

BACKROADS
THE WORLD'S #1 ACTIVE TRAVEL COMPANY.

SOUTHERN ITALY—SICILY'S SEASIDE & ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS



BIKING | Premiere Hotels

An island almost as close to Africa as to Europe. It's historic. Passionate. It's Sicily. The homeland of some of Europe's friendliest hosts. Where art and architecture hail from countless centuries. Where Mount Etna simmers on the horizon and delicious seafood forever raises the bar. Ready to surrender to an island's passions? Let it be Sicily.

18BSIIR1c 5/24/2018



WHY BACKROADS?

"Backroads is the best of the best."
Sheryl Simons | SK, Canada

"Trip of a lifetime for my husband and I. The beauty of Sicily was fabulous...I felt like I was in a movie set every day. The accommodations and additional experiences (i.e. the Sicilian singers) were fantastic. The attention to every detail of our comfort, food, water, route advice, etc. was top notch. Can't wait to book another!"

*Mindy Salzberg-Siegel |
Birmingham, MI*

Click [HERE](#) to read more reviews

6 DAYS, 5 NIGHTS

Click [HERE](#) for departure dates and pricing details

ACTIVITY LEVELS 2-5

[See below for details](#)

TO RESERVE YOUR TRIP

Sign up online [HERE](#) or call 800-GO-ACTIVE (462-2848) or 510-527-1555

Open daily 6 a.m.-6 p.m. Pacific time

BACKROADS
THE WORLD'S #1 ACTIVE TRAVEL COMPANY.

Never Subcontracted

We operate our own trips around the globe. That way we control the quality—and we're fully responsible for your great experience.

Two Support Vans

We provide two support vans on all of our trips* so you can count on us to be there when you need us, regardless of the route you take.

Three Leaders

Our trips have three leaders*, for an average 6:1 guest-to-leader ratio. Guests consistently score our leaders 9.7 out of 10, telling us they make all the difference.

Thoughtful Trip Design

We know how to create exceptional travel experiences, ensuring that you get the most from your trip as it unfolds.

Multiple Daily Routes

Being able to choose among several expertly designed routes each day gives you the freedom to enjoy the best of a region at your own pace.

We Celebrate Mixed Abilities

To accommodate varied activity levels, you need three leaders, two vans, multiple route options, detailed directions, a rating system showing if shuttles are required, and plenty of well-matched riding/hiking companions.

*See web for more information on leaders and van support

Click [HERE](#) to learn more about the Backroads Quality Guide

STRAIGHT *talk*

We want to make sure you're on the right trip and that you have the best experience possible. Every Backroads trip is unique and this one is no exception.

BIKING IN SICILY

Although Sicily is part of Italy, the island can feel worlds away from the mainland, as it remains one of the country's most rural and economically challenged regions. Cycling here is both a physical and cultural experience where a touch of patience and humor go a long way—watch out for that rooster! And believe it or not, litter can occasionally be part of the landscape, especially when approaching small villages. For most, these challenges are overpowered by the indelible beauty of Sicily's serene countryside and its warm hospitality.

SERVICE STANDARDS

The slower pace and relaxed approach to life in Sicily is one of the highlights of this spectacular island and is reflected in the inns and restaurants on this trip. This said, service can lack a sense of urgency when compared with the service found in other regions. Because dining is an event unto itself here, our restaurants encourage you to slow down and enjoy a leisurely paced meal. Your best bet is to sit back, relax and soak in the Sicilian way of life.



DAY 1

On the first day of the trip, meet your Backroads Trip Leaders (the folks in Backroads T-shirts) at 10 a.m. at UNA Hotel Palace (+39-095-2505111), located at Via Etnea 218 in Catania, Sicily.

Please arrive dressed in your biking clothes and bring your luggage and a daypack with your rain gear and anything else you may want for today's ride (your luggage will be transported to our first night's accommodations).

SHUTTLE TO BUCCHERI 1½ Hours

BIKING OPTIONS:

Castello Camemi Route: 16 Miles (800' elevation gain)

Valley of the Giants Route: 29 Miles (2,100')

Benvenuti in Sicilia! After meeting in Catania, we shuttle to quiet and charming Buccheri, a small town nestled in the hills. Following a feast of Sicilian specialties, your Backroads Trip Leaders fit your bike and give a brief talk on biking techniques and safety. Then head out on a warm-up ride along country roads through the verdant hills of the Val di Noto, a World Heritage site, with spectacular views of Mount Etna, Europe's largest active volcano, in the distance.

The valley's eight towns (Caltagirone, Militello Val di Catania, Catania, Modica, Noto, Palazzolo Acreide, Ragusa and Scicli) were rebuilt after being destroyed by an earthquake in 1693. They represent innovations in urban planning and are impressive in both their architecture and artistry.

Our home for the next two nights is Castello Camemi, a nobleman's former residence located in the countryside near the ancient city of Vizzini—you'll know we're close when you see imposing Mount Etna in the distance.

When you arrive, take time to settle into your room before we gather this evening for a welcome reception and *aperitivo* (cocktail), followed by dinner at the hotel's restaurant. *Lodging: Castello Camemi*



DAY 2

BIKING OPTIONS:

Valle dei Margi Route: 21 Miles * (1,200' elevation gain)
Camemi to Grammichele Route: 34 Miles * (2,800')
Grammichele Loop: 41 Miles (3,500')
Citrus Grove Route: 52 Miles (4,300')

SHUTTLE TO CALTAGIRONE 1 Hour Round-Trip

**with shuttle*

Today's ride is quintessential Sicily: rolling hills, citrus trees, agricultural fields and hill towns. From the hotel, follow lightly traveled roads toward the flanks of Mount Etna. Enjoy a breezy descent through the Sicilian countryside before climbing to Mineo, a former Arab stronghold. Then it's a brisk downhill to an area blanketed with fragrant lemon and orange orchards. Here we stop at a local *agriturismo* (country retreat and working farm) for a fresh lunch of regional specialties made with seasonal produce grown right on-site.

Following lunch you can jump back on your bike and pedal toward Grammichele, tracing the ridgeline between two valleys. After the 1693 earthquake, Grammichele was rebuilt and divided into six sections by streets emanating from the main piazza. Pass through the square, stop for a refreshing granita, then pick up a scenic road that takes you back to our hotel for some downtime before dinner.

This evening we shuttle to the town of Caltagirone, famous for producing beautiful hand-painted ceramics and terracotta sculptures, where you'll have the opportunity to learn about this age-old craft and perhaps find a

handmade souvenir. Colorful tiles honoring the town's history line the 142 steps leading to the highest point in the city—make it to the top and you'll be duly rewarded with spectacular views of the evening light falling over the city. Then we revel in a festive night of Sicilian culture and seafood-based cuisine at one of Caltagirone's best trattorie. *Lodging: Castello Camemi*

DAY 3

BIKING OPTIONS:

Zottopera Route: 23 Miles * (1,200' elevation gain)
Donnafugata Route: 46 Miles * (3,100')
Eremo della Giubiliana Route: 60 Miles (4,500')

**with shuttle*

After breakfast, grab your bike and set your sights on the southern province of Ragusa. Our ride highlights the varied Sicilian landscape, from the rugged volcanic zone to the Mediterranean seaside. Coast down from Licodia Eubea along tranquil roads toward the town of Chiamonte Gulfi. Beautiful olive trees shade the route as we near our lunch spot at a picturesque *agriturismo* on the outskirts of town. Here we break for a Backroads picnic that includes samples of the delicious olive oil produced on the farm.

In the afternoon, pedal along roads lined with *muri a secco* (stone walls) to Donnafugata, best known for its 17th-century castle where the Italian masterpiece *Il Gattopardo* (The Leopard), directed by Luchino Visconti, was filmed. From here, head out on a rolling route with a few challenging hills through a landscape of olive trees and farmland, enjoying views of the sea along the way.

Our home for the next two nights is Eremo della Giubiliana. Originally a 12th-century Arabic fortification and later a convent used by the Knights of Malta, the castle has been thoughtfully restored with many historic architectural elements. The former friars' rooms are now comfortable guest rooms, the medieval vault is a well-stocked wine cellar and the lookout point from which Barbary pirates were once spotted is now perfect for simply enjoying the view. Before dinner we're treated to a tour of the property and its very own archaeological site, a necropolis dating back to the 4th century BC. This

evening we gather for a tasting of local wines and delicacies before a lovely Mediterranean meal at our hotel. *Lodging: Eremo della Giubiliana*

DAY 4

BIKING OPTIONS:

Eremo to Scicli Route: 22 Miles * (1,400' elevation gain)

Donnalucata Route: 28 Miles * (1,700')

Scicli Loop: 42 Miles (3,500')

Modica Loop: 57 Miles (4,800')

SCICLI GUIDED WALKING TOUR 1 Hour

**with shuttle*

Soak in valley and ocean vistas along quiet roads that give way to undulating hills en route to the baroque town of Scicli. Those interested in maximum mileage—and perhaps a sweet treat for your trouble!—can tack on a ride to Modica before lunch. It's an uphill climb to the top, but then it's downhill through a lush valley all the way back to Scicli.

In Modica you can visit the famous duomo or stop in at the oldest chocolate shop in Sicily, Antica Dolceria Bonajuto, for a sample of chocolatier Pierpaolo Ruta's tempting creations. For those not visiting Modica, we take a guided walking tour of town, visiting the unique *chiafura*, ancient cave dwellings that were inhabited until the 1960s. Later you're free to have lunch on your own at one of Scicli's trattorie. Your leaders can point out some of their favorites, including one that's located in a *grotta* (cave).

In the afternoon pedal to the charming fishing village of Donnalucata. After parking our bikes, we walk along the waterfront to a favorite *gelateria* for a tasting of homemade gelato. If the gelato has revived you and you're up for the final challenge of the day, hit the road on two wheels, taking on the picturesque ascent back to the hotel.

Tonight we shuttle to the World Heritage town of Ragusa Ibla, where you'll see more examples of baroque architecture and the town's famous Duomo di San Giorgio. After strolling through town, savor dinner on your own at one of several fine restaurants. *Lodging: Eremo della Giubiliana*



DAY 5

BIKING OPTIONS:

Giannavi Route: 23 Miles * (2,000' elevation gain)

Solarino Route: 44 Miles * (3,400')

Minareto Route: 62 Miles (3,700')

**with shuttle*

Bidding farewell to Eremo della Giubiliana, we follow a westward route through a less populated part of Ragusa and into the Sicilian countryside. Cruise along rolling hills, past Greek ruins and small towns, then pedal to an *agriturismo* for a picnic lunch featuring the property's cheeses and produce.

Afterward, ride through rolling hills to the town of Solarino to meet up with the shuttle or stay on your bike to coast your way to our last hotel, Grand Hotel Minareto. Situated on a bluff in the Plemmirio Marine Nature Reserve, the hotel looks out over the sea to Siracusa's old city on the island of Ortigia. Once you settle in, there's time to soak up the Sicilian sun, take a swim in the refreshing waters of the Mediterranean at the hotel's private beach or head to the spa. (Spa treatments not included in the trip price. Advance reservations are recommended.)

In the evening, we reconvene to celebrate our week in Sicily with a farewell *brindisi* (toast) on the hotel's terrace. Relish spectacular views of the sea and old city, then we head into Ortigia for our last night's dinner together. As we stroll through town to tonight's restaurant, take in the

many Greek-influenced and baroque sites before sitting down to a superb fine dining experience. *Lodging: Grand Hotel Minareto*

DAY 6

PLEMMIRIO MARINE NATURE RESERVE LOOP 13 Miles (400' elevation gain)

ORTIGIA WALKING TOUR 2 Miles (minimal elevation gain)

SHUTTLE TO CATANIA 1 Hours

This morning you can opt for an easy ride through the Plemmirio Marine Nature Reserve, which protects a plethora of species, from dolphins in the sea to saw palmettos onshore. Or if you prefer a more relaxed start to your day, sleep in and enjoy a leisurely breakfast or a spa treatment at the hotel. You can also take a morning jaunt back to Ortigia to explore the city's history on a walking tour with Salvatore, our friend and exuberant local guide, or to peruse the many charming streets and shops. Late morning, Backroads provides transportation to Catania. See "Arriving & Departing" for end-of-trip logistics.

KEEPING YOU UP TO DATE

We are always seeking opportunities to enhance this itinerary. We'll be certain to notify you of any important changes prior to departure; other changes may be communicated on trip by your leaders.

SHIFT GEARS



Our trips are designed to be flexible, giving you the freedom to experience the best of the region the way YOU want. Feel like you're ready to go, go, go? We can show you the way! Want some downtime or prefer to head out on your own? No problem! Your Trip Leaders will make sure to tell you the best days to take time for yourself (if you want it) without feeling like you're missing out. So feel free to shift gears and make it your day!

TRIP ACCOMMODATIONS

Premiere Hotels



2 Nights (above)

Castello Camemi

A beautifully restored 15th-century fortified castle that was once home to a noble family. (pool) | Vizzini Scalo | www.castellocamemi.com | +39-0933-010999

2 Nights

Eremo della Giubiliana

Amid orchards of almonds, figs and olives, this elegant 900-year-old property was once a hermitage and fortress. (pool) | Ragusa | www.eremodellagiubiliana.it | +39-0932-669119

1 Night

Grand Hotel Minareto

Take in stellar sea views at this luxury resort, perched on a promontory overlooking the pristine Plemmirio Marine Nature Reserve and featuring two private beaches. (pool, spa) | Siracusa | www.grandhotelminareto.it | +39-0931-721222

ARRIVING & DEPARTING

After reviewing the following information, please inform us of your arrival and departure plans on your *Personal Information Form*.

All prices are in US dollars and subject to change.

Meeting Time & Location

On the first day of the trip, meet your Backroads Trip Leaders (the folks in Backroads T-shirts) at 10 a.m. at UNA Hotel Palace (+39-095-2505111), located at Via Etna 218 in Catania, Sicily.

Please arrive dressed in your biking clothes and bring your luggage and a daypack with your rain gear and anything else you may want for today's ride (your luggage will be transported to our first night's accommodations).

Conclusion of the Trip

On the last day of the trip, Backroads provides a private coach to Catania Fontanarossa Airport, arriving at approximately 1:30 p.m., and to the UNA Hotel Palace, arriving at approximately 2 p.m. **Please schedule your departure flight for no earlier than 4 p.m.** If you're departing from Palermo, your leaders can help you arrange transportation from Catania; keep in mind that this option will take 2½–3½ hours and cost \$350–\$375.

Flight Arrangements

This trip starts and ends in Catania, Sicily. We suggest flying into and out of the Catania-Fontanarossa Airport (airport code: CTA; www.aeroporto.catania.it).

For help arranging air transport to and from your Backroads trip, please work with your own travel advisor or you may choose to work with the Backroads Travel Desk at Dimensions in Travel. Their professional expert travel advisors are ready to share their insiders' knowledge of Backroads and our worldwide destinations and are available to assist you with any of your travel needs. Call 800-GO-ACTIVE (462-2848) to be connected with an advisor. Please note that consulting or ticketing fees may apply, depending on the services requested. The Backroads Travel Desk at Dimensions in Travel is open Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Pacific time.

Transport Between the Airport & Central Catania

A taxi from the Catania airport to the city center takes about 15–20 minutes and costs approximately \$35–\$55.

PRICES & SCHEDULES

All prices and schedules were current at the time of printing, but are subject to change at any time.



DURING YOUR TRIP

Meals

Food is an important part of the Backroads experience. For lunch we look for the best way to capture the essence of the region. It may be a Backroads Grand Picnic, when your Trip Leaders prepare the freshest and healthiest local fare at a carefully chosen setting along the day's route; a boxed lunch; a packed lunch; a meal together at a favorite restaurant; or the opportunity to have lunch on your own.

Sicily has its own distinct cuisine, influenced by diverse culinary traditions including Spanish, Greek and Arab flavors. And seafood lovers rejoice—fish dishes are an essential part the island's fare! Our dinners feature Sicilian specialties at gourmet restaurants, frequently with specially prepared limited menus.

All breakfasts, four lunches and four dinners are included in the trip price.

Be aware that vegetarian/vegan, gluten-free and low-carb dishes are not always available. If you have special dietary requirements, please indicate them on the *Personal Information Form*. Your Trip Consultant will pass on the information to your Trip Leaders. Alcoholic beverages at meals are not included in the trip price, unless otherwise noted.

DESTINATION DETAILS

Climate

During late spring and early autumn, Sicily generally enjoys sunny skies and warm temperatures during the day and comfortably cool evenings. In early spring, Sicily can be quite chilly—extra layers are essential that time of year. Rain showers are possible year-round, so don't forget to come prepared with quality rain gear that is waterproof and breathable.

Catania

| Average: | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun |
|----------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| High °F | 59 | 60 | 63 | 68 | 74 | 82 |
| Low °F | 42 | 42 | 44 | 48 | 54 | 61 |
| Precip. inches | 3.6 | 2.3 | 2.2 | 1.5 | 0.7 | 0.2 |
| Average: | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec |
| High °F | 88 | 88 | 84 | 76 | 67 | 61 |
| Low °F | 67 | 68 | 64 | 58 | 50 | 44 |
| Precip. inches | 0.2 | 0.5 | 1.6 | 3.7 | 3.6 | 4.0 |



WORLD BICYCLE RELIEF

MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT



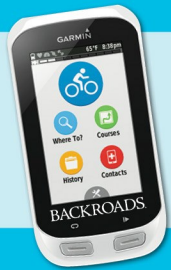
Backroads is pleased to support World Bicycle Relief's mission of providing bicycles to women, students, rural workers, healthcare providers and others in disadvantaged communities worldwide.



VISIT WORLDBIICYCLERELIEF.ORG

GETTING ACTIVE FOR YOUR TRIP

check out the **GARMIN EDGE** EXPLORE 1000 GPS



Our state-of-the-art GPS devices offer easy-to-follow directions and come pre-loaded with all the route options specific to your Backroads Biking Trip in Europe.

Activity Level

The routes on this trip are rated Levels 2-4.

| ACTIVITY LEVEL | BIKING | | WALKING | | |
|----------------|--------------------|------------|------------------------|------------|------------------------|
| | Avg. Time in hours | Avg. Miles | Max Elev. Gain in feet | Avg. Miles | Max Elev. Gain in feet |
| 1 | 2-3 hrs | 8-22 | 1000' | 2-5 | 800' |
| 2 | 2-4 hrs | 18-32 | 2200' | 4-7 | 1300' |
| 3 | 3-5 hrs | 26-42 | 3400' | 5-9 | 2000' |
| 4 | 4-6 hrs | 36-54 | 4400' | 6-11 | 3000' |
| 5 | 5-7+ hrs | 48-70+ | 4400'+ | 7-13+ | 4000'+ |

Review the "Activity Level" section on the web for more details on daily route options.

Conditioning Tips

Every Backroads trip is designed to appeal to a wide variety of interests and fitness levels. We know your pace may vary from one day to the next—and your traveling companions' may differ somewhat from yours. So we present a range of mileage options, and each day you decide exactly what and how much you want to do.

Before your trip, we suggest biking regularly and hitting a few hills whenever you can. Review the route options in the daily itinerary for the range of mileages offered on this trip. But mostly, just show up and have fun!

WHERE TO STAY BEFORE & AFTER YOUR TRIP

For help making hotel reservations for before and after your Backroads trip:

- Work with your own professional travel advisor.
- Contact the Backroads Travel Desk at Dimensions in Travel by calling 800-GO-ACTIVE (462-2848), Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Pacific time. Please note that consulting or ticketing fees may apply, depending on the services requested.
- Book directly with the hotel or through a discount website.

Please note that Backroads does not block rooms and does not offer special rates for pre- and post-trip stays. If you plan on extending your stay at our first night's hotel before the trip starts or our last night's hotel when the trip ends, let the hotel reservations agent know that you're traveling with Backroads—you may be able to avoid changing rooms. **We recommend booking your rooms as early as possible, especially during peak travel season!**

The following is a selection of recommended properties that span a range of prices, amenities and locations. Refer to the Hotel Room Rates guide for the starting double-occupancy rates, which were accurate at time of printing. Note that rates are subject to change and some hotels may require a minimum stay.

| HOTEL ROOM RATES | |
|-------------------------|-------|
| IN US DOLLARS PER NIGHT | |
| \$501 and up..... | ◆◆◆◆◆ |
| \$300 to \$500..... | ◆◆◆◆ |
| \$201 to \$300..... | ◆◆◆ |
| Up to \$200..... | ◆◆ |

UNA Hotel Palace in Catania is our meeting location on Day 1 and a drop-off location on Day 6. See the following for more information on this hotel.

Catania

Hotel map: bit.ly/CataniaHotels

Liberty Hotel

An intimate boutique hotel set on a quiet street within walking distance of Catania's center. The staff couldn't be more pleasant and helpful—ask for the best restaurant in town and someone will point you in the right direction. | Via San Vito 40 | www.libertyhotel.it | +39-095-311651 | 18 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆

UNA Hotel Palace

A chic fixture in Catania's downtown, this hotel invites you to slip into Sicilian-style luxury and comfort. Fantastic views of Mount Etna can be had from the roof garden—order a cocktail and a cool breeze and settle in for awhile. | Via Etna 218 | www.unahotels.it | +39-095-2505111 | 94 rooms | Rates: ◆ ◆

Villa Romeo

This simple but charming restored 19th-century palace is conveniently situated near the railway station and less than 2 miles from Fontanarossa Airport. | Via Platamone 8 | www.hotelvillaromeo.it | +39-095-534714 | 25 rooms | Rates: ◆ ◆

Siracusa

Hotel map: bit.ly/SiracusaHotels

Algila Ortigia Charme Hotel

Set near Ortigia's waterfront in the heart of the historic old city, this beautifully renovated hotel exudes ancient charm and offers views of the Mediterranean. | Via Vittorio Veneto 93 | www.algila.it | +39-093-1465186 | 30 rooms | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆

Hotel Borgo Pantano

Situated in the countryside not far from the city center, this tranquil retreat features a spectacular pool surrounded by fragrant citrus groves. (pool, spa) | Traversa Fontana Mortella 13 int. 4 | www.borgopantano.it | +39-093-1721993 | 32 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆

Antico Hotel Roma

The oldest and most centrally located hotel in Siracusa, the charming Antico Hotel Roma is known for its warm hospitality. Each room features a view of the sea. | Via Roma 66 | www.hotelromasiracusa.it | +39-093-1465630 | 44 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆

Palermo

Hotel map: bit.ly/PalermoHotels

Villa Igiea Palermo

Nestled in the suburb of Acquisanta, 1½ miles from the city center, this historic Art Nouveau hotel sits amid tropical gardens overlooking the sea. (pool) | Salita Belmonte 43 | +39-091-631-2111 | www.villa-igiea.com | 122 rooms | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆

Massimo Plaza Hotel

This wonderful palazzo is located in the heart of Palermo, across the street from the stunning Teatro Massimo. Some rooms have a balcony overlooking the plaza. | Via Maqueda 437 | +39-091-325657 | www.massimoplazahotel.com | 11 rooms | Rates: ◆ ◆

Rome

Hotel map: bit.ly/RomePPH

Hotel de Russie

Set on Piazza del Popolo, this Leading Hotels of the World member feels more like an elegant private home

than a hotel. Every detail has been thoughtfully considered, from the divine Italian linens to the magnificent gardens. *Travel + Leisure* World's Best. (pool, spa) | Via del Babuino | www.roccofortehotels.com | 888 667-9477 (from the US) or +39-063-28881 | 129 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Hotel Eden

This Leading Hotels of the World member has been welcoming royalty and dignitaries since 1889. Request a room on the fourth floor to take in the vistas from the privacy of your own geranium-filled balcony. | Via Ludovisi 49 | www.edenroma.com | 800-543-4300 (from the US) or +39-064-78121 | 121 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Hotel Hassler Roma

You'll find the hotel atop the Spanish Steps, just a stone's throw from the stunning Borghese Gardens. With a state-of-the-art fitness facility and Michelin-starred Imágo restaurant, it's no wonder that it's considered one of the world's finest hotels by industry mavens. *Travel + Leisure* World's Best. (spa) | Piazza Trinità dei Monti 6 | www.hotelhasslerroma.com | +39-066-99340 | 95 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Hotel Splendide Royal

This boutique hotel housed in a 19th-century palace is situated near Villa Borghese, three blocks from the Spanish Steps. Don't miss dining at the rooftop restaurant, Mirabelle. A Small Luxury Hotels of the World Member. | Via di Porta Pinciana 14 | www.splendideroyal.com | +39-064-21689 | 69 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Hotel Alimandi Vaticano

Located across from the Vatican Museums is the luxurious Hotel Alimandi Vaticano, whose spacious Liberty-style guest rooms face the Vatican Museums' entrance. A rooftop terrace offers views over the Vatican walls. | Viale Vaticano 99 | www.alimandivaticanohotel.com | +39-063-9745562 | 25 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆

Hotel Sole al Pantheon

Best known for its outstanding view of the Pantheon, Hotel Sole is one of Rome's oldest hotels, in operation since 1467. Ask for a room away from the piazza if you're

sensitive to noise. (spa) | Piazza della Rotonda 63 | www.hotelsolealpantheon.com | +39-066-780441 | 31 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆

Best Western Hotel Canada

Built in 1870 to house the officials of Castro Pretorio and conveniently situated near the Termini train station, this Best Western offers air-conditioned guest rooms and breakfast with your stay. | Via Vicenza 58 | www.bestwestern.com | 800-780-7234 (from the US) or +39-064-457770 | 73 rooms | Rates: ◆ ◆

Capo d’Africa

This hotel benefits from a great location just steps from the Colosseum, between the Forum and Domus Aurea palace. | Via Capo d’Africa 54 | www.hotelcapodafrica.com | +39-067-72801 | 65 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆

Hotel Alimandi Tunisi

If you’d like to stay close to the Vatican Museums, an Alimandi brothers’ hotel may be the perfect choice. Take in the spectacular view of St. Peter’s Basilica while enjoying breakfast on the hotel’s veranda. | Via Tunisi 8 | www.alimanditunisi.com | +39-063-9723941 | 35 rooms | Rates: ◆ ◆

Hotel Santa Maria

Set in the Trastevere quarter, this former 16th-century convent is within walking distance of Campo de’ Fiori and Piazza Navona. Few tourists venture to the Trastevere, a wonderful neighborhood with a bohemian spirit, tiny streets, artisan shops, great restaurants and an active nightlife. | Vicolo del Piede 2 | www.htlsantamaria.com | +39-065-894626 | 19 rooms | Rates: ◆ ◆

Hotel Teatro di Pompeo

This quaint property was constructed over the ruins of the Theatre of Pompey, the site on which Julius Caesar was assassinated in 44 BC. Guest rooms are spacious, pleasant and quiet. | Largo del Pallaro 8 | www.hotelteatrodipompeo.it | +39-066-8300170 | 16 rooms | Rates: ◆ ◆

Mecenate Palace Hotel

A few blocks from the Termini train station, this 19th-century home offers modern rooms and fantastic views of the Colosseum and Santa Maria Basilica from the rooftop garden terrace. | Via Carlo Alberto 3 | www.mecenatopalace.com | +39-064-4702024 | 74 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆

Florence

Hotel map: bit.ly/FlorenceHotels

St. Regis Florence

One of Europe’s finest hotels, the historic Grand Hotel reopened as St. Regis Florence after a complete renovation in 2011. For an even more special stay, request a room with a view of the Arno River. *Travel + Leisure* World’s Best. (spa) | Piazza Ognissanti 1 | www.stregisflorence.com | +39-055-27161 | 100 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Hotel Helvetia & Bristol

Considered by many to be the quintessential Florentine hotel, this Leading Hotels of the World member offers timeless sophistication. Guests love the ideal location between Piazza della Repubblica and Via de’ Tornabuoni. | Via dei Pescioni 2 | www.hotelhelvetiabristol.com | +39-055-26651 | 21 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Hotel Savoy

With one of Florence’s most enviable addresses on Piazza della Repubblica, just steps from the Duomo, Hotel Savoy wins over guests with its outstanding location and superior service. Request a room at the corner or on the top floor for spectacular city views. *Travel + Leisure* World’s Best. | Piazza della Repubblica 7 | www.roccofortehotels.com/hotels-and-resorts/hotel-savoy | 888-667-9477 (from the US) or +39-055-27351 | 102 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

J.K. Place

This Leading Hotels of the World member is an unexpected find, situated in the heart of Florence and ready to treat you with "precious details and impeccable service." A Small Luxury Hotels of the World member. *Condé Nast Traveler* Gold List. | Piazza Santa Maria Novella 7 | www.jkplace.com | +39-055-2645181 | 20 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Palazzo Magnani Feroni

For more than 500 years this regal residence has been at the center of Florence's aristocratic life. Just a 5-minute walk from the Ponte Vecchio, Magnani Feroni is perfectly situated for exploring San Frediano, one of the city's most historic neighborhoods. | Borgo San Frediano 5 | www.palazzomagnaniferoni.com | +39-055-2399544 | 12 suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆

Hotel Regency

This hotel has the feel of an exclusive private villa, with luxury accommodations and a tranquil setting. The Regency serves as a serene escape from the city's hustle and bustle. | Piazza Massimo d'Azeglio 3 | www.regency-hotel.com | +39-055-245247 | 35 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆

Palazzo Niccolini al Duomo

In 1532 the Naldini family began transforming a collection of 14th-century houses near Piazza del Duomo into this lavish palazzo. Its prime *centro storico* address is another plus: the Duomo can be seen from many of the hotel windows. | Via dei Servi 2 | www.niccolinidomepalace.com | +39-055-282412 | 10 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆

Room Mate Isabella

A former gathering place for European literati, this delightful hotel is in a recently renovated classic 19th-century building with a superb location on the fashionable Via de' Tornabuoni overlooking the magnificent Palazzo Strozzi. | Via Tornabuoni 13 | www.isabella.room-matehotels.com | +39-055-2396464 | 23 rooms & suites | Rates: ◆ ◆ ◆

Hotel Il Guelfo Bianco

If you're looking for pleasant no-frills accommodations in the heart of Florence, the Guelfo Bianco—just 200 yards from the Duomo—is hard to beat. | Via Cavour 29 | www.ilguelfobianco.it | +39-055-288330 | 10 rooms | Rates: ◆ ◆

Johanna & Johlea

While Florence has no shortage of outstanding hotels, it's also full of charming and elegant residence inns. We

recommend any of the Johanna & Johlea properties. All offer superb locations in unique buildings (a 19th-century villa, for instance, or a 1920s garden townhouse), attentive staff, lovely furnishings and a warm ambience. **Please note that credit cards are not accepted at any of the Johanna & Johlea residences listed below.** The properties are not staffed overnight, so you must check in by 7 p.m. Because Johanna & Johlea are such great finds in the city center, advance booking is key to securing a reservation; visit www.johanna.it for more information.

Antica Dimora Firenze

Via San Gallo 72 | +39-055-4627296 | 6 rooms | Rates: ◆ ◆

Residenza Johlea & Antica Dimora Johlea

Via San Gallo 76 & 80 | +39-055-4633292 | 12 rooms | Rates: ◆ ◆

Residenza Johanna I

Via Bonifacio Lupi 14 | +39-055-481896 | 11 rooms | Rates: ◆ ◆

Residenza Johanna II

Via Cinque Giornate 12 | +39-055-473377 | 7 rooms | Rates: ◆ ◆

Relais Uffizi

This inn offers modest rooms, a friendly atmosphere and an unbeatable location. Stumble out of bed and you're in the beautiful Piazza della Signoria, within easy walking distance of museums and other points of interest. Street noise is to be expected in such a prime spot, so keep this in mind if you're a light sleeper. | Chiasso del Buco 16 | www.relaisuffizi.it | +39-055-2676239 | 13 rooms | Rates: ◆ ◆

