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_Beppe Severgnini_  
*La Bella Figura*  
2007, PAPER, 288 PAGES, $15.00  
Italians themselves love this guide to the Italian character, which addresses their never-ending passion for beauty, disorder and high emotion. The book opens with a snapshot of Malpensa Airport, then moves on to Tuscany, Rome, Naples and Sardinia. (Item ITL718)

_Christopher Hibbert_  
*The House of Medici, Its Rise and Fall*  
1982, PAPER, 364 PAGES, $16.99  
A well-written, entertaining history of the Medicis in Renaissance Florence. Great to read before going to Florence, where the influence of the Medicis and the artists they supported is still very much in evidence. (Item ITL135)

_Ada Gabucci (Editor)_  
*Ancient Rome: Art, Architecture, and History*  
2002, PAPER, 144 PAGES, $19.95  
This lively, illustrated survey of Ancient Rome's monuments, history and art is a terrific introduction. (Item ITL419)

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_Borch Maps_  
*Italy Map*  
2014, MAP, PAGES, $12.95  
A convenient laminated map of Italy at a scale of 1:800,000 with excellent topographic detail, an index and large maps of Sicily and Sardinia. (Item ITL19)

_Lonely Planet_  
*Lonely Planet Italian Phrasebook*  
2015, PAPER, 272 PAGES, $9.99  
A handy, palm-size guide to pronunciation, basic grammar and essential vocabulary for the traveler. (Item ITL531)

_Blue Guides_  
*Blue Guide Italy Food Companion*  
2016, PAPER, 200 PAGES, $12.99  
This pocket guide to ordering, understanding and enjoying the best of Italian food can be used in preparation for a visit to Italy or as a handy reference while you're there. (Item ITA195)

*Micelin Travel & Lifestyle*  
*Michelin Map & Guide Rome*  
2016, MAP, 24 PAGES, $9.95  
Perfect for the spontaneous, unstructured traveler, this map-based guide picks Rome apart, neighborhood by neighborhood, pinpointing suggested spots for: shopping, taking a break, eating and nightlife. (Item ITA603)

_Jonathan Buckley (Editor), Tim Jetson (Editor)_  
*Rough Guide Tuscany and Umbria*  
2015, PAPER, 384 PAGES, $24.99  
This comprehensive travel guide includes region-by-region descriptions and a good overview of history and culture. (Item ITL292)
Shirley Hazzard

The Ancient Shore
2009, PAPER, 144 PAGES, $13.00
Hazzard’s lyrical collection of essays on the history, beauty, complexities and contradictions of Naples. Includes a celebrated New Yorker essay by husband Francis Steegmuller. (Item ITL967)

Jan Morris

The World of Venice
1995, PAPER, 315 PAGES, $18.95
Morris displays her talent for research, telling anecdote and well-wrought prose in this spirited portrait of a beloved city, its history and inhabitants. If you are going to read one book on Venice, we recommend this favorite. (Item ITL12)

E.M. Forster

A Room with a View
1989, PAPER, 248 PAGES, $9.95
E.M. Forster's classic tale of love among the middle classes, set largely in Florence. (Item ITL142)

Alice Powers

Italy in Mind
1997, PAPER, 349 PAGES, $18.95
A terrific collection of some of the best literary writing on Italy, including pieces by Melville, Lawrence, Henry James, Mary McCarthy and many others. (Item ITL39)

Roger Crowley

City of Fortune
2013, PAPER, 400 PAGES, $18.00
Crowley spins tales of plunder and plague, imperial conquest and piracy in this riveting new history, chronicling the transformation of a tiny city of lagoon dwellers into the richest place on earth. (Item MED185)

Harry Hearder

Italy, A Short History
2001, PAPER, 294 PAGES, $29.99
Elegantly written, generous and informative, this compact book takes in the sweep of Italian history from the Roman Republic through the Renaissance, World War II and up to the present. (Item ITL56)

Christopher Scarre

Penguin Historical Atlas of Ancient Rome
1995, PAPER, 144 PAGES, $20.00
A vivid overview of the rise and fall of the Roman Empire and its expansion throughout North Africa and the Mediterranean, illustrated with ingeniously color maps on many topics (political borders, trade, defense, religion) and 80 color photographs. (Item ITL29)

R.W.B. Lewis

The City of Florence
1996, PAPER, 350 PAGES, $22.99
A vivid tour of the city and its riches by the fine biographer. Lewis has written what he calls “a partial biography of Florence,” interweaving the personal and the historical. (Item ITL47)

Robert Etienne

Pompeii, The Day a City Died
1992, PAPER, 215 PAGES, $15.95
This indispensable pocket guide illustrates daily life in the city as revealed by its evocative frescoes, mosaics and treasures. (Item ITL01)

Peter Murray

The Art of the Renaissance
1992, PAPER, 286 PAGES, $18.95
A classic, illustrated survey of the world of the Renaissance and its art. With chapters on Florence and its artists, the Netherlands and many individual artists. (Item ITL14)

Keith Hopkins, Mary Beard

The Colosseum
2011, PAPER, 224 PAGES, $17.00
This engaging overview of the history of the Colosseum deconstructs Hollywood-perpetrated misconceptions of gladiator-eating lions, Nero fiddling and other myths. (Item ITL654)