

Suggested Reading List for Italy & Croatia

Books

Last Voyage of the Valentina *Santa Montefiore*

A daughter's quest for the truth about the mother she never knew takes readers on a mysterious journey of decadence, deception, murder, and betrayal involving partisans and Nazis, peasants and counts in the post-war Amalfi Coast.

The Broker *John Grisham*

A Washington power broker-lobbyist is spirited away to Bologna to begin a new life after a deal goes badly wrong. He soon realises that his new identity, provided by the CIA, is not all that it seems and he will have to do all that he can just to survive this environment, under pressure from the most ruthless and lethal intelligence offers from enemy states.

I, Claudius *Robert Graves*

Graves' depiction of the life of the fourth Emperor of Rome is regularly regarded as one of the literary classics of the 20th century. The titular character is overlooked by loftier family members until he rises all the way to the top in a novel that chronicles some of the most significant events in ancient Roman history, from the assassination of Julius Caesar to that of Caligula.

Imperium *Robert Harris*

Unfolding in the decades immediately before Caesar's assassination, Harris' Imperium is narrated by the secretary of Cicero, the Consul famed for his talented oratory and prose. The story follows that of the real-life secretary, Tiro, whose biography of his master was lost during the Dark Ages, and this recreation recounts in vivid detail the power struggle between leading Roman figures, such as Pompey, Crassus and Caesar. Those enjoying the first in the trilogy might like to read on in Lustrum (2009).

Blue Guide Florence 11th Edition *Alta Macadam and Annabel Barber*

The 2017 edition of the Blue Guide is just the latest in a long series of informative and detailed insights into the city of the Renaissance. Wonderful plans and illustrations of paintings, architecture and sculptures bring the city alive and reveal the aesthetic impact of Florence on world history. For those visiting Florence at leisure, this is a highly recommended accompaniment.

Inferno *Dan Brown*

The final chapter in Brown's highly acclaimed Robert Langdon series sees the titular character wake up in Florence with no memory of previous events. As it quickly transpires that assassins are once more on the hunt for him, the thriller leads Langdon to the secrets behind the city's most renowned treasures, including the Boboli Gardens and the Vasari Corridor.

Under The Tuscan Sun *Frances Mayes*

A personal account of a middle-aged divorcee finding a new world and falling in love with Tuscany, this familiar tale is brought to life with glorious description of the finer details. Mayes' restoration of an abandoned villa in the countryside of Cortona is a therapeutic analogy of self-healing, illustrating a pace of life that makes readers want to up sticks and leave behind the worries of everyday life.

Death at La Fenice *Donna Leon*

The first in Leon's best-selling crime series, this novel goes behind the serenely beautiful façade most associate with Venice. Commissario Guido Brunetti attempts to solve the mysterious poisoning of an internationally-renowned conductor and discovers a web of corruption and depravity weaved between the famous city canals.

Dubrovnik: A History *Robin Harris*

The compact and relaxed modern-day city on the Adriatic coast belies a millennium's worth of expansive history and thrilling stories. Harris demonstrates how this 7th-century settlement grew into a sizeable city-state, competing with Venice and the Ottomans for dominance across the Eastern Mediterranean, before narrowly surviving with its cultural heritage intact after the more recent wars in the former Yugoslavia.

Chasing a Croatian Girl: A Survivor's Tale *Cody McClain Brown*

This autobiographical account starts with the author falling in love with a Croatian girl in an Oklahoma university. Brown's wild misconceptions about the origins of his future wife lead him to Split, where he experiences Croatia for himself and finds that his preconceived ideas need some adjustment. Full of personal and humorous anecdotes, this book has been described as the perfect guide to Croatia (and Croatians) for foreigners and reveals cutting insight into subjects ranging from the importance of wearing slippers to the endless coffee-drinking.