

Anna Rose Petinos – Age 13

I have had many great experiences in my life, including a trip to Italy this summer. I am very fortunate to be able to take numerous trips to various places. I am only thirteen, and I do not believe many children my age can say that they have been out of the country.

Before we left for Rome, Italy, we had to take many things into consideration. We were looking for an airline that was affordable, reliable, and safe. We finally decided on the airline Alitalia. We left on our family vacation on July 5th from Kennedy Airport. The flight number was 609, and the model of the airplane was 767. We were quite satisfied with our flying experience. The flight was shorter than we imagined. The cloth seats were extremely comfortable, and made it easy to relax. The flying staff was very courteous, professional, and reliable, and they provided the service we needed. The food they served was gourmet. Overall, I enjoyed flying Alitalia.

Rome was very nice. The flowing traffic reminded me of New York City, except for the fact that many of the civilians rode vespas or motorcycles, and that Rome was made up of cobblestone streets. While in Rome we visited many landmarks such as the Coliseum, the Spanish Steps, the Pantheon, and the Trevi Fountain. While at the Trevi Fountain, I tossed a coin over my shoulder and made a wish. I also visited many churches during my stay in Rome. I enjoyed a meal of pizza margherita, and my personal favorite, pasta with pesto.

After Rome, we made the trip up north to Florence. As we drove through Tuscany, I really noticed how gorgeous the surrounding area was. Everything was peaceful and rural. We drove past lush fields, with the occasional sighting of horses, cows, or sheep. We drove through fields, valleys, and up winding mountain roads. It was a long car ride, but it was thoroughly relaxing. In Florence, we stayed at a hotel right on the river. I was awed at the beauty in Florence. It was a very charming city compared to the chaotic streets of Rome. Like many places in Italy, Florence had cobblestone streets. It was very quiet and relaxing. The food in Florence was phenomenal. I ventured out of the pizza and pasta category most Americans would eat, and I had some more traditional specialties of the region, such as wild boar and rabbit. I saw Michelangelo's David. It was truly a masterpiece. Every proportion was right, and the beauty of the features of the finely chiseled man was unbelievable. Along with the David we saw other landmarks such as the Duomo. The Duomo is one of the most famous cathedrals in Italy, and is home to many masterpieces by Della Robbia, Michelangelo, Da Vinci, and many more. It also houses the graves of these famous men. The Duomo is truly an architectural feat. It seems impossible that a man could put so much detail into a cathedral of that size, or even build something that massive. The dome alone is colossal. One of my favorite parts of the trip was the many piazzas. Every night, after eating a tremendous meal, we would stroll through the piazza, eating gelato and look up at the starry night sky.

After Florence, we drove to Siena. In Siena, we visited the Church of St. Dominic, and saw the grave of St. Catherine of Siena. While in Siena, we visited towns such as Volterra, Montepulciano, and Greve. Like Siena, Volterra and Montepulciano are walled cities. As I was walking through the street, it felt like I was in a medieval fortress.

I have been very blessed that my parents have taken me on many trips. It was great that I got to travel to the land of my ancestors. I have ties to my culture, and I enjoyed the food, the relaxing lifestyle, and the history. In today's society, if you ask a kid what nationality they are, many of them will only say "American." Many of them do not know what nationality they are. Many of them will say a nationality, but don't have a clue of what their heritage is really about. It is important and necessary to get children to care about their culture, because as generations go by, culture is being diluted until everyone is the average American. I thoroughly enjoyed my trip to Italy.