Cruising the Canals of Venice

Apr. 7-16, 2016 | Approximately $4,695*

(*Please note: All dates, prices, and itinerary details are subject to change. Finalized pricing and terms and conditions will be made available closer to departure.)

Venice, La Serenissima, is capital of the Veneto region and one of the loveliest, most unique places in the world. This appearance of this city, built impossibly on a collection of islands in a lagoon, remains virtually unchanged from its heyday 600 years ago. In the words of Truman Capote, “Venice is like eating an entire box of chocolate liqueurs in one go”. The Most Serene Republic of Venice dates back to 827, and it reached its pinnacle of power and importance in the 15th through 16th centuries, when Venetian doges ruled the Adriatic Seas. This journey takes you into Italy’s Veneto, a treasure trove of art and UNESCO World Heritage Sites nestled between the Dolomites and the Adriatic Sea. You will travel through this region on the Fissero-Bianco Canal aboard the luxury barge Ave Maria, which serves as a floating hotel ferrying you to the regions other charming cities such of Verona, Padua, Ferrara, and Vicenza. You will marvel at the magnificent frescoes by artists such as Giotto and take in walled town centers with expansive piazzas topped by red tile roofs. Bring your curiosity and appetite as opportunities will abound to sample and witness production of the Veneto’s culinary delights – Grana Padana and Asiago cheese, tortellini and fine Italian wines.
Day 1 (Apr. 7) | Depart
Depart your gateway city for an overnight flight to Venice’s Marco Polo Airport to arrive on Apr. 8 (*international flights not included in program price)

Day 2 (Apr. 8) | Venice
Rendezvous with your guide and fellow travelers at the airport for a private water taxi transfer to your hotel on the peaceful Venetian island of Giudecca, which sits across the Grand Canal from the bustling St. Mark’s Square. Check into your hotel and relax, or seek out a local café or trattoria for a light lunch. Enjoy an authentic taste of Venice this evening at your Welcome Dinner in the oldest trattoria on the Giudecca followed by a leisurely stroll back to the hotel before settling in for the night (B, D)

Day 3 (Apr. 9) | Venice
Begin your exploration of Venice by boarding a vaporetto to St. Mark’s Square to the Rialto, originally the center of Venice and famous for the arched stone bridge spanning the Grand Canal. Join a local guide to stroll through this colorful, bustling outdoor market, then experience life like the Venetians do: socialize and relax by visiting several local wine bars (baccari) and eat small plates of appetizers (cicchetti) with your glass of wine or Prosecco. This afternoon, independently explore Venice. Enjoy the scenery while traveling by vaporetto, or perhaps new artwork in one of the many splendid churches or marvel at the modern art collection in Peggy Guggenheim’s home. Late afternoon, make your way to the island of Certosa and come aboard Ave Maria, settling into assigned cabins before attending a short orientation to the ship by the captain and crew. Relax on board or take a stroll around the island before gathering for the Captain's Dinner aboard the barge. (B, L, D)

Day 4 (Apr. 10) | Venice
Your first stop this morning is the Torre dell'Orologio, Venice’s famed clock tower, an elaborate timepiece dating from the 15th century that symbolizes Venice's wealth and power. Discover the history of this famous landmark and learn about its intricate mechanism. Enjoy an independent lunch in one of many cafes or restaurants neighboring the square, then meet a local historian for a guided tour of the Doge's Palace. This magnificent palace was the residence of the Doge, the ruler of Venice, and is the very symbol of Venice. Continue to St. Mark's Basilica, where great Italian and European artists embellished the walls with opulent mosaics. Take the afternoon in Venice for independent exploration, perhaps riding the elevator to the top of the Campanile (the model for Cal’s very own bell tower), or splurge on a gondola ride with a serenading Venetian! Dinner will be aboard the barge this evening. (B, D)

Day 5 (Apr. 11) | Chioggia
Relax on deck this morning while sailing to the ancient town of Chioggia. Located at the southern entrance to the lagoon, the town is known as “Little Venice” for its network of tiny canals, lined with colorful fishing boats. Chioggia is situated on the second-largest island in the Venetian lagoon. Enjoy a light lunch aboard the barge en route to Chioggia. On arrival, board a coach for a transfer to the city of Padua to join a local guide for an excursion to the Scrovegni Chapel. Marvel at the groundbreaking cycle of frescoes completed in 1305 by the famous Florentine artist, Giotto during a lecture at the chapel. The fresco cycles include the Life of Christ, the Life of the Virgin, the Annunciation and the Last Judgment. Return by coach to the barge docked in picturesque Chioggia. Dine aboard the barge before taking an optional promenade through this delightful town. (B, D)

Day 6 (Apr. 12) | Adria
Discover the intriguing fish market of Chioggia that houses some thirty fishmonger stalls. Behold the market’s main entrance (the “Portale a Prisca”) carved by Amleto Sartori, a sculptor from Padua. Continue your exploration of Chioggia with a visit to the thousand-year-old bell tower of St. Andrews Museum with its medieval clock. Climb the steps to the top of the tower for a great view of the harbor. Relax and enjoy lunch in a lovely famiy trattoria specializing in fresh seafood from the Adriatic. (B, L, D)
Day 7 (Apr. 13) | Zelo

Enjoy breakfast during our morning sail from Adria to Bosaro where a motor coach will be waiting to take you to the city of Ferrara, renowned as a cultural center under the powerful Este family in the 15th and 16th centuries. Enjoy time for independent exploration, shopping and lunch in Ferrara. Then join a local guide on a walking excursion of Ferrara where the four-tower, moated Este Castle dominates the city. Rest your feet during the coach transfer to Zelo, where the Ave Maria is docked along Calan Bianco for the night. Visit the local pub near the bridge after dinner for a night-cap and chance to mingle with local residents. (B,L,D)

Day 8 (Apr. 14) | Mantua

Start the day with an excursion to a local winery and eno-museum devoted to the history of wine making to learn about the production of Soave wines. Sample a few of the classics before continuing by coach to the ancient city of Verona where you are free for lunch, independent exploration or shopping. Stroll the perimeter of the famous amphitheater in Verona, or visit the home of Juliet to see the balcony where Juliet stood while Romeo declared his love. Conclude the day with a transfer to the Renaissance city of Mantua, once home to the mighty Gonzaga family. This is the final destination of the barge which will be docked on one of the picturesque lakes outside the city walls. After dinner on the barge, take a leisurely stroll along the lake before settling in for the night. (B,D)

Day 9 (Apr. 15) | Mantua

Our final day of exploration begins with an excursion to a cheese factory for a presentation on the production of Grana Padano and Caciotta cheese and of course, a chance for samples. Continue to the town of Valeggio sul Mincio to visit a family run pasta making facility. Witness the creative efforts of the chefs in forming and filling various pasta, among them tortellini, ring-shaped pasta filled and pinched in the middle with classic combinations such as spinach and ricotta cheese. Complete your visit with a tasting of the pasta before returning by coach to Mantua. After lunch, join a local guide to gain insight into the history of Mantua and the Palazzo Ducale during a walking tour of the historic old town. Following the walk, take the opportunity for independent exploration of Mantua. Return to the barge at your leisure and perhaps sit on deck and enjoy the wonderful lakeside views. Recap your adventures and share your favorite memories with your fellow travelers tonight at our Farewell Dinner aboard the barge. (B,L,D)

Day 10 (Apr. 16) | Verona

Bid arrivederci to the captain and crew of Ave Maria before either transferring to Verona for your flight home or continuing on to Florence or another destination of your choosing. (B)

Meals included as listed above:
B=Breakfast; L=Lunch; D=Dinner

Post-trip Extension
Florence | Apr. 16-19
$1,795 double / $2,195 single

Guests who want to enjoy more of Italy’s charm are welcome to join a 3-day optional extended stay in Florence. Travel by coach or van from Verona to your Florence hotel, Hotel Orto de’Medici. Explore the museums, palaces, and cuisine of Tuscany. After checking into your hotel, enjoy a walking tour of the city center and cross the Ponte Vecchio, the oldest bridge over the Arno River that bisects Florence. The next day, enjoy activities of your choice, ranging from visits to the Uffizzi Gallery, L’Academia, or the Palazzo Pitti and Boboli Gardens. Your stay concludes with an agroturismo tour of the region, visiting San Gemignano and Castellina, home to excellent producers of Chianti Classico wine.

Price Includes: Three Breakfasts; One lunch; One dinner; Hotel accommodations; Transfer from Verona to Florence; Tours and entrance fees as described in detailed itinerary (available upon request); A minimum of 8 total paying travelers are required for extension to operate.

California Seller of Travel #: 2090031-50
Enclosed is my/our deposit of $_______________($600 per person) for ___________ person/people on the above tour.

Make check payable to Cal Alumni Association (CAA), or charge my deposit to:

☐ AMEX  ☐ Discover  ☐ MasterCard  ☐ VISA
Card # ___________________________________________________________ Expiration Date ___________________________
Signature: __________________________________________________________________ Date ___________________________

Names of each traveler as they appear on your Passport:

Traveler 1 ____________________________________________________________ Cal Class Year _________________________
Email:_______________________________________________________________   Date of Birth: ________________________
Traveler 2 ____________________________________________________________ Cal Class Year _________________________
Email:_______________________________________________________________  Date of Birth: ________________________

Street Address______________________________________________________________________________________________
City ____________________________________________________ State ________________ Zip __________________________
Phone: Home ___________________________________________ Alternate __________________________________________

☐ I prefer a single room and will pay the supplement of $900
☐ Please sign me/us up for the post-trip extension to Florence:  ☐ Double Room  ☐ Single Room

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COST INCLUDES:
Accommodation at a 5* hotel in Venice for one night; Accommodation for seven nights aboard the exclusively chartered deluxe barge Ave Maria in cabins with en suite bathrooms; Welcome and Farewell dinners inclusive of wine; 9 Daily breakfasts, 3 lunches and 8 three-course dinners; Group transfer from Venice Marco Polo Airport to hotel Venice and group transfer from the Ave Maria to the Verona airport at the culmination of the sailing portion of the trip. Motor coach transportation for excursions throughout the trip; Services of an English-speaking guide for the duration of the program; 72-hour vaporetto pass for use in Venice; Admissions and fees for all activities and excursions listed in the daily itinerary; Gratuities for drivers, restaurant staff for scheduled meals, barge staff.

COST DOES NOT INCLUDE:
International airfare from USA to Venice and Verona or Florence to the USA; Fees for passports and visas. (USA and Canada passport holders do not require a visa for Italy); Gratuities for your tour guide, which are at your discretion; Meals other than those specified in the itinerary; Travel insurance; Other expenses of a personal nature; Extended stay in Florence, Italy; Tickets/entry fees for activities and events not included in the itinerary.

PLEASE NOTE:
Your deposit will be charged upon receipt and is completely refundable until we receive your sign-off on the final brochure. At that time we will send you a confirmation with information about Travel Insurance. Please do not make any non-refundable airline reservations until you have approved the final brochure and we fully confirm the completion of this trip.

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