

## International Soccer Tour 2023 Itinerary University of Illinois Chicago Spain – Barcelona

### Travel dates:

March or August 2023

### Itinerary:

- April 1 Departure from Chicago airport.
- April 2 Arrival Barcelona airport. Transfer to your accommodation.
- April 3 Bus or boat tour Tossa de Mar: visit the beautiful old fishing town made famous in the 1950's by Ava Gardner and James Mason in the film Pandora and the Flying Dutchman. Evening game vs. a local team.
- April 4 Visit Barcelona by bus, covering the Bullring, the Gaudi buildings, Casa Battlló and the Pedrera, Plaza Francesc Masia, the Nou Camp - home of FC Barcelona, followed by Gaudi's unfinished Sagrada Familia Cathedral and lastly Parque Guell.
- April 5 Visit the city of Girona. Sightseeing possibilities include St. Mary's Cathedral, built between the 11th and 17th centuries, Passeig de la Muralla, Monastery of Saint Pere de Galligants and Chapel of Sant Nicolau, the Arab Baths, Cases de l'Onyar, etc. Evening game vs. a local team.
- April 6 Visit the sacred mountain-top monastery of Montserrat with its breathtaking views.
- April 7 Free day in Barcelona visiting the places the bus cannot reach. Drop off and pick up point in the central Plaza Catalunya. Recommended are the: Ramblas with its human statues and street artists, Palau de la Musica, Barrio Gotico with its maze of narrow streets, Plaza Real, Cathedral. Evening game vs. a local team.
- April 8 More sightseeing in Barcelona. Visit Montjuic, a prominent hill overlooking Barcelona with amazing views of the city and visit the Olympic facilities.
- April 9 Transfer to Barcelona airport and return flight.

\*The above itinerary is a provisional/suggested itinerary and can/will change depending on your group's specific wishes, the final game schedule for your team(s) and any pro game visit(s) incorporated for your group. Sightseeing admission fees are not included in the prices but can be added and pre-booked based on your group's specific wishes. Consult us for more information.



Wartburg College



Camp Nou



University of Mary



La Sagrada Familia

### Price per person\*:

<b>March participant prices:</b>						
Number of people traveling	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49
Participant prices	\$2,554	\$2,395	\$2,300	\$2,220	\$2,167	\$2,125
<b>August participant prices:</b>						
Number of people traveling	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49
Participant prices	\$2,990	\$2,832	\$2,737	\$2,656	\$2,603	\$2,561

\* Prices are based on contracted airline fares for 2022. We will know more about fares for 2023 approx. 11 months prior to departure date, when airlines publish flights, and can confirm pricing then.

**Price inclusions:**

- Round trip airfare, including airport taxes and fuel surcharges. Prices are always subject to availability of flights and fares at time of booking.
- Accommodations and meals as specified in this proposal – see below.
- Ground transportation – see below.
- Costs for arranging the sport program – see below.
- Services of a local tour assistant – see below.

**Sport program included:**

We will arrange three friendly games per team.

**Accommodation and meals included:**

4-star Hotel accommodation in the Costa Brava region in a seaside town like Santa Susanna, Calella, etc.

- Daily breakfast and dinner included.
- The accommodation is situated near the town center and/or beach.
- Distance to Barcelona is approx. 30-35 miles. All rooms (3 bedded rooms) have a shower and toilet as well as air-conditioning.
- The hotel has a restaurant, bar, lounge, reception and sometimes an outdoor swimming pool.
- Double rooms are available as well at a supplement of \$ 15.00 per person per night.

**Ground transportation included:**

During your entire stay a private bus will be available exclusively for your group – 10 hours a day.

**Local guide services included:**

A local tour assistant will be assigned to be exclusively with your group full time each day during your stay in each destination to provide you with any assistance when necessary, and help plan or amend your daily schedule as needed.

**Options available (not included in prices)**

**Sport program options:**

- We can arrange tickets to pro games, subject to availability. Ticket costs will depend on the game, but usually ticket costs range from approx. \$75-\$150 per person depending on the game.
- A 2-hour training session with your own coaching staff – costs approx. \$300.00 per 2 hours.
- Training sessions with coaches from a Barcelona area pro club like RCD Espanyol – costs approx. \$1,050.00 total per 2 hours, including field hire. Consult us for more information.
- Visit and tour of a pro team stadium – approx. \$ 35.00 per person for Camp Nou Stadium Tour.

**Accommodation option Barcelona:**

On request, we can accommodate the group in a 3/4-star hotel in Barcelona, close to the city center while in Spain instead. Hotel is within walking distance of a train station and not far from the Sagrada Familia. All rooms have private facilities/bathroom, satellite TV, phone and climate control. Hotel has a bar, lounge, workout room and small outdoor pool. Supplemental cost for this hotel option is approx. \$40.00 - \$60.00 per person per night (to be confirmed – depends on time of the year).

**Travel insurance option:**

Your participants have the option to purchase accident, illness and trip cancellation/interruption insurance, including a Cancel for Any Reason Coverage (CFAR) – more information about this insurance is included on your team website page.

**Not included in prices:**

- Beverages (soda) with meals.
- Gratuities for representatives and bus drivers.
- Admission fees to attractions.
- Single rooms in hotels. Single rooms are available at a supplement of \$40.00 per person per night on top of the double room supplements outlined in the accommodation description.

## Touristic information Barcelona

Barcelona is the capital city of the autonomous community of Catalonia in Spain, as well as the country's second most populous municipality, with a population of 1.6 million within city limits. It is the largest metropolis on the Mediterranean Sea. Barcelona has a rich cultural heritage and is today an important cultural center and a major tourist destination. Particularly renowned are the architectural works of Antoni Gaudí and Lluís Domènech i Montaner, which have been designated UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Barcelona is also home to two top pro clubs in Spain, FC Barcelona and RCD Espanyol.

**CAMP NOU:** Visit the Home of Barcelona FC, the away team changing room and the players' tunnel, the dugouts, the press room, commentators box and of course the Museum. The Museum is the most modern football museum thanks to its interactive wall spaces, large scale audiovisual displays and an extensive display of objects to explain the history of FC Barcelona and understand the values that make Barça "més que un club" -- "more than a club".

**SAGRADA FAMILIA:** The unfinished Cathedral by Gaudi, The expiatory church of La Sagrada Família is a work on a grand scale which was begun on 19 March 1882 from a project by the diocesan architect, Francisco de Paula del Villar (1828-1901). At the end of 1883 Gaudí was commissioned to carry on the works, a task which he did not abandon until his death in 1926. Since then different architects have continued the work after his original idea.

**MONTSERRAT:** Montserrat is a multi-peaked mountain located near the city of Barcelona. It is well known as the site of the Benedictine abbey, Santa Maria de Montserrat, which hosts the Virgin of Montserrat sanctuary and which is identified by some with the location of the Holy Grail in Arthurian myth. The mountain is composed of strikingly pink conglomerate, a form of sedimentary rock. Montserrat is Spain's first National Park.

**CASTELL DE MONTJUIC:** Barcelona's Montjuïc is a broad shallow hill to the southwest of the city center. The eastern side of the hill is almost a sheer cliff, giving it a commanding view over the city's harbor immediately below. The top of the hill (a height of 184,8 m) was the site of several fortifications, the latest of which the Castle of Montjuïc remains today. The fortress largely dates from the 17th century, with 18th-century additions. It served as a prison, often holding political prisoners, until the time of General Franco. The castle was also the site of numerous executions. On different occasions during the Spanish Civil War, both Nationalists and Republicans were executed there, each at the time when the site was held by their opponents. The Catalan nationalist leader Lluís Companys i Jover was also executed there in 1940, having been extradited to the Franco government by the Nazis.

**LA RAMBLA & BOQUERIA MARKET:** This busy street is just for pedestrians and is lined with outdoor markets, shops, restaurants and cafes. La Boqueria is a large public market in the Ciutat Vella district of Barcelona, and one of the city's foremost tourist landmarks, with an entrance from La Rambla, not far from the Liceu, Barcelona's opera house. The market has a very diverse selection of goods.

## International Soccer Tour 2022 Itinerary University of Illinois Chicago England – London and Chester/Manchester

### Travel dates:

March or August 2023

### Itinerary:

- April 1 Departure from Chicago airport.
- April 2 Arrival London airport. Transfer to your accommodation.
- April 3 Sightseeing London, including The Tower of London, The Houses of Parliament, Buckingham Palace and London's newest and highest attraction, The London Eye, with its spectacular views over London. Afternoon or evening game vs. a local team.
- April 4 Visit Hampton Court Palace and Windsor Castle. For almost 200 years, Hampton Court Palace was at the center of court life, politics and national history. Windsor Castle is an official residence of The Queen and the largest occupied castle in the world.
- April 5 Enjoy the day sightseeing in London. Visit to the Chelsea Village MegaShop and Stamford Bridge Stadium, Trafalgar Square and Covent Garden shopping precinct, Emirates and/or Wembley Stadium. Evening game vs. a local team.
- April 6 Transfer to your accommodation in Chester. Chester is a magical city over 2000 years old; it is the most complete walled city in Britain. Walk the walls – 2 miles of entirely walkable walls, studded with historic towers and a bird's eye view of the city center. Look over the other side of the wall for a view of the Welsh mountains in the distance. Afterwards you can head for the Roman Amphitheater and The Chester Cathedral (14th century church).
- April 7 Sightseeing York. With a stunning cathedral, the world's best railway museum, and the finest UK Viking attraction, York boasts major sights as well as smaller gems like medieval guildhalls, Georgian town houses & National Trust and English Heritage properties. Evening game vs. a local team.
- April 8 Day trip to Manchester. One of the most popular sights is the Old Trafford stadium, home of Manchester United.
- April 9 Transfer to London or Manchester airport. Return flight.

\*The above itinerary is a provisional/suggested itinerary and can/will change depending on your group's specific wishes, the final game schedule for your team(s) and any pro game visit(s) incorporated for your group. Sightseeing admission fees are not included in the prices but can be added and pre-booked based on your group's specific wishes. Consult us for more information.



Norco



Tower of London



Wisconsin Lutheran College



Thames River

**Price per person\*:**

<b>March participant prices:</b>						
Number of people traveling	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49
Participant prices	\$2,821	\$2,673	\$2,568	\$2,491	\$2,432	\$2,393
<b>August participant prices:</b>						
Number of people traveling	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49
Participant prices	\$3,086	\$2,931	\$2,820	\$2,738	\$2,677	\$2,636

\* Prices are based on contracted airline fares for 2022. We will know more about fares for 2023 approx. 11 months prior to departure date, when airlines publish flights and fares for 2023, and can confirm pricing then.

**Price inclusions:**

- Round trip airfare, including airport taxes and fuel surcharges. Prices are always subject to availability of flights and fares at time of booking.
- Accommodations and meals as specified in this proposal – see below.
- Ground transportation – see below.
- Costs for arranging the sport program – see below.
- Services of a local tour assistant – see below.

**Sport program included:**

**London:** we will arrange 2 friendly games per team.

**Chester:** we will arrange 1 friendly game per team.

**Accommodation and meals included:**

**London:** 4-star Hotel accommodation in London.

- Daily breakfast and dinner included.
- Hotel accommodation in the outskirts of London about 10 miles from the city center.
- Rooms for 2 people with en-suite bathroom, trouser press, hairdryer, tea/coffee maker and TV.
- The hotel offers a restaurant, lounge/bar, outdoor patio/garden, fitness center and free Wi-Fi.

**Manchester area:** 4-star Hotel accommodation in the Liverpool/Manchester area.

- Daily breakfast and dinner included.
- Hotel accommodation Northwest England located between Manchester and Liverpool.
- Rooms for 2 people with private facilities, satellite TV and phone.
- The hotel has a restaurant/lounge, indoor heated pool, sauna/solarium and fitness center.

**Ground transportation included:**

During your entire stay a private bus will be available exclusively for your group – 10 hours a day.

**Local guide services included:**

A local tour assistant will be assigned to be exclusively with your group full time each day during your stay in each destination to provide you with any assistance when necessary, and help plan or amend your daily schedule as needed.

## Options available (not included in prices)

### Sport program options:

- We can arrange training sessions with youth academy coaches from English pro clubs like Manchester City, Everton FC, Tottenham Hotspurs or Fulham FC. Supplement for a 2-hour session, including field hire, is approx. \$650 total.
- Subject to availability we might be able to arrange training sessions with English FA coaches at St. George's Park, headquarters of the English FA, along with a tour of the facilities. Approx. supplement for a 2-hour session will be around \$800 total.
- We can arrange tickets to pro games, subject to availability. Ticket costs will depend on the game, but usually ticket costs range from approx. \$75-\$150 per person depending on the game.
- Visit and tour of a pro team stadium – between \$25.00 and \$30.00 per person.
- A 2-hour training session with your own coaching staff – costs \$260.00 per 2 hours.

### Travel insurance option:

Your participants have the option to purchase accident, illness and trip cancellation/interruption insurance, including a Cancel for Any Reason Coverage (CFAR) – more information about this insurance is included on your team website page.

### Not included in prices:

- Beverages (soda) with meals.
- Gratuities for representatives and bus drivers.
- Admission fees to attractions.
- Single rooms in hotels. Single rooms are available at a supplement of \$40.00 per person per night on top of the double room supplements outlined in the accommodation description.

## **Touristic information London**

**LONDON STADIUM TOURS:** Tour one of the famous pro team stadiums in London like Wembley, Emirates (Arsenal FC) or Stamford Bridge (Chelsea)

**THE LONDON EYE:** The London Eye is a giant Ferris wheel on the South Bank of the River Thames in London, England. The entire structure is 135 meters (443 ft.) tall and the wheel has a diameter of 120 meters (394 ft.). It is the tallest Ferris wheel in Europe. Includes 30-minute rotation, Samsung interactive capsule guides, entry to 4D cinema experience.

**TOWER OF LONDON:** The massive White Tower is a typical example of Norman military architecture, whose influence was felt throughout the kingdom. It was built on the Thames by William the Conqueror to protect London and assert his power. The Tower of London – an imposing fortress with many layers of history, which has become one of the symbols of royalty – was built around the White Tower.

**WINDSOR CASTLE:** A visit to the Castle includes the State Apartments, St George's Chapel and Queen Mary's Dolls' House. Windsor Castle is a royal residence at Windsor in the English county of Berkshire. The castle is notable for its long association with the British royal family and for its architecture.

**HAMPTON COURT PALACE:** Hampton Court Palace is a royal palace in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, Greater London, in the historic county of Middlesex; it has not been inhabited by the British Royal Family since the 18th century.

**LONDON DUNGEONS:** The London Dungeon is a London tourist attraction which recreates various gory and macabre historical events in a gallows humor style aimed at younger audiences. It uses a mixture of live actors, special effects and rides.

**HARRY POTTER TOUR:** People the world-over have been enchanted by the Harry Potter films for over a decade. The wonderful special effects and amazing creatures have made this iconic series beloved to both young and old – and now, for the first time, the doors are open for everyone at the studio where it first began. You'll have the chance to go behind-the-scenes and see many things the camera never showed. From breathtakingly detailed sets to stunning costumes, props and animatronics, Warner Bros. Studio Tour London provides a unique showcase of the extraordinary British artistry, technology and talent that went into making the most successful film series of all time.

## **Touristic information Chester/Manchester and Northwest England**

Chester and Manchester both are located in the Northwest part of England. Chester lies right on the border between Wales and England. Chester is one of the best preserved walled cities in Britain. It has a number of medieval buildings, but some of the black-and-white buildings within the city center are Victorian restorations. Manchester lies within the United Kingdom's second-most populous urban area, with a population of 2.55 million. Manchester is notable for its architecture, culture, musical exports, media links, scientific and engineering output, social impact, sports clubs and transport connections. Manchester is home to two top EPL clubs, Manchester United and Manchester City FC.

**NATIONAL FOOTBALL MUSEUM:** The National Football Museum is a museum at the Urbis building in Manchester city center founded to preserve, conserve and interpret several important collections of association football memorabilia. The museum was originally situated in Deepdale, Preston, Lancashire, but moved to Manchester in 2012.

**IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM:** Visit the award-winning IWM North to discover powerful stories that reveal how war shapes lives, from a soldier's last letter home to the twisted steel of New York City's World Trade Center. Housed in Daniel Libeskind's iconic building representing a globe torn apart by conflict, IWM North offers a free day out like no other.

**TRAFFORD CENTER:** The Trafford Center is a largest indoor shopping center in Western Europe and leisure complex in Greater Manchester, England. Situated in the Metropolitan Borough of Trafford, the Centre is situated close to the Trafford Park industrial estate and lies approximately five miles west of Manchester city center.

**THE BEATLES MUSEUM:** The Beatles Story is a visitor attraction dedicated to the 1960s pop group The Beatles in Liverpool, England.

**BLACKPOOL PLEASURE BEACH:** Blackpool Pleasure Beach is an amusement park and resort situated along the Fylde coast in Blackpool, Lancashire, England. It is one of the top twenty most-visited amusement parks in the world.

## International Soccer Tour 2022 Itinerary University of Illinois Chicago Italy – Venice and Florence

### Travel dates:

March or August 2023

### Itinerary:

- Day 1 Departure from Chicago airport.
- Day 2 Arrival Milan or Venice airport and transfer to your accommodation.
- Day 3 Day trip Venice. The famous city of gondolas built on small islands connected by bridges. See the famous Rialto bridge and the San Marco church and its vibrant plaza. Possible evening game vs. a local team.
- Day 4 Day trip to Verona – Verona offers a medieval old town built between the meandering Adige River. It's famous for being the setting of Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet." A 14th-century residence with a tiny balcony overlooking a courtyard is said be "Juliet's House." The Verona Arena is a huge 1st-century Roman amphitheater, which currently hosts concerts and large-scale opera performances
- Day 5 Transfer to your accommodation in Montecatini, near Florence.
- Day 6 Sightseeing in Florence. You will visit major sights such as the Duomo, Ponte Vecchio, the Oltrarno, the Palazzo Vecchio, Piazza della Signoria and of course Piazza Michelangelo. Evening game vs. a local team.
- Day 7 Day trip to Pisa, known for its Torre Pendente (Leaning Tower) and Viareggio, a popular seaside resort on the Mediterranean. Optional evening cooking class.
- Day 8 Day trip to Siena. Siena is distinguished by its medieval brick buildings. The fan-shaped central square, Piazza del Campo, is the site of the Palazzo Pubblico, the Gothic town hall, and Torre del Mangia. Evening game vs. a local team.
- Day 9 Transfer to Milan, Venice or Bologna airport and return flight.



Vatican City



Wartburg College



Milan



SIAC All Stars

\*The above itinerary is a provisional/suggested itinerary and can/will change depending on your group's specific wishes, the final game schedule for your team(s) and any pro game visit(s) incorporated for your group. Sightseeing admission fees are not included in the prices but can be added and pre-booked based on your group's specific wishes. Consult us for more information.

### Price per person\*:

<b>March participant prices:</b>						
Number of people traveling	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49
Participant prices	\$2,753	\$2,577	\$2,465	\$2,377	\$2,314	\$2,261
<b>August participant prices:</b>						
Number of people traveling	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49
Participant prices	\$2,882	\$2,706	\$2,593	\$2,505	\$2,442	\$2,389

\* Prices are based on contracted airline fares for 2022. We will know more about fares for 2023 approx. 11 months prior to departure date, when airlines publish flights, and can confirm pricing then.

**Price inclusions:**

- Round trip airfare, including airport taxes and fuel surcharges. Prices are always subject to availability of flights and fares at time of booking.
- Accommodations and meals as specified in this proposal – see below.
- Ground transportation – see below.
- Costs for arranging the sport program – see below.
- Services of a local tour assistant – see below.

**Sport program included:**

We will arrange 3-4 games per team.

**Accommodation and meals included:**

**Florence:** 3-star Hotel accommodation in Montecatini near Florence.

- Daily breakfast and dinner included.
- Montecatini is a tourist resort 30 miles from Florence.
- The hotel has a restaurant, bar and lounge with TV.
- Rooms for 3 people (triple rooms) include TV, telephone, bathroom with shower and toilet.
- Double rooms are available at a supplement of \$15.00 per person per night.

**Venice:** 3-star Hotel accommodation in Venice.

- Daily breakfast and dinner included.
- Approx. 5-10 kilometers from the center of Venice.
- All rooms, triple rooms (3 people) have private shower, toilet and TV. The hotel has a lounge, restaurant and bar.
- Double rooms are available as well at a supplement of \$15.00 per person per night.

**Ground transportation included:**

During your entire stay a private bus will be available exclusively for your group – 10 hours a day.

**Local guide services included:**

A local bi-lingual tour manager will be assigned to be exclusively with your group full time each day during your stay in each destination to provide you with any assistance when necessary, and help plan or amend your daily schedule as needed.

**Options available (not included in prices)**

**Sport program options:**

- Visit and tour of a pro team stadium – approx. \$30.00 per person.
- A 2-hour training session with your own coaching staff – costs \$ 300.00 per 2 hours.
- Training sessions with coaches from an Italian pro club – costs approx. \$650 per 2 hours, including field hire. Consult us for more information.

**Travel insurance option:**

Your participants have the option to purchase accident, illness and trip cancellation/interruption insurance, including a Cancel for Any Reason Coverage (CFAR) – more information about this insurance is included on your team website page.

**Not included in prices:**

- Beverages (soda) with meals.
- Gratuities for representatives and bus drivers.
- Admission fees to attractions. This applies to per person admissions for sights and attractions as well as city admission fees (called ZTL fees) for the touring bus in Italy. These ZTL fees are approx. \$100.00 - \$250.00 when you enter a city ZTL zone. There are options to avoid these fees – consult us for more information on this.
- Single rooms in hotels. Single rooms are available at a supplement of \$40.00 per person per night on top of the double room supplements outlined in the accommodation description.

## Touristic information Florence

Florence is the capital city of the Italian region of Tuscany and of the Metropolitan City of Florence. It is the most populous city in Tuscany, with 383,083 inhabitants, expanding to over 1,520,000 in the metropolitan area.

**Leaning Tower of Pisa:** The Leaning Tower of Pisa is the campanile, or freestanding bell tower, of the cathedral of the Italian city of Pisa, known worldwide for its unintended tilt to one side. It is situated behind the Cathedral and is the third oldest structure in Pisa's Cathedral Square after the Cathedral and the Baptistry. The tower's tilt began during construction, caused by an inadequate foundation on ground too soft on one side to properly support the structure's weight. The tilt increased in the decades before the structure was completed, and gradually increased until the structure was stabilized (and the tilt partially corrected) by efforts in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

**The Ponte Vecchio:** The Ponte Vecchio ("Old Bridge") is a Medieval stone closed-spandrel segmental arch bridge over the Arno River, in Florence, Italy, noted for still having shops built along it, as was once common. Butchers initially occupied the shops; the present tenants are jewelers, art dealers and souvenir sellers. The Ponte Vecchio's two neighboring bridges are the Ponte Santa Trinita and the Ponte alle Grazie.

**Palazzo Vecchio:** The Palazzo Vecchio ("Old Palace") is the town hall of Florence. This massive, Romanesque, crenellated fortress-palace is among the most impressive town halls of Tuscany.

**Viareggio:** Viareggio is a city and commune in northern Tuscany, Italy, on the coast of the Tyrrhenian Sea. It is known as a seaside resort as well as being the home of the famous carnival of Viareggio (dating back to 1873), and its papier-mâché floats, which (since 1925), parade along the promenade known as "Passeggiata a mare", in the weeks preceding Easter.

**SIENA - Piazza del Campo in Siena:** Piazza del Campo in Siena is considered one of the most beautiful places of the world. It has a characteristic shell-shape divided in 9 slices, you can admire this particular form from the top of the tower del Mangia.



Florence



Wartburg College Men's Soccer



Leaning Tower of Pisa



Lake Hill Storm SC

## Touristic information Venice

Venice is the capital of the Veneto region in Italy. It is situated across a group of 117 small islands that are separated by canals and linked by bridges. These are located in the shallow Venetian Lagoon, an enclosed bay that lies between the mouths of the Po and the Piave Rivers. Parts of Venice are renowned for the beauty of their settings, their architecture, and artwork. The lagoon and a part of the city are listed as a World Heritage Site.

**Basilica di San Marco (Saint Mark's Church):** This elaborate church sits on the popular piazza by the same name. The church was built in honor of Saint Mark the evangelist, whose remains were stolen from their home in Alexandria, Egypt, and hidden in barrels of pork by a couple crafty Venetians, intent on bringing him to rest in Venice.

**Piazza San Marco (St. Mark's Square):** St. Mark's Square, or Piazza San Marco, is considered by many to be the heart of Venice. As the largest square in Venice, St. Mark's Square is the only "piazza" in the city. All other squares are campis or campielli. Lining the square are multiple historical sites including St. Mark's Basilica, St. Mark's Campanile and Doge's Palace, as well as a number of restaurants, making it the perfect spot for leisurely people-watching and wine sipping. Along with intricate architecture and hearty plates of spaghetti carbonara, visitors will also be met with throngs of tourists, pigeons and vendors selling souvenirs. If you hoped to pick up a gondola hat or a carnival mask during your trip, this is the place you will find them.

**Rialto Bridge (Ponte di Rialto):** Several centuries ago, if you wanted to cross the Grand Canal, the Rialto Bridge was the only way. Now there are other options, including the Accademia Bridge. The bridge's current incarnation is the handiwork of Antonio da Ponte, whose name translates to "Anthony of the Bridge," is built entirely of marble after collapsing multiple times from previous wooden designs. Predicted to fail by critics, the bridge still stands and is considered an engineering marvel.

**Grand Canal:** Considered to be the main street of Venice, the 2-mile-long Grand Canal is one of the city's most popular and highly photographed attractions. Recent travelers recommend hiring a gondolier for a romantic (but expensive) row along the canal.

**Doge's Palace (Palazzo Ducale):** Views from the Venetian Lagoon give the Doge's Palace an ethereal look — almost like it's floating on top of water. But it's fitting, as the Doge's Palace (or Palazzo Ducale) has witnessed an intriguing history in its role as the residence of the doge (leader), the seat of government and the palace of justice. Everything from execution orders to the affairs of Venetian leaders was carried out here; and a web of secret passageways and hidden doors reveals a decidedly mysterious past.