



In Search of The Modern Grand Tour of Italy

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Taking “a grand tour” sounds old-fashioned – and it truly is. Few modern travelers to Italy have the patience for the amount of luggage required. “Who has more than two or three weeks, these days, for their holidays?” says Paul Bennett, co-founder of Context Travel.

Historic Meaning

“The classic Grand Tour was the wealthy, young man who spent several months traveling in Europe after finishing his formal schooling”. The young man typically left from England, and the tour served as “hiatus between adolescence and adulthood, between formal schooling and working. Italy was the high point, because these were people who were classically trained, and Rome and Greece were the cradle of Western civilization for them.” Aristocratic and upper-class families wanted their sons to improve their cultural and artistic knowledge. Italy became the centre of these journeys for its agreeable climate, wealth of artistic and cultural treasures, and Mediterranean lifestyle. Typical itineraries would include temples of high art, like Florence’s *Uffizi*, architectural masterpieces, like Rome’s Pantheon, archaeological finds, from *Pompeii* to *Herculaneum*.

When did things start to change? By the post-World War II 1950s, very few young people had the time or inclination to embark on the traditional Grand Tour – but many of its elements survived. “No one asks for The Grand Tour anymore,” says Sam Hilt of Tuscany Tours. “Our world has changed so much since that time it’s hard to imagine anyone sending their kids on a similar adventure. Still, there are places around the world that people definitely want to see, and millions take the trouble to do so every year. For the majority of travelers, this takes the form of a *bucket list*”. There are must-see places like Machu-Picchu, the Great Wall of China, or Petra, and must-see paintings and statues like the *Mona Lisa* or *Michelangelo’s David*.

Here is a list of experiences the 2016 traveler to Italy wants:

New Museums

There are many important art collections built in the past 50 years like the *Peggy Guggenheim Collection* in Venice, one of the world’s most important modern art destinations, including works by *Klee*, *Picasso*, *Braque*, *Duchamp*, *Dalí*, *Magritte*, *Miró*, *Mondrian*, *Kandinsky*, *Pollock*. Another important site is *Museo del Novecento* in Milan that must be visited.

Culinary Experiences

Culinary travel is completely new and it’s something we get the most requests without considering what time of year. Cooking courses, market tours and trips to food producers have become *a must* for sophisticated travelers to Italy. Cooking schools remain extremely popular; equally as good or better are the lessons given by Italian grandmothers right in their own homes. Clients of all ages look for “the most authentic” Italy possible, whether that means eating – or drinking.

Archaeological Finds

Many prehistoric discoveries in Italy would not have been available to travelers on Grand Tour, or even to 20th century travelers. Also, it was harder to get to remote areas in the 18th and 19th centuries, before airplanes and cars were available. In recent decades, archaeologists have uncovered never-before-seen sites and artifacts. One team has located a wall in Rome that proves the city existed two centuries earlier than believed; in Pompeii six new houses were re-opened after renovations at the site in December 2015.

Modern Secular Pilgrimages

Of course religious tours still visit St. Peter’s Square and walk on Saint Francis of Assisi’s path. However, modern travelers also appreciate a side trip to see favorite spots of a literary character like Andrea Camilleri’s Inspector Montalbano in Sicily or other Sicilian tours inspired by Francis Ford Coppola’s *The Godfather* movies.

A) Decide if these sentences are true (T) or false (F) 

T F

1. The ancient Grand Tour involved rich people after finishing their studies	T	
2. Italy was a typical destination of the classic Grand Tour because of its artistic heritage	T	
3. The Grand Tour changed its features for the destructive consequences of the World War II		F
4. The modern Grand Tour is mainly focused on cooking experiences		F
5. Nowadays, archeological tours offer less sites to visit than in the past		F

B) Match the definition... 

... to the correct word

1. A long strip of ground which people walk along to get from one place to another ...c...	a. must-see
2. Something recommended to be visited or seen ...a.....	b. knowledge
3. A place that is referred as the beginning of something ...d....	c. path
4. An ornament, tool, or other object that is made by a human being, especially one that is historically or culturally interesting ...e.....	d. cradle
5. Information and understanding about a subject which a person has, or which all people haveb.....	e. artifact

C) Choose the correct option looking at the text 1. The word *HIATUS* wants to express:

- a. change
- b. gap
- c. connection
- d. continuity

2. The expression *SIDE TRIP* means:

- a. a long excursion off the main route of an itinerary
- b. a tour on the coast
- c. a brief excursion off the main route of an itinerary
- d. the main itinerary

3. The expression *BUCKET LIST* means:

- a. a series of experiences a person doesn't want to have before dying
- b. a series of experiences a person wants to have before dying
- c. a series of experiences impossible to have
- d. a series of events affecting a person during his/her life

D) Fill in the gaps using the given words 

a. 1660 – b. trips – c. opportunity – d. years – e. 1840s – f. traditional – g. primary – h. neo-classical – i. itinerary – j. Renaissance

The Grand Tour was the**traditional**..... trip of Europe undertaken by mainly upper class European young men when they were approximately 21 years old. The ritual flourished from about**1660**....., until the advent of large-scale rail transport in the**1840s**....., and was associated with a standard**itinerary**..... . It served as an educational rite of passage. Similar**trips**..... were made by wealthy young men of Protestant Northern European nations, and from the second half of the 18th century, by some South and North Americans. The tradition declined with the fall of**neo-classical**..... enthusiasm and after rail and steamship travel made the journeys much easier.

The**primary**..... value of the Grand Tour, it was believed, lay in the exposure both to the cultural inheritance of classical antiquity and the**Renaissance**..... . In addition, it provided the only**opportunity**..... to admire specific works of art, and possibly the only chance to hear certain music. A Grand Tour could last from several months to several**years**..... .