

# SPECIAL OPERA-THEMED EXCURSION

## FROM ROME, ITALY

### EXP190418 Civitavecchia, Italy:

#### The Great Tosca of Puccini

#### Duration 10 hours

A tour inspired by the great operas of Puccini. A sumptuous itinerary following in the footsteps of Puccini's masterpiece, Tosca.

A church, a palace and a castle are the dramatic setting for Tosca, the most Roman of operas. Enjoy a walking tour for enthusiastic opera lovers to some of Rome's most beautiful monuments. The tour will take you behind the curtain to see all the places featured in the opera that tells the story of Tosca and her lover, the revolutionary painter Mario Cavaradossi. Giacomo Puccini, born in Tuscany in the middle of the 19th century, became one of Italy's greatest composers and Tosca is his most celebrated opera. Start your waking tour in St. Andrea Church where at the beginning Tosca comes to see her lover, Mario and much of the plot of the opera's first act is centered around the church's Attavanti chapel. A Baroque church that was completed in 1650. It is a basilica church, meaning that its architectural layout includes several important features such as a grand dome, an apse, and left and right chapels. The second stop is Farnese Palace- outside view- where in the second act Tosca sings of her anguish in the famous aria "Vissi d'arte," then, finding a knife, stabs his antagonist to death. Farnese Palace is one of Rome's most sumptuous Renaissance palaces, built in the 1500s partly under the direction of Michelangelo. It's just a few minutes' walk from Sant'Andrea della Valle. The opera's last act is set on the rooftop of this almost 2,000-year-old, fortress building where a statue of the Archangel Michael looms, here the drama become tragedy: Tosca flings herself off the rooftop to her death.

Castel Sant'Angelo is one of Rome's most important monuments, located on the banks of the Tiber River it was built around 135 A.D. as a mausoleum for the Roman emperor Hadrian. It was converted to a fortress several hundred years later, served for centuries as a state prison, and in the Middle Ages and into the 1500s sheltered popes during some of Rome's many conflicts. Melodramatic and romantic, Rome was the perfect backdrop for Tosca's tragic journey, and the ultimate scene on Castel Sant'Angelo is surely one of the most vivid in opera. This tour brings Rome to life, with tales and legends of barons, painters and tragic singers. The opera is set during a significant time in Rome's history giving insight into Rome's turbulent past. Continue your tour in order to reach and visit the Pantheon, that is the most complete ancient building (125 AD) in Rome and one of the city's most spectacular sights. Once you start to look around you, you are taken in by the opulence. Monumental tombs are set into the walls of Pantheon, including that of the artist Raphael (on the left side as you enter). The oculus, the only source of natural light in the Pantheon, is a round opening in the centre of the dome. It is 27 feet in diameter and open to the sky (the floor is gently sloped to allow for runoff of rainwater).

Time for lunch in one of the typical roman restaurant. Free time for shopping in the Pantheon area before reboard your bus in order to come back and reach the pier.

*Please kindly note that is not possible to visit Palazzo Farnese on the day you request because it will be open only on Mondays / Wednesdays / Fridays evening. However, the guide will explain it from the outside*

# SPECIAL OPERA THEMED EXCURSION FROM LIVORNO, ITALY

## Livorno, Italy

Lucca & Puccini muse Villa and gourmet lunch

Duration 8.5 hrs

Discover another dimension of Tuscany on this tour, As you journey along, you'll pass several quaint medieval villages that seem to be caught in a time warp. The enchanting view outside your windows as you travel past the golden vines of the vineyards, silvery green olives waiting to be harvested, and elegant dark green cypress trees, makes it easy to see why this region has long been praised by poets and artisans for its charm and beauty as you visit the town of Torre del Lago Puccini on Lake Massaciuccoli, where the famous composer Giacomo Puccini resided. At the Museo Villa Puccini, where he and his wife are buried, you will see the piano room, where the esteemed Puccini composed all but the last of his operas. Enjoy a private concert played on the original piano of the composer with a pianist and a soprano performing all the most important "aria" of one of the most world knowne composer.

A scenic drive then brings you to the walled city of Lucca, beautifully situated on the banks of the River Serchio. This easy-to-walk town offers so many attractions, including the Romanesque-style Cathedral of San Martino (from outside), the remains of an ancient Roman amphitheater in Piazza Anfiteatro and the lovely Church of San Frediano, founded in the 6th century (from outside)

Enjoy typical pasta plates at the gourmet restaurant il giglio in lucca to flavor real Italian dishes

Your visit in Lucca will be on your own, with ample time provided to explore this charming old-world city. Perhaps you'll want to stroll along the amazingly well-preserved Renaissance-era city walls which have today become a popular pedestrian promenade, or visit some of the ornate basilica-styled churches. Other attractions that can be experienced here are several inviting piazzas, an ancient Roman amphitheater and an impressive Ducal Palace.

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# SPECIAL OPERA-THEMED EXCURSION

## FROM VENICE, ITALY

### La Fenice Opera House

#### Duration 4 hours

You will depart from the Pier to reach Cornoldi. Disembark amidst breathtaking wonders. Ground was broken for the legendary Piazza San Marco in the 9th century and, with the consecration of St. Mark's Basilica in 1094, a wonder was born. The Basilica is known for its opulent and gilded interior mosaics and astounds the viewer with arched portals, bronze doors, vibrant mosaics and fabled sculptures of Greek Horses, St. Mark and the Angels and the Winged Lion - the timeless symbol of Venice. Marvel at the Campanile, where panoramic city views are earned by the hale and hearty and the Doge's Palace facing the tranquil lagoon. Then follow your tour escort through dazzling city scenes. Arriving at "La Fenice" for your guided visit, you will immerse yourself in the soaring beauty of this world-class opera house, the site of many stunning premieres by Bellini, Donizetti, Verdi, Rossini and more. La Fenice was destroyed in a night-time fire in 1836; was rebuilt by brothers Giovanni Battista and Tommaso Maduna and was reborn just like the mythical bird. It is second only to La Scala in performing the largest number of premiere works. Today the theater stages operas such as La Traviata and The Barber of Seville. At the end of the visit you will enjoy some free time in St. Mark's Square for independent exploration. You will rejoin your escort at a set meeting place and return to the ship.