San Gimignano

Nicknamed the medieval Manhatten, San Gimignano is a village in Tuscany famous for its 14 stone towers. At the height of San Gimignano’s wealth and power, more than 70 towers were built to defend the town against enemy attacks. After the plague devastated the city in 1348, San Gimignano’s power faded, which kept enemies away and preserved many of the city’s medieval towers.

Manarola (Cinque Terre)

Mestled in the Italian Riviera, Manarola is one of the oldest towns in Cinque Terre. The “Five Lands” comprises of five villages noted for their beauty. Part of Cinque Terre charm is the lack of visible modern development. Paths, trains and boats connect the villages, and cars cannot reach it from the outside. The towns sprout out of the mountainside to provide a breathtaking view of the Mediterranean sea.

Leaning Tower of Pisa

The world famous Pisa Tower was built over a period of about 177 years. Soon after the construction started in 1173 the tower began to sink due to a poorly laid foundation and was left alone for almost a century. When the construction resumed the engineers built higher floors with one side taller than the other to compensate for the tilt and the tower was finally finished in the 2nd half of the 14th century. Since 2001, the famous tower in Pisa is again open to those wishing to climb it’s 296 steps.

Lake Como (Italian Lake District)

Lake Como is part of the Italian Lake District an area popular with visitors for well over 100 years for its combination of fresh air, water, mountains and good weather. The lake is shaped much like an inverted ‘Y’, with two branches starting at Como in the south-west and Lecco in the south-east, which join together half way up and the lake continues up to Colico in the north. The lake is famous for the attractive villas which have been built here since Roman times. Many have admirable gardens which benefit from the mild climate and are able to include tropical as well as temperate plants.

Positano (Amalfi Coast)

Positano is a small town located on the Amalfi Coast, a stretch of coastline renowned for its rugged terrain, scenic beauty, picturesque towns and diversity. The city seems to be scattered from top to bottom down a hillside leading to the coast. Though Positano grew and prospered in medieval times, by the mid 19th more than half of the population was gone. In the 20th century it went from being a poor fishing village to a very popular tourist attraction with the help of author John Steinbeck who wrote about its beauty.

Pompeii

On August 24, 79 AD, the volcano Vesuvius erupted, covering the nearby town Pompeii with ash and soil, and subsequently preserving the city in its state from that fateful day. Everything from jars and tables to paintings and people were frozen in time. Its excavation has provided an extraordinarily detailed insight into the life of people living two thousand years ago. Today Pompeii is one of the most popular tourist attractions of Italy, with approximately 2,500,000 visitors every year.

Piazza del Campo(Siena)

One of Europe’s greatest medieval squares, the Piazza del Campo is the principal public space of the historic center of Siena, Tuscany. It is renowned worldwide for its beauty and architectural integrity. The Palazzo Pubblico and its famous tower, as well as various palazzi signorili belonging to the wealthiest of Siena families surround the shell-shaped piazza. The twice-per-year horse-race, Palio di Siena, involves circling the Piazza del Campo, on which a thick layer of dirt has been laid, three times and usually lasts no more than 90 seconds.

Santa Maria del Fiore(Florence)

Begun in 1296 in the Gothic style and completed in 1436, The Basilica di Santa Maria del Fiore is Florence’s beautiful cathedral and symbol of the city. The exterior of the basilica is faced with polychrome marble panels in various shades of green and pink bordered by white. The basilica is one of Italy’s largest churches, and until the modern era, the dome was the largest in the world. It remains the largest brick dome ever constructed.

Colosseum(Rome)

The Colosseum in Rome is the largest and most famous amphitheater in the Roman world. Its construction was started by emperor Vespasian of the Flavian dynasty in 72 AD and was finished by his son Titus in 80 AD. The Colosseum was capable of holding some 50,000 spectators who could enter the building through no less than 80 entrances. Spectators were protected from the rain and heat of the sun by sails called the “velarium”, that was attached around the top of the attic.

Canals of Venice

Referred to as “The City of Water”, Venice is the crown jewel of water cities. Romantic gondolas, and Italian architecture along the Grand Canal helped earn this status. Stitched together with over 150 canals that have become central to its character, Venice has decayed since its heyday and has more tourists than residents, but with its romantic charm it remains one of the top tourist attractions in Italy.