

# TASTING TUSCANY

## Art and Flavors

### 1° DAY: ARRIVAL

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

### 2° DAY: FLORENCE AND THE CHIANTI FLAVORS

After breakfast at hotel, departure by private bus for an half-day tour in **Florence**, the celebrated capital of Tuscany, the city of art known all over the world like a nonpareil open-air museum. Before starting the classical walking guided tour of the old town, you'll be able to 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 centre of Florence, with its wonderful gothic Cathedral, its romanesque Baptistery and the majestic Giotto's Campanile. Free lunch. Possibility of having lunch in a characteristic tavern in the heart of Florence, tasting typical Tuscan viands (not included).

In the afternoon, tour in the heart of *Classic Chianti*, passing through the most famous Tuscan Wine Road: the Chianti road, which goes through the sinuous Chianti hills covered with green vineyards. Visit of **Greve in Chianti**, a nice village of Italian origin, with its asymmetric large square and its old porches full of typical workshops. After a pleasant walk in Greve in Chianti, you'll visit a wine farm near Greve, where you'll be able to have a tasting-dinner, sampling the renowned Classic Chianti wine and other good typical Tuscan products. Overnight in hotel.

### 3° DAY: PISTOIA AND ITS SWEET TREASURES

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, 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 startlingly colorful 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, included 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 in the old center of Pistoia. Opportunity to have lunch in a typical tavern, tasting the famous Tuscan soups (not included).

Afternoon dedicated to a special sweet tour, starting with the visit of a renowned **Pistoia's Confectionery**, as a mark of the traditional hand-made production of the famous Pistoia's confections, masterly prepared following the old medieval recipes. You'll be able to taste the exclusive Pistoia's glazed '*panforte*', delicious pralines, coffee and chocolate bonbons and of course the typical Pistoia's full candies.

Return to hotel for dinner and overnight.

### 4° DAY: THE LAND OF THE FAMOUS VERNACCIA WINE

Breakfast in hotel. Morning 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 also visit the Duomo, with its special pavement made with a startling sequence of 56 marble panels. Stop in a Siense Confectioner's Shop, where tasting and buying the famous typical Siense cakes.

Free lunch. Possibility of having lunch in a typical Tuscan restaurant in the heart of Siena (not included).

In the afternoon, visit of **San Gimignano**, in the heart of the *Vernaccia* Wine production: 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.

Tasting-dinner in a farm in the sweet country-side near San Gimignano, sampling the renowned *Vernaccia* white wine accompanied by good typical Tuscan viands. Overnight in hotel.

## **5° DAY: THE LAND OF MARBLE AND THE 'LARDO DI COLONNATA'**

Breakfast in hotel. Morning dedicated to the visit of an open-air museum in the Fantiscritti Quarries, where your guide will explain you the entire history of marble quarrying from Roman times up to our days. The tour will continue visiting the "cava in galleria", a unique quarry for an interesting experience. At the end of the visit, transfer to **Colonnata**, a little village close to Carrara famous all over the world for the traditional art of lard making: the lard of Colonnata is the most unusual traditional Italian food, made from pork fat matured in a special marble vat (called 'conca'). Probably dated back to Roman times, it was traditionally the meal of the quarry workers, who sliced it and accompanied it with bread, raw onions and tomatoes. You'll be able to discover the traditional art of lard making and to taste this unique natural product, free from preservatives and coloring.

Free lunch.

In the afternoon, visit of the historical center of Carrara, where you'll see the Romanesque Cathedral, entirely built in marble, the Teatro degli Animosi, the House of Michelangelo and the Academy of Fine Arts (outsid of **Carrara**: crouched at the feet of the Apuan Alps, the town is famous all over the world for the extraordinary quality of its marble. Michelangelo himself has tramped up there in search of the perfect block of marble for his sculptures. You'll be able to visit a professional marble workshop, where you learn the essential techniques used by today artists.

Dinner and overnight in hotel.

## **6° DAY: TUSCAN WONDERS: PECORINO CHEESE OF PIENZA AND MONTEPULCIANO RED WINE**

Breakfast in hotel. Morning dedicated to the visit of **Pienza**, nice Renaissance village famous all over the world for its fine Pecorino cheese. You'll visit the old center, with the beautiful Church of the Franciscans and the central Piazza dedicated to Pope Pius II Piccolomini, who wanted to transform his birthplace into an ideal city of the Renaissance. In the Piazza Pio II you'll be able to see the Cathedral, the Town Hall and the beautiful Palace of the Piccolomini family. Walking through small streets with singular names (like, for example, "Love's Street"), you'll reach a vantage point from where you'll enjoy a wonderful view over a landscape of harsh beauty.

Lunch in a wonderful farm near Pienza, where you'll be able to taste the famous good Pecorino cheese.

In the afternoon, visit of **Montepulciano**, a former Roman settlement risen on the "Mons Politianus", famous for its fine *Vino Nobile* wine. You'll visit the beautiful sanctuary of the Madonna di San Biagio, the central Piazza Grande, the Cathedral, the Town Hall and Palazzo Nobili Tarugi. At the end of the walking tour, you'll enjoy a delightful tasting-dinner in a farm, sampling the famous *Vino Nobile of Montepulciano* supported by fine Tuscan typical food.

Overnight in Hotel.

## **7° DAY: PEARLS BY THE SEA**

After breakfast at hotel, departure for **Livorno**, a pleasant port city on the Tyrrhenian Coast. You'll walk through the narrow streets of the "Venezia" district, so called because of its many waterways and small bridges. You'll also see the churches of the most important non catholic religious communities and you'll pass over the largest bridge of Europe: an huge square built over the water! You'll have a stroll along the beautiful sea promenade, with its amazing Liberty villas and the ancient palaces where famous people from all over Europe lived in the past.

Lunch in a typical tavern in the center of Livorno, tasting the famous "cacciucco": a savory fish stew specific to Livorno, consisting of several types of fish and shellfish cooked in wine, tomatoes and chili pepper.

In the afternoon, your tour will continue visiting

La piccola Venezia Livorno by channel

## **8° 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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