



# Pre-Departure Information

ITALY: THE TOUR OF THE GIANTS



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# Reminders Before You Go

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## WELCOME!

We're delighted to welcome you on this adventure! This booklet is designed to guide you in the practical details for preparing for your trip. As you read, if any questions come to mind, feel free to give us a call or send us an email—we're here to help.

## PLEASE SEND US

- Trip Application:** Complete, sign, and return your Trip Application form as soon as possible if you have not already done so.
- Medical Form:** Complete, sign, and return your Medical Form as soon as possible if you have not already done so.
- Air Schedule:** Please forward a copy of your email confirmation, which shows your exact flight arrival and departure times. Refer to the Arrival & Departure section of the Detailed Trip Itinerary for instructions. Please feel free to review your proposed schedule with Wilderness Travel before purchasing your tickets if you have any questions about the timing of your arrival and departure flights or would like to confirm we have the required minimum number of participants to operate the trip.

## PLEASE CAREFULLY REVIEW

- Travel Documents & Medical Information:** Carefully review the Travel Documents and Medical Information sections of this booklet to familiarize yourself with Passport and Visa entry requirements for your destination, as well as any recommended inoculations.
- Optional Travel Insurance:** Review the Trip Cancellation & Transfer Fee Schedule included in the Detailed Itinerary. We recommend that all trip members purchase Travel Insurance.
- Final Documents:** Approximately three weeks before your trip, we will send you final departure documents, including hotel and local contact information and rendezvous instructions.

## QUESTIONS?

Call: 1-800-368-2794, go to our **website** ([www.wildernesstravel.com](http://www.wildernesstravel.com)) or e-mail us at: [info@wildernesstravel.com](mailto:info@wildernesstravel.com).

# Travel Information

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## PASSPORT

A valid passport is required for your trip. Be sure to check the expiration date. Your passport must be valid for three months after your date of exit from Italy. In addition, we recommend your passport have at least two completely blank visa pages for every country you will be visiting. It is very important that the blank pages say “Visas” at the top. The last few pages of your passport, which say “Amendments and Endorsements,” and the final page of your passport, which may not have a page number, are not considered to be legitimate visa pages. The service of adding pages for visas was discontinued as of January 1, 2016. You can request a new passport through **US Passport Services Office** (<http://travel.state.gov/passport>) or use a visa service agency, which can take care of your passport renewal and expedite the process, if needed. We recommend **Passport Visas Express** (<http://www.passportvisasexpress.com/?affId=2120>). Be sure to allow sufficient time to acquire this before your trip.

It is a good idea to carry photocopies of your passport’s photo page and any acquired visa pages for your trip (if applicable) in case your passport is lost or as an additional piece of identification, as well as two extra passport photos.

## VISAS

US citizens do not need a visa for countries visited on this trip. If you are a citizen of any country other than the US, check with a local consulate for entry requirements.

## MONEY

The Euro is the official currency of Italy. The most convenient way to obtain Euros is to use your bank ATM card at automatic tellers in Italy. If you plan to get cash this way, it’s wise to get a list of ATM locations in advance online or from your bank. Traveler’s checks are not recommended as they can be difficult and time-consuming to cash. Your Trip Leaders will advise you where and when money can be changed. Major credit cards are accepted in most shops in cities and larger towns.

To use an ATM internationally, you must have a four-digit PIN. If you plan to use your credit cards, inform your credit card company before your departure that you will be using the card abroad.

You will need to budget spending money for gratuities, any meals not included in the trip itinerary, international and domestic airport departure taxes, and personal items such as beverages.

## TIPPING

Tipping is completely discretionary, but over the years, clients have asked us for tipping guidelines to reward guides for outstanding service. A range of reference would be \$110-135 USD per trip member for each Trip Leader, which can be given in USD or Euros. The Trip Leader takes care of gratuities for luggage handling, waiters at restaurants, and local guides and drivers who are with the group for only a short time.

## SPECIAL DIETS

We will do our best to accommodate special dietary needs, however, please keep in mind that certain cultural differences or limitations due to logistics can make it extremely difficult and at times impossible to accommodate dietary restrictions. Please inform us at least eight weeks before your trip if you have a restricted diet. It is important to bring a flexible attitude and supplemental snacks.

## COMMUNICATIONS

### **Telephone**

The international dialing code for Italy is 39. Please contact your cell phone company for specific instructions for international use.

### **Email & Internet Access**

Internet access is available at most of our hotels, but can be unreliable.

## ELECTRICITY

Europe has 220-volt current. Plugs usually have two or three prongs.

# Medical Information

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The following recommendations should be used as a guideline only; consult your physician for medical advice. It is vital that you let Wilderness Travel know of any medical problems, allergies, or physical limitations you may have. Please fill out and return the personal medical questionnaire, and feel free to consult us if you have any questions about your ability to undertake this particular trip.

Wilderness Travel is not a medical facility and has no expertise or responsibility regarding what medications or inoculations you and your physician decide are necessary for your safe participation in the trip.

Traveler's health information is available from the **Centers for Disease Control**. (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm>) Medical travel products are available from **Travel Health Medicine** (<http://www.travmed.com>) and from **Magellan's Travel Supplies**. (<http://www.magellans.com>)

## INOCULATIONS

No inoculations are required. However, it is easy to get a small cut, so a tetanus booster is strongly recommended (good for 10 years). If you take prescription medicines, be sure to bring enough for the duration of your trip.

## STAYING HEALTHY

You can reduce your risk of getting a cold on the trip by washing your hands often and not touching your face with unwashed hands. If you arrive on the trip with a cold or feel the symptoms of a cold, avoid close contact with others and move away from people before coughing or sneezing. The CDC recommends coughing or sneezing into a tissue or into the crook of your elbow or upper sleeve, not your hands.

## GETTING IN SHAPE

We strongly urge you to “train up” for your trip. Your enjoyment of the trip will be very dependent on your level of fitness. The best training for hiking is hiking, especially over hills or rough terrain. Next best are running, swimming, bicycling or other sports exercise. Stair-climbing machines are excellent preparation for hiking uphill. Try to incorporate exercise into your daily schedule at least a couple of months before departure. Your feet should also be well prepared—make sure your hiking boots are sturdy and thoroughly broken-in. Altitude is not a problem on these trips. The itineraries are designed to take you gently to higher altitudes, giving you plenty of time to acclimatize. However, some people still find they get a few problems when they first reach high altitude. A slight headache and sleeplessness are the most common problems.

# Helpful Information

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## PHOTOGRAPHY

### Camera Recommendations

With the many advances in digital technology, a simple compact digital camera or even your smartphone is capable of taking pictures suitable for the needs of most people. For higher quality images and the ability to use long lenses for closer wildlife pictures, a DSLR camera is well worthwhile, though heavier. Most digital cameras and phones have good video options, but you may want to consider a GoPro for a lightweight, waterproof option. Always practice ahead of time with new equipment and bring your manual with you. Camera equipment is available for rent from **Borrow Lenses** (<https://www.borrowlenses.com/discount/wildernesstravel>), with a 10% discount offered to Wilderness Travel clients. This is an especially good idea for renting large zoom lenses that you may need for just one trip.

### Camera Accessories

We recommend bringing at least two large capacity memory cards or a small digital storage unit (or tablet) to back up your photos, freeing space on your memory cards. Don't forget to bring a battery charger and a backup battery so one is always charged and ready to use. For trips where you may be away from power sources for multiple days, consider looking into a solar-powered battery charger or buying additional backup batteries, and check that you have the appropriate adapter for the electrical outlets in your destination.

### Sharing Your Images

We would love for you to share photos from your trip, and with your permission, may even use your photos in our marketing materials or on our photo blog. We request that you send us a small sample of your best images. Please email your photos to [wtphotoblog@gmail.com](mailto:wtphotoblog@gmail.com) or tag us **@WildernessTravel** on social media.

### Photography Etiquette

When taking pictures of local people, be aware of cultural considerations. Approaching people with a warm smile and using polite gestures or simple phrases to ask permission to photograph them usually works well. It is always recommended to engage people in conversation before asking to photograph them, but if people do not wish to have their photo taken, please honor their requests. We urge travelers to avoid giving money in exchange for photo opportunities, which makes it harder for future travelers to have a meaningful personal interaction with local people. Please always heed your Trip Leader's guidelines for what is appropriate.

## BEING A CONSIDERATE TRAVELER

Please show respect for the cultures we are visiting by observing local customs concerning appropriate dress, particularly in sacred places. Your Trip Leader is always available to answer any questions that you may have regarding this. If it is necessary to use a cell phone during the trip, please do so privately. Smoking is rarely an issue these days, but if you do smoke, please do so only away from the group.

# Packing List

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## THE ESSENTIALS

- Air tickets (or E-tickets)
- Passport
- One other picture ID, such as a driver's license
- Expense money

## WT GEAR STORE

To help you prepare for your next WT adventure, we've put together a great collection of top brands including Patagonia, Outdoor Research, Eagle Creek, and more at our **WT Gear Store** (<http://wildernesstravel.newheadings.com>).

## LUGGAGE

We ask that you restrict your luggage to one piece plus your daypack. Additional luggage can be checked at the airport if you plan to return to the same airport for departure.

- Soft-sided suitcase, with a small padlock.
- Daypack, large enough for a fleece jacket, rain gear, water bottle, camera, and other items you want on the trail. A padded hip belt and padded shoulder straps add greatly to the comfort.
- (Optional) Small roll-up bag to carry home purchases.

## NOTES ON CLOTHING

The clothing list below is provided as a guideline only. The single two most important and essential items for this trip are waterproof, breathable, good quality rain jacket with a hood, and medium to heavyweight, broken in, good quality hiking boots. For certain evenings when we dine in some nice restaurants, you might feel comfortable wearing dressier, non-hiking clothes. Khakis and a nice shirt will suffice for men (coat and tie not necessary).

## LAYERS

For your base layer, look for t-shirts and long underwear in synthetic fabrics. Synthetic fabrics (Polypropylene, Capilene, fleece) insulate and retain warmth even when they are wet, and they are far lighter than wool. They also have the added benefit of drying quickly. Avoid cotton because it is not a good insulator, especially as a first layer next to the skin. Once cotton gets wet from perspiration, it stays wet and keeps you cold. (Cotton is fine for city wear and touring.) As your insulating layer, we suggest a fleece jacket and pants, which are lightweight, warm, and breathable, or wool, which also keeps you warm even when wet. Finally, a good outer layer is necessary to block the wind and keep you dry in case of rain. Your outer layer should be roomy enough to fit over other layers of clothing.

## CLOTHING

- Gore-Tex rain/wind shell jacket with hood, and Gore-Tex rain/wind pants (preferably with leg zippers so that they can be taken off without removing your boots). Important: Whether you choose Gore-Tex, Supplex, or a similar fabric, make sure your jacket has a hood and sealed seams to prevent leaking.
- Fleece jacket or heavy wool sweater
- Fleece sweater or sweatshirt
- Polypropylene or Capilene long underwear, bottom and top
- Long-sleeved shirt. Fleece or quick-drying “travel” fabrics like nylon.
- T-shirts
- Hiking pants, one or two pairs. Jeans are not suitable because they are made of dense cotton, and once wet, will stay wet. Pile pants or synthetic hiking pants are a practical choice.
- Hiking shorts, two pairs. Quick-drying nylon shorts are great.
- Shade hat with wide brim, preferably a waterproof one that can double as a rain hat
- Fleece hat for warmth
- Fleece gloves
- Medium to heavyweight hiking boots
- Comfortable walking shoes for towns
- Hiking socks. Thick pairs (Thorlo-type) as well as synthetic liner socks.
- Underwear. Synthetics dry faster.
- Sleepwear (long underwear can double)
- Casual city/hotel attire

## EQUIPMENT

- Two reusable water bottles, or hydration pack
- Good quality sunglasses with case. A spare pair of sunglasses is a good idea should your first pair be broken or lost.
- Stuff sacks or plastic bags to compartmentalize items in daypack or luggage
- Raincover for daypack

## PERSONAL FIRST AID SUPPLIES

Every trip member should bring a small kit for personal use. Your own experience will influence your choices.

- Sunscreen SPF 30 or higher and lip balm with sunscreen. We recommend mineral-based sunscreens with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide because they do not contain harsh chemicals that are harmful to the environment. Brands such as Honest Company, Badger, and Alba Botanica are found in most sporting goods stores and drugstores.
- Aspirin, ibuprofen, or Tylenol for muscle pain or headaches, Tylenol PM for sleep
- Blister kit. Look for the long-lasting gel-type bandages that you can apply directly on blisters, such as Band-Aid Advanced Healing Bandages or Curad Gel Multi-Day Bandages. “Liquid band-aids,” such as New-Skin, are useful because they dry rapidly to form a tough protective cover over a blister.
- Prescription medications properly labeled
- Spare contact lenses or spare prescription glasses

## OPTIONAL ITEMS

- Voltage converter and plug adapter for appliance use in hotels.
- Fleece vest for layering
- Bandannas
- Hiking poles. Hiking with a collapsible hiking pole, such as those by Leki and REI, helps to distribute your body weight, takes pressure off your knees, and improves your balance. Some hikers prefer using one pole and others hike with two poles.
- Camera, spare batteries, spare memory cards
- Bathing suit
- Reading/writing material
- Travel clock
- Small umbrella
- Washcloth, if you like to use one (most European hotels do not provide them)

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