



2836 West Main Street
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49006 U.S.A.
Telephone: (269) 343-5667
(866) 499-3799 – toll free
Facsimile: (269) 343-3408
Email: info@culturaltourconsultants.com
www.culturaltourconsultants.com

CON BRIO CHORAL SOCIETY PERFORMANCE TOUR TO ITALY

May 10-23, 2010

Suggested Itinerary...

Monday, May 10

Fly from New York to Rome, Italy

Assemble at the JFK Airport and check in for your flight.

Depart New York. Meals served on board your transatlantic flight.

Tuesday, May 11

Arrive in Rome; excursion to Tivoli to visit the Villa d'Este

D

Morning Arrive at the Rome's Leonardo da Vinci Airport (Fiumicino). Claim your luggage and clear customs. You will be met in the Arrivals Hall, after customs, by your Cultural Tour Consultants tour manager.

Board coach and transfer to the Tivoli, where you will have a guided tour of the sumptuous Renaissance Villa d'Este, a masterpiece of Italian architecture, especially garden design (UNESCO World Heritage Site). The Villa was commissioned by Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este, son of Alfonso d'Este and Lucrezia Borgia and grandson of Pope Alexander VI in the mid-16th century. Designed to impress the Cardinal's guests, the Villa d'Este's gardens are composed almost exclusively of water features. Fountains of every description dazzle the onlooker: the grand Fountain of the Dragon, the Hundred Fountains, and the grand centrepiece, the gigantic Water Organ Fountain. Franz Liszt, who evoked the garden in his "Les Jeux d'Eaux à la Villa d'Este," gave one of his last concerts here. Through the ages, the Villa d'Este has been celebrated in poetry, painting, and music.



Afternoon Independent lunch in hilltown of Tivoli.

Reboard coach and transfer to your hotel in central Rome.

Remainder of afternoon at leisure to relax and unpack.

Evening Welcome Dinner at a nearby restaurant.

*B = Breakfast
L = Lunch
D = Dinner*

Wednesday, May 12

Rome

B

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Transfer to the [Vatican](#), meet your guide and begin a tour of the Vatican Museum, one of the greatest museums in the world. Included in the tour will be the Sistine Chapel and the Stanze della Segnatura, decorated by Raphael.



Afternoon Independent lunch in or around the Vatican.

Return transfer to your hotel.

Free time to relax or to explore independently.

Reassemble at the hotel and transfer back to the Vatican.

♪ [The Con Brio Choral Society may perform during mass at St. Peter's Basilica.](#)

Evening Independent dinner.

Thursday, May 13

Rome

B

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Transfer by coach to Colle Oppio. Meet your guide and begin a walking tour of the Imperial [Roman Forums and the Roman Colosseum](#).

Afternoon Independent lunch.

Meet your guide and continue your discovery of Rome with a walking tour to include the [Trevi Fountain, the Pantheon, Piazza Navona, and Piazza di Spagna](#).

♪ [Con Brio Choral Society may perform this afternoon at the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, one of the four papal basilicas of Rome associated with the ancient patriarchal sees of Christendom. It is especially known for its 5th century mosaics and the magnificent coffered ceiling.](#)



Evening Independent dinner.

Friday, May 14

Travel (267 kms/165 miles) by private coach from Rome to the Amalfi Coast B/D

- Morning Breakfast at your hotel.
Board coach and depart Rome.
- Afternoon A stop will be made en route for an independent lunch.
Arrive at **Pompeii**, meet your guides and begin a tour of this ancient Roman town that was lost to the world for 1700 years following the catastrophic eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79AD. A visit through the ongoing excavation site provides extraordinary insight into life of a city at the height of the Roman Empire.
Reboard coach and continue on the short distance to the **Amalfi Coast**, renowned for its rugged terrain, scenic beauty, picturesque towns and diversity.
Arrive in Sorrento and check into your hotel.
- Evening Dinner at your hotel.



Saturday, May 15

Day excursion to the Ile of Capri

B

- Morning Breakfast at your hotel.
Board boat for an excursion to the **Ile of Capri** a resort location since the time of the ancient Roman Republic. Following a boat tour around the island, you will have free time for independent activities: shopping in the up-scale boutiques on the central piazzetta of Capri, swimming, or taking one of the organized excursions from the main port to the Emperor Tiberius' Villa Jovis, or to Villa San Michele, or to the Blue Lagoon.
- Afternoon Independent lunch on the island.
Return by boat to Sorrento. Time to prepare for evening concert.
- Evening Independent dinner.
🎵 **The Con Brio Choral Society will give an evening concert in Vico Equense or another small town on the Amalfi Coast. This may be a joint performance with a local choir.**

Sunday, May 16

Naples and an overnight ferry to Sicily

B/D

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Board coach and depart Sorrento for [Naples](#).

♪ **The Con Brio Choral Society may participate during mass at the Cathedral of Naples or another of the city's 448 historical churches.**

Afternoon Independent lunch.

Reassemble, meet your guide and begin a tour of one of the [fabulous museums of Naples](#): either the Naples National Archaeological Museums considered one of the most important in the world for ancient Roman artifacts, or the Museo di Capodimonte featuring paintings from the 13th to the 18th centuries including works by Raphael, Titian, Caravaggio, El Greco and many others.

Evening Dinner at a local restaurant in Naples.

Board ship and take possession of your double-berthed cabins for the overnight crossing to Sicily.

Monday, May 17

Arrive at the port of Catania and transfer

by coach to Taormina with a stop at Mount Etna

B/L/D

Morning Breakfast on board the ship.

Arrive on the island of Sicily, a fascinating and enchanting place that is almost a country in itself. Where Archimedes taught and Saint Paul preached; a Greek colony, a Roman province, an Arab emirate and a Norman kingdom; where the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Swabians, Angevins and Aragonese made Sicily their home, leaving behind an eclectic history that you will touch, taste, and hear in its unique architecture, food and language.

Board coach and depart Catania.

A stop will be made at [Mount Etna](#), the largest active volcano in Europe, standing at nearly 11,000 feet, which also constitutes the highest mountain in Italy south of the Alps.

The fertile volcanic soil support extensive agriculture around the volcano, primarily vineyards and orchards.

Afternoon A stop will be made at a [local vineyard](#) for a wine tasting and light lunch.

Continue on to Taormina and check into your hotel.

Evening Dinner at your hotel.



Tuesday, May 18

Taormina

B/D

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Transfer to the "top" of **Taormina**, a site occupied since ancient times. Meet your guide and begin a tour of the major historic landmarks including the Greek Theatre, one of the most celebrated ruins in Italy, the Cathedral, dating from the 13th century, the Palazzo Corvaja, the Baroque Fountain, and the Church of San Domenico.

Afternoon Independent lunch.

Return to your hotel to prepare for evening concert.

Evening Dinner at your hotel.

♪ **The Con Brio Choral Society may give an evening performance at the Cathedral of Taormina.**

Wednesday, May 19

Taormina

B

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Entire day at leisure to enjoy Taormina and for swimming in the hotel pool or at the beach.

Afternoon Independent lunch.

Evening Independent dinner.

Thursday, May 20

Travel 319 kms/198 miles across the mountainous interior of Sicily

B/D

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Board coach and depart Taormina. You will travel south to Catania and then turn inland, following the highway that crosses the island.

A stop will be made at Piazza Armerina to visit the **Roman Villa del Casale**, one of the largest Roman dwellings to have survived from antiquity. The remarkable mosaics (3500 square metres) depict scenes from daily life and are as remarkable for their sociological value as for their artistry. The Villa was built in the 4th century AD.

Continue on through the scenic mountainous area to the **hilltop town of Enna**.

Afternoon Independent lunch in Enna.

Reboard coach and continue your journey to Palermo.

Arrive in Palermo and check into your centrally-located hotel.

Evening Dinner at your hotel or a local restaurant.



Friday, May 21

Palermo

B

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Meet your guide and begin a walking tour [Palermo](#), this eclectic crossroads of Mediterranean and northern European civilizations. It's a vibrant --even chaotic-- city whose unique culture has been forged and molded by three millennia of history emerging from three continents. There's no other place on earth like Palermo, and to discover the history of this singular city is to experience something of the diverse worlds that have evolved into its own culture.



The streets of old Palermo are an intriguing labyrinth of outdoor markets, subtle niches and long-forgotten secrets --almost a subculture unto themselves. Nine centuries after Arab rule ended in Sicily, street markets still evoke the atmosphere of Arab souks. Only the Baroque churches and palazzi on the same narrow streets remind you that you're in Italy. Your tour will include the small streets and markets as well as the Cathedral, the Royal Palace, including its Palatine Chapel, and much more.

Afternoon Independent lunch.

Remainder of day at leisure for independent exploration of Palermo.

Evening Independent dinner. One of Sicily's attractions is its cuisine. You'll want to be sure to try out some of the local specialties: caponata, panella, maccu, sficione, arancine, . . . Your Tour Manager and your hotel will be able to assist you in locating restaurants.

Saturday, May 22

Day excursion to Segeste and Monreale

B/D

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Board coach for a day excursion. Your first stop will be in [Monreale](#), situated on Mount Caputo and overlooking Palermo below. The focal point of the town is the splendid Monreale Cathedral, an amalgamation of Arab, Byzantine, and Norman artistic styles, framed by traditional Romanesque architecture. The mosaics covering the cathedral walls are one of the world's largest displays of mosaic art, surpassed only by Istanbul's Saint Sofia.

♪ **The Con Brio Choral Society may participate during mass at the Cathedral of Monreale.**

Afternoon Independent lunch in Monreale.

Continued on following page

CONTINUED FROM SATURDAY, MAY 22

Board coach and continue on to the ancient Greek temple of Segeste. Set in a remote rural setting, Segeste in springtime is a magical place. The Doric temple, built before 430 BC can make a claim to being the best preserved Greek temple in the world. And the nearby amphitheatre boasts a hilltop position on Mount Barbaro that is second to none.



Meet your guide and tour the ancient site.

Return to Palermo.

Evening Festive Farewell Dinner

Sunday, May 23

Return flight from Palermo to JFK Airport

B

Morning Breakfast at your hotel.

Board coach for transfer to the Palermo Airport. Check in for your flight.

Depart Palermo. A connection may be required in a European city before continuing on to JFK Airport.

Arrive at JFK. Claim your luggage and clear customs.

Welcome Home!