

LET'S TASTE TUSCANY



DAY 1: ARRIVAL at Pisa or Florence airport

In the heart of Valdinievole, in the area of Pistoia, the ***Chocolate Valley*** is one of the sweet surprises that Tuscany offers to food lovers. The most important chocolate-makers in Italy live and work here. Visiting the chocolate valley is a delightful experience that will make you discover and taste this sweet Tuscan tradition.

(free lunch – dinner and overnight in Montecatini Terme)

DAY 2: PISA / SAN MINIATO

The *Field of Miracles* in ***Pisa*** is one of Italy's and Europe's most beautiful places, one of Europe's greatest groups of Romanesque buildings, with the remarkable *Leaning Tower*, the *Duomo* and *Baptistry*.

In the early afternoon you will be transferred to the medieval village of ***San Miniato***, that preserves an historic centre set on the top of a hill. This town is known for its olive oil, that is more than just a healthy and tasty ingredient in Italian cooking! We'll take you from a *Tuscan olive grove* to various parts of the production process in a traditional *olive oil mill*. The tour will be followed up with a tasting of 3-4 types of olive oil.

(free lunch – dinner and overnight in Montecatini Terme)



DAY 3: FLORENCE

Welcome to the birthplace of the Italian Renaissance: **Florence**, a city of extraordinary and timeless beauty with exceptional cultural and artistic heritage.

After a half day guided tour of the *Cathedral*, *Piazza della Signoria* and *Ponte Vecchio* you will get some free time for lunch, relax or shopping in the famous market of S. Lorenzo.

In the late afternoon you will have the possibility to learn how to make a real Italian pizza: create and taste your own one through a *Pizza making class*! Enjoy the pizza you have cooked and take home the knowledge and joy of the Italian cousin.

(free lunch – dinner and overnight in Montecatini Terme)



DAY 4: SAN GIMIGNANO / FATTORIA SAN DONATO / VOLTERRA

On a hilltop in the heart of Tuscany, with a 360 degrees view into the surrounding valleys, stands a majestic medieval walled town, its profile bristling with tall towers: **San Gimignano**. Truly a little gem, it is so precious that UNESCO has declared it a “World Heritage Site.” At lunchtime we’ll visit a **Farm** in the area of S. Gimignano, their winery, the vineyards, and see the full details about all the making procedures of the wines you will taste at the end of the visit, together with their extra-virgin olive oil, Vinsanto, Grappa, and other typical products of the area like cheeses, honeys, cold cuts, and season fruit.

Volterra: a jewel of Etruscan, Roman, Medieval and Renaissance art, dominates the whole valley of the river Cecina from a hill 550 m above sea level. Its unique position and its ancient history leave everyone enchanted.

(free lunch – dinner and overnight in Poggibonsi area)

DAY 5: SIENA / BROLIO CASTLE, accommodation in Poggibonsi

The city of Siena is best known for its cuisine, art, museums and last but not least the **Palio**, a spectacular horse race preceded by an impressive parade. The most famous square of **Siena** is without a doubt *Piazza del Campo*. Another highlight of the city is the magnificent Cathedral of Siena, one of the finest examples of Italian Gothic architecture and home to great artistic treasures!

Castle of Brolio: The castle passed into the hands of the Ricasoli family due to an exchange of lands in 1141. The castle rises at the center of **boundless vineyards**, from which the Ricasoli

distilled their famous wines, place to grow old in the cellars inside the mighty walls of the fortress. Bettino Ricasoli was one the most important figures of the Italian 19th century, a vigorous politician, and also the experimental agronomist who invented a new Chianti wine formula.

(free lunch – dinner and overnight in Poggibonsi area)



DAY 6: PIENZA / MONTALCINO / S. ANTIMO ABBEY

Pienza is famous not only for its architectures but also for the excellent sheep's milk cheese, or more correctly, ewes' milk cheese, “pecorino”, produced in the area.

After a short walk in the tiny village located in the beautiful setting of the Valdorcia Legion, we'll visit a *cheese factory* to discover production and taste of one most famous cheeses of Italy.

Brunello di Montalcino is one of the most famous and evocative names for wine collectors, and this Tuscan village itself is a sheer delight to visit. **Montalcino** has an aristocratic pedigree, and was already famous for its red wines in 1400s. Let's visit a traditional *winery* in Montalcino, see the cellars, enjoy the fabulous views and of course taste a range of their best wines, from Rosso di Montalcino to the high end Brunellos. After visiting Montalcino, we'll follow the road signs to the ***Romanesque Abbey of Sant'Antimo***, a beautiful and evocative abbey built in the 12th century. The drive along the winding country road leading to the monastery will be an incredible pleasure for your eyes: vineyards, olive groves, green hills, and isolated farmhouses. The Abbey, built in travertine stone, stands in perfect isolation on a plain among secular olive groves and lovely wheat fields. When you enter the church, its solemn and severe atmosphere will take you back to the Middle Ages and the austere monastic world.

(free lunch – dinner and overnight in Poggibonsi area)

DAY 7: departure day