per person deposit (non-refundable).

Final Balance: Due 90 Days prior to the departure date (non-refundable)

Optional Pre & Post Extensions:

Deposit: \$250 CAD per person due at 10 months prior to departure (non-refundable)

Final Balance: Due 90 Days prior to the departure date (non-refundable)

Other Notes:

- Roundtrip airport-to-hotel transfers are included for all passengers who book a Trip Merchant Journeys or a Trip Merchant Long Stays group departure. These transfers are available on the regular arrival and departure dates of the trip and do not apply to pre and post night stays. Arrival and Departure Transfers are based on a minimum of 6 travelling together on the same transfer. We will provide specific transfers times when it comes to booking airfare at 8 months prior to departure.
- For any programs that include domestic flights there may be additional deposits required. These will be advised on a case-by-case basis.
- This departure requires a minimum number of passengers to operate. If choosing to book your own air, please check with us prior to doing so.
- Itinerary subject to change

Trip Summary

October 4 - Benvenuto in Italia: Arrive in Milan – Transfer to Como – Welcome Dinner

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October 5 - Half Day Como Food & Walking Tour | Afternoon at leisure

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October 6 - A Day Tour to Lake Maggiore (Stresa & Isola Bella)

A Day Tour to Lake Maggiore (Stresa & Isola Bella)

October 7 - Como to Parma by road – Light Lunch in Parma

Como to Parma by road – Light Lunch in Parma

October 8 - Bologna Walking Tour & Local Food Tasting | Afternoon at leisure in Bologna

Bologna Walking Tour & Local Food Tasting | Afternoon at leisure in Bologna

October 9 - Parma to Liguria Region – Day at leisure – Dinner

Parma to Liguria Region – Day at leisure – Dinner

October 10 - Full Day tour in Cinque Terre

Full Day tour in Cinque Terre

October 11 - Portofino & Santa Margherita Ligure tour with Pesto Tasting

Portofino & Santa Margherita Ligure tour with Pesto Tasting

October 12 - Liguria to Tuscany – Day at leisure – Dinner

Liguria to Tuscany – Day at leisure – Dinner

October 13 - Half Day Walking Tour in Florence | Leisure time in Florence | Dinner at the Villa

Half Day Walking Tour in Florence | Leisure time in Florence | Dinner at the Villa

October 14 - San Gimignano: Free time & Winery with Wine Tasting & Lunch

San Gimignano: Free time & Winery with Wine Tasting & Lunch

October 15 - Day at leisure at the Villa – Hands on Cooking Class with Mamma Paola

Day at leisure at the Villa – Hands on Cooking Class with Mamma Paola

October 16 - Tuscany to Rome with stop in Perugia & Perugia House of Chocolate – Farewell Dinner

Tuscany to Rome with stop in Perugia & Perugia House of Chocolate – Farewell Dinner

October 17 - Arrivederci, Italia!

Arrivederci, Italia!



Itinerary Map



October 4 - Benvenuto in Italia: Arrive in Milan – Transfer to Como – Welcome Dinner



Benvenuto in Italia: Arrive in Milan – Transfer to Como – Welcome Dinner

Upon arrival at Milan International Airport, clear Customs and Immigration and proceed to the Arrivals Hall, where you will be warmly welcomed by your Tour Manager. Board your private motorcoach for a scenic drive to Como, a picturesque lakeside town celebrated for its breathtaking views, elegant villas, and charming historic centre.

After checking in at your hotel, enjoy free time at leisure to stroll along the lakefront, relax, or begin soaking in the beauty of Lake Como at your own pace. This evening, gather with your fellow travelers for a welcome dinner at your hotel, marking the beginning of your Italian journey.

Accommodation: Hotel Como** or similar, Como**

Meals: Dinner



October 5 - Half Day Como Food & Walking Tour | Afternoon at leisure



Half Day Como Food & Walking Tour | Afternoon at leisure

After a leisurely breakfast at your hotel, set out on a guided food and walking tour of Como—far more than a simple “walk and eat” experience. Led by a professional, English-speaking local guide, this tour offers an insider’s perspective on the history, culture, and architecture that shape this fascinating lakeside city.

Stroll through the charming alleyways of Como’s historic centre, admiring its most important landmarks, including the magnificent Gothic-Renaissance Duomo, the Broletto (the historic town hall), and the Church of San Fedele, a beautiful example of Romanesque architecture. Venture beyond the main sights to uncover hidden corners of the medieval quarter, rich with character and local life.

Along the way, pause to sample the flavors most loved by locals. Visit a traditional enoteca to taste a selection of regional wines paired with high-quality sliced meats. Discover Lake Como’s extra virgin olive oil, learning how it differs from oils produced in southern Italy, and enjoy fruit-based, barrel-aged balsamic vinegar served with local cheeses, focaccia, and wine. With the surrounding mountains providing ideal conditions for dairy farming, cheese lovers will find this experience especially rewarding.

Before concluding the tour, stop at a carefully selected local shop to enjoy a refreshing cono gelato, the perfect sweet ending to your culinary journey through Como.

Accommodation: Hotel Como** or similar, Como**

Meals: Breakfast Lunch



October 6 - A Day Tour to Lake Maggiore (Stresa & Isola Bella)



A Day Tour to Lake Maggiore (Stresa & Isola Bella)

Enjoy a full breakfast at the hotel before meeting your driver and guide in the lobby.

Board your tour bus for a scenic drive north into the Alps to the charming lakeside town of Stresa, a visual feast for the eyes. Nestled on the shores of Lake Maggiore in Italy's Piedmont region, Stresa is framed by the Borromean Islands and majestic Alpine peaks, offering a picturesque setting perfect for relaxation. Take a leisurely stroll along the panoramic lakeside promenade, wander the quaint cobbled streets, or sample some of the town's local cuisine — Stresa truly embodies the Italian dolce vita.

Next, embark on a boat ride to Isola Bella, one of Lake Maggiore's most beautiful islands. Explore the world-famous Italian-style Baroque gardens, built on artificial terraces that rise like an elegant ship of stone and flowers above the deep blue waters.

After your visit, enjoy free time for lunch in Stresa, with recommendations from your guide to ensure a memorable meal.

In the afternoon, reboard your tour coach for the short drive back to Como, concluding a day filled with stunning scenery and lakeside charm.

Accommodation: Hotel Como** or similar, Como**

Meals: Breakfast



October 7 - Como to Parma by road – Light Lunch in Parma



Como to Parma by road – Light Lunch in Parma

This morning, depart Como and journey to another remarkable Italian region: Emilia-Romagna — a land where rich history, stunning art cities, and world-renowned cuisine come together in perfect harmony. Known as a paradise for food lovers, Emilia-Romagna is the birthplace of Parmigiano Reggiano, Prosciutto di Parma, balsamic vinegar, and fresh egg pasta dishes like tortellini and tagliatelle al ragù.

After approximately 2½ hours of scenic driving, arrive in the Parma area, home of the famous Prosciutto Crudo di Parma (Parma Ham). Visit a local production facility for a guided tour, where you'll learn about each stage of production and the meticulous care taken in selecting the finest raw materials. Experience the tradition and craftsmanship that make this rosy-coloured, delicately scented delicacy a true “work of art” in flavour.

The visit concludes with a light lunch featuring local specialties, including Prosciutto di Parma, Parmigiano Reggiano, and Tortelli, along with other regional delights.

In the afternoon, continue to Parma city and check in to your hotel for a two-night stay. Enjoy free time to explore at your own pace, whether it's strolling the historic centre, relaxing, or shopping. Highlights include the magnificent Parma Cathedral, the Baptistery, and the elegant Palazzo della Pilotta.

Evening at leisure.

Accommodation: Starhotel Du Parc**or similar, Parma**

Meals: Breakfast Lunch



October 8 - Bologna Walking Tour & Local Food Tasting | Afternoon at leisure in Bologna



Bologna Walking Tour & Local Food Tasting | Afternoon at leisure in Bologna

This morning, after breakfast, depart for Bologna (approximately 1½ hours). Upon arrival, meet your local guide and set out on a walking tour through the city's historic streets. Learn about Bologna's rich history and explore its most significant cultural attractions, including Piazza Maggiore, the Asinelli Tower, the Basilica of San Petronio, and the Neptune Fountain — don't forget to make a wish at the fountain and see if it comes true!

Stroll through the charming streets, admiring the city's architecture and discovering hidden gems along the way.

Following the tour, enjoy a stop at a local Osteria to sample authentic Bolognese cuisine, including Parmigiano Reggiano, Mortadella, and the typical bread Crescentina, all paired with a glass of Pignoletto, the region's sparkling white wine.

The afternoon and evening are at leisure, giving you the opportunity to explore Bologna on your own. Ask your guide for recommendations on local shops, cafés, and cultural sites to make the most of your free time.

Accommodation: Starhotel Du Parc**or similar, Parma**

Meals: Breakfast Lunch



October 9 - Parma to Liguria Region – Day at leisure – Dinner



Parma to Liguria Region – Day at leisure – Dinner

Today, we depart the Emilia-Romagna region and head towards the famed Liguria region, a crescent-shaped area in northwest Italy (approximately 2½ hours by motor coach). Its Mediterranean coastline, known as the Italian Riviera, includes the charming towns of Santa Margherita Ligure and Rapallo.

Upon arrival, check in to your accommodation for the next three nights. Spend the remainder of the day at leisure, exploring at your own pace. Wander through charming alleyways, sun-drenched squares, and soak in the relaxed Riviera atmosphere.

This evening, enjoy dinner either at your hotel or at a nearby restaurant within walking distance.

Accommodation: BW Hotel Regina Elena** or similar, Santa Margherita Ligure**

Meals: Breakfast Dinner



October 10 - Full Day tour in Cinque Terre



Full Day tour in Cinque Terre

Start your day with a delightful breakfast at the hotel before setting off on an unforgettable journey to Cinque Terre, one of Italy's most breathtaking coastal regions. Comprising five charming villages perched along steep cliffs, Cinque Terre is renowned for its rugged landscapes, colourful houses, and crystal-clear waters.

Travel in comfort aboard your private deluxe motor coach as your guide leads you through this UNESCO World Heritage site. Depending on the weather, you will visit two or three of the villages, travelling by boat or train, with your guide selecting the most scenic and efficient route. Wander the winding streets, take in panoramic views, and fully immerse yourself in the charm and character of these picturesque seaside gems.

After a full day of exploration, return to your hotel, carrying memories of the stunning landscapes, vibrant villages, and unique character of Cinque Terre. The rest of the evening is at leisure.

Accommodation: BW Hotel Regina Elena** or similar, Santa Margherita Ligure**

Meals: Breakfast



October 11 - Portofino & Santa Margherita Ligure tour with Pesto Tasting



Portofino & Santa Margherita Ligure tour with Pesto Tasting

Breakfast at the hotel. This morning depart for a short boat ride to Portofino, a picturesque seaside village with brightly colored houses lining the shore. Portofino is also known as the resort of the rich and famous. Designer boutiques and dozens of cafes and restaurants line the main square, giving guests the chance to experience the real Italian “bella vita”. You will have free time to visit the main square, the church of San Giorgio, which is said to have relics of St. George. You can also visit the Brown Castle, built in the 15th century, and used for harbor defense over the centuries.

Next, take the boat back to Santa Margherita where you'll meet the guide and enjoy a Walking Tour of Santa Margherita Ligure with Pesto Tasting. Santa Margherita Ligure is the jewel of the Ligurian coast, where pastel-colored houses, baroque churches, and fragrant gardens come together in a landscape of timeless beauty.

Breathe in the sea air along the waterfront, where traditional fishing boats bob beside glamorous yachts. A picture-perfect slice of Ligurian life. Savor a freshly made pesto Genovese, prepared with local basil, pine nuts, and Parmigiano — served with traditional Ligurian focaccia.

In the afternoon back to the Hotel and enjoy the rest of the evening on your own.

Accommodation: BW Hotel Regina Elena** or similar, Santa Margherita Ligure**

Meals: Breakfast Lunch



October 12 - Liguria to Tuscany – Day at leisure – Dinner



Liguria to Tuscany – Day at leisure – Dinner

Enjoy a delicious breakfast at the hotel. Then, you will check out and board your private coach for a road trip southward to Tuscany – the Wine Region (approximately 3 hours by motorcoach).

As you drive into the heart of Italy, admire the rolling hills and vineyards of Tuscany. Arrive at your destination and be immersed in the tranquil beauty of the Tuscan landscape. Check in for the next four nights and take some time to relax and refresh.

This afternoon, your tour manager will lead a pleasant orientation walk of the town. Gather later for dinner at the villa.

Accommodation: Hotel Villa Casagrande** or similar, Tuscany**

Meals: Breakfast Dinner



October 13 - Half Day Walking Tour in Florence | Leisure time in Florence | Dinner at the Villa



Half Day Walking Tour in Florence | Leisure time in Florence | Dinner at the Villa

This morning, enjoy a sumptuous breakfast at your hotel. Meet your driver and transfer to the most famous of the Renaissance cities – Florence (approximately 1 hour).

Your local guide will be waiting to begin a guided walking tour of the Cradle of the Renaissance. Florence, a city steeped in history and art, is renowned for its stunning architecture, world-class museums, and vibrant piazzas. Admire the majestic Duomo, built in 1296, with its striking terracotta dome designed by Brunelleschi, Giotto's elegant Bell Tower, and the Baptistery with its famous "Gates of Paradise" doors (outside visits). Wander through the medieval streets to Piazza della Signoria, Florence's political and artistic heart, where statues and palaces showcase centuries of creativity.

After the tour, enjoy some free time to explore the charming streets, browse artisan shops, or pick up souvenirs. Later, meet your driver and transfer back to the villa, where you will have dinner together.

Accommodation: Hotel Villa Casagrande** or similar, Tuscany**

Meals: Breakfast Dinner



October 14 - San Gimignano: Free time & Winery with Wine Tasting & Lunch



San Gimignano: Free time & Winery with Wine Tasting & Lunch

Wake up, enjoy a hearty breakfast, and get ready for a day full of laughter, flavour, and fun! First, we'll head to San Gimignano, a picturesque medieval hilltop town in the heart of Tuscany, often called the "Manhattan of the Middle Ages" for its striking skyline of 13 towering stone towers. Steeped in history, this UNESCO World Heritage site is renowned for its well-preserved medieval architecture, narrow cobblestone streets, and breathtaking panoramic views of the surrounding Tuscan countryside.

After some free time to explore, we'll visit a Tuscan estate winery in the San Gimignano area. Here, you'll learn about the grapes, the aromas, food pairings, and, most importantly, which glass to use! Enjoy a traditional Tuscan lunch accompanied by wine tasting. Salute! Return to your accommodation and spend the evening at leisure.

Accommodation: Hotel Villa Casagrande** or similar, Tuscany**

Meals: Breakfast Lunch



October 15 - Day at leisure at the Villa – Hands on Cooking Class with Mamma Paola



Day at leisure at the Villa – Hands on Cooking Class with Mamma Paola

Spend your day at leisure, lounging by the pool, strolling through lush gardens, or simply savouring the breathtaking views of rolling hills and vineyards. Indulge in a book, enjoy a glass of local wine, or treat yourself to a peaceful afternoon nap—today is all about relaxation. For those seeking a little more adventure, explore the villa's nearby paths, bike trails, or enjoy a private spa treatment. Whether you prefer a quiet moment of reflection or a leisurely exploration of your surroundings, your day at the villa offers the perfect blend of peace, beauty, and Tuscan charm.

COOKING CLASS – This afternoon, participate in your first cooking class with Mamma Paola. During the three-hour class, you will learn to prepare a variety of traditional and seasonal Tuscan dishes. Dinner will follow, featuring the delicious creations you prepared yourself.

Accommodation: Hotel Villa Casagrande**** or similar, Tuscany

Meals: Breakfast Dinner



October 16 - Tuscany to Rome with stop in Perugia & Perugia House of Chocolate – Farewell Dinner



Tuscany to Rome with stop in Perugia & Perugia House of Chocolate – Farewell Dinner

This morning, after breakfast, we travel south to Rome, crossing the heart of Italy through the Umbria region. Don't miss the chance to stop in Perugia, famous worldwide for its fine cioccolato!

Our first stop will be the House of Chocolate, the most renowned in Italy. Perugia is celebrated for its chocolate production. Visit the factory and museum to discover the secrets behind Perugia's famed Baci chocolates.

Next, transfer to Perugia's city centre for some free time and a pleasant walk with your tour manager. Stroll through the 14th-century Piazza IV Novembre, pass by Etruscan- and Roman-period walls, admire the 13th-century Fontana Maggiore, and see the Gothic-style Prior's Palace.

Continue to your accommodation near Rome Airport and enjoy one last Italian dinner at your hotel.

Accommodation: Hotel Isola Sacra**, Rome Airport Area**

Meals: Breakfast Dinner



October 17 - Arrivederci, Italia!



Arrivederci, Italia!

All good things must come to an end, and so concludes our unforgettable Italian adventure. This morning, say “Arrivederci” to Italy and savour your final moments in this beautiful country. Transfer to Fiumicino (FCO) Airport for your onward journey. Until next time... Ciao, Bella Italia!

Meals: Breakfast

