

DISCOVERING MEDIEVAL TUSCANY

CLASSICAL ARTISTIC ITINERARY

1° DAY: ARRIVAL

Check-in in hotel, in Pistoia. Or Montecatini. Meeting with our assistant and accommodation in the rooms. Dinner and overnight in hotel.

2° DAY: FLORENCE, THE CRADLE OF RENAISSANCE

After breakfast at hotel, departure by private coach for a full-day tour in *Florence*, the celebrated capital of Tuscany, the city of art known all over the world like an exceptional open-air museum. Before starting the classical walking guided tour of the old town, you'll have a wonderful view over Florence and its surrounding hills from the famous panoramic large square called Piazzale Michelangelo. Then a local guide will show you the wonders of the old town: starting by the celebrated medieval Basilica of Santa Croce, moving to Piazza della Signoria, the heart of the political Florence, and then reaching the famous medieval bridge Ponte Vecchio and finally the Piazza del Duomo, the religious center of Florence, with its wonderful Gothic Cathedral, its Romanesque Baptistery and the majestic Giotto's Campanile.

Free lunch. Opportunity to have lunch in a characteristic tavern in the heart of Florence, tasting typical Tuscan viands (not included).

Afternoon dedicated to the guided visit of the *Uffizi Gallery*, the most complete Italian painting gallery famous all over the world.

Dinner and overnight in hotel.

3° DAY: TWO SMALL MEDIEVAL TOWNS: PISTOIA AND LUCCA

Breakfast in hotel and then guided walking tour in *Pistoia*, a very charming and well-preserved medieval town full of fine artworks, excellent restaurants and quality shops. You'll visit the old medieval town: the central Piazza San Francesco, with its interesting Franciscan Church, and the Romanesque church of S. Andrea, housing a precious pulpit carved by the sculptor Giovanni Pisano, one of the town's greatest works of art. You'll also visit Piazza del Duomo, the heart of the old center, with its Cathedral, Baptistery and intact medieval palaces and then the nearby Piazza della Sala, where you'll get in touch with a typical picturesque Italian fruit and vegetable open market. You'll also see the Ospedale del Ceppo (the Ceppo Hospital), famous for Giovanni della Robbia's earthen glazed frieze. You'll visit the basements of this ancient Hospital: along an interesting route, you'll discover the secret underground architectures of this old building, including the prestigious Hall of Anatomy, designed as a true 'anatomical theater', and the special and valuable collection of surgical instruments dating from the seventeenth-century.

Free lunch. Possibility of having lunch in a typical Tuscan restaurant in Pistoia's old center (not included).

In the afternoon transfer to *Lucca*, fascinating town which has exceptionally preserved its city walls complete. Guided tour in the old town, visiting the Church of San Frediano, with its magnificent thirteenth-century mosaic representing *Christ in Majesty*, the nearby Piazza Anfiteatro, the most beautiful square of Lucca, the ancient Duomo dedicated to San Martino and finally the important Piazza San Michele, the central civic square of Lucca since Roman times.

Dinner and overnight in hotel.

4° DAY: PISA AND THE MEDIEVAL VILLAGE OF VOLTERRA Possibility to match this itinerary to the scheduled dates of STEAM TRAIN during the year. -

Breakfast in hotel and then departure for **Pisa**, little town famous above all for its “Leaning Tower”. But Pisa offers certainly more than just its special Tower. With this pleasant guided tour we’d like to show you the most important monuments and squares of the town, starting with the world famous Campo dei Miracoli (Field of Miracles), with its unmatched quartet of medieval masterpieces: the Leaning Tower, the Cathedral with its wonderful bronze doors and the famous pulpit carved by Giovanni Pisano, the Baptistery with its fine pulpit by Nicola Pisano and the Campo Santo Cemetery with its huge medieval painting called *Triumph of Death*. Walking among medieval Tower-houses, you’ll reach the famous Piazza Dante, with Pisa's State University where Galileo Galilei himself taught, and then Piazza dei Cavalieri, the central civic square of medieval Pisa with Italy's academic showpiece: the Scuola Normale Superiore.

Free lunch. Opportunity to have lunch in a typical Tuscan restaurant near Pisa (not included).

In the afternoon your tour will carry on to **Volterra**, the town of the legendary Etruscans and the fine alabaster. From the top of the medieval town walls, with a view of the untouched Tuscan landscape, on bright days you can even see the Island of Corsica. You’ll see the Arco Etrusco (Etruscan Arch), the 2300-year-old Etruscan gateway. Through small streets and peaceful little squares, you’ll reach the Roman theater and the thermal baths. Then you’ll see the medieval Piazza dei Priori, flanked by the town hall, the Duomo rich in rare works of art and finally the Baptistery, situated in front of the Duomo.

Dinner and overnight in hotel.

5° DAY: THE MEDIEVAL ATMOSPHERE OF SIENA AND SAN GIMIGNANO

Breakfast in hotel. All morning long dedicated to the visit of **Siena**, one of the leading art cities in Tuscany, which has completely preserved its medieval character. You’ll visit the Church of San Domenico, much visited for its venerated relics of Saint Catherine, patron saint of Italy and Europe. You’ll see the magnificent Palace of Monte dei Paschi bank, the oldest bank in Europe, founded in 1472. You’ll reach the nearby Piazza del Campo, the unrivaled center of vivid city life, where your guide will explain you the rules - and tricks!- of the famous Palio, Siena's breathtaking bareback horse race. With a stop at the Chigi-Saracini Palace, you’ll finally visit the Duomo, with its special marble pavement, and the wonderful Baptistery of St. John, with its precious Renaissance frescoes.

Free lunch. Possibility of having lunch in a typical Tuscan tavern in Siena (not included).

In the afternoon your tour will continue with the visit of **San Gimignano**, a completely preserved charming medieval town which reveals an unexpected richness of art treasures. You’ll see Piazza della Cisterna, with its impressing medieval tower-houses, the Church of Santa Maria Assunta, adorned with fine frescoes, the Church of Sant’Agostino and finally the wonderful Rocca di Montestaffoli, the old fortress with a tower from where you’ll enjoy a magnificent view on the surrounding Tuscan landscape.

Dinner and overnight in hotel.

6° DAY: “LIKE IN A COSTUME MOVIE”: AREZZO AND CORTONA TRENINO Possibility to match this itinerary to the scheduled dates of STEAM TRAIN during the year.-

After breakfast at hotel, departure for **Arezzo**, birth place of many illustrious Italians like the architect Giorgio Vasari and the famous poet Francesco Petrarca, seat of an important Fiera Antiquaria (Antiquarian Fair) and of the Giostra del Saracino, a costumed medieval joust. You’ll visit Arezzo’s old center, where the witty Italian director Academy Awards prizewinner Roberto Benigni has set his masterpiece *La vita è bella* (*Life is beautiful*): the Cathedral, the Church of San Francesco with its famous frescoes by Piero della Francesca, the Piazza Grande bordered by Vasari's lodges, the Cathedral, the Church of San Donato, the Palazzo del Comune (Town Hall) and the Church of San Domenico, housing a fine Gothic *Crucifix*.

At the end of the visit, free lunch. Possibility of having lunch in a typical Tuscan tavern in the heart of Arezzo (not included).

Afternoon dedicated to the visit of the nearby **Cortona**, small town characterized by its medieval palaces and small streets, made famous by Frances Mayes's wonderful book *Under the Tuscan sun*. Cortona is also known for its "Tuscan Sun Festival", which inside its musical programme includes interesting culinary and literary events, wine tastings and art exhibitions. Your guide will show you the main monuments in the historic center: the house where the famous painter Pietro da Cortona was born, the Church of San Francesco, the Piazza della Repubblica, dominated by the medieval Palazzo Comunale (Town Hall), as well as the Palazzo Casali, once the residence of the noble Casali family and now seat of the Museo dell'Accademia Etrusca.

Dinner and overnight in hotel.

7° DAY: DEPARTURE

Breakfast in hotel. End of our services.

WE'LL CREATE YOUR OWN PRICE!

All our tours have been designed and developed with the following basic features:

- 3 / 4 STARS HOTELS
- HALF BOARD, with the possibility of full board
- GUIDED TOURS AS PER PROGRAM
- TRANSFERS BY COACH or TRAIN

We can expand or decrease our offer according to some variables or specific requests: the period of stay (low, medium or high season), the number of participants, the ability to integrate the program with extras like cooking classes, entrances in museums not listed in the programs and so on.

Send us an email with your personal request and we'll respond within 24 hours with an ad hoc quote just for you! Customize and make your holidays in Tuscany special and unforgettable with the expertise and advise of *Tour in Tuscany!*

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