

italia by design



Your perfect italian holiday.

charming
italy



Have you always dreamed of going to Italy?
Already decided that now is the time to go?
Not looking for a group tour, but don't know how to start planning your trip?

Start with your personal travel consultants!

Italia by Design

Custom-designed travel allows you to make the best use of your time and money, while seeing Italy that is off the beaten path.

Let us take care of all of your travel needs, including your accommodations, eating out, what to see and do, getting around, and most importantly – having an unforgettable Italian experience!

Let us start creating your dream trip now!

memorable
holidays



Our Services and Rates

Our Services

Creating your Custom - Made Itinerary

We work with you to develop an itinerary that is personalized to meet your needs 100%.

We start by gathering information from you by having you fill out our **Getting Started Questionnaire**. With your preferences and requests in mind, we create an itinerary proposal for you, complete with your costs for hotels, transportation and approximate costs for the restaurants we recommend. You are free to make any changes you like to this proposal. In fact, this is a very important part of the itinerary creative process. We continue to fine-tune your trip until you are completely satisfied with your finalized itinerary. Why settle for an impersonal package tour?

This is your vacation, spend it the way you want!

Finding the Perfect Accommodation

Italia by Design consultants will find that perfect hotel that satisfies all of your preferences based on hotel size, location, services, room type, and in your price range. In Italy there is a remarkably wide range of types of accommodations available, including small, charming bed and breakfasts, family-run hotels, modern boutique hotels, rustic country inns, and stylish apartments. Let us do the legwork, and find the perfect match for you.

Things to See and Do

Deciding on the day's activities can be time-consuming, and a very common source of stress while travelling. With Italia by Design, leave your sightseeing planning to us. Your days can be as structured or as unstructured as you like. We will give you sightseeing suggestions for any morning, afternoon or evening of your trip that you request. See an **Example Day** to see what we mean!

italian
appeal



Museum Reservations

You can say “arrivederci” to waiting in long museum entrance lines.

Italia by Design will reserve your museums for you ahead of time, so you have an actual appointment time to visit the museums on your list. We can also provide information on special exhibits going on during your trip, and provide you with advance tickets or reservations.

Getting Around Planes, Trains and Automobiles.... and Gondolas!

Whatever your means of transport within Italy, we will make it easy and hassle-free.

Renting a car? Let us help you find the best deal from among all the rental companies.

Travelling by train? We can purchase your tickets in advance, reserve your seats, and find you discounts and special offers. We can mail your tickets to your home or have them waiting for you at your hotel.

We can also provide you with information on any other transportation you may need, including airport transfers and water bus and ferry information for Venice and the Italian Lakes.

Dining Out

Italia by Design will have you eating like a local! We will send you to the most authentic places, advise you on the local cuisine and wine, with special insider tips that no guidebook can possibly provide. We will make reservations for you where necessary, and even help you plan a special romantic evening. Get to know Italy and the Italians through the cuisine, and you won't return home disappointed – or hungry!

Wine Tourism

Our expert staff can plan a visit to a vineyard or cantina during your trip, a day excursion into a wine producing region, or even a whole vacation organized around the wonderful world of Italian wine. There are many important wine regions in Italy, including Tuscany, Piedmont, Friuli, the Veneto, and Trentino Alto-Adige.

You don't have to be a wine expert to enjoy wine tourism – your visits will be geared to your level, be it novice, wine enthusiast or wine professional.



italian
greetings



Maps and Driving Directions

Italia by Design provides you with city maps, area maps and directions, to make getting around Italy a breeze. These are all included in our services, and are mailed to you at home before your departure.

Survival Italian

Don't worry about communicating with the natives, since we will supply you with the basics to get around successfully. With just a little effort on your part, you'll be ordering in a restaurant or asking directions like a pro.

Assistance During your Trip

Italia by Design staff is just a phone call away, ready to help you at any time during your stay in Italy.

Business Travel

If you are travelling to Italy on business, Italia by Design staff can take care of all the details of your visit, to streamline your stay and maximize your limited free time.

We can organize your airport transfers, reserve hotels with business-oriented services, and choose appropriate venues for lunch or dinner meetings.

Why not schedule in some specialty shopping, a chamber music concert, or a reservation at a special restaurant in your downtime?

Special Extras (at additional cost)

If you want to plan something truly unique into your trip, we are happy to assist you.

Why not include a cooking class, an Italian conversation hour, or a private wine and cheese tasting?

You may also want to consider a guided visit of a city (if you or someone in your group is an art history or history buff, for example), or a walk around town with a local (this is usually a lighter, more fun way to see the city!).

your
dream
trip



● Our Rates:

Why spend your money on our travel consulting services? Because by spending with us you can actually save money overall, since your savings will more than cover our affordable rates. Create your custom-designed vacation, save money, have an unforgettable time in Italy – you can't afford NOT to use Italian by Design!

For specific examples of how you can save, go to **Save Money with Italia by Design.**

For 1 – 2 people: \$50 per day

For groups of 3 or more, please contact us for custom rates

Payment: Our fees are payable by check,

50% deposit at the beginning of the itinerary planning phase

50% when you have completed your trip

The rates for our consulting fees are designed to be 100% transparent.

We earn no commission on hotels, restaurants, or other third-party services. It is in our best interest to find you the best deal possible, so that you become a repeat customer, or recommend us to friends and family.

You pay your hotel, restaurants and transportation directly.

While we are working with you to create your personalized itinerary, you will know exactly how much your fixed expenses are, and will all be subject to your approval.

● Your Italia by Design Package

Your custom-designed Travel Pack:

- Day by Day Itinerary
- Itinerary at a Glance
- Area Maps
- City Maps

Your Information Pack:

- Background Information on Italy
- Restaurant Tips
- Driving in Italy
- Survival Italian: Useful Phrases

All of the above material is mailed to you at your home address prior to your departure.

italian
lifestyle



• Save Money with Italia by Design!

Savings on accomodation

Need a hotel in a big city like Venice, Florence, Milan or Rome?

Book a room through an internet travel site, and if you are lucky you will get a boring, hotel-chain room, not necessarily in the area you prefer, and with no real guarantee that the hotel will meet your expectations.

Hotels who can afford to list with these big booking sites are generally business-orientated hotels, often part of large hotel chains – with high prices to match. Italia by Design consultants will recommend a hotel that satisfies all of your preferences: hotel size, location, services, room type, and in your price range.

We have a wide range of types of city accomodations, including small, charming bed and breakfasts in the heart of the city, family-run pensione close to all the sights, modern boutique hotels, and independent apartments.

How much can you save? Let us give you some examples:

Big cities

Staying just one week in Venice, Florence, Milan or Rome, we can save you up to 30% compared to the hotels you can find on the internet.

Florence

Internet booking: 7 nights in Florence at \$ 200 per night = \$ 1,400

A hotel with Italia by Design: 7 nights in Florence at \$ 140 per night = \$ 980

Italia by Design can save you \$ 60 per night, for a total of \$ 420.

Rome

Internet booking: 7 nights in Rome at \$ 220 per night = \$ 1,540

A hotel with Italia by Design: 7 nights in Rome at \$ 150 per night = \$ 1,050

Italia by Design can save you \$ 70 per night, for a total of \$ 490.

a beautiful
journey



Small towns

Stay in an Italian Country Inn or Bed and Breakfast to see places that haven't been discovered yet by most visitors, with prices that are very reasonable, as low as \$ 100 per night for a double room in a charming and welcoming setting, including a bountiful breakfast.

We can find you accommodations in the most picturesque areas of Italy, including the many wine producing regions, in the Tuscan countryside, on the Amalfi coast, in Sicily and Sardinia, the lake district, and any other place you'd like to visit.

Your savings:

Stay in a large city for your entire trip: 7 nights at an average of \$ 200 per night = \$ 1,400

Stay in a small picturesque town: 7 nights at an average of \$ 125 per night = \$ 875

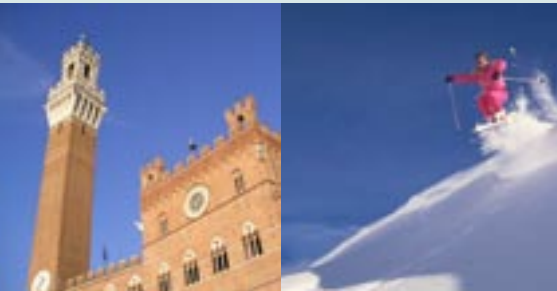
Italia by Design can save you \$ 75 per night, for a total of \$ 525.

Savings on things to see and do

Time is money, and this is also true on vacation! We can help you use your time wisely:

- Having a well-planned out itinerary ensures that you are making the best use of your time in Italy. We work with you to decide just the right amount of days to spend in each city or area that you are planning to visit.
- You can say "arrivederci" to waiting in long museum entrance lines. Italia by Design will reserve your museums for you ahead of time, so you have an actual appointment time to visit the museums on your list.
- Deciding on the day's activities is time-consuming, and a very common source of stress while travelling. With Italia by Design, your days can be as structured or as unstructured as you like. We will give you sightseeing suggestions for any morning, afternoon or evening of your trip. See an **Example Day** to see what we mean!
- We can give you many ideas of things to see and do that are completely free!
- Don't waste precious time deciding how to arrive at your next destination. Let the experts at Italia by Design show you the best way to travel between Padova and Venice, for example, or between Florence and Siena. Get there easy, get there fast!

great italian holidays



Savings on eating out

Italia by Design can recommend a wide variety of places to eat: a colorful outdoor market stand, a bustling osteria, a traditional pizzeria, a classic trattoria, or ristorante. Why limit yourself when Italy has so many different types of restaurants to choose from? Not only will you please your palate, but also your wallet! Don't settle for a boring and expensive meal at an overpriced hotel restaurant!

An example of your savings for two people:

Take advantage of our non-touristy restaurant recommendations, and you can expect to save at least \$ 10 on lunch, and \$ 20 on dinner.

In one week Italia by Design can save you \$ 210!

Savings on transportation

If you are renting a car, we will make sure you are getting the best deal. Likewise, if you are travelling by train, we can find you the best rates or special offers from Trenitalia, and any available discounts. If you are covering large distances within Italy, we can find you the best plane fare available, as there are many budget airlines that cover domestic routes. But most of all, we can suggest the most practical way to travel between your destinations, taking time and money into account.

For example: Why do we recommend taking the Eurostar train from Rome to Venice? It might seem faster to fly from Rome to Venice, as actual flying time is about 1 hour.

However, once you calculate the transfer from the center of Rome to Fiumicino airport, the time you spend in the airport, actual flight time, and airport transfer from Venice Marco Polo airport to your hotel in Venice itself, you will agree with us that the Eurostar train is a much better option, and also less expensive, that will get you door to door in less time than the plane.

italian
beauties



• An Example Day with Italia by Design

Thursday, October 12th

Arrival: Milan Malpensa Airport

Tips:

In the airport: stop at an ATM machine (Bancomat) and withdraw some cash. Make a purchase or buy a coffee (you'll need one!), in order to have some change (coins) handy for parking and other necessities on your first day. Most airport bars/caffès, like in big cities, require that you first pay at the cash register (cassa), then show your receipt to the bartender.

In Italy, a great breakfast, at any bar, is a brioche (pastry) and cappuccino. Brioche (pronounced bree-osh) can be cream filled (alla crema), jam filled (alla marmellata) or empty (senza niente).

At the bar: "Buongiorno. Due brioche alla crema e due cappuccini, per favore"

Pick up rental car – Car Rental Agency in Airport

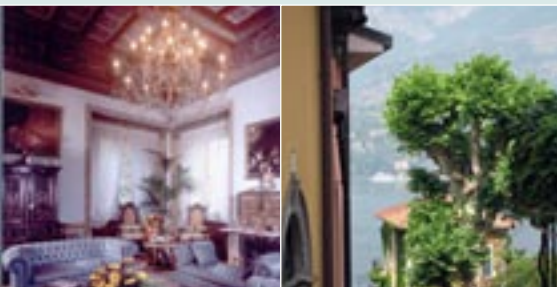
Driving directions:

approx. 40 min.

From Milan Malpensa Airport to Como

First you will follow GREEN signs for the AUTOSTRADA A8 towards MILANO (MI). You will be on the A8, then look for and follow directions for the A9 direction COMO (CO). Exit at COMO SUD, and follow signs for the center of town CENTRO CITTA', also marked by a black and white bull's eye symbol. The historical center of town is rather small, so look for a parking place marked by a blue P sign. Blue spaces are not free, and there is usually a parking machine nearby, that will print out a ticket to be left on the dashboard. Another parking option that you will find: small pay parking lots marked by a blue P. Get a ticket from the machine on your way in, and pay at the automated machine before leaving. On your small Como map, parking lots are marked with a blue "P".

must
see



Stretch your legs! Have a walk around the historical center of Como including Piazza Cavour and the Duomo (Cathedral), and the area that borders the lake.

Our suggestion for lunch in Como:

Restaurant xxx Via xxx Tel. xxx
English-friendly

Great mix of traditional and innovative cuisine. Some dishes we think you would enjoy trying: appetizers- *La ciambellina di polenta ai porcini in crema di taleggio della Valsassina* (polenta with porcini mushrooms and strong Taleggio cheese), *il crottin de chevre alla vinagrette al miele* (goat cheese with honey vinagrette); two local first courses - *Gli straccetti di grano saraceno al bitto con erbette tenere* (homemade buckwheat pasta with local bitto cheese and baby greens) and *il risotto alla brianzola* (special local risotto with saffron and sausage); second courses – the *ossobuco* is a very good veal dish (lots of garlic) or perhaps the cheese selection, with honey and nuts.

At the restaurant: *Buongiorno. Siamo in due, per favore. Hello – a table for two, please.*

Driving directions:

approx. 1 hour

From Como to your hotel in Gravedona:

From the center of Como, follow directions towards TREMEZZO/MENAGGIO, which will put you onto route SS340. Then look for directions towards ST.MORITZ, continuing along the lake. You will arrive in GRAVEDONA, where at the 1st traffic light you should keep going straight, and after 200m. you'll see the HOTEL - pink hotel with swimming pool - on your right.

Hotel Gravedona
Via xxx - Gravedona
Tel. xxx Fax xxx

After checking in, you may feel like a walk in the historical center of Gravedona. The principle sights to visit are the church of Santa Maria del Tiglio and Palazzo Gallo.

You may feel like relaxing and having dinner at the hotel – no need for reservations.
Dinner is typically from 7:30pm on.

Note: When you check in to a hotel, the reception staff will ask for your passport, and typically return it to you the next day. Hotels need this time to fill out the necessary paperwork to register every guest with the local police.

enjoy
italy



• After the highlights, what next?

• Castelmagno of the Piedmont

Picture a wheel of Castelmagno set upon a rough-hewn wooden table, a cheese so valuable to be used as currency in the 1300s by shepherds coming down to the valley. Alongside sits a decanter of vintage Barolo. It's evening, the sun is setting on the Langhe and the fire crackles in the hearth, enveloping the room in warmth and the aroma of chestnuts. Cut yourself a hefty wedge of Castelmagno, one of Italy's most prestigious cheeses, whose special flavor comes from the blue mold that grows within each form. Now take a sip of Barolo, and let your adventure into Italian wine and food begin. **With Italia by Design, this, and much more, is what we are.**

• Rustic charm of Friuli

Meet Tony, your welcoming host, full of energy. He invites you, like an ancient pilgrim, to enter his rustic stone farmhouse, welcomed by his whole family. You are in front of a large circular hearth called fogolar, where you can hear the interesting history of the house and its owners, past and present. The room of the fogolar is furnished with a peaceful simplicity: wooden tables and chairs woven from straw. Memories of old farm life adorn the walls. Tony's wife, Paola, prepares the organic food grown on their property, with the ease of a great chef. After dinner you relax in front of the fire until it is mere embers, then make your way upstairs, listening to the gentle sound of your slippers on the wooden stairs worn smooth by the centuries. The wood-burning stove has made your room toasty, and you crawl under the heavy covers and fall into a deep and restful sleep. When you wake, you can be sure that Tony has already been tending his land for hours. You will appreciate his efforts when you try the homemade jams, honey and bread at the breakfast table, along with the fresh apple juice. Spend the morning exploring nearby Cividale, along the banks of the Tagliamento, which bears witness to the past civilizations of the Longobards and the Romans. Contemplate life in a cosy enoteca with one of the excellent Friuli wines. This region called Friuli means culture, food, wine, and fun. **Come discover it with Italia by Design.**

crazy
for italy



• Tastes of Sicily

When your meal in an Italian restaurant begins with a taste of extra virgin olive oil, this often comes from Sicily. Enter into the secret world of this liquid gold, and come with us to a bed and breakfast set in the heart of an olive grove, just outside of Trapani. Here the owner Maria Grazia will show you the whole process of how olive oil is made. You can then relax by the pool, dreaming of the menu that the resident chef is preparing. Here in the heart of European civilization you can still feel the influence of the ancient Greeks, Romans and Phoenicians on this unique region. Wake up early to go to the sea or visit the fish market as the boats return to port. Experience the island's real flavor with authentic cannoli, cassata cake or pistacchio gelato. **Let Italia by Design show you the true tastes Sicily.**

• Sorrento and the Amalfi Coast

The oranges and lemons in the grove surrounding your bed and breakfast bask in the sun during the day, and at night can be heard gently dropping to the ground. You'll find the fresh-squeezed juice from the oranges at breakfast, at your table on the terrace. How easy it would be to while away the time here, gazing out over the Bay of Naples and Mount Vesuvius, but there is so much to see and do around Sorrento. A leisurely day exploring the Isle of Capri with its wonderful rocky landscape and famous Grotta Azzurra. A trip back in time to visit the wonders of ancient Pompei and Ercolano. A drive along the breathtaking Amalfi Coast, stopping for a stroll in Positano, perched above the cliffs. A day in colorful Naples discovering the traditions and flavors of this unique city. **What does Italia by Design have in store for you today? Put your daily itinerary in your bag, and you're on your way.**

art
and
beauty



• What clients say about us

Coming soon

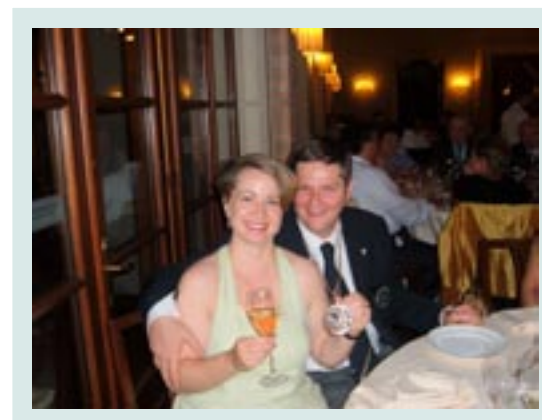
italy
sweet
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• The Italia by Design Staff

Mario Piccinin, a native of Milan, is a graduate of the University of Bologna and is a certified Sommelier (Associazione Italiana Sommeliers) and Master Cheese Taster (Organizzazione Nazionale Assaggiatori Formaggi). He has many years of hands-on experience organizing specialized Italian travel.

Mario is married to an Ohio native, Rachel, who has been living and working in Italy since 1994. They live with their two children in Padova, and spend their free time exploring all that Italy has to offer.



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