



# HEDONISTIC HIKING

## A Tuscan Harvest – 8 Days

### *Chianti, Castles and Tuscan Cooking*

This is classic Tuscany with the tour celebrating the region's unmistakable landscape, abundant vineyards and strong culinary heritage. The hikes take us off the beaten track to remote castles, formal gardens and the vineyards of Chianti where we meet local winemakers to taste their wines and olive oils. A free day in Siena offers the chance to explore this medieval jewel and see the Piazza del Campo where the legendary Palio horse-race is run twice each year. We have fun with a local chef making our own pasta in the sixteenth century kitchen of a private country villa. We get to enjoy a variety of fabulous restaurants along the way which showcase the very best of Tuscan cooking and the region's world-famous wines.

#### What is included?

- **7 nights' accommodation** in 4 and 5 star hotels
- **Two experienced and knowledgeable guides** who will look after your every need and bring this stunning area to life
- **All meals including wine.**
- **Gourmet picnic lunches** each day and snacks en route
- Dinner in a variety of **superb restaurants.**
- All **Museum visits** and wine tastings as per itinerary
- **Support vehicle**, enabling you to walk as little or as much of the trail as you please
- **Transport to/from Pisa** in air-conditioned minibus
- Comprehensive **pre-trip information.**

#### Itinerary

##### Day 1

We meet at Pisa Airport at 11.00am. We stop for lunch along the way to La Suvera, our hotel converted from a former Papal villa, where we stay for 4 nights. Time to settle in and relax before we meet for a welcome drink in the gardens followed by a delicious dinner.



## Day 2



Walk in the wooded hills of the Montagnola, past the Renaissance gardens of Villa Cetinale and the beautiful garden at Celsa Castle. Picnic in the open countryside with views across to the towers of Siena. (16km/10miles) This evening we visit the pretty hilltop town of Casole d'Elsa near our hotel where we have dinner.

## Day 3

We depart the hotel on foot and follow former merchant trails up into the Montagnola hills, passing through ancient woodlands and coming upon an abandoned castle. Pass a small former quarry, once used for the lovely "pietra serena" stone typical of this area and descend to an pretty hamlet overlooking the valley of the River Elsa. Picnic in the open countryside before returning to the hotel. (8km/5 miles). Later in the day experience a **Tuscan cookery lesson** with a charismatic local chef in the 16th century kitchen of a nearby private villa. Enjoy a relaxed evening with lots of opportunities for hands-on involvement!



## Day 4



A leisurely start to the day before we drive to **Siena** and have time to explore this **World Heritage city** with a private tour of some of the lesser-known artistic gems. Enjoy a delicious lunch at a lively trattoria in the heart of the medieval city. Free time in the afternoon to shop and visit the sights before we return to our hotel. Casual dinner in a nearby town.



### Day 5



We depart La Suvera and drive to the heart of the Chianti Classico region. Visit one of the oldest churches in Chianti near the village of Panzano in Chianti before walking through vineyards and woodlands to a local organic farm. Private tour of their cellars to taste their wines and olive oil before a picnic lunch on the estate. In the afternoon, opportunity to continue on foot to the market town of Greve-in-Chianti. We stay the next 3 nights at four star Palazzo Leopoldo in the village of Radda-in-Chianti. Dinner in Radda this evening. (13km/8.3miles)

### Day 6

Starting above the village of Radda-in-Chianti we climb up to the ridge of Monti dei Chianti and the highest point in the region, Monte San Michele. From here you have views to the Arno valley and beyond to the ridge of the Apennine Mountains. Fabulous leisurely lunch at the renowned Ristorante Lamole high in the Chianti hills before returning to our hotel. Time to relax before an easy pizza dinner in the village. (10km/6.3miles)



### Day 7



Magnificent final walk in Tuscany in the more rugged region of Eastern Chianti. We pass through perfectly preserved villages en route to the magnificent Brolio Castle, owned by the Ricasoli family since the 11th century. Brolio Castle provides stunning views to Siena, the Tuscan Crete to the south and to the Chianti hills to the west. Visit the gardens and family chapel before returning to our hotel for a memorable last night dinner in a Radda restaurant. (16km/10miles)

### Day 8

Return to Pisa Airport for 11 o'clock.

### Walking

Shortest day: 8km/5miles

Longest day: 16km/10.1miles





There are 5 days of walking on the trip and one free day. In terms of terrain this is one of our more gentle itineraries. There are some long days of hiking, however, as on all tours there is always van support with the opportunity to walk a half-day and spend the afternoon at the hotel. We walk on strade bianche (gravel roads), through vineyards, along woodland tracks and quiet tarmac roads. This area of Tuscany is one of rolling hills with some significant ups and downs. Sturdy walking boots, with good ankle support, are recommended. Many guests like to hike with walking poles and these are very useful, especially on steeper sections and on the occasional stony or muddy descent.

**Weather:**

Autumn is a delightful time to walk in Tuscany. Warm, sunny days with cooler mornings and evenings.

Oct: Max 21° Min 15°. Rainfall 55mm



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