

MAY 9-20, 2026

FROM ROME to RAVENNA:

A PILGRIMAGE EXPLORATING THE ART, HISTORY, & FAITH OF
THE EARLY CHRISTIANS



THE CHURCH OF
ST JOHN THE DIVINE



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- Rome
- Assisi
- Ravenna
- Padua & Venice optional extension

BEYOND THE UNPARALLELED BEAUTY OF THESE CITIES AND THEIR TREASURES, EXPERTLY BROUGHT TO LIFE BY HIGHLY SPECIALIZED LOCAL GUIDES, AND BEYOND DELIGHTFUL CULINARY AND WINE EXPERIENCES, A METICULOUS ORGANIZATION WEAVES THESE ELEMENTS INTO AN UNFORGETTABLE TAPESTRY OF MEMORIES AND EXPERIENCES.



YOUR GUIDES

During your stay in Rome, your guide will be [Livia Poletti](#), who has worked for years as a guide in the Vatican and in Rome. She is an Art Historian and conducts religious themed tours and pilgrimages with passion and professionalism. Livia graduated cum laude in Art History from La Sapienza University in Rome. Her postgraduate education includes a Master's degree in Cultural Mediation in Museums with specialization in museum accessibility for people with disabilities. Livia has completed further studies at the Ecole du Louvre in Paris, as well as specialization courses on Christian Antiquities held at the PIAC (Pontifical Institute of Christian Archaeology) and multiple courses for tourist guides organized by the Diocese of Rome. She is a member of the group of guides for the Venerable English College, the oldest English institution outside of England which houses English seminarians who complete their formation in Rome.

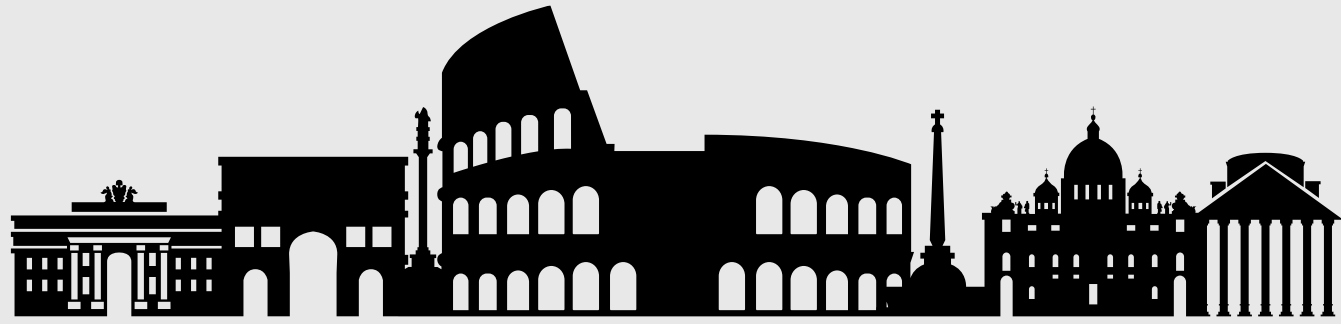


Your guide in Ravenna, [Luana Piccinelli](#), holds a degree in Cultural Heritage Conservation from the University of Bologna, as well as a Master's degree in Sacred Art from I.S.S.R. Marvelli – Rimini. Luana is accredited by the Diocese of Ravenna for "Art and Faith" itineraries.

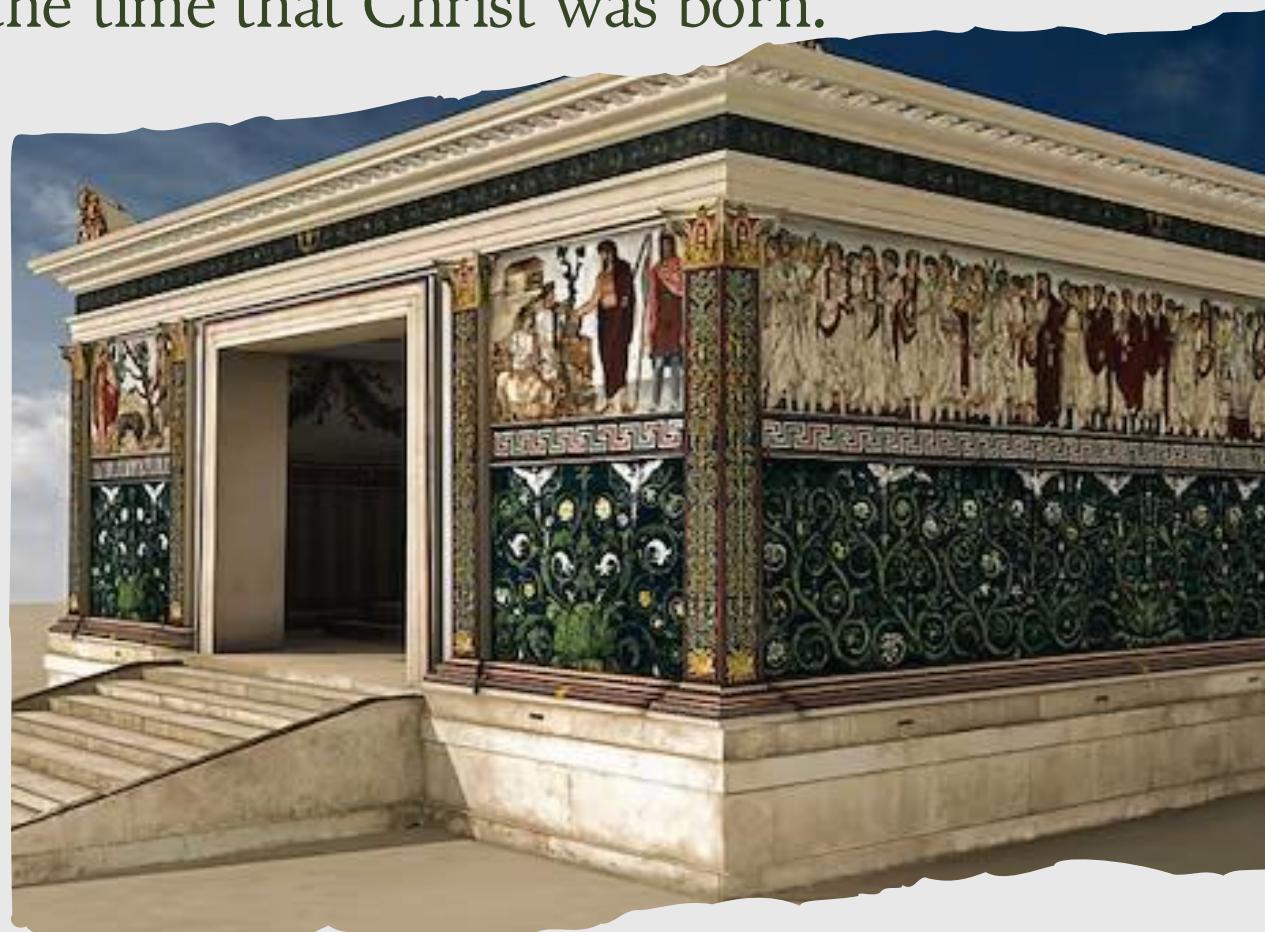
The guided visits of the Vatican Necropolis and the Catacombs will be led by on-site guides

The guides in Assisi and Padua will be selected using similar criteria.

DAY 1- MAY 9: Benvenuto to your Roman Adventure!



This evening, you'll meet Livia, your expert guide, who will begin your immersion in the Roman Empire with a visit to the awe-inspiring Ara Pacis, dedicated in 9BC to honor the Emperor Augustus and the PAX ROMANA. Augustus is celebrated on the alter as the Pontifex Maximus and arbiter of peace during the time that Christ was born.



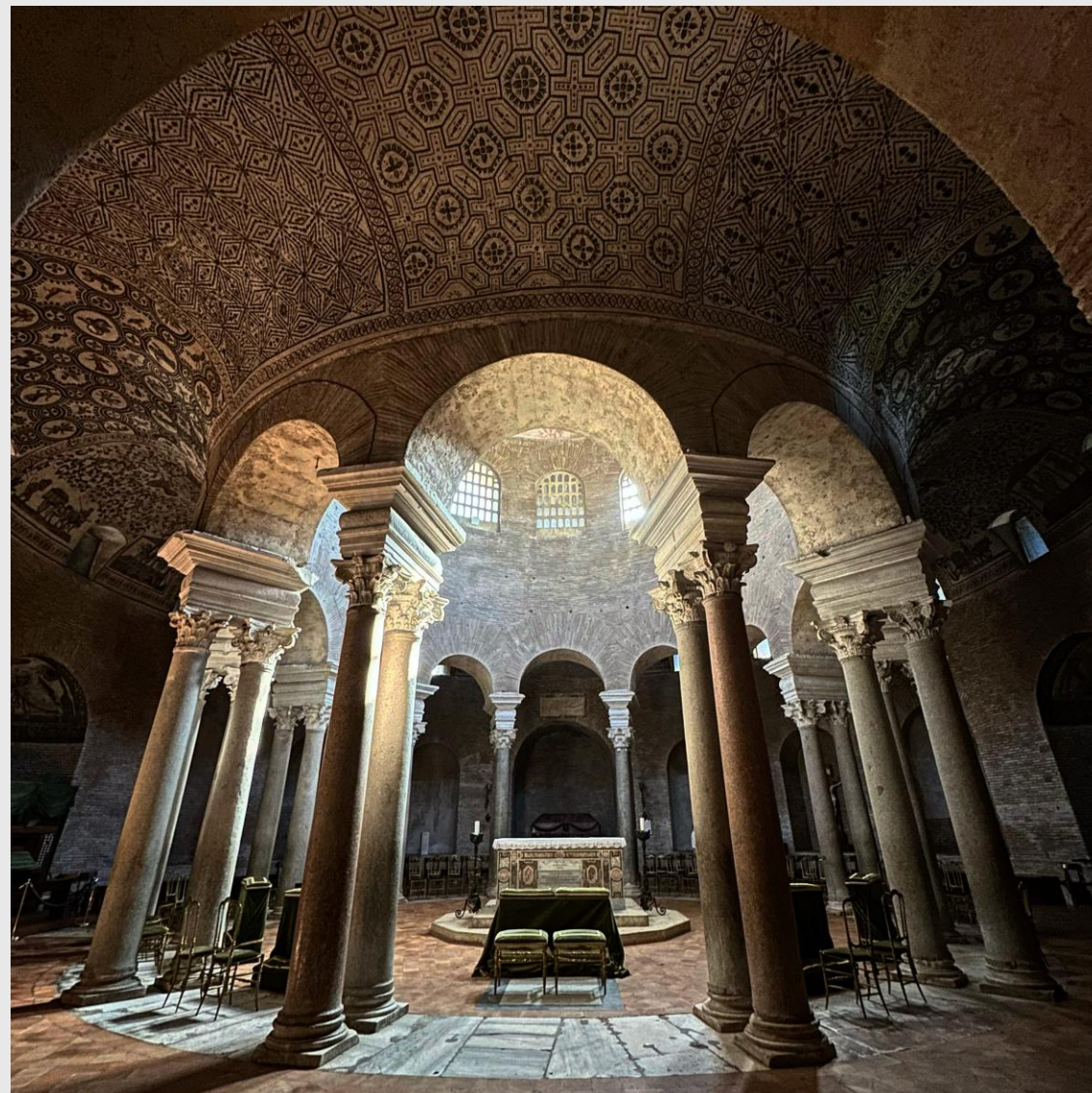
Today marks the exciting start of our pilgrimage! After a comfortable transfer from the airport, you'll settle into the 47 Boutique Hotel, perfectly nestled in the vibrant heart of ancient Rome. <https://www.fortysevenhotel.com/>

Afterward, prepare to indulge in the culinary delights of Roman cuisine at a historic Roman restaurant, Alfredo alla Scrofa, truly savoring your first taste of the Eternal City!



DAY 2 -MAY 10: Roma

This morning, you will be accompanied to the Church of St. Paul Within the Walls, a truly significant and historically fascinating church. It holds a special place in Rome's history as the first non-Catholic church to be built here after the Unification of Italy in 1870, and it was built by American Episcopalians. You'll be there in time for the 10:30 AM Holy Eucharist service.



For lunch, we will head to the famous Jewish Quarter – also known as the Jewish Ghetto. The Jews had lived in Rome long before the birth of Christ. This historic neighborhood carries a long and often tragic history, established in 1555 to segregate the city's Jewish population into a confined, walled-off area near the Tiber River. Despite its past, it is now one of the best places in Rome to savor authentic Roman-Jewish cuisine!



In the afternoon we will delve into the fascinating complex of the Mausoleum of Santa Costanza, the Basilica of Sant'Agnese fuori le Mura, and their associated Catacombs. This will give us insight into the architecture, art, and burial practices of Christians in the late Roman Empire.

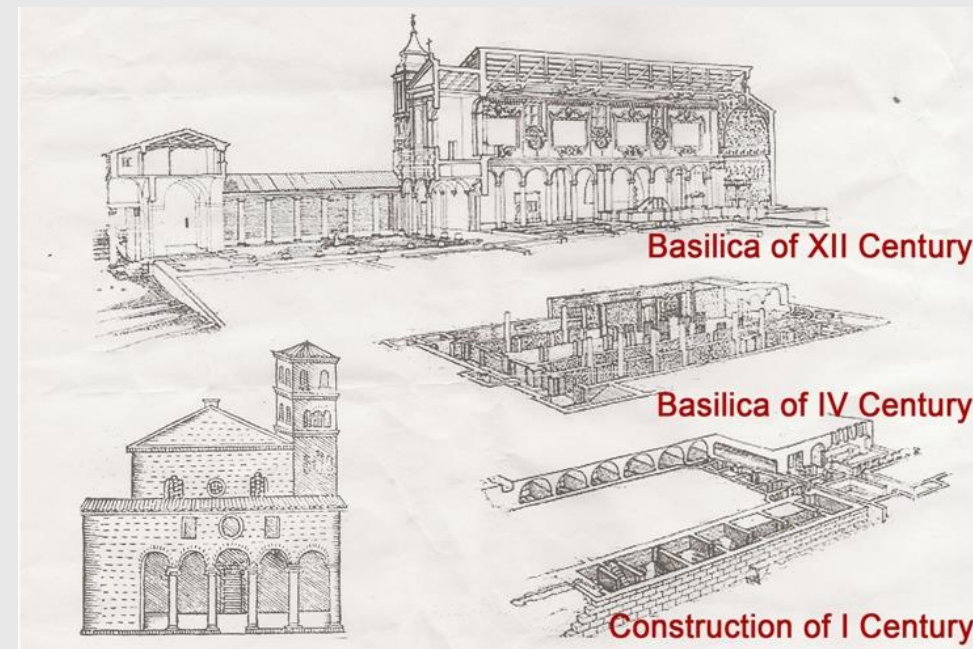
To wrap up your day, you will have the freedom to enjoy a delightful dinner on your own, where you can savor and explore new dishes at your leisure.

DAY 3 - MAY 11: Roma



Our morning begins with a deep dive into the Lateran complex, a truly significant collection of buildings and historical sites, intimately intertwined with the history of the Catholic church and the Papacy.

Our first stop is the Scala Sancta, or Holy Stairs. According to ancient Christian tradition, these 28 marble steps were brought to Rome from Jerusalem in 326 AD by Saint Helena, Emperor Constantine's mother. Believed to be the staircase leading to the praetorium of Pontius Pilate, Jesus would have ascended these steps during his Passion. Today, pilgrims visit from throughout the world to climb these stairs on their knees.



After lunch in the market district of Testaccio, we'll visit San Clemente, a true gem layered across three historical levels: Roman, Early Christian, and Medieval. The church is a treasure chest of mosaics and frescoes, built atop a labyrinth of Ancient Roman environments. The evening and dinner will be at your leisure.

DAY 4- MAY 12: Roma

In the morning our visit to the significant sites within the Roman Forum area illustrates the transition from the pagan to the Christian world. During the walking tour, we will admire impressive ruins like the Basilica of Maxentius, as well as buildings that illustrate the shift to Christianity such as the churches of Santa Maria Antiqua and Santi Cosma e Damiano. We will also visit iconic monuments like the Mamertine Prison and the Arch of Titus.



After we enjoy lunch at a delightful, typical Roman restaurant, our visit continues. We will head to the Church of San Pietro in Vincoli, a treasure trove of historical evidence and artistic masterpieces. To cap it all off, we will dive into the Capitoline Museums, founded in 1471, to see the incredible remains of the colossal statue of Emperor Constantine, the First Christian emperor, and the recent completed scaled replica.

Tonight, dinner is on your own. You are free to explore and choose any restaurant that catches your eye. We will supply you with a list of suggestions.

DAY 5 - MAY 13: Arrivederci Roma!

Today's visits are truly special and exclusive, offering unique access. We will spend our morning in Vatican City exploring the Necropolis, also known as the Scavi. This ancient Roman burial ground lies 16-39 feet beneath St. Peter's Basilica, and it is here that St. Peter, revered by Catholics as the first Pope, is believed to be buried.

You will then have lunch on your own and the afternoon free to explore at your leisure.

Later, we will regroup for an exclusive, after-hours, private tour of the magnificent Basilica of Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri. In the 16th century, Michelangelo designed this basilica within the frigidarium and tepidarium of the Baths of Diocletian, built AD 298-306. As we step into these immense spaces, you'll feel the grandeur of the Roman world seamlessly merge with Christian solemnity.

We'll bid farewell to the Eternal City with a fantastic wine tasting and dinner, perfectly paired with some of Italy's finest gastronomic delights.



DAY 6-MAY 14: Assisi

Before we depart from Rome and check out, we will visit the Basilica of Santa Sabina. This is a remarkably significant early Christian basilica, standing as the oldest existing ecclesiastical basilica in Rome that largely preserves its original colonnaded rectangular plan and architectural style. It offers us an invaluable look into early Christian church architecture, transporting us back in time.

OFF TO ASSISI! On the way, we will make a delightful stop at Cantina Violati, a family-run estate winery, nestled in the heart of Umbria—often called the "green heart of Italy".



Once we've checked in to our beautiful hotel housed in the ruins of the Santa Caterina Monastery dating from 1275, we'll embark on a captivating walking tour with our local guide through the historic heart of Assisi. <https://www.nunassisi.com/en>

This remarkably preserved medieval hillside town is renowned as the birthplace of both St. Francis (1181/1182) and St. Clare (1193/1194). Assisi is an UNESCO World Heritage site, deeply significant not only for its profound religious heritage, but also for its truly stunning medieval architecture.

To top off our day beautifully, we'll enjoy a delicious dinner at Benedikto, a restaurant focused on Umbrian cuisine, within the hotel.

DAY 7- MAY 15: Assisi and Ravenna



After check-out, we will dedicate our morning to a journey of high spirituality with a guided visit to the magnificent Basilica of Saint Francis. This basilica is a key destination for Christian pilgrimage, and is a landmark of Medieval Italian art. Renowned for its extensive fresco cycles that mark a significant transition from Byzantine to Early Renaissance painting, San Francesco is an UNESCO World Heritage site. We will enjoy lunch in Assisi, and then make our way to Ravenna in the afternoon.

When we arrive in Ravenna, before our hotel check in, we will explore Sant'Apollinare in Classe with our local guide.

Sant'Apollinare in Classe is part of the "Early Christian Monuments of Ravenna" UNESCO World Heritage designation, recognized for its outstanding universal value. Consecrated in AD 549, it is a true marvel, considered the largest and most impressive example of an Early Christian basilica, especially renowned for its dazzling mosaics and architectural grandeur.



There are not many hotel choices in Ravenna. We will be staying at the Palazzo Bezzi Hotel in the city center which is a short walk to the sites we will visit. <https://palazzobezzi.it/en/home-english/?lang=en>

After we check into the hotel, feel free to enjoy a stroll through the historic center, perhaps to enjoy an aperitif. Dinner is at leisure this evening.

DAY 8 - MAY 16: Ravenna's UNESCO Treasures

Ravenna's fame comes from its exceptional collection of Early Christian Monuments. These sites collectively offer an extraordinary visual and historical journey through the late Roman Empire and the early Byzantine period. For anyone fascinated by art history, archaeology, or early Christian heritage, Ravenna is truly an indispensable destination.

During our walking tour in the historical center with our local guide, we'll immerse ourselves in the splendor of:

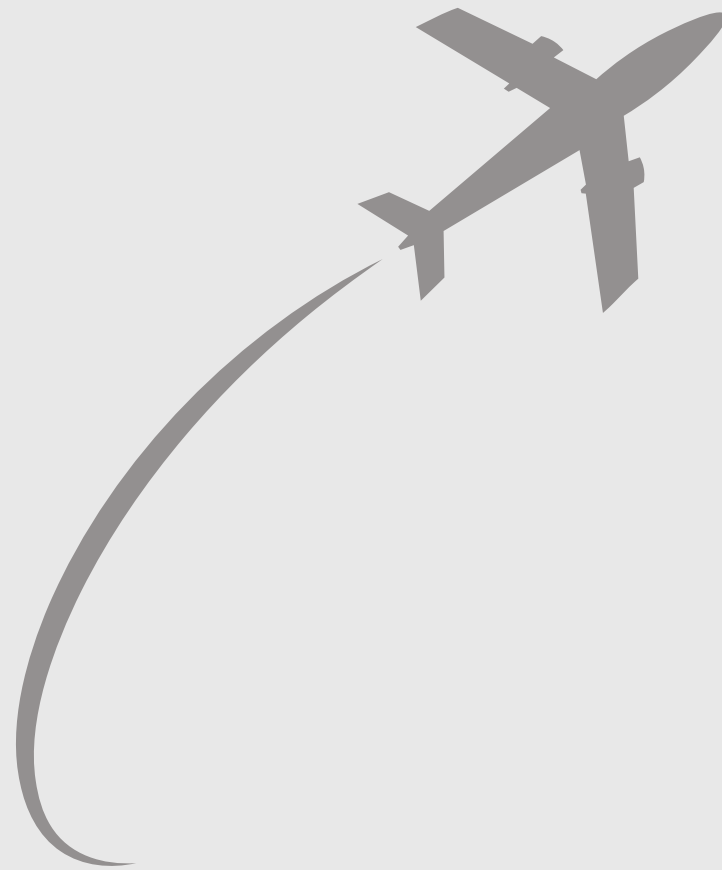
- The Basilica of San Vitale
- The Mausoleum of Galla Placidia
- The Neonian Baptistery
- The Archiepiscopal Museum and Chapel of Sant'Andrea
- The Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo
- And, of course, Dante's Tomb

To complete our immersive experience, we will end the evening with a goodbye dinner to bid farewell to those departing the following day.



DAY 9 - MAY 17: DEPARTURE

To ensure a smooth departure for everyone not continuing on our Padua and Venice tour extension, we will organize today's program around flight schedules.



EXTENSION DAY 9 - MAY 17: Padua and Venice

After we check out, we are off to explore two iconic Italian cities. First, we head to Padua, known as the "Urbs Picta" (the Painted City). This is a well-deserved title, as Padua boasts a UNESCO World Heritage Site consisting of eight buildings decorated with 14th-century fresco cycles. Found in various buildings throughout the historic center, these paintings offer a vivid glimpse into the artistic brilliance of the late medieval period.

After lunch, we will dive into the absolute highlight of our visit to Padua: the magnificent Scrovegni Chapel. With our local guide, we will marvel at its complete fresco cycle by the early Renaissance master, Giotto, painted between 1303 and 1305.

Giotto's work in the Scrovegni Chapel truly marked a revolution in art. It was a significant departure from the flatter, more iconic art that came before it, and it profoundly laid the groundwork for the Renaissance.

After our tour of the Scrovegni Chapel, we're off to magnificent Venice, La Serenissima! We will be staying at a charming 4 star hotel on a canal in the center of town.

<https://collezione.starhotels.com/en/our-hotels/splendid-venice-venice/>

After we check in, you will have some free time and dinner at your leisure to begin uncovering the magic of this city unlike any other.



EXTENSION DAY 10- MAY 18:

Venice

This morning, we will meet our expert guide and embark on a walking tour of two fascinating but sometimes overlooked sites. We will start our tour at the magnificent Scuola Grande di San Rocco and from there we will see the Jewish Ghetto.

Often referred to as the "Sistine Chapel of Venice," the source of Scuola Grande di San Rocco's fame is the extraordinary cycle of paintings by Jacopo Tintoretto, one of the greatest Venetian painters of the High Renaissance.

Next, we'll make our way to the historic Jewish Ghetto, which inspired Shakespeare's play, *The Merchant of Venice*. After learning of the sobering history of the Ghetto, we will have ample free time to enjoy lunch and explore at your own pace in the afternoon.

Dinner at leisure.



EXTENSION DAY 11 - MAY 19: Venice

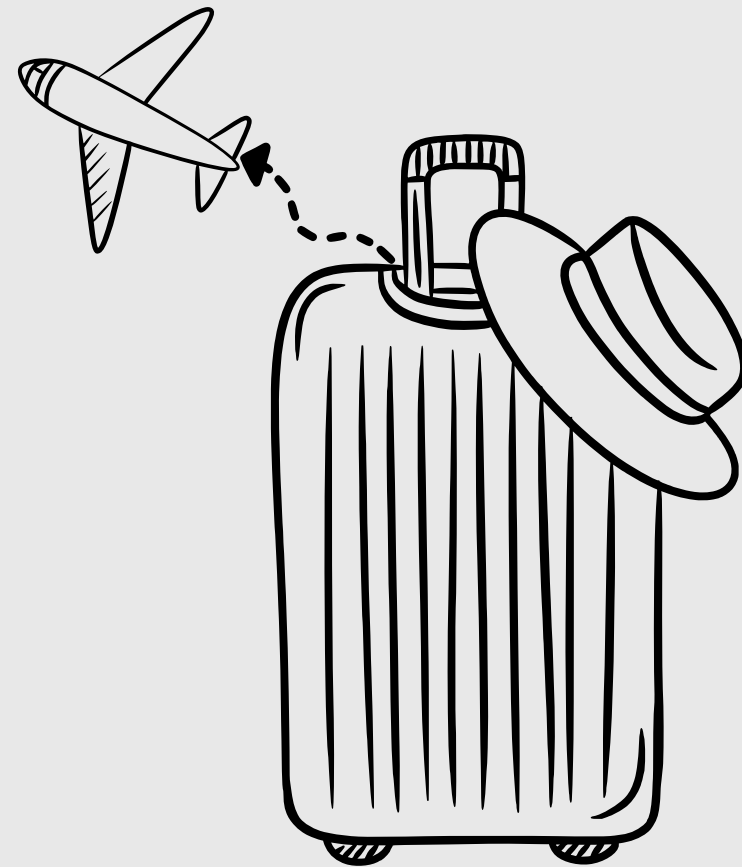
DAY AT LEISURE



Today you are free to explore Venice on your own, whether touring St. Marks, visiting the Biennale or the Guggenheim, or simply getting lost on the charming canals. As our incredible day in Venice comes to a close, we'll gather for a special goodbye dinner at Da Ivo, a charming, typical Venetian restaurant to toast our wonderful adventure.

DAY 12 - MAY 20: Arrivederci!

And just like that, our incredible journey together has come to an end! Today marks our departure day. Transfers will be smoothly organized to get you to the airport, ensuring a comfortable end to your adventure.



2026 SJD Pilgrimage designed by:

