

TEMPLE SINAI
Dresher, Pennsylvania
ITALY TOUR
April 23 – May 2, 2017

Prepared for Temple Sinai by Keshet: The Center for Educational Tourism in Israel

"The Creator made Italy from designs by Michaelangelo." - Mark Twain

Sunday, April 23 **Departure**

- Departure from New York to Venice, Italy

Monday, April 24 **The Merchant of Venice**

We begin our experience in Italy with a tour which will take us to the canals, bridges, gondolas, courtyards, historical and architectural landmarks of this beautiful city. Alongside the astounding city of Marco Polo, explore the history of a Jewish community which has its earliest roots in the 16th Century. Our tour combines the best of what Venice has to offer, both general and Jewish.



- Mid-morning arrival at Venice Marco Polo Airport.
- Transfer to Venice and tour by **gondolas**, including the **Rialto Bridge** and the **Bridge of Sighs**.
- Visit **San Marco Square**.
- Tour of the **Ghetto Novo** (New Ghetto) and **Ghetto Vecchio** (Old Ghetto), the **Jewish Museum** and view the **synagogues**.
- Participate in the Venetian Jewish Community's **Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony** (upon availability).
- Transfer to hotel.
- Welcome dinner at vegetarian restaurant.
- Free evening.

Overnight: Hotel Bellini (or similar), Venice

Tuesday, April 25 **The Venetian Islands**

Venice is situated on 118 different islands separated by canals. Today we'll visit the eight islands that make up Murano, a center for glassmaking since the 13th century and Burano, known for its lacework and its brightly colored houses. We will also meet with an author and leader of the Venice Jewish community, Riccardo Calimani.



- Transfer by boat to **Murano**. Visit one of Murano's glass factories

- Continue to the colorful island of **Burano** for a tour and an opportunity to visit its acclaimed lace workshops and colorful houses.
- Return to Venice to meet **Riccardo Calimani**, leader of the Jewish community of Venice and author of *The Venice Ghetto* (Pending confirmation).

Overnight: Hotel Bellini (or similar), Venice

Wednesday, April 26 To Florence

- Cross the **Apennine Mountains** as we transfer to **Florence**, capital of **Tuscany**.

Birthplace of the Renaissance, Florence is a feast for the senses. Inventor/architect/artist, Leonardo De Vinci lived and worked here, as did Michaelangelo and architect Boticelli. Our tour today will take us through the highlights of the art and architecture of Florence, city of the Medici Dynasty.



- Overlook Florence from the **Piazalle Michelangelo**.
- Take a walking tour of central Florence, including the **Piazza Duomo, Batisterium, Piazza Della Signora, Ponte Vecchio** and the **San Lorenzo Market**.
- Continue to the **Galleria Accademia** to view its masterpieces, including the stunning **David** statue and the four statues of **the Slaves**.
- Meet with **Rabbi Joseph Levy**, Rabbi of Florence (pending availability), and visit **the Great Synagogue** and **Jewish Museum**.
- Check in and free evening.

Overnight: Grand Hotel Cavour (or similar), Florence

Thursday, April 27 Florence

- Depart Florence for **Siena**, Tuscany's loveliest medieval city.
- Visit the central piazza, **Il Campo**, famous for its **Palio** horse race run around the piazza.
- Explore the **Duomo**, including the Cathedral roof.
- Continue to **Pisa** to see its famous **Leaning Tower** (the bell tower of the Cathedral) and its **Baptistry**.
- Return to Florence.

Overnight: Grand Hotel Cavour (or similar), Florence



Friday, April 28 Tuscany

Rich in history, encompassing the ancient, modern, urban, artistic and bucolic, Tuscany represents a journey of leisure, pleasure, and above all, discovery – thus ItalyGuides describes this magical area. Travelers familiar with Israel and Italy compare the Galilee's beauty with that of Tuscany.

- Travel through **Tuscany** to **Ptigliano**, *La Piccola Gerusalemme* (Little Jerusalem). This mountaintop town was the center of Jewish life in Tuscany for a thousand years. Tour its **synagogue**, **mikveh**, **matza bakery** and take in its stupendous views.
- Transfer to **Rome**.
- Late afternoon – free time and Shabbat preparations.
- Kabbalat Shabbat with local Jewish community.
- Shabbat Dinner

Overnight: Grand Hotel Palatino or Mediteraneo (or similar), Rome



Shabbat, April 29

Shabbat in Rome

Capital of the modern state of Italy, seat of the Vatican and capital of the ancient Roman empire, this city is a feast to the eyes and spirit. The well-preserved remains of the one of the ancient capitals of Western Civilization and modern monuments thrill the visitor. Our walking tour today allows us to get a taste of the city which we will explore for the next three days.



Shabbat will be a time to relax (a bit), to explore on your own and to get to know the Jewish community of Rome. We will have our tefilot in a local shul and tour by foot additional sites in this enchanting city.

- Join the morning services at the **Great Synagogue**.
- Shabbat Lunch.
- Walking tour of the main squares of the city center including **Piazza Espania**, the **Trevi Fountain**, **Phanteon** and **Piazza Navona**.
- **Discussion: Rome and Jerusalem.**

Overnight: Grand Hotel Palatino or Mediteraneo (or similar), Rome

Sunday, April 30

Castelli Romani

*South of Rome is a region of **green hills** and **volcanic lakes** known as **Castelli Romani**. Since the early days of Rome this area has been a green refuge from city life. Today modern Romans come here on hot summer weekends. We will visit this area and some of its most outstanding ancient and Medieval sites.*



- Visit the picturesque village of **Nemi**, a Medieval town on the shores of **Lake Nemi**.
- View **Lake Albano** in the mouth of an extinct volcano.
- Tour **Castel Gandolfo**, including the summer home of the Pope.
- Visit the town of **Tivoli** and tour the magnificent **Villa D'Esti**, whose magnificent Renaissance buildings, gardens and fountains are a UNESCO world heritage site.
- Return to Rome for to commemorate Yom Hazikaron with the Rome Jewish community

Overnight: Grand Hotel Palatino or Mediteraneo (or similar), Rome

Monday, May 1

Christian and Ancient Rome

Ancient Rome was also the city whose leaders destroyed the Temple and burned Jerusalem, exiled the Jews and brutally quashed the Bar Kokhba rebellion. In addition, it is the seat of the Vatican whose Popes saw themselves as the “New Israel”. Today and tomorrow we will explore the sites and institutions that played a major role in shaping our Jewish and western world history.



- Visit **Vatican City**, including the **Vatican Museums** with the famous ceiling of the **Sistine Chapel**, **Vatican Square** and **Saint Peter's Cathedral**.
 - Visit the **Statue of Moses** by *Michelangelo* in **San Pietro in Vincoli Cathedral**.
 - Visit the **Jewish Catacombs** near **Villa Torlonia** (pending availability). Otherwise: Visit the **Catacombs of Rome**.
 - Commemorate **Erev Yom Ha'atzma'ut** with the Rome Jewish community.
- Overnight: Grand Hotel Palatino or Mediteraneo (or similar), Rome**

Tuesday, May 2

Rome and Jerusalem – Yom Ha'atzma'ut

- Tour the **Colosseum**, built by Emperor Vespasian, conqueror of Jerusalem and the Roman commander credited with burning the ancient Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. Some scholars feel that the emperor funded the building of this large structure – the largest of its size in the world – from proceeds from the sacking of the treasury of the Temple.
- Visit the **Roman Forum**, including the **Arch of Titus** with its image of the ransacking and burning the Temple in Jerusalem and leading Jewish captives off into exile, **a particularly meaningful visit on Yom Ha'atzmaut!**
- Transfer to Rome Leonardo da Vinci airport and flight to the U.S.



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