

French Wine

EXPLORERS



TREASURES OF FLORENCE AND TUSCANY A WINE, CULINARY AND CULTURAL TOUR

**8 DAYS, 7 NIGHTS | PRIVATE TOUR
AVAILABLE YEAR ROUND
2-6 GUESTS**

Visit the vineyards of Italy once, and you'll fall in love for a lifetime. Tuscany is one of the most beautiful and culturally rich wine regions in the world, and we'll include its most famous sites, as well as its secret treasures, on your tour. Begin in Florence, and travel through the lovely backroads of Chianti Classico.

Dear Pascale, I've been so busy since we have been home I have not had a chance to thank you for facilitating our wonderful trip. We are still feeling relaxed and very European... hopefully that will not wear off soon. We made gnocchi the other night - it turned out better than I thought it might! Valerie B.

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DAY 1

WELCOME TO FLORENCE

Arrive in Florence early afternoon. Meet your driver and enjoy a private transfer to your 4* hotel in the heart of the city, your home for two nights. Remainder of day and evening on own.

DAY 2

FLORENCE

B,L

Meet your **Florence guide** at your hotel for a half-day city tour. Your day begins up at Piazzale Michelangelo, the great promenade and lookout point with a panoramic view across Florence. The piazzale is dominated by a bronze replica of Michelangelo's David, and all of the Medieval and Renaissance landmarks of Florence are spread out before you.

Thereafter you'll immerse yourself **in the old city**. You'll cross the 14th-century Ponte Vecchio—or 'Old Bridge'—lined with jewelry shops since 1552, when Duke Cosimo I issued an edict for jewelers to replace all of the butcher shops.

Next we enjoy a **cooking class and lunch**: just a few steps away from Michelangelo's David, your chef offers the possibility to experience typical Florentine cooking in her home in a palace built in the 1700s. Using all the vibrant, fresh ingredients she has procured, you will prepare an entire Tuscan meal together from antipasto, pasta, meat, side dish all the way to dessert! Once the work in the kitchen is done, it is time to relax and enjoy what you have prepared together around the table.

DAY 3

CHIANTI CLASSICO

B,L

Today our explorations take us to the **Chianti Classico region**.

Your Chianti Classico adventure begins with a leisurely drive through the beautiful Chianti Classico landscape. Your first stop will be at **Castello di Monsanto**, a marvelous castle in the Chianti Classico region with outstanding, award winning wines and one of the most impressive cellars in all of Italy.

You will have lunch featuring specialties of the region paired with wine and you will then have time to explore the charming town of San Donato in Poggio. In the afternoon, you will have a guided visit to your second top winery of the day.

Check into your **boutique hotel Palazzo Leopoldo**. Evening on own. *Palazzo Leopoldo is perfectly located in the heart of Radda, one of the most well known towns in Chianti. A wonderful base for exploring the countryside, the palazzo offers large rooms, jacuzzi showers, all with modern conveniences.*

DAY 4

SAFFRON & OLIVE OIL—GIMIGNANO

B,L

Once there were seventy-two, now there are fourteen. Towers, that is—those medieval skyscrapers that are the unmistakable mark of **San Gimignano**, dramatically recognizable from miles away and dear to all Toscanophiles the world over.

In addition to learning about the art and history of this incredible city, you'll learn about local gourmet products, especially saffron and, needless to say, Vernaccia, the local white wine. Visit a beautiful, award-winning winery and a traditional local farm that cultivates precious saffron in addition to producing wine and olive oil.

You'll learn about the farm's production during your delicious saffron inspired meal, served on the open terrace with a splendid view of **San Gimignano** and its towers. Return to your hotel late afternoon. (If you prefer more wine touring, we can replace this day or the next with Bolgheri for Super Tuscans.)

DAY 5

SIENA

B,L

It's easy to lose yourself in **Siena's mesmerizing maze of narrow cobblestone streets**. On this tour, your private expert guide will make sure you don't miss out on the fascinating details of its rich history.

If this is your first time in Siena, we suggest an itinerary that includes the **13th-century Piazza del Campo**, Siena's stunning main square, where the famous Palio horse race is still held each summer. The Campo is dominated by the Palazzo Pubblico (Town Hall) and its majestic bell tower. Then on to the cathedral, one of the most sumptuous examples of Italian gothic architecture, built between 1180 and 1370. **Lunch will be in an attractive local osteria with wine.**

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At the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, you will view treasures of great Sienese art, and ascend to the top of the frontone for a breathtaking view of Siena and its environs. The 15th-century palace and courtyard of the counts Chigi-Seracini is a world music and musicology center. It was here that Antonio Vivaldi (1675-1741) was rediscovered in the 1930s, and his works were performed publicly for the first time since his death. Return to your hotel late afternoon.

DAY 6

BRUNELLO

B,L

Today is dedicated to Brunello! You will enjoy an amazing guided visit and tasting at the **Tenute Silvio Nardi**, an extensive estate dotted with small vineyards that makes modern, sleek, reliably excellent Brunello. Your wonderful lunch will be at **Il Leccio trattoria**, on top of the hilltop village St. angelo in Colle, overlooking the splendid Orcia valley, an elegant Tuscan restaurant with superb wine list and authentic, fresh tastes.

Next up is a guided visit and tasting at **Soldiera**, an "old school" master of Italian wines. Gianfranco, the owner, makes no compromises with his wine and philosophy of wine production. His divine Brunello has the best aging potential.

You will have plenty of time to visit the charming town of **Montalcino** and taste some incredible vintage Brunello in a fine wine shop as well as explore the town with its incredible views of the surrounding hills and valleys. Return to your hotel late afternoon.

DAY 7

MONTEPULCIANO

B,L

Montepulciano, the Renaissance city where the day's tour begins, is a particularly well preserved hilltop town surrounded by one of Tuscany's most enchanting landscapes: the Val d'Orcia and Val di Chiana valleys.

The area is noted for its red wines, the most famous being **Vino Nobile di Montepulciano**, a medium-body wine rich in color, with a good tannin structure. After strolling around the town and learning about the local history and handsome 16th century palaces, you will visit one of the ancient vaulted town cellars and taste Vino Nobile.

Lunch is served in one of our very favorite restaurants in the historic center of the old city.

In the afternoon you'll visit **Pienza**, in the Val d'Orcia Valley. The town is well furnished with fine architectural and artistic works. It is also a good place to discover local food products, in particular the famous **pecorino** sheep cheese, Pecorino di Pienza.

At a local cheese shop you will see (and taste!) the **pecorino** in many stages of aging from soft-fresh-mild to hard-crumbly-winey, in all shapes and sizes. Or, an alternative program is to enjoy lunch in a local cheese farm, where you will learn all about how this special pecorino is made, before exploring Pienza.

DAY 8

FLORENCE

B

Your program ends after breakfast today. **Private transfer to the Florence airport**. Continue your journeys with fond memories of Florence and Tuscany and their entire splendor.

LEGEND FOR MEALS INCLUDED IN YOUR TOUR: B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner

*Itinerary subject to change: every effort will be made to keep the itinerary as close as possible to what appears here; however, the final itinerary may vary due to wine producer schedules, availability and factors beyond our control.

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YOUR LUXURY TOUR OF FLORENCE & TUSCANY INCLUDES:

- Creation of your totally customized itinerary, and all advance arrangements for your tour
- Seven nights in deluxe double occupancy rooms, four and five star hotels as indicated in the program
- Daily Breakfasts
- All transfers with Mercedes Viano minivan
- The services of an expert English-speaking guide per the itinerary
- Private cooking class and lunch in Florence
- Lunch in Chianti with wine
- Lunch in a fine restaurant in Montepulciano, fixed 3 course menu, with wine
- Lunch in a wine bar in Siena, fixed 3 course menu, with wine
- Buffet lunch at a Brunello winery, with winery's wine
- Lunch at the saffron farm in San Gimignano with local wine
- Visit and tasting at top rated Montepulciano, Brunello and Chianti Classico wineries
- Museum entrance fees
- All local taxes

Price based on 2 guests, double occupancy: US \$ 7990.00 per person

Price based on 4 guests, double occupancy: US \$ 6990.00 per person

Price based on 6 guests, double occupancy: US \$ 5990.00 per person

(Monday through Friday tour dates are preferable, as more wine estates are open. Saturday is also possible if necessary.)

Subject to availability. Single supplement: please inquire. For groups of 7 or more guests: please contact us for a price quote. Not included: any personal expenses, or any services not specifically mentioned above as included in the price of your tour.

To reserve this program: contact us at info@wine-tours-france.com

Tel.: 1-877-261-1500 or 410-745-5406 (outside the USA)

We look forward to meeting you!

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