

5th Year School Tour to Italy

By Kristina Batt

I didn't know what to expect on this trip; I had seen images of Italy posted over Pinterest, Tiktok and Instagram and then I finally I was there seeing it all for myself. The night before our flight felt like Christmas eve, we had all been counting down the days until our trip. It turned out to be the best few days of my 5th year experience. I think back to it now more than I expected to, with a small bit of nostalgia already.

Day 1)

The first day of our trip was full on. Our first stop was the Vatican City, followed by the Colosseum. I really wasn't prepared for just how massive the Colosseum was in person. I had seen a lot of pictures in Classics and History class, I knew what it looked like but standing there touring around gave me a whole different perspective on it. The details around the Colosseum showed us what ancient Rome used to be like and the stories made it come alive so much more than reading about it in school ever could.

After the Colosseum we had free time to explore the city. Throughout the trip, we were given a lot of independence, being responsible for making our way to different locations and being on time! Using our brochure bucket list, created by Ms Martin, we toured around ourselves at our own pace, ticking off some interesting sites as we went. As the rain came down, I think locals thought we were really colour coordinated because we looked like a whole rainbow in our newly purchased ponchos.

That evening we attended a Pizza Making Workshop for our dinner, one of my favourites. We got to pick our own toppings, sauce and cheese and assemble our own pizza. From someone who doesn't really like pizza, I can assure you, it was amazing; compliments to the chef (me!).

Day 2)

In the morning, we visited the Pantheon. Both the architecture and high level of detail on the ceiling and the pictures were incredible. It was a place that forced you to stop and just look up and be in awe.

Following lunch, we visited the very famous Trevi fountain. Some of us threw a coin backwards over our shoulder to ensure our return to Rome sometime in the future!

We then did a walking tour around the city of Rome for 2 hours, where we passed by the Spanish Steps and other famous landmarks.

Following some shopping time, we ended the day with dinner at our hotel and some free time in our rooms.

Day 3)

If I'd have to choose, day 3 would have to be my favourite. We got on the bus early in the morning and headed straight for Pompeii. In primary school I remember I did a project on Pompeii, with the help of my Mum! So I knew about the volcano Mt Vesuvius, the eruption and the city getting buried in ash, but walking through the ruins was another level. Our tour guide brought us through the buildings and highlighted the detailed floors and objects found in the ruins. It all looked so ordinary – making it more interesting and relatable. The tour took us through someone's house or someone's shop, you can feel a connection to these normal people who once lived here going about their regular lives when the eruption happened. It was eerie and so interesting all at once.

We then hopped back on the bus and went to Sorrento for the rest of the day. We had lunch in a Pizzeria that brought us different types of pizzas to try, including some unusual ones with potato as a topping!

In Sorrento everything has lemon branding! We were given free time after lunch which meant that we had time to independently visit different stalls, charity shops and even just window shopping to see all the

amazing lemon branded items. As we had time to explore in smaller groups, we were more observant and we got to see and take in a whole lot more. It made it feel a lot less like a school tour and more like an actual trip.

That evening back in the hotel we had a talent show! Having completed a performance myself with my friend, I think our act won! There was a random mix of performances by lots of people. It was one of the most memorable moments of the whole trip and really made our group bond together.

Day 4)

On our last morning, on our way to the airport we stopped off at Herculaneum, which was another village that had been ruined by the volcanic eruption in 79AD. It was a great historic site to visit to round off our trip.

The trip wasn't what I had expected, it did have lots of history and good food but what I'll really remember was all the people I shared it with.

I spoke to so many people in my year that I wouldn't normally get a chance to hang out with. Being on a tour with your year group, out of a school environment and in a whole different country was very special. Without the worry of 5th year, everyone was so relaxed.

5th year is really hard, everyone knows that. But in the middle of all the stress and study the trip was a reminder to me that the students in my year are lovely and genuine people. The memories we created in the few days in Italy has given us all something to share and I know we all became even a little closer because of it.