

VENETIAN CRUISE

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Venice: the beautiful city of waterways

You can park up your motor caravan and arrive in St Mark's Square by water

WE WANTED TO SEE THE aquatic city of Venice from the water rather than by road where all land transport comes to an abrupt halt in a huge car park. We'd often looked at the Crown Blue Line stand at the NEC's National Boat, Caravan and Outdoor Show and thought how similar this type of boating is to motor caravanning- being able to meander and roam at will and park up in inspiring wild places. So we booked a charter boat to take us from Casier Marina near Treviso, to the beautiful city of Venice.

With our reservation made, we were sent a book with easy to follow routes, along with 'a guide to boat handling' and tips on shopping hours and what to see. Our Venetian Classic Cruise would take us to the Venice Lagoon, which is made up of 80 islands interlinked by rivers and canals, with narrow streets, antique markets, palaces, churches and boutiques.



Drift through Venice city at your own pace

When we arrived at Casier Marina, six hours boating from Venice, we off-loaded our camper with provisions and clothes and parked it in the secure yard behind the electric sliding gates.

The boat had all the creature comforts of our motorhome and was easy to drive- 'one' single lever controlled speeds going backwards or forwards. We cruised cautiously at 3-4 knots, (more like a brisk walk,) so it gave plenty of time for manoeuvres. The only difference is that there isn't a brake!! so the only way to stop is by gliding to a halt.

Before we left, the base manager came aboard, ran through all the controls and took us out on the river so we could practise reversing, parking and braking. With tips on which marinas offered discounts to their boats, we set off.

Our time was spent cruising the Venetian islands of the northern Lagoon, some of the oldest settlements, where centuries of traditions of lace-making on Burano, and glass blowing on Murano, can still be seen today. Torcello has a 6th century basilica and the Church of Santa Fosca, and on our way back we treated ourselves to a pit stop at the famous Locanda Cipriani restaurant which is just a short cycle ride away from Torcello's day mooring.

Our cruise through the Lagoon was brilliant and to arrive in Venice at St Mark's Square by water and moor-up in one of the marinas was a real treat. A night in the 5* Grand Canal hotel can cost £800 per night so our cruise was certainly a cheaper option. □



A single lever makes the boat easy to handle

VENETIAN CLASSIC CRUISE

Our return trip from Casier to Venice covered 120km (74 miles), over seven days to take in the sights, but the journey can be done over three days. Boats can be hired from £770 for one week and fuel is calculated per hour. We cruised for 18 hours at £6.57(€8.20) per hour at a total cost of £118.26. We also opted for the £90 (€110) non-returnable insurance to cover accidents.

Crown Blue Line
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