



Celebrations International Travel, Inc.



## *Culinary Highlights of Tuscany*

### **DAY 1 ARRIVO AL CASTELLO**

**D**

You are met at Florence Airport and escorted to the Castello di Gabbiano at San Castiano Val di Pesa. Upon check-in, there is a welcome reception in your honor in the castle gardens.

Dinner follows at the winery restaurant, Il Cavaliere. Ingredients are as varied as dried figs, estate-grown olives and olive oil, artisan cheeses, game birds, smoked meat and chocolate and find delicious expression in the changing seasonal menus – and pair perfectly with wine.

### **DAY 2 VITA IN TOSCANA**

**BLD**

After a leisurely Tuscan country breakfast, you will participate in a cooking class that will result in a rustic and fresh lunch that typifies al fresco Italian cooking. After lunch, the vineyard owner will explain to you his way of making wine and take you through a tour of the vineyards. You will then be taken back to the Medieval Times and be shown the work done restoring this 12<sup>th</sup> century castle.

For the rest of the afternoon, you will be at leisure to take a dip in the swimming pool, explore the surrounding hillsides, or simply lie down with a good book before dinner at Il Cavaliere.

### **DAY 3 LA MAGIA DI FIRENZE**

**BLD**

After breakfast, you are transferred by private coach to Florence. You will enjoy a personal walking tour of the city and a lunch at typical trattoria in the city, witnessing the bustle of the cobblestone and plates of cheeses, breads and of course glasses of wine. In the afternoon you receive a guided tour of the Uffizi Academia.

In the early evening you depart from the excitement of the city for the quiet solitude of your Castello. Relax before you leave for dinner at an authentic pizzeria in the neighbouring village.

#### **DAY 4 I VINI DELLA TOSCANA**

**BLD**

After breakfast you are driven through the Tuscan countryside, where your tour guide points out castles, history, and provides an overview of Tuscan Wines. Your first stop is the massive Meleto Castle which produces Chianti Classico Castello di Meleto, Reserve und Fiore, 2 types of Grappa and olive oil. You will enjoy a typical Tuscan repast in the nearby restaurant Radda, known for rustic country cooking. Then you visit Castello di Verrazzano (pictured below), located on the hilltop in the Chianti Classico area which is known for exquisite red Tuscan varietals, and floral, fresh Vin Santo.

Afterwards you can retire to the quiet of your Castello for evening drinks and a dip in the pool. Dinner tonight is served to you at Il Cavaliere.



#### **DAY 5 BELLEZZA DEL SIENA**

**BLD**

After breakfast, you get an early start on the thrilling autostrada toward Siena, 40km across the Tuscan hillside. Here, you will step into the Middle Ages with a private walking tour including the Tuscan hill town's magnificent Siena Cathedral (Il Duomo). Spend a day people-watching and enjoy lunch on the town's sloping red-brick Piazza del Camp, which is designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site and houses a dramatic Gothic city hall, the Gaia Fountain and the Chapel of the Virgin and visit the museum, the Torre de Mangia.



In the amber evening, you return to the Castello once again, for drinks, a dip in the pool and dinner at Il Cavaliere.

#### **DAY 6 MONTEPULCIANO**

**BD**

This morning after breakfast you will move to Villa Nottola for the amazing experience of an Agriturismo. At a distance of only 2 miles from Montepulciano you will find 5 restored farm houses sitting in the middle of a picturesque Olive Tree and Grape Vineyard. You will have an Olive Oil and Wine tasting this afternoon as well as learning about and tasting the amazing Peccorino cheese of the area. You will be amazed at what age can do for wine and cheese alike.

You will have the afternoon at leisure till dinner at the Agriturismo's Ristorante. This evening, stroll around the vineyards or sit by the pool listening to the crickets and sipping your newly discovered favourite wine.

### **DAY 7 MONTEPULCIANO**

**BLD**

After breakfast at Villa Nottola you will be taken for a tour of Montepulciano. Montepulciano is one of the most attractive hills towns in Tuscany. It is the ancient Etruscan city of Nocera Alfaterna, which in 308 B.C. made an alliance with Rome against the Samnites. In the Middle Ages it was under the control of Florence, but was conquered by Sienna in 1260. The main street of Montepulciano stretches for 11.5 kilometers from the Porta al Prato to the Piazza Grande at the top of the hill. The cathedral was built in 1619, from plans by Scalzo and until the 18 C it held the tomb of Bartolomeo Arragazzi, Secretary of Pope Martin V, a work of Michelozzo. The church of the Madonna di San Biagio was planned by Antonio da Sangallo (1518-37). You will fall in love with the people and this town's warmth.



After lunch we will go for a chocolate tasting before returning to your Villa Nottola to freshen up and go for dinner down the lane at the neighboring Agriturismo.

### **DAY 8 ORVIETO**

**B**

Your transfer bus will take you back to Florence for your flight home.

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### ***Extended Option (At an Additional Cost)***

### **DAY 8 ORVIETO**

**BLD**

After breakfast today you will visit the ancient Etruscan town of Orvito. Thanks to its production of quality labels, Umbrian wines have earned themselves a position of respect both on the national and international scene. While here you will have opportunity to try wines such as Sagrantino di Montefalco, Rubesco, Grechetto, Orvieto Classico, etc. On your city tour here you will visit the fine Palazzo del Capitano del Popolo, The Duomo of Orvieto, one of the most important examples of Gothic architecture in Italy. Also the Palazzo del Vescovado, or former bishop's palace, dating back to the reign of Pope Benedict VII, who gave



orders for the building to be erected in 977 next to the church of Santa Maria Prisca. Marvel at The Pozzo di S. Patrizio (pictured below), a well built for the Popes.

For lunch we will have a picnic in the park at Parco Delle Grotte. Afterwards you will have free time to explore and shop till dinner time.

Dinner will be an experience at the Al San Giovenale Restaurant. The ancient building that today houses the Al San Giovenale Restaurant of Orvieto is almost certainly the earliest church erected in Orvieto by the Augustinians in 1264. The strongly Mediterranean cuisine at the San Giovenale di Orvieto is careful to select seasonal ingredients of the finest quality. Their fresh pasta and home made cakes are made according to traditional recipes and are among the restaurant's strong points. The Chef will be pleased to meet you.

After a long day you will return to Villa Nottola for a good night's sleep.

### **Day 9 VOLTERRA**

**B**

This morning after breakfast your coach will pick you up for your trip to Volterra. En route you will stop to do a Cheese and Salami tasting. You will visit the barn where the sheep and pigs are raised organically and end with tasting their local cheeses, hams, salami, and wines. Then proceed to check in to your hotel.



### **Day 10 VOLTERRA**

**B**

After breakfast today you will have free time to discover this ancient, diversified city. Make sure you have some good walking shoes on and a bottle of water because there is so much to see.

Volterra stands on a rocky hill some 1770 feet above the sea level, located between the rivers Bra and Cecina, and is surrounded by strong walls. The district is rich in alabaster, the working of which was an important industry of the city, and in mineral waters, such as those of S. Felice and the Moie, or salt springs. Still more important are the Soffoni of Larderello, from which boric acid is extracted, the sulphur lake of Monterotondo, the copper springs of Caporciano, and the baths of Montecatini.

The cathedral, consecrated by Callistus II in 1120, was enlarged by Andrea Pisano in 1254, and again in 1576. The high altar is adorned with sculpture by Mino da Fiesole. Among the pictures is an "Annunciation" by Luca Signorelli, and there are pictures by Benvenuto di Giovanni, Leonardo da Pistoia, and others. In the baptistery (1283) are a font by Sansovino and a ciborium by Mino da Fiesole. Other churches are those of S. Lino (1480) and S. Francesco. The Palazzo Pubblico (1217)

holds the extensive archives of the city. The Palazzo Tagani houses an important museum of Etruscan and Roman antiquities.

**Day 11 SAN GIMIGNANO**

**BD**

After breakfast you will visit San Gimignano which stands on a hill dominating the valley of the river Elsa. This hill was the location of a small Etruscan village during the Hellenistic period (200-300 BC) and San Gimignano began its life as a town in the 10 Century. San Gimignano is well-known for the production of the wine **Vernaccia di San Gimignano**. This is one of the most well-known white wines in Italy. It is golden yellow in colour and with a rich bouquet, and is suitable as an aperitif and also goes well with fish dishes. This wine has very ancient origins, and there are records of it dating back to the 13 Century. We will have a brief wine tasting here and carry on to learn how to make one of its own traditional Siennese, Pinolata, which is made with cream custard and pine nuts. You will be able to taste the fruits of your labour afterwards. Afterwards you will return to Volterra for dinner and a leisurely evening.



**Day 12 FLORENCE**

**BD**

Today after breakfast you will be transfer to Florence for check in to your final hotel. You will have the day free at leisure to do your final shopping or just relax. As a very high end optional tour you may consider going on a Truffle hunt. Enjoy your last evening in Florence with a wonderful farewell dinner.

**Day 13 DEPARTURE**

**B**

Today you will have at leisure until your transfer to take you to the Florence airport. Have a great flight home.

*Tour Offered Exclusively By:*



Celebrations International Travel, Inc.

**Call: (480) 272-6020**

**Email: [info@celebrationsinternationaltravel.com](mailto:info@celebrationsinternationaltravel.com)**

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