

Heart of the Mediterranean

MAJ 06/05-2

Sunday, June 05

Depart for Malta

Day 1

Greet your fellow Ambassadors as you assemble in your departure city for your international flight to Valletta, Malta.

Monday, June 06

Salina Bay, Malta

Day 2

Welcome to Malta! Upon arrival, your People to People delegation manager and coach driver will greet you. Get to know the largest of the three Maltese islands. The first thing you notice about Malta is the dramatic landscape. Malta is desert-like and dominated by the golden glow of its stone buildings. Malta has been conquered and inhabited by many different cultures and contains some of the oldest man-made structures in the world. The capital city, Valletta, surrounded on three sides by water was once a mighty fortress, built by the Knights of Malta.

Tuesday, June 07

Home Stay, Malta

Day 3

Explore the island of Malta! Start with Valletta, the capital city. Valletta is an architectural gem of graceful golden-stone balconied buildings. Visit the Upper Barracca Gardens, where you have a breathtaking view of Europe's largest natural harbor. You'll also see the magnificent St. John's cathedral. Check out the marble floor, which contains hundreds of tombs of distinguished knights and nobles. Today you will have the possibility to take pictures of the impressive Mosta Dome, the third largest dome in Europe. During the Second World War, a bomb pierced the roof of the church but, miraculously, did not explode. Toward the middle of the island is the walled city of Mdina, the former capital. Stepping through the impressive gateway into the city is like stepping through time to the medieval age. It is one of the world's finest examples of a walled city that is still inhabited. Known as "the Silent City" because its narrow streets are unfit for traffic, Mdina is home to some of the oldest Maltese families. Explore the area as you participate in a fun treasure hunt. In the evening, meet your home stay family and get to experience life in Europe. Malta is a former British colony, so you will have no problem communicating with your hosts in English. Be ready to try new things!

Be sure to bring pictures of friends and family. Your host family will enjoy seeing them.

Wednesday, June 08

Home Stay, Malta

Day 4

Cruise to the tiny island of Comino and make the most of the unforgettable crystal clear waters of the magical Blue Lagoon. The cruise passes along both sides of Sliema, St. Julian's, the Casino, St. Andrews, Salina Bay, St. Paul's Bay and the island where St. Paul was shipwrecked in 60 AD. Spend your day swimming off the boat or ashore on the small white sandy beaches. Spend the evening with your home stay family, learn about the culture of Malta and meet the locals. This is your opportunity to make lifelong friends!

Thursday, June 09

Home Stay, Malta

Day 5

Race against your fellow delegates in a friendly go-cart competition! In the afternoon attend an educational meeting and take part in a service project. Tonight is your last evening you with your host family. Remember to write a thank you note and leave it with them, or mail it to them right away.

Don't forget to exchange address information so you can keep in touch!

Friday, June 10

Catania, Italy

Day 6

In the morning head for the south of Malta, and have a walk in a fishing village, where you may have an impression of Malta's daily life. In the afternoon depart Malta by ferry. *Bon Giorno e Benvenuti in Italia!* After your arrival in Sicily head for Catania where the charming Sicilian way of life is waiting for you!

Saturday, June 11

Catania, Italy

Day 7

Discover one of the most magnificent and popular towns of Sicily: Taormina. Set on a steep hill overlooking the sea, Taormina offers incredible views of one of the world's largest and Europe's most active volcano: Mount Etna. The Greek theater was built in the 3rd century BC, designed to highlight the majesty of the volcano. Get a feel for life on this beautiful coast as you explore the shops leading up to the cathedral square. This square is actually a terrace overlooking the azure waters of the Ionian Sea. Now that you've seen it from a distance, journey to Mount Etna (10,902 feet). The ancient Romans thought that the mountain was the forge of the god of fire, Vulcan. It's easy to see why; as the volcano has four live craters and is almost constantly in a state of activity. The surrounding areas teem with plants and birds due to the rich volcanic soil, and the trails around the mountain are a hiker's paradise.

Sunday, June 12

Palermo, Italy

Day 8

Depart for the seaside town of Cefalu (pronounced "chef-a-loo," with a hard "ch" sound, like in "checkers"). The town is dominated by a massive rock, once the site of the Temple of Diana. You'll get a feel for Cefalu on a guided city walk with your delegation. In the afternoon, continue to the "capital" of Sicily – the breathtaking city of Palermo.

Monday, June 13

Palermo, Italy

Day 9

The Greek influence in Sicily is not to be overlooked. Historians say that during the 6th and 5th centuries BC, there was probably little difference between Athens and the Greek cities of Sicily. Today, Sicily is a place where the classical world comes to life. You will visit the ruins of a massive Greek temple at Segesta — one of the most impressive Greek ruins outside of Greece. The temple dates back to the 5th century BC. Nearby, visit the ruins of an ancient theater where concerts are still held in the summer. In Trapani, you will have the opportunity to learn about sea salt production. Afterwards continue to Erice (pronounced "airy-chay"), a medieval mountain fortress. Tiny cobblestone streets wind through the town, lined with numerous shops and pastry stores. Erice was once the seat of the cult of Venus, the fertility goddess. Today, you can explore the remains of the temple once dedicated to her.

Tuesday, June 14

Overnight Ferry, Italy

Day 10

Today: sleep in! Relax in the morning before you will meet at lunch time to prepare your own meal: a typical Italian pizza! After lunch discover Palermo! Due to its strategic location, Sicily was home to numerous invaders and colonizers. The result is an abundance of Greek temples, Byzantine domes, Arab mosques and baroque churches. The capital city of the island is Palermo, once regarded as the grandest and most beautiful city in Europe. For a taste of the many architectural flavors of Sicily, your delegation will pay a visit to *San Giovanni degli Eremiti*, a Norman church built on the grounds of a former mosque. Notice the bulbous red domes on top of the church that point to its Islamic influence. Later on, head up the mountains outside Palermo to the hilltop town of Monreale. Here you'll have splendid views of Palermo and the surrounding mountains and sea. In the evening, board your overnight ferry to Naples!

Wednesday, June 15 **Rome, Italy** **Day 11**

Before going on to Rome, visit the capital of the region of Campania: *Napoli!* Situated on a beautiful bay, Naples is an ancient city that was founded by the Greeks. Make an excursion to the ancient city of Pompeii, Mount Vesuvius' most famous victim. When the volcano erupted in AD 79, it rained ash and stone, completely destroying and burying the town. In 1748, excavation began, and is still going on today. Some of the ruins are remarkably intact, including the House of the Faun, the House of the Vettii and the House of the Mysteries. Walking among them, you will feel as though you've stepped back two thousand years.

Friday, June 16 **Rome, Italy** **Day 12**

Welcome to *Roma!* For a first look at the "Eternal City" your delegation manager will take you on a guided exploration. Feel yourself immersed in centuries of history! Discover the sights and sounds of this incredible city as you explore the Forum, *Piazza Venezia* and the Colosseum. Constructed in 80 AD, the Colosseum has the capacity to seat over 50,000 spectators and was the venue once for such entertainment as gladiator combat! This afternoon, explore Rome's center as your delegation is divided into teams to engage in a little friendly competition. With your team, collect information about the Palatine Hill, *Piazza Navona*, the Pantheon, the *Campo de' Fiori*, the Spanish Steps and the *Trevi Fountain*. Don't forget to bring a coin; tossing a coin into the fountain will grant your wish to return to *Roma!*

Saturday, June 17 **Montecatini, Italy** **Day 13**

Visit the capital of Catholicism and the world's smallest state, the Vatican. Marvel at St. Peter's basilica, which contains hundreds of works of art, including Michelangelo's glorious *Pietà*. Adjacent to the basilica you will find the Sistine chapel, containing what are perhaps the most amazing frescoes in the world. Later, head for Montecatini, the next stop on your journey.

Remember: There is a strict dress code at the Vatican. Girls must cover their shoulders and knees. Long skirts or pants are appropriate. For boys, short-sleeved shirts are okay, but no shorts, please. Sandals are fine for either. You may be asked to leave or be denied entrance if you do not follow these guidelines.

Sunday, June 18 **Montecatini, Italy** **Day 14**

Today, travel to one of the most famous cities in Italy in Pisa, whose powerful navy once dominated the Mediterranean. Stop at the Square of Miracles, where you'll see some of the best examples of Romanesque architecture in Italy, including the Leaning Tower. Begun in 1173, the Tower started to tilt even before the third level was finished in 1274; it was finally completed in 1350. Your last Italian city will be one of the most culturally rich cities in the world: *Firenze* (Florence). At the center of the famous Tuscany region, Florence is the birthplace of the Renaissance—a rebirth of art and culture around 1400-1600. Meet your Italian guide for an initial look at the city. You'll get an overview of the colorful history of Florence and take a walk through the city center. The *Duomo*, the famous symbol of Florence, is the tallest building in the city and the fourth largest cathedral in Europe. Look for the bronze doors of the Baptistery, known as the "Gate of Paradise." Pay a visit to the *Accademia* Gallery that houses Michelangelo's colossal statue, *David*.

Monday, June 19 **Nice, France** **Day 15**

Bonjour et Bienvenue en France Arrived in France, join an educational meeting in the perfume factory in Eze, called Fragonard, and learn about how various herbs and spices are turned into exotic oils and perfumes.

Tuesday, June 20

Cannes, France

Day 16

Nice is the largest resort town on the Mediterranean coast. Considered the capital of the Côte d'Azur (the blue coast), Nice was Italian until 1860. You can see the Italian influence in the architecture. This area is also known as the French Riviera and is renowned around the world as a favorite destination of the rich and famous. You'll feel right at home here after a walk around the city with your delegation. Soak up the atmosphere on the *Promenade des Anglais*, which runs along the seafront. You will also visit Cannes, the seaside town that hosts the annual International Film Festival. Later in the afternoon have a walk through the tiny principality of Monaco, famous for its Royal family—the Grimaldis, the world's oldest monarchy—and its Grand Prix racetrack. Did you know that Monaco occupies an area smaller than New York City's Central Park?

Wednesday, June 21

Lyon, France

Day 17

Climb aboard your coach and head for Lyon, in the heart of France. On the way, you will pass through Avignon, an old medieval town. The most famous building found here is the bridge of Avignon called St. Benezet-Bridge. At one time, this bridge had twenty-two arches, but most of them were destroyed by floods in 1668. You might know this bridge from the song "*Sur le pont d'Avignon...*" In the evening, your delegation manager will show you the beauty of Lyon, which is built on the banks of the two rivers Rhône and Saône. The pace is slower there, the crowds are smaller and food is the first priority.

Thursday, June 22

Paris, France

Day 18

This morning head for Paris, the capital of France. Today explore the magnificent *Château de Versailles*. Built during the reign of Louis XIV, the Sun King, it was the seat of the royal court from 1682 to 1789, when the French Revolution put an end to the monarchy.

Friday, June 23

Paris, France

Day 19

For a dazzling view of Paris, the best place to go is up! Take the elevator to the top of the Eiffel Tower (899 feet), which was built for the 1889 World's Fair to commemorate the French Revolution. Then climb aboard a *bateaux*, or riverboat, for a cruise along the Seine. *Notre Dame* Cathedral, as seen from the river, is an unforgettable sight. After lunch, continue your day with a guided exploration of one of the most important art collections in the world, the famous *Musée du Louvre*. Since it would take at least three weeks to see all the wonderful treasures held inside, you will visit only the principal parts of the museum—including a look at Leonardo's masterpiece, *Mona Lisa*! In the afternoon, join a French guide for an orientation of the city Ernest Hemingway called "a moveable feast," because "wherever you go for the rest of your life, Paris stays with you." One of the most unforgettable places in Europe, the Cathedral took two centuries to complete. *Point Zéro*, the spot from which all road distances are measured in France, is found in the courtyard in front of *Notre Dame*.

Saturday, June 24

Depart for the United States

Day 20

Pack up your suitcase for the last time and board the coach for the airport. Remember to complete your program evaluations and exchange friendship cards with your fellow Ambassadors! *Au revoir La France!* Goodbye, Europe!

PLEASE NOTE: This itinerary may change at any time without prior notice.
Revised Schedule of Activities will be posted on your student's OnBoard web site.