



TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Provinces: Siena and Lucca
- Visit cheesemaker
- Wine tasting of Nobile di Montepulciano
- Visit Mount Amiata & free-range Cinta Senese pigs
- Truffle hunt
- Visit chestnut drying hut
- Village chestnut festival
- Pick olives and press oil
- 2 cooking lessons
- Visit Cinque Terre
- Dinner in Italian home
- Optional: spa treatment, Puccini concert
- Sightseeing & shopping: Pienza, Montepulciano, Arezzo, Lucca



TRUFFLES, OLIVE OIL & CHESTNUTS

15–25 October 2012

A collaboration with Saponi e Saperi Adventures

ITINERARY

Monday 15 October

Transfer from Chiusi-Chianciano Terme train station to Osteria dell’Orcia, Bagno Vignoni, our **accommodation in the Val d’Orcia, a World Heritage Site**, for the next six nights. **Welcome dinner** at Osteria dell’Orcia prepared by our hosts Eliana and Silvano.



Tuesday 16 October

This morning we visit a **family dairy** where the owners Sandra and Ulisse show us how to make pecorino cheese and ricotta. We meet their family and flocks and then settle down to taste their cheese, homemade bread, honey and wine. Free afternoon in the quintessential Renaissance town of **Pienza**, a Unesco World Heritage Site. Dinner at Osteria dell’Orcia.

Wednesday 17 October

At a ‘carbon-free’ vineyard that produces the famed **Nobile di Montepulciano** we tour the estate learning about the microclimates that give each wine its distinct flavour. After a visit to the wine cellar where we find out about the process of making wine, we come to the enjoyable task of tasting the wine. **Montepulciano** is our next stop, where you are free to have lunch shop and explore. You can visit some of the historical wine cellars or sit and admire the Renaissance magnificence of the Piazza Grande. Next to the Piazza is one of the last coppersmiths in Tuscany. Then we head home for dinner along ‘*la Foce*’, a panoramic route on which many car commercials have been shot.

Thursday 18 October

Today our destination is **Mount Amiata** - a majestic, extinct volcano that still generates the hot springs at Bagno Vignoni and Bagni San Filippo. The mountain is renowned for its wild mushrooms, truffles, chestnuts, olive oil, game and wild berries. It is also home to the **Cinta Senese pig**, a breed dating back to at least the 14th century, which until 20 years ago had almost disappeared. After a visit to the farm, we have lunch in the nature reserve where you can taste the Cinta and find out for yourselves how lucky it is that it was saved from extinction. After lunch we return to Osteria dell’Orcia for a **cooking lesson** with Eliana. We will then relax and enjoy the dishes we’ve cooked with local wines and great company!

Friday 19 October

The delightful Gianni and his dog take us **truffle hunting** on his estate, after which we taste his extra-virgin olive oil and the truffles you’ve found (we hope). The afternoon is free to visit the ancient pilgrimage town of **Bagno Vignoni** just 10 minutes walk from the hotel, bathe in its thermal pool known to the Etruscans and frequented by pilgrims and nobility ever since, or simply relax at Osteria dell’Orcia.



Saturday 20 October

We bid farewell to the Val d'Orcia and head to the Garfagnana in northern Tuscany. Luckily we arrive at **Arezzo** in time to lunch at a restaurant with one of the top wine sommeliers in Italy. Arezzo merits a visit in its own right for its churches and art, especially the **Piero della Francesca cycle, 'The Legend of the True Cross'**. We continue to agriturismo La Cappella just outside Lucca, our home for the rest of the tour. Our hostess Vicky welcomes us with a pizza party.

Sunday 21 October

We spend today in the wild, rugged mountains of the Garfagnana because it's the beginning of the chestnut season. Dishes made from chestnut flour were the staple food of the Garfagnana until very recently and the new flour is still eagerly awaited every autumn. We walk through the beautiful autumn chestnut woods to visit a **chestnut-drying hut**, where you are introduced to the mysteries of how chestnuts are turned into flour. We lunch at a family restaurant on Giovanna's silky pasta, Enrico's game stews and Luisa's incomparable desserts. We end up at a **chestnut festival** in a romantic hilltop village where craftsmen make wooden shoes and cane chairs, we can visit a chestnut museum and sample roasted chestnuts, mulled wine and chestnut flour pancakes cooked between hot stones.



Monday 22 October

Olive oil is fast food. In ideal circumstances the olive gets from the tree to the oil drum in a single day. In the morning we help **pick olives** on an organic estate which produces one of the best olive oils of Lucca. Our lunch on the estate shows off the owners' commitment to Slow Food produce and cooking. After lunch we visit the **modern press** where our olives will be turned into extra-virgin oil. We also visit a **traditional press** and find out which is best. We return to La Cappella for a **cooking lesson** where we learn to make typical dishes of Lucca with our new olive oil.

Tuesday 23 October

The **Cinque Terre** — the Five Lands — is one of the most beautiful stretches of Italian coastline. Our driver takes us to the first village, from which you can explore all five, hopping between them by train or by boat, from which you get the best view of the vertiginous cultivated terraces and rocky cliffs plunging down to the sea. Or you can walk between villages on the well-marked trails. We return to a **home-cooked dinner with an Italian family**. If you've already been to the Cinque Terre and don't want to go again, we will walk from La Cappella to a wine estate for a tour of the vineyards and wine tasting.

Wednesday 24 October

A free day to explore the exquisite walled town of **Lucca**. Among its treasures are its landscaped Renaissance walls, the amphitheatre still bearing traces of its Roman and mediaeval origins, many churches, paintings and sculptures. In the evening a **Puccini concert** (optional) followed by our farewell dinner in a 16th-century noble palazzo.

Thursday 25 October

Departure. Transport provided to Lucca train station or Pisa airport.

ACCOMMODATION



Relais 'Osteria dell'Orcia', Bagno Vignoni

A 17th-century post house along the Via Francigena where pilgrims on their way from Canterbury to Rome stopped to rest, take refreshment and change horses. Visit:

www.osteriadellorcia.com



La Cappella, Cappella

A fully restored former convent, with outstanding views over Lucca. The estate produces olive oil and jam, the latter a feature at breakfast. Visit:

www.lacappellalucca.it



PRICE PER PERSON: €2950 (Euros)

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: €375 (Euros)

Itinerary is subject to change if necessary due to weather or agricultural conditions or other events outside our control.

INCLUDES

- 10 nights welcoming, relaxing accommodation, en suite bathrooms
- Local ground transportation for 11 days
- Daily continental breakfast, 5 lunches, 9 dinners
- Entrance to wine tasting, cheese tasting, truffle hunt, cooking lessons, guided visits with producers

DOES NOT INCLUDE

- Airfares
- Travel and cancellation insurance
- Spa treatments, concert
- Wine and drinks, other than those served with meals, additional meals
- Personal expenses such as telephone, mini-bar, etc.



BOOKINGS

Lucia Norrito
Viaggi Senza Fretta

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TOUR MANAGERS

Lucia Norrito

Lucia founded Viaggi Senza Fretta (Slow Travel Tours Tuscany) to share her community's valued traditions, culture and countryside with people who travel to learn, compare cultures and exchange ideas as a means of relaxing and regenerating their minds, bodies and souls.



Heather Jarman

Following her careers as archaeologist, orchestra and artist manager and chef, Heather came to Lucca to pursue her passion for traditional artisan food. Her tours, inspired by her infectious curiosity, open captivating new worlds to her guests.



ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Dress

Informal. Jeans or smart trousers are acceptable everywhere. Good walking shoes and socks required for pig farm, truffle hunt and olive picking.

Weather in October

Val d'Orcia: 9–15°C/48–60°F, rainfall 69 mm/2.7 in
Lucca: 11–21°C/52–70°F, rainfall 119 mm/4.7 in