

ITINERARY FOR A TASTE OF ITALY: TUSCANY

Price: 2690 euros per person

Single supplement : 360 euros

Distance : 51 km approx

Walking : moderate +



This new seven day trip takes you through the beauty of a well trodden Tuscany. Well trodden yes but we will be showing you this great region through our eyes and with our passion. Food, wine, culture and walking will lend itself to the success of a great week showing you just why there is much justification in the simile 'as proud as a Tuscan'. Numerous of the great City Republics of the early Renaissance were in this region and it is extraordinary not only to see how they could build such masterpieces of beauty and invention but also There are some outstanding wines made in Tuscany ... namely Brunello of Montalcino and the Vino Nobile of Montepulciano. These you will be sampling and comparing. James has always had a great love for the works of the Gothic sculptor Giovanni Pisano and as well as seeing some outstanding works of his, there will be much early and high Renaissance work of equal merit to see!

The Walking Party was founded by James Tamlyn in 1998. His love of flora and fauna combined with his fascination for the food, wine and local traditions and the personal contacts he has accumulated since the creation of this itinerary, make this a special experience that you could not enjoy as an individual traveller. James will be walking with you every day through the week.

Day 1 ARRIVAL You will be met in Rome at the Fiumicino airport for the BA afternoon flight arrival (scheduled at the moment for 16.15) by James and then be driven to the pretty town of Vignarello for lunch before visiting the Castello Ruspoli. This is a typical and enchanting castello. The gardens are formalised and classically Italian. We will quickly move on to the gardens at Bomarzo which were discovered by Salvador Dali and Man Ray. The garden was constructed in the sixteenth century. It is based on the epic poem by Ariosto about unrequited love called Orlando Furioso. We will have time to wander through the woods and see the extraordinary sculptures. We will then continue to San Gimignano to stay at the Antico Pozzo which has authenticity and charm and sits within the walls a stones throw away from the beautiful Colegiata. It is a wonderful way to start 'A Taste of Tuscany'!

Day 2 SAN GIMIGNANO After breakfast we will visit the Colegiata with its wonderful frescoes. This is a saturation of Renaissance colour that really hits you as you walk in. Then we walk out of the village walls towards a vineyard for a wine-tasting to taste olive oil and the

lovely dry white wine 'Vernaccia' of which the locals are so proud. We picnic with beautiful views of San Gimignano before returning to the village to relax in this wonderful village. Dinner in the village. *Walk: 3km*

Day 3 VOLTERRA We leave San Gimignano in the morning after breakfast by car and drive towards the Etruscan bastion of Volterra. We start walking in the valley up a hill (!) and eventually arrive to be greeted by a wonderful picnic with stunning views. We will eat drink and enjoy the general beauty of bucolic Italy before continuing on foot to San Gimignano. For the tired or less interested in walking' there is a vehicle option to go earlier to Volterra and wander through the streets. We drive to Siena. Dinner in Siena. *Walk: 15km*



Day 4 COOKING AND CULTURE DAY We will have an easy morning in Siena before meeting Lella who will be inviting us to cook a great Italian lunch with her including pastas and artichokes and salads. Italian cooking has always for me been the freshest and best in the world and here we will see why! We will all be joining in, getting our hands dirty and we will eat lunch here. In the afternoon we will be visiting three gems of Sienese culture: the Duomo, the Museo del Duomo and the Baptistery. Here you will see stunning work by Giovanni Pisano as well as Duccio, Donatello and Pinturicchio. You will be staying in a delightful hotel, the C, five minutes walk from the Piazza del Campo. Dinner in Siena in the Piazza del Campo.

Day 5 GARDENS DAY You awake for another lovely continental breakfast of fruits and *cornetti* and coffee. We then drive to La Foce for a private tour of this extraordinary garden built by one of the great Tuscan families in the 1920s. We then walk to a small hilltop village for a delicious light lunch with stunning views. After lunch we walk to Pienza. This 'village' was created by Pope Pius II in the mid fifteenth century as an ideal Renaissance town! It has immense charm and we will visit the palazzo and its small garden which has to have been an influence on Cecil Pinsent at La Foce. You will stay in a beautiful monastery converted to a four star hotel. The rooms are ordered around an ancient cloister with beautiful views over the Val d'Orcia. There is a swimming pool. All bedrooms are spacious with bathrooms en suite and with lovely views. This region of Tuscany is beautifully romantic and dotted with lines of cypress trees along the undulating clay hills of '*le crete*' beneath the backdrop of Monte Amiata. We may then visit the hilltop town of Montepulciano time permitting. It is famous for its *Vino Nobile* a sumptuous red wine of sangiovese grapes. Drive to Montefollonico for dinner. *3km morning 6km afternoon*

Day 6 MONTALCINO DAY After breakfast we drive to a small castello to walk to the lovely hilltop town of Montalcino for lunch where we have a tasting of the fabulous wines coming from this area. Montalcino is famous for its Brunello wine – another Sangiovese gem. We will be tasting the differences between Brunello and Vino Nobile all the great wines from this Siena area with various *bruschetti* and *salumi*. In the afternoon we set off again on foot through the woods for the abbey of San Antimo. Return by car to Pienza. Farewell dinner in Pienza at the hotel with lovely views of Monte Amiata. *7km morning 5km afternoon*

Day 7 ROME We drive back to Rome after an early breakfast.



Bomarzo



San Gimignano

Please note that this itinerary is subject to change according to local conditions. All mileages shown are approximate.