

DEPAUW SUMMER 2015

Explore Italy

REGIONS AND CITIES OF NORTHEASTERN ITALY



The Authentic Italy

Northeastern Italy is composed of two regions, Veneto and Friuli Venezia-Giulia. At the geographical heart of Europe, the area has played host to many different peoples and cultures, including the Celts, Romans, Huns, Byzantines, Lombards, Franks, Venetians, French, and Hapsburgs, before becoming regions of Italy. The result is an area rich in diverse architecture and art, and one with world-class cuisine and wine. The two regions are home to no less than eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites. *The New York Times* recently called Friuli “Italy’s Secret Garden,” and the region has only lately been discovered by non-Europeans.

The Veneto and Friuli Venezia Giulia Regions

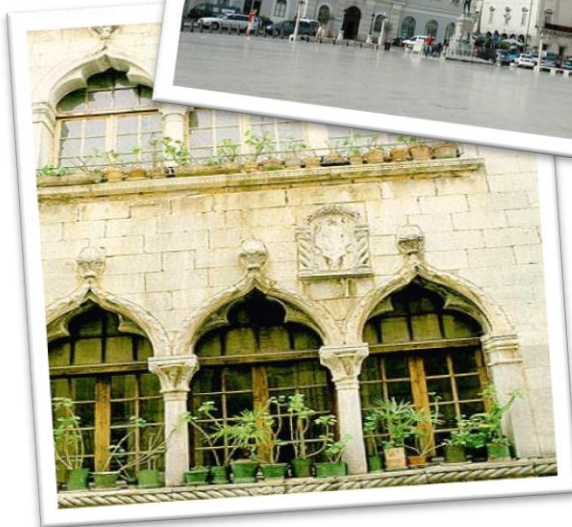
“Friuli is the great undiscovered region of Italy: It has beautiful beaches on the Adriatic, stunning undiscovered alps in Carnia, idyllic scenery in the winegrowing district known as Collio, vibrant and handsome cities such as Udine and mysterious Trieste, historical centers such as Aquileia and Cividale del Friuli, wonderful food and wine, great coffee, good cultural facilities, and above all some of the warmest, most welcoming people you will ever meet.”



Slovenia & Croatia

A town of ancient origins on the coast of the Istrian peninsula, 25 km from Italy, Piran was voluntarily absorbed into the Venetian empire in 1283 when Croatian pirates were continually threatening the Dalmatian coast. Many Venetian artists visited and worked in Piran, including the famed Piranese violinist Giuseppe Tartini (born in Piran) and the Venetian master painter Tintoretto, one of whose paintings can be seen in the local museum. Piran's quaint, medieval town today boasts of its 14th century Venetian church of St. George and its 15th century town walls with crenellated towers nearly all intact. Although subsequently part of Austria, Italy, Yugoslavia, and since 1991 the independent Republic of Slovenia, the town still retains all of its Venetian charm. It is one of the best preserved historical towns anywhere on the Adriatic Sea and it is in fact entirely protected as a cultural monument.

The ancient town of Porec, Croatia, also on the Dalmatian coast not far from the Italian border, is known most of all for its highly celebrated 6th century Basilica of Bishop Euphrasius, which is adorned with mosaics from the great Age of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian. Begin the day with breakfast in Piran, followed by a guided tour of the medieval town walls, the church, and the Old Town. Then break for an optional short swim in the incredibly blue waters of the Dalmatian coast and follow with a typical Slovenian lunch on the medieval town square. Traveling on to Porec, tour the Old Town, stopping for gelato, and complete the day with a guided tour of the celebrated basilica complex.





The City of Padova and Frescoes of Giotto

“Faire Padua, nurserie of Arts.” So Lucentio, in Shakespeare’s *Taming of the Shrew*, accurately describes one of Italy’s most interesting and historic cities. As the Roman colony of Patavium, the city flourished and, despite suffering numerous barbarian invasions with the fall of the Roman Empire, it rose again to prosperity in the early medieval period.

In 1164, Padova declared itself an independent republic which helped usher in a Golden Age in the 13th and 14th centuries, when the town attracted many first rate artists. One of Europe’s oldest universities was founded in 1222, a magnet for many distinguished men, including Dante, Petrarch, and Galileo. But the town’s most celebrated “citizen” is surely the “wonder-worker” and most beloved of all Christian saints, Saint Anthony of Padova, whose tomb is in the city’s 13th century basilica built in his honor. The most well known monument in Padova, however, is arguably the medieval *Cappella degli Scrovegni*, whose frescoes are the masterpiece of Giotto and widely considered to be one of the greatest achievements of Italian painting.

Begin with a guided tour of the Old Town, home of the city’s celebrated 14th century town hall, *Il Salone*, situated between the *Piazza delle Erbe* and the *Piazza della Frutta*, two bustling squares that formed the heart of medieval Padova. Continue with a private tour of the university, where you may see, among other things, the *cattedra* (pulpit) from which Galileo lectured physics, as well as the medical school’s famous Anatomical Theatre, Europe’s oldest. In addition to an extensive tour of the Basilica of Saint Anthony, which contains magnificent art from the medieval and Renaissance periods, including important bronze statues and reliefs of the sculptor Donatello, you may visit the *Prato della Valle*, the largest piazza in Italy; the *Battistero del Cattedrale*, the interior of which is completely covered by frescoes of the medieval painter Menabuoi, his best work; the *Basilica di Santa Giustina*, which houses both a masterpiece of the Venetian artist Paolo Veronese as well as the relics of several important saints, including those of the apostle St. Matthias and the evangelist St. Luke; and the *Chiesa degli Eremitani*, a 13th century church which boasts Renaissance frescoes of Mantegna.

You may conclude with a private tour of the spectacular *Cappella degli Scrovegni* and the recently restored Giotto frescoes. A tour of one of the celebrated villas along the Brenta Canal, such as the “Malcontenta,” designed by the most famous Renaissance architect, Palladio, or the stately Villa Pisani, with its celebrated Tiepolo frescoes, is also advised. The excursion should include a guided tour of the city, churches, and monuments, a visit to the famed Caffè Pedrocchi, and lunch in Padova’s medieval ghetto.

Wine-Tasting & Dinner in the Collio Region

Wines from the Friuli area were famous already in the age of the Roman emperor Augustus and today it is considered one of the three premier wine regions of Italy and is widely regarded as the home of Italy's best white wines. You may tour the famed hillside vineyards of the Collio and Colli Orientali (D.O.C.)



Villalta Castle and Medieval Cividale del Friuli

Travel to the town of Villalta, home to the best preserved medieval castle in northeastern Italy and best example of feudal architecture in Friuli. After a guided tour of the castle and its grounds, explore the city of Cividale del Friuli. Founded by Julius Caesar *ca.* 50 BC. Cividale later became the first and most important Lombard duchy formed in Italy after the sixth century Germanic invasion of the peninsula. Nestled in the foothills of the Alps, Cividale remained one of the most powerful and important Lombard towns in medieval Italy and it maintains its medieval charm. You may begin with a tour of the quaint Old Town, where the facades of the medieval houses are



still adorned with frescos. Tour Cividale's beautifully preserved and very rare eighth century Lombard chapel adorned with remarkably rare Dark Age stucco art. Both the Duomo Museum and the National Archaeological Museum preserve outstanding examples of Lombard and early medieval Italian art. It is for its exceptional rich history and its early medieval art and architecture that the city was recently awarded UNESCO World Heritage status. You may conclude with a spectacular multi-course dinner in the rustic countryside of the Colli Orientali D.O.C. wine zone at an *agriturismo* (farm house) situated in a fortified medieval architectural complex.

Baroque and Rococo Udine

At the foothills of the Alps, Udine is a town of Roman origins, of Venetian splendor and the historical and cultural center of Friuli Venezia-Giulia. A flourishing medieval town, Udine finally surrendered to Venice in 1420 after nine years' resistance and the Venetian presence is felt all over town. Below the 16th C. *castello* is the *Piazza della Libertà*, a picturesque square, which reflects the Venetian influence of the 15th and 16th centuries. A walk through the *città vecchia* will lead one past the ancient town walls to frescoed medieval *palazzi*, to the quaint but lively *Mercato Vecchio*, and on to the 14th C. *Duomo* and the 18th C. *Oratorio della Purità*, both graced with celebrated paintings by the last of the great Venetian artists, Tiepolo.

The nearby *Palazzo Arcivescovile*, now a museum and home to Udine's wide array of medieval Christian art, was also adorned by the Venetian master and is another reason why Udine is also called the *Città del Tiepolo*. We suggest a tour of the Old Town, including a guided tour of the art of Tiepolo, a visit to the *Duomo*, the *Oratorio della Purità*, and the *Palazzo Arcivescovile* (museum).



The Italian Alps / The Dolomites

The dramatic Dolomites, considered by many to be the most beautiful mountains in the world. The setting of the 1956 Winter Olympic Games and the area so dear to the Austrian composer Gustav Mahler, the Dolomites were recently awarded UNESCO World Heritage status for their picturesque and rugged peaks. Among their peaks are included some of the most famous of the Alps: *Monte Cristallo*, the *Marmarole* and the *Tre Cime di Lavaredo*, all about 3,300m (10,000 ft.). After a short stop for breakfast en route, you may arrive at the charming village of Pieve di Cadore, birthplace of the Venetian Renaissance master, Titian. Following a walk through town and a visit to the painter's 14th century home, proceed to the Lago di Misurina, a natural alpine lake, where you may take in breathtaking views, perhaps with a picnic lunch. Afterward,



drive up to the base of the most celebrated peaks of the Dolomites, the *Tre Cime di Lavaredo*, where, at 2360m. (7,741 ft.), enjoy what is widely considered to be the most spectacular views of the Dolomites. After an optional hike in the mountains, you may conclude with a visit to the stunningly picturesque resort-town of Cortina d'Ampezzo, the "Pearl of the Dolomites" and setting of the 1956 Winter Olympic Games. Ample free time allows one to explore the elegant boutiques of the Corso Italia or relax in one of the town's chic street-side cafés.

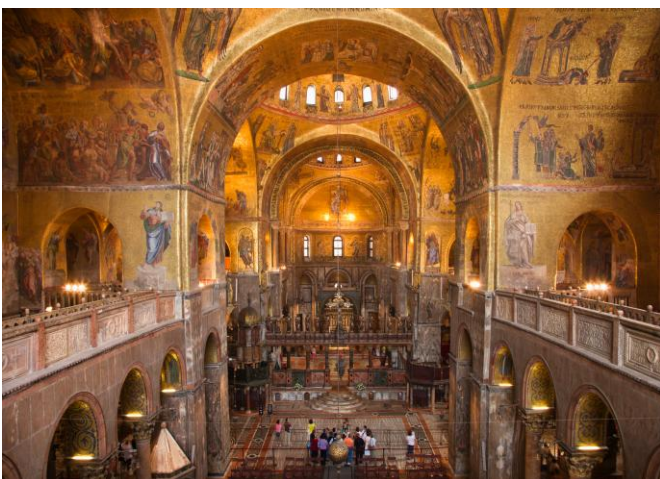
Roman Aquileia

"Aquileia omnium sub occidente urbium maxima" ("Aquileia, the greatest of all the towns in the West"). That is how the Byzantine emperor Justinian described the town in the sixth century and, though he perhaps was exaggerating a little, Aquileia could once boast to be the ninth largest city in the Roman Empire, fourth in Italy. As the capital of Regio X (the Tenth Roman Region), it was for centuries the seat of the Roman governor as well as the home of the Northern Adriatic Fleet. In the first century AD, the Roman historian and geographer Strabo described it as a "bustling trading center for Mediterranean and transalpine countries." In recognition of its impressive ruins and its important place in Roman history, Aquileia is considered as a World Heritage site by the United Nations. And in light of its significant role in early Christian history, when it was for centuries the seat of a Christian Patriarch, it was proclaimed by the Vatican City as one of the five official Jubilee cities in Italy. The city preserves both Roman and early Christian ruins, including the Roman port and forum, remains of Roman public baths and private houses with beautifully preserved mosaic floors, Roman roads with visible chariot tracks, a Roman burial ground, and the ancient Patriarchal Basilica preserving both the largest known Paleo-Christian polychrome mosaic floor in Western Europe (early fourth century), and a ninth century crypt adorned with thirteenth century frescos. The excursion includes transportation, a guided tour of the various sites by an ancient historian and entrance to the museums, the church foundations and the frescoed church crypt.



Architectural Tour of Venice

Known variously as *La Serenissima* ("The Most Serene Republic"), The Bride of the Sea, Queen of the Adriatic, City of Bridges, and termed by the Victorian critique John Ruskin as "A Paradise of Cities," Venice is a place like no other. Begin your tour with a private taxi-ride of the Grand Canal and proceed to see two sites celebrated for the greatest Venetian medieval and Renaissance art: the Frari Basilica and the Accademia Museum. You may see up close celebrated art of Veneziano, Bellini, Giorgione, Titian, Veronese, and



Tintoretto. After a typical Venetian lunch along a scenic canal, you may return to St. Mark's Square, Napoleon's "Drawing Room of Europe," for a drink at the world's oldest café, the Caffè Florian. Then break for some free time in Venice and reconvene for a tour of the iconic and renowned St. Mark's Basilica. You may conclude with private water transportation back to the bus or train.

Castles of Friuli Venezia-Giulia

The region of Friuli, with its long history of independent dukes and counts, is particularly rich in medieval and Renaissance castles. Our tour commences with the most visited castle in Friuli, Trieste's romantic seaside Castello di Miramare (19th C.), home to the Hapsburg Archduke Ferdinand (later Emperor of Mexico) and his wife, the Belgian princess Carlotta. After a brief historical tour of the Old Town of Trieste, proceed to the center of the city, visiting the Venetian Castello di San Giusto (15th C.) with its enormous walls and draw-bridge. After a brief stop at one of Trieste's historic cafés, travel north to the fortified medieval city of Gorizia, a charming town situated in the foothills of the Alps on the border with Slovenia and which, like Berlin, was divided in two after World War II. You may begin your tour at the imposing Castello di Gorizia (11th C.), the wonderfully preserved medieval castle of the Counts of Gorizia, complete with fortified walls, moat, a number of historic buildings, including the Hall of Arms. Afterward, a brief historical tour of the town of Gorizia which you may follow with a traditional dinner, either in the city or in the countryside. An optional medieval dinner with live music and entertainment can be arranged in either the Renaissance Castello di Formentini or the medieval Castello di Strassoldo.



watch-towers, and
Banqueting Hall and the Music Salon, and the

Byzantine Mosaics and Monuments of Ravenna

Unsurpassed in western Europe for its Byzantine art and architecture, Ravenna was one of the first cities anywhere to be chosen as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is celebrated above all for its early Christian mosaics and monuments. Ravenna's importance first begins with the Roman emperor Augustus' building of the imperial port of Classis nearby, the seat of the Adriatic fleet. However, its greatest period began in the fifth century when the Roman Emperor Honorius moved the imperial court from Rome to Ravenna. Successive emperors adorned the city with splendid monuments. Your guide should lead you on a historic tour of the city, taking you through the seven buildings constructed in the fifth and sixth centuries: the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia, the Neonian Baptistery, the Basilica of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, the Arian Baptistery, the Archiepiscopal Chapel, the Mausoleum of Theodoric the Great, and the Church of San Vitale. You may also take in the austere tomb of Dante as well as the impressive sixth century Basilica of Sant'Apollinare in Classe. An additional stop is usually made at the nearby seventh century Abbazia di Pomposa, widely regarded as one of Italy's oldest and most important monastery complexes.

Our Home Base: Grado, Italy

Grado's Historic Old Town, port, and Shopping District

Grado's Old Town, dating back to Roman times, is the oldest area of the island and one of the best preserved Medieval towns anywhere on the Adriatic Sea. As the heart of the island, the Old Town offers a variety of restaurants, cafes and scenic piazzas. At the center are two celebrated and ancient churches. Grado's historic Patriarchal Basilica, dedicated in AD 579 to Santa Euphemia, is still the main church of the Gradese. Nearby, the Basilica di Santa Maria della Salute, dating also from the sixth century, is now the scene of summer evening concerts, poetry readings, and other activities. The main port of Grado, in the center of the town, has long been the repository of Grado's spirit. Though the Old Port today has made room for large sailboats and yachts, it is still the home of Grado's fisherman, who still depart at night and arrive with their catch early in the morning. The entire center of town has been converted to a pedestrian zone and is closed to traffic. These tree-lined streets are lined with shops and elegant boutiques, as well as numerous cafes, wine bars, restaurants and pizzerias. The Grand Hotel Astoria, our hotel, is located in this pedestrian area.



Grado's World-Class Beaches

Grado is well endowed with many of nature's gifts including a beautiful climate, gently sloping shores and more than 20 km of beaches of very fine sand. It is not difficult to see why, in the 19th century, Grado became the holiday resort developed by the Hapsburg Emperor Franz Joseph and was patronized by the cosmopolitan Austro-Hungarian nobility, being appropriately dubbed "L'isola del Sole" ("Island of the Sun"). The main beach of Grado is widely considered one of the most beautiful and best equipped in Italy, winning awards year after year.



Besides the modern thermal baths and health spas, which include the renowned "sand bathing" facilities, Grado's beaches offer a wide choice of sports, games, organized tournaments and entertainment, including bocce ball, water-skiing, wind- and kite-surfing, beach-volleyball, beach-soccer, etc. Also available on the beach are several swimming pools, tennis courts, basketball courts, and a soccer field. Near the beach, one may find a club gymnasium, a tennis club, and a golf course, all accessible to the public.

