

The Palio of Siena

12th – 18th August 2012

*The Palio horse race in Siena is one of the most spectacular festivals in Italy. It takes place twice a year, on 2nd July and 16th August. It is, however, much more than one race on the one day. It is the apex of months of preparation and the Palio itself is a 4-day festival. To watch it on TV or read about it in the paper, or even to stand in the square and experience the race itself is only scratching the surface of a fabulous tradition. This exclusive tour brings you the “**Quattro giorni del Palio**” and immerses you in the rituals and folklore of the Palio together with the signature Food, Wine, Walking and attention to detail of Hedonistic Hiking.*

12th August

The tour starts in Pisa (train station or airport) where we meet you at 3pm. Drive 2 hours to Siena where we stay in the historical centre in [Il Chostro di Carmine](#), a former Carmelite convent dating from the 14th century. The hotel has views of the countryside and is a 10 minute walk from the main square of Siena. This evening there is a short introductory talk about the Palio before we stroll into the Campo, the beautiful central square, where we enjoy an aperitif before dinner in a local Trattoria.



13th August

Today is the start of the “Quattro Giorni del Palio”. This morning a leisurely walking tour of the city will take in one of the Contrade museums before we converge in the Campo to see the horses being allocated to their Contrade. This important event is attended by many local Sieneese and accompanied by much fanfare. Light lunch in a local wine bar. Later in the day we head out of the city where we meet Orietta, a delightful local chef. Join her for an informal and fun cookery class and enjoy a relaxed dinner at a local farm.

14th August



We visit one of the private art collections in the city before heading out of the city for a guided walk in the shady hills of the Montagnola. Picnic in the open countryside. Free time in Siena in the afternoon. After an early dinner we take our seats at an open-air opera performance (location tbc - subject to availability – this may be done on an alternative evening).

15th August

Today a guided hike explores the beautiful area of the Merse River, one of the most pristine areas in the region. Opportunities to cool off in the clear waters before a leisurely picnic in the countryside. We return to Siena in the afternoon and watch the penultimate trial race before joining with the *Contrada* for a pre-race dinner in the streets of the city.

16th August



An early start for those that wish to see the Bishop of Siena leading Mass in the chapel on the Piazza del Campo. A guided walk through the streets enables you to absorb the excitement of the day. In the afternoon we attend the blessing of the horse at one of the *Contrada* chapels before the procession sets off from the Duomo. We take our seats on the square to enjoy the medieval parade followed by the race itself. We dine in the square after the race and enjoy the continuation of the festivities.

17th August

Free morning in Siena. Later in the day we head out of the city for a picnic in the countryside followed by a visit to some beautiful private gardens. Magnificent final dinner in a renowned restaurant.

18th August

Return to Pisa for 11am



Cost per person (twin-share): €2565

Seven-day all-inclusive tour:

- **Grandstand tickets** for Historical Parade and Palio Horse Race – 16th August 2012
- **Siena Contrada Museum Tour**
- **Contrada Dinner** - night before the race day
- **Horse Blessing** - day of the race
- **All meals** as per itinerary (dinner on Day 1 to Breakfast on Day 7)
- **Transfers and all transport** ex. Pisa in air-conditioned minibus
- Exclusive services of **Hedonistic Hiking guide(s)**
- **6 nights' accommodation** at Il Chiostro di Carmine – a historic residence in the centre of Siena
- Dinners in a variety of **excellent restaurants**. Meals matched to **quality wines** – including some of the top wines of the region
- **Museum visits** as per itinerary
- Hands-on **cooking class** with local chef

NB: If the race has to be cancelled for any reason (eg. Heavy rain) it will usually be rescheduled for the following day. If this were to happen we would adapt the itinerary accordingly in order to attend the race.

Temperatures in Tuscany in August can be very high - Min 25 Max 35.

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