

TURIN, GENOA AND THE FRENCH RIVIERA

With Dr Kathleen Olive



Discover outstanding art and architecture in Italy and southern France, from the hidden gems of Turin and Genoa to the exuberant modernity of the French Riviera

HIGHLIGHTS

- Appreciate the diverse heritage of north-western Italy, from Roman Taurinorum to medieval frescoes in extraordinary castles
- Survey superlative collections of art and antiquities in Turin, including the Egyptian Museum and the Savoy dynasty's encyclopaedic collections
- Explore beautiful landscapes, from wine tastings in Piedmont's hills to the colourful villages of the Riviera
- Discover Genoa, a less-visited and vibrant city, with its well-preserved medieval and baroque districts
- Enjoy the light of the French Riviera, the landscape of mountains and sea that inspired Matisse, Chagall and other modern masters

IN A NUTSHELL

DATES: 01-16 May 2025

ITINERARY:

Turin – 4 nights

Barolo – 3 nights

Genoa – 4 nights

Nice – 4 nights

PRICE: \$12,450pp twinshare

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: \$2,100
for sole use of a double room

FITNESS: Above moderate

GROUP SIZE: max. 20 places



Limelight Arts Travel Pty Ltd
Level 6, 84 Pitt Street, Sydney NSW 2000
(02) 8599 4201
www.limelight-arts-travel.com.au

LIMELIGHT
ARTS — TRAVEL

OVERVIEW

Turin, Genoa and the French Riviera have much in common, from their stunning alpine landscapes and colourful Mediterranean fishing villages, to their shared histories and cosmopolitan modern culture.

This 16-day tour explores the history, art and culture of these regions. In northern Italy, we encounter a frontier history that runs from Roman Taurinorum to fresco-covered medieval castles, and extraordinary collections of art and antiquities assembled by Savoy dukes and modern industrialists. Heading south, we enjoy Piedmont's celebrated wines and its lesser-known yet outstanding medieval art and architecture, before discovering Genoa's baroque cityscape and the scenic towns of the Italian Riviera. Finally, journeying into France, we admire a staggering patrimony left by artists in the hill-top towns and fishing villages in and around Nice, from Chagall to Matisse.

The tour is rounded out by excellent regional cuisine and the expertise of Dr Kathleen Olive, an experienced tour leader and Italianist.

TOUR LEADER

Dr Kathleen Olive is one of Australia's best-known cultural tour leaders, with over fifteen years' experience leading tours to Western Europe, North America, Australasia and Japan.

Kathleen is particularly known for her expertise in Italy, and she holds a PhD in Italian Studies from the University of Sydney. She lived and studied in Italy for a number of years and speaks fluent Italian.

Since 2003, Kathleen has led and designed over 70 cultural tours, and she is well known for her lectures on the history, art and culture of Italy at the WEA (Sydney), the Italian Institute of Culture (Sydney), the Art Gallery of NSW and for ArtsNational (formerly ADFAS). She has designed successful tours to France for other cultural tour operators, and in 2023 co-led this tour with Dr Louise Marshall.

Tour participants frequently praise Kathleen's engaging and attentive leadership of a group.



From top: Turin's distinctive skyline, with the Mole Antonelliana; Fountain of Youth in the Castello della Manta; Genoa's biosphere on the Porto Antico (Cristina Sanvito, Flickr); Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild; Nice's Musée Marc Chagall (Rosino, Flickr)



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TURIN: CAPITAL OF HISTORY, ART, FOOD AND WINE

BY DR KATHLEEN OLIVE

How much do you know about Turin, tucked away in the north-westernmost corner of Italy? Probably not much, as it's never received significant recognition from international visitors to Italy, despite its grand squares, colonnaded streets, superlative museums of art and antiquities, and reputation as the birthplace of Italy's Slow Food gastronomy movement.

From the first century BCE, Rome took a close interest in the site of present-day Turin. At the upper reaches of the mighty Po, so crucial to the transportation of goods and people, and nestled underneath the western Alps that form the modern border between Italy and France, it was a strategic base for the expanding empire, and the well-preserved **Porta Palatina** in the centre of Turin is still one of the world's best-preserved and oldest Roman city-gates.

From the eleventh century, Turin became part of the lands of the Counts of Savoy. With territory covering the major alpine passes from Chambéry to Vaud, the House of Savoy extended its influence as far west as Nice and, by the nineteenth century, down to Genoa. In the seventeenth century, successive generations of connoisseurs and patrons of the arts ensured that Turin, capital of the Savoy from 1563, was rejuvenated by **Guarino Guarini** (1624-83) and **Filippo Juvarra** (1678-1736), two of the Baroque's greatest architects, and by artists such as **Giovanna Garzoni**, a still-life painter who left some of her most interesting botanical works and miniatures at the Savoy court.

The Savoy were great collectors, too. They amassed priceless manuscripts, such as the van Eyck brothers' **Turin-Milan Hours**, and a handful of superlative Flemish works by Jan van Eyck, Hans Memling and others (still in Turin's **Galleria Sabauda**). In the eighteenth century, Savoy statesmen began to take a close interest in Egyptology, and the thousands of artefacts they excavated from all over North Africa are the reason why Turin's recently-renovated **Museo Egizio** is considered the finest collections of Egyptology in the world after Cairo's museum.

It was also in the nineteenth century that Turin became a centre of the Risorgimento ('resurgence'), a political movement that led to the unification of Italy. By 1861, Turin had been proclaimed the capital of the Kingdom of Italy, and an early House of Deputies of one of the incarnations of the new kingdom can still be visited inside **Palazzo Carignano** in central Turin.

In 1986, a group of Italian gastronomes – horrified by the opening of a McDonald's at the foot of Rome's Spanish Steps – inaugurated a movement celebrating Italy's traditions of gastronomy and viticulture. Its approach, the antithesis of "fast food", would become known as the **Slow Food movement**, and it now holds its most important event, the Salone del Gusto, in Turin every two years. It's the world's largest food and wine fair, and it's fitting that Turin is indelibly associated with its principles, as its region of Piedmont also gives us prestigious white truffles from Alba, and the red wines Barolo, Nebbiolo and Barbéra, in addition to *spumante* from Asti.



DETAILED ITINERARY

THURSDAY 01 MAY – ARRIVAL (L) – PUBLIC HOLIDAY

Our tour commences at 10.00am this morning, at a meeting point in Terminal 1, Malpensa airport, Milan. We meet our coach and travel to **Lake Orta**. Just west of better-known Lake Maggiore, Orta is placid, picturesque and crowd-free, with the basilica of local saint Julius occupying almost all of the small island of San Giulio in the lake's centre. After a lakeside lunch, we travel by boat to **Isola San Giulio** to admire the ancient church and its Romanesque pulpit, an inventive reminder of the aesthetic cross-currents encouraged by alpine trade. We continue in the afternoon to Turin, where the evening is at leisure. Your tour leader is at hand to assist with dining recommendations and reservations, after welcome drinks in the hotel. Overnight Turin.

FRIDAY 02 MAY – FROM THE EGYPTIANS TO THE SHROUD (B)

We begin the day with an orientation walk in central Turin, admiring the remnants of ancient Julia Augusta Taurinorum at the **Roman city gate** and the baroque redesign of the elegant Savoy capital from **San Lorenzo** to the **Chapel of the Shroud**. After our walk, we have a guided tour of the **Museo Egizio**, which houses the second most important collection of Egyptian antiquities in the world, the result of eighteenth and nineteenth-century aristocratic attitudes to excavation and connoisseurship. The entire museum was redesigned in 2015 and, after our tour, there is time at leisure to explore its collections independently. After a talk in the hotel, the evening is at leisure. Overnight Turin.

SATURDAY 03 MAY – SAVOY ROYAL COLLECTIONS (B)

We make the short walk this morning to **Piazza Castello**, the centre of royal power in Savoy Turin. From the seventeenth century, generations of this Franco-Italian house called upon architects such as Filippo Juvarra to showcase their wealth and culture in a stunning display of baroque architecture. Within this expansive and elegant series of squares and palaces, we take a survey of the **Galleria Sabauda** with Kathleen. The gallery is often overlooked in the circuit of great Italian art museums, but it has a fine collection of paintings that demonstrates the cosmopolitan heritage of the Savoy, related by marriage to all the great European royal houses, and its generations of connoisseurship. We admire works by Flemish artists Jan van Eyck, Rogier van der Weyden and Hans Memling, Italian Renaissance masterworks by Filippino Lippi and Andrea Mantegna, and an excellent international collection including Rubens, Rembrandt and van Dyck. There is the option to continue with Kathleen after lunch, to another museum or gallery in central Turin. There is a talk in the hotel this evening. Overnight Turin.



SUNDAY 04 MAY – FINE ART & FIAT (B)

Late in the nineteenth century, Turin was transformed by a rapid process of industrialisation, which only intensified with WWII and the subsequent “Economic Miracle” of the 1950s and 1960s. One of the most significant families leading this modernisation of the economy and of Italian society was the Agnelli’s of FIAT, and it’s no exaggeration to say that Turin today would not be the same without them. Today we take a short journey on Turin’s efficient metro system to the former industrial quarter of Lingotto, site of FIAT’s cutting-edge twentieth-century factory. It has been transformed into a commercial centre, with a bijoux Renzo Piano-designed art gallery for legendary “Swan” Marella Caracciolo Agnelli’s favourite artworks. We have a guided tour of the **Pinacoteca Agnelli**, which includes works from Canaletto to Renoir, Modigliani and Matisse, before taking a stroll on the **panoramic rooftop racetrack**. FIAT vehicles underwent their test drives up here, before descending a series of dramatic helicoidal ramps to the streets of Lingotto below. Returning to central Turin together, the afternoon is at leisure. Scheduled permitting, we plan to attend an opera tonight. Overnight Turin.

MONDAY 05 MAY – MEDIEVAL MARVELS IN THE VAL DI SUSA (B, L, D)

As the flow of pilgrims on the Via Francigena to Rome grew from the tenth century, religious communities began to establish themselves on alpine roads to minister to practical needs such as food, lodging and medical assistance. The Val di Susa, to the north-west of Turin, with its high mountains and narrow river valley, is still dotted with such institutions. Today we make an excursion into the valley, checking out of our hotel and calling in first at the **Abbey of Sant’Antonio di Ranverso**, an impressive art-filled monastery of the Antonine order, dedicated to caring for victims of St Anthony’s Fire (now identified as ergotism poisoning, caused by eating contaminated grains). After a country lunch, we continue to one of the most extraordinary medieval complexes in all of Italy, the **Sacra di San Michele**. Probably founded in the tenth century, it is a sprawling compound sited dramatically on top of a rocky outcrop, perfectly placed to survey the entire valley, and the inspiration for Umberto Eco’s *Name of the Rose*. Following our guided tour, we continue to the Barolo region and check into our hotel. There is a simple dinner in the hotel this evening. Overnight Barolo.

Please note: the 800m ascent to the Sacra di San Michele must be made on foot. It will take approximately 15 minutes to walk from the coach to the monastery.

TUESDAY 06 MAY – TRUFFLES & TASTINGS (B, D)

Of course, Barolo country is today known for much more than its medieval art and architecture, and it is one of Italy’s most prestigious gastronomic regions. Today we travel to **Alba**, a town of 30,000 inhabitants that is the centre of the white truffle trade in the UNESCO-listed Langhe region. We learn about the very precise conditions required for the production and gathering of Alba’s white gold, which can cost upward of 300 Euros for every 50 grams!



After time at leisure for lunch, we visit **San Fiorenzo** in Le Langhe, where a staggering collection of excellent fifteenth-century frescoes await us – more than 320 square metres in surface – in a little-visited church. In the evening, we learn more about the region's gastronomic culture, with a tour of the historic cellars of the Marchesi di Barolo. There is dinner and a tasting of Barolo wines at this family-owned winery. Overnight Barolo.

WEDNESDAY 07 MAY – CUNEO & THE ALPS (B, L, D)

From the Middle Ages, the Savoy dynasty, and the local counts with whom they were allied, took a keen interest in controlling and taxing traffic back and forth across the Alps. At the base of the so-called Cottian Alps, not far from the present-day border between France and Italy, the Marquises of Saluzzo enriched their castles not only with impressive fortifications, but also with the kind of courtly decorations that exemplified the aristocratic culture to which they belonged. Today we travel to the **Castello della Manta**, a perfectly preserved and lavishly decorated Renaissance castle, including a spectacular reception hall featuring gorgeously dressed famous men and women to serve as courtly exemplars, and an exuberant evocation of the transformations effected by bathing in the Fountain of Youth, with formerly grizzled elders eagerly making the most of their rejuvenation. Returning to the hotel, there is time at leisure before dinner in our hotel. Overnight Barolo.

THURSDAY 08 MAY – TO GENOA (B, L)

We check out of our hotel this morning and travel to Genoa, stopping in the area of **Asti** to visit the World Heritage-listed cellars of a sparkling wine producer. Asti's *spumante* has an excellent name, made from a Moscato white grape and with the highest appellation that Italy awards: Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita (DOCG). After lunch together, we continue to Genoa where we check into our hotel. There is the option of a light *aperitivo* this evening, and of an orientation stroll with Kathleen through the baroque and medieval districts of Genoa to its pleasant harbour. Overnight Genoa.

FRIDAY 09 MAY – THE LIGURIAN SEA (B, L)

The Ligurian coast is dotted with small bays and inlets, with dramatic scenery formed by craggy mountains that stretch in many places right down to the shore. Today we enjoy a landscape that has inspired countless generations of artists, writers and travellers, and which remains a popular holiday destination with the rich and famous. Travelling by private coach to the colourful fishing village of **Camogli**, we have time for a coffee in its picturesque lanes before embarking for the **Abbey of San Fruttuoso**. Accessible only by sea or a mountain path, this monastery was founded by Benedictines in the tenth century and later became an important possession of Genoa's powerful Doria dynasty. It perches, surrounded by mountains and crystal-clear water, in an unbelievably panoramic location, as we discover on a tour of the



complex. After lunch together, and weather permitting, we continue by boat to **Portofino**, a small Ligurian harbour that was the setting for Elizabeth von Armin's delightful *Enchanted April* and is now a jet-set haunt. Returning to Genoa, the evening is at leisure. Overnight Genoa.

Please note: a coaching alternative will be substituted for the boat in case of inclement weather.

SATURDAY 10 MAY – A MEDIEVAL MARITIME REPUBLIC (B)

Despite the inhospitable mountainous terrain, the city of Genoa was blessed with a deep harbour and a strategic Mediterranean location, and from ancient times it was a centre for trade and cultural exchange. In the Middle Ages, Genoa's fortunes changed for good as it refined its maritime technologies and maximised its shipping reach, just like Italy's other powerful maritime republics of Venice and Pisa. We begin today by exploring this proud heritage with Kathleen, taking a **walking tour** of the lanes (or *caruggi*) of the medieval Castello district. From the traditional house of Christopher Columbus to the church of Santa Maria di Castello and the Banco di San Giorgio, medieval Genoa was poised to exploit its relationship with the sea and the diverse architectural and artistic influences that this allowed. After time for lunch at leisure on the waterfront, we walk to the World Heritage-listed **Strada Nuova**, or Strada Maggiore ("new" or "main" street, now via Garibaldi). A superb example of Renaissance city planning, this broad, straight avenue was created in the mid-sixteenth century and quickly became the most fashionable district in town, where aristocrats built a series of magnificent palaces. Several are now art museums. The evening is at leisure. Overnight Genoa.

SUNDAY 11 MAY – THE LIGURIAN MOUNTAINS (B)

The other defining aspect of Genoa's geography is its mountains, which cluster so close to the harbour that extensive agriculture was never an option and crops such as chestnuts, olives, nuts and herbs became a central part of the Ligurian diet. Today we take a **historic railway journey**, on a narrow-gauge track, from Genoa to Casella. Winding 25km through the valleys and villages of the Scrivia region, the Casella railway opened in 1929 and was designed to transport tired city-dwellers from portside Genoa into the healthy environment of the pristine mountains. After lunch at leisure, we descend to Genoa, where the rest of the afternoon is at leisure. You might like to explore the shops and boutiques around Piazza de Ferrari and Via XX Settembre. There is an evening talk in the hotel before time at leisure. Overnight Genoa.

MONDAY 12 MAY – INTO FRANCE (B, D)

Travelling into France today, our first stop is the Dominican convent at **Taggia**, on the hills above the Italian Riviera. This striking example of an entire complex built and decorated over a few years at the end of the fifteenth century preserves harmonious Renaissance architecture, and many altarpieces still in place. Most of these were painted by French-born artist Louis (or Ludovico) Brea, who worked up and down the Provençal and Ligurian coast, a perfect example



of the artistic cross-cultural nature of the Renaissance Mediterranean. After lunch, we continue to the **Hanbury Botanic Gardens**, established by an English businessman in 1867 to preserve Mediterranean species and now regularly listed among Italy's most beautiful gardens. This evening in Nice, there is a simple dinner together. Overnight Nice.

TUESDAY 13 MAY – NICE OLD TOWN & VENCE (B, L)

We meet our local guide this morning for a **walking tour of the Old Town**, a maze of fascinating medieval streets wedged between the grand Promenade des Anglais and the imposing Castle Hill. After time to explore the Provençal market, we take an excursion into the hills to the west of Nice, particularly associated with artists such as Matisse, Picasso and Chagall. We enjoy lunch in the tiny walled village of **Saint-Paul-de-Vence**, irrevocably transformed by the residence of artists and intellects such as Sartre, Picasso and Chagall, and now populated with art galleries and chic restaurants. Afterwards, we visit the **Fondation Maeght**, a reminder that behind the big artistic personalities of the twentieth century there lay canny collectors, dealers and publishers such as Marguerite and Aimé Maeght. Through their sponsorship of Bonnard, Matisse, Calder, Braque, Chagall, Giacometti, Miró and Léger, this couple transformed modern art – and acquired a significant number of pieces from these artists, whom they encouraged to visit their villa in the hills. Designed by Josep Lluís Sert, it is a modernist paradise with over 12,000 works of art and highly-regarded temporary exhibitions. Returning to Nice, the evening is at leisure. Overnight Nice.

WEDNESDAY 14 MAY – MODERN MASTERS (B)

The warm light and rich colours of the French Riviera – in addition to its welcoming climate, relative permissiveness and affordability – has drawn generations of modern artists. Of those whose Mediterranean careers we explore, perhaps none has left as joyous and bright a legacy in the region as Marc Chagall and Henri Matisse. Matisse spent a significant amount of time on the Riviera, recovering from illness and working closely with local patrons. We start the day at the **Musée Matisse**, a museum dedicated to the artist's work and located on the prominent hill of Cimiez. Alongside the museum is the **Cimiez Cemetery**, where luminaries such as Matisse and Raoul Dufy now rest in peace. We pay our respects before a break for lunch, and then continue to the **National Museum Marc Chagall of the Biblical Message**. Working directly with the famed André Malraux, an influential Minister of Culture, Chagall and his family made the city of Nice this extraordinary gift in 1973. A recognition of the formative impact of the region on his work, the museum is also a testament to Chagall's lifelong desire to bring together in peace the closely connected People of the Book. Working in painting, sculpture, mosaic and stained glass, Chagall created a cycle of enduring religious and historic significance, and artistic experimentation. The later afternoon is at leisure for independent explorations in central Nice. Overnight Nice.



THURSDAY 15 MAY – VILLA KERYLOS & VILLA EPHRUSSI (B, L, D)

Cap Ferrat, a scenic peninsula to the east of Nice, is today one of the most expensive residential locations in the world, and it was the fashionable aristocrats of the Belle Époque period who created its golden reputation. Today we explore two historic villas that exemplify this world in very different ways. Beginning at **Villa Kerylos** in Beaulieu-sur-Mer, we encounter the extraordinary Ancient Greek Revivalist mansion of archaeologist Théodore Reinach, who in 1902 sought to recreate the world that his professional career had been dedicated to uncovering – with all mod cons, such as plumbing and underfloor heating, of course! Afterwards, we travel to nearby **Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild**, where we enjoy a high tea lunch before our guided visit. This residence, built 1907-1912 by Baroness Béatrice de Rothschild, takes a different approach to the historicism of Villa Kerylos, with antique French furniture, Old Masters, rare porcelain collections and other decorative arts showcased to magnificence in a pink neo-classical building with manicured gardens. To this day, the Baroness's extraordinary creation is rated as one of the Remarkable Gardens of France. Returning to the hotel, there is time at leisure before our farewell dinner. Overnight Nice.

FRIDAY 16 MAY – DEPARTURE (B)

Tour arrangements conclude today, after breakfast in our hotel. There are connecting flights from Nice airport to international and European ports, as well as high-speed TGV train departures to Marseille, Lyon and Paris from Nice-Ville station. Our partners at Mary Rossi Travel will be pleased to advise on onward travel arrangements, including flights, accommodation, transfers and travel insurance.



INCLUSIONS

- 15 nights' accommodation at 4* and 3* Superior hotels
- All breakfasts and 12 lunches or dinners
- All ground transport, guided tours and entrance fees to sites as mentioned in the itinerary, and tipping
- Expertise of and commentary by an Australia tour leader throughout, including talks in the hotel

HOTELS

Hotel Victoria 4* Turin, 4 nights

<https://www.hotelvictoria-torino.com/en/>

A family-owned boutique hotel in a quiet, central zone of Turin. Rooms are well-sized with elegant decorations and the breakfast is excellent.

Hotel Barolo 3* Superior Barolo, 3 nights

<https://www.hotelbarolo.it/en/>

Owned by the same family for three generations, this hotel has simply furnished rooms, a highly-regarded restaurant and an outdoor swimming pool.

Hotel Continental 4* Genoa, 4 nights

<https://www.hotelcontinentalgenova.it/en/>

A welcoming boutique hotel in a renovated nineteenth-century building, the Continental offers generously-sized and sound-proofed rooms in a central location.

Hotel Beau Rivage 4* Nice, 4 nights

<https://www.hotelnicebeaurivage.com/en/>

Well-located in the Old Town near the Promenade des Anglais, the hotel's City View rooms (our selection) have been recently renovated.

NB: hotels of a similar standard may be substituted.

TOUR DETAILS

DATES

01-16 May 2025

TOUR LEADER

Dr Kathleen Olive

ITINERARY

Turin – 4 nights

Barolo – 3 nights

Genoa – 4 nights

Nice – 4 nights

PRICE

\$12,450pp twinshare

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT

\$2,100 for sole use of a double room

FITNESS

Above moderate: some steep walks, getting on and off boats, long coaching days, standing in museums

GROUP SIZE

Maximum 20 places

DEPOSIT

\$1,500pp at the time of booking

FINAL PAYMENT DUE

15 February 2025

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

By booking on this tour, you accept our terms and conditions, which can be found on our website:

<https://www.limelight-arts-travel.com.au/terms-and-conditions-tours>

