



FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA - BETWEEN THE MOUNTAINS AND THE SEA

17 - 30 SEPTEMBER 2026





OVERVIEW

AUD 9,860

P.P. (double/twin-share)

AUD 11,460

P.P. (solo traveller)

Since 2007, Italian Tours has crafted thoughtful and engaging journeys for travellers who share our passion for Italy and value a slower, more personal way to explore the country. Our small groups, with a maximum of twelve guests, allow us to travel at a relaxed pace, spend time in places that larger tours often overlook and enjoy the rhythms of daily Italian life without hurry.

This itinerary takes us into Friuli Venezia Giulia, a region that many visitors never reach. Framed by alpine valleys to the north and the Adriatic coast to the south, Friuli is a meeting point of Latin, Slavic and Germanic cultures. Roman cities, Longobard heritage, Venetian influences and Habsburg elegance coexist here, creating a rich tapestry of history and architecture.

The landscape is equally varied. Gentle hills planted with vineyards give way to crystal clear lakes and soaring mountain peaks, while the coast offers lagoons, fishing towns and long stretches of sea air. Throughout the journey, we meet local producers, taste celebrated regional wines and visit museums, churches and archaeological sites that reveal the depth of Friulian identity.

Friuli Venezia Giulia remains one of Italy's most authentic and quietly beautiful regions, and we look forward to sharing its landscapes, history and distinct culture with you.





ITINERARY

DAY 1 - ARRIVAL IN FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA

Welcome to the northeastern corner of Italy, where the Alps meet the Adriatic and three cultures, Italian, Austrian and Slovenian, blend seamlessly. Our tour begins in Sacile, a graceful town on the River Livenza known as the Garden of the Serenissima for its Venetian heritage and waterside villas. A complimentary group transfer is available from Venice Marco Polo Airport or Venice Mestre train station. Guests who prefer may choose to arrive in Sacile independently. After settling in, we gather for a welcome aperitivo and dinner to meet your fellow travellers and your tour leader.

Overnight: Sacile

DAY 2 - HILLTOWNS AND LAKES AROUND POLCENIGO

Our first full day reveals the beauty of the foothills north of Sacile. We visit the hilltop Sanctuary of the Santissima Trinità, a peaceful spot overlooking chestnut forests and mountain valleys, then stroll through Polcenigo, officially recognised as one of the Borghi più belli d'Italia. This organisation celebrates Italy's most beautiful historic villages. Its cobbled lanes, stone houses and spring-fed canals offer a picture of timeless Friuli.

After coffee in the main piazza, we follow winding roads into the mountains for lunch beside Lake Barcis, its turquoise waters framed by steep, wooded slopes. The afternoon invites an unhurried lakeside walk before returning to Sacile.

Overnight: Sacile



DAY 3 - ABBEYS AND TRADING TOWNS OF THE PLAIN

Today's journey takes us south across the Friulian plain, a region shaped for centuries by the Venetian Republic. Much of Friuli Venezia Giulia remained under Venetian control until 1797, when the Republic fell to Napoleon. We pause at Sesto al Reghena to visit its remarkable Benedictine abbey, founded in the eighth century and famed for early medieval frescoes.

Continuing to Portogruaro, we find elegant arcaded streets and old watermills turning slowly on the Lemene River, a reminder of the town's mercantile past. After free time for lunch, we stop in nearby Pordenone, known for its frescoed facades and lively cafés along Corso Vittorio Emanuele.

Overnight: Sacile

DAY 4 - MOSAICS AND HILLTOP CHARMS

Leaving Sacile, we travel to Spilimbergo, the City of Mosaics. Here we explore the medieval centre and visit the Scuola Mosaicisti del Friuli, whose workshops preserve an art form practised since Roman times. Masterpieces of glass and stone shimmer in the Mosaic Museum, a highlight of the morning.

After lunch in town, we continue to San Daniele del Friuli, perched on a ridge with sweeping views and renowned for its prosciutto. We end the day at Lake Cavazzo, the largest natural lake in Friuli, where we settle into our lakeside hotel for a relaxing three-night stay surrounded by forested slopes and alpine light.

Overnight: Lago di Cavazzo

DAY 5 - ALPINE VISTAS AND THE SANCTUARY OF MONTE LUSSARI

Today's route carries us deep into the Julian Alps. We stop first in Valbruna, a storybook village of wooden chalets and flowered balconies, then take a cable car from Camporosso to the mountaintop

hamlet of Monte Lussari. This centuries-old pilgrimage site offers spectacular views across three countries and a serene alpine chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary. After lunch in a rustic rifugio, we descend to visit the mirror-like Lago di Fusine, whose waters reflect jagged peaks above. It is an unforgettable landscape day, filled with pure air, cowbells and changing light, before returning to our lakeside base.

Overnight: Lago di Cavazzo

DAY 6 - THE MONTASIO PLATEAU

High pastures and mountain flavours await on the Montasio Plateau, birthplace of the celebrated DOP cheese. We meet local cheesemakers to learn how milk from alpine herds becomes the nutty, fragrant formaggio Montasio, followed by a generous tasting and a relaxed lunch featuring local products.

Afterwards, we take a gentle stroll across the meadows, enjoying wide open alpine views and the calm rhythm of plateau life. In the late afternoon, we return to our hotel by the lake with time to unwind before dinner.

Overnight: Lago di Cavazzo

DAY 7 - VENZONE AND THE WINES OF THE EASTERN HILLS

A leisurely morning precedes a short drive to Venzone, a walled medieval town rebuilt stone by stone after the 1976 earthquake and now honoured as one of Italy's Borghi più belli d'Italia. After coffee beneath its restored Gothic facades, we continue to a rural osteria for a relaxed lunch featuring local seasonal produce. In the afternoon, we visit a family-run winery in the hills near Nimis, where the winemaker introduces us to the character of Friuli's native grapes and elegant whites. After tasting and conversation among the vines, we travel on to Udine, our base for the next four nights.

Overnight: Udine





DAY 8 - CIVIDALE DEL FRIULI AND THE LONGOBARD HERITAGE

We journey east to Cividale del Friuli, founded by Julius Caesar and later the capital of the Longobard Duchy of Friuli, one of the most influential duchies within the early medieval Lombard Kingdom. With our local guide, we explore the cobbled streets and cross the graceful Devil's Bridge spanning the Natisone River. The highlight is the Tempietto Longobardo, one of the most significant surviving Longobard monuments in Italy, renowned for its refined stucco decoration and intimate scale. Cividale's long history, Roman, Longobard, patriarchal and Venetian, gives the town a distinct cultural depth.

After free time for lunch and independent wandering, we return to Udine.

Overnight: Udine

DAY 9 - TIEPOLO FRESCOES AND LIFE IN UDINE

This morning we explore Udine, historically the capital of the Friulian patriarchate and still

considered the cultural heart of Friuli, even though the regional capital today is Trieste. Our guided visit to the Museo Diocesano e Gallerie del Tiepolo reveals Giambattista Tiepolo's masterful frescoes, radiant figures, sweeping colour and a lightness that fills the Archbishop's Palace.

Afterwards, we stroll past the loggias and arcades of Piazza della Libertà, and those who wish may walk up to the castle for views across the city's rooftops. The afternoon is free to enjoy Udine at your own pace, whether browsing boutiques, relaxing in a café or exploring quiet backstreets.

Overnight: Udine

DAY 10 - AQUILEIA AND THE SEASIDE CHARM OF GRADO

We travel south to Aquileia, one of the most important cities of the Roman Empire and later a major early Christian centre. Its strategic position at the head of the Adriatic made it a crossroads of trade, culture and religion. A guided visit reveals the extraordinary fourth-century mosaics of the Basilica di Santa Maria Assunta, among the finest in Europe, depicting biblical scenes, symbolic imagery and early Christian iconography across an



immense mosaic floor. We also visit the archaeological area, with remains of the ancient forum and river port that hint at the city's former grandeur. In the afternoon, we continue to Grado, a graceful seaside town with Venetian-style houses, sandy beaches and narrow lanes perfect for strolling before returning to Udine.

Overnight: Udine

DAY 11 - THROUGH THE COLLIO VINEYARDS TO BORDERLAND - GORIZIA AND TRIESTE

Leaving Udine, we journey through the rolling vineyards of the Collio Goriziano, famed for elegant white wines that thrive in its mineral-rich soils. The scenic wine and cherry road leads past Dolegna, San Floriano and Capriva, where terraced vineyards line the hills. We pause at a local cantina for tasting and a relaxed lunch featuring Friulano, Ribolla Gialla and Refosco.

In the afternoon, we reach Gorizia, a fascinating border town where Italy and Slovenia meet. Here, it is possible to stand with one foot in each country and reflect on the shifting frontiers that shaped daily life in the twentieth century. We conclude the day by continuing to cosmopolitan Trieste, our final base.

Overnight: Trieste

DAY 12 - ECHOES OF EMPIRES IN TRIESTE

Trieste's layered history unfolds on today's guided tour. Once the main port of the Habsburg Empire, the city retains a Mitteleuropean elegance with broad boulevards, neoclassical facades, and the magnificent Piazza Unità d'Italia, which opens onto the sea. We visit the literary Caffè San Marco, a historic meeting place for writers such as James Joyce and Italo Svevo, and learn how Trieste's role as a major coffee trading port shaped its identity and cultural life. The afternoon is free to explore Trieste at your own rhythm, perhaps visiting Miramare Castle, browsing elegant shops, or simply enjoying the Adriatic view with a glass of local Malvasia.

Overnight: Trieste

DAY 13 - COASTAL STROLLS IN PIRAN AND MUGGIA

A short drive brings us across the Slovenian border to Piran, a tiny Adriatic gem with Venetian Gothic palaces and winding lanes that spill toward the harbour.

After morning coffee overlooking the sea, we return to Italy for lunch in Muggia, Trieste's colourful fishing town, where boats rock beneath pastel facades. The relaxed afternoon invites a wander through the old quarter or along the waterfront promenade before we gather this evening for a farewell dinner celebrating the food, wine and friendships formed on our Friulian journey.

Overnight: Trieste

DAY 14 - DEPARTURE

After breakfast, our journey through Friuli Venezia Giulia comes to an end. We provide a group transfer to Venice Marco Polo Airport and Venice Mestre train station. As you travel onward, you will carry with you memories of alpine valleys, Roman mosaics, vineyards and coastlines, along with the warmth and character of this fascinating region.

Overnight: Trieste





ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

STAY

- ❖ 3 nights in Sacile in the Hotel Due Leone - a charming hotel in the historic centre
- ❖ 3 nights at the peaceful lakeside Hotel Trilago at Lago di Cavazzo, surrounded by alpine scenery
- ❖ 4 nights in Hotel Astoria Italia, a centrally located hotel in Udine, close to cafés, piazzas and museums
- ❖ Finish the tour at the beautiful Savoia Excelsior Palace (3 nights)

INCLUSIONS

- ❖ Luca Ros, owner of Italian Tours and a native of Friuli, will be the tour leader for this tour
- ❖ Accommodation on a twin-share basis as listed above
- ❖ Breakfast daily
- ❖ Ten meals (lunches or dinners, with wine included) in restaurants chosen for their authenticity and quality
- ❖ All land transport in Italy is by private, air-conditioned mini-bus
- ❖ Admission to all museums, galleries and sites in the itinerary
- ❖ Expert local guides at key locations

WEATHER

September is a superb time to visit Friuli Venezia Giulia. Days are generally mild to warm, especially in the plains and along the coast. At the same time, evenings in the foothills and mountains can be refreshingly cool. It is an ideal season for sightseeing, gentle walks and enjoying the region's food and wine.

PHYSICAL FITNESS

We do not place any age limits on clients and welcome anyone with a moderate level of physical fitness. You should be comfortable on your feet for up to 3 hours with short breaks and confident walking on cobblestones, uneven surfaces and gentle inclines, particularly in the hilltowns and alpine areas.

BOOKING

If you would like to book a place on this or any other tour or have questions about the itinerary, please don't hesitate to contact Luca or Philippa at Italian Tours.

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