



The Palio of Siena

12th – 18th August

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. The Tour stays for 6 nights in a four star hotel in the heart of Siena.

What's Included?

- **Grandstand tickets** for Historical Parade and Palio Horse Race – 16th August
- **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 Palazzo Ravizza – 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

12th August

The tour starts in Pisa (train station or airport) where we meet you at 1.30 pm. Drive 2 hours to Siena where we stay in the **historical centre in Palazzo Ravizza**, a charming hotel in the heart of the city with fabulous views across the Sienese countryside. 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 Sienese and accompanied by much fanfare. Light lunch in Siena followed by free time to explore the city in the afternoon. Dinner in a local restaurant.

14th August

Today we drive out of Siena to explore the Tuscany's famous Chianti countryside. We enjoy a picnic lunch al fresco and hike in the beautiful vineyards of the region. We make our way to the stunning Podere Patrignone agriturismo where we learn to cook Tuscan specialities and dine on the fruits of our labour. Return to Siena after dinner.



15th August



This morning we visit the private art collection of the Monte di Paschi, the oldest bank in the world, before heading out of the city for a guided walk in the shady hills of the Montagnola. Picnic in the open countryside. We return to Siena in the afternoon and watch the penultimate trial race before joining with the *Contradaioli* from one of the city Contrade 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

Enjoy a relaxed start to the day as the city recovers from the festivities of the Palio. 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. Time for some last minute shopping in Siena later in the afternoon before a magnificent final dinner in a renowned restaurant.



18th August

Return to Pisa for 11.00 am

Walking

Much of the walking on this tour is around the paved streets of Siena. However, there are 3 hikes from 4-9km in the surrounding countryside. We hike on strade bianche (unsealed roads) and on woodland tracks. These hikes are of course optional and guests can choose to stay in Siena on the walking days – or maybe relax under a tree with a good book! Unlike our other tours there is only one guide for this tour with no support vehicle for pick-ups during the hikes. Some days the tour leader will carry the picnic to have en route and on other days the picnic will be at the end of the hike. If you are a non-hiker but are still keen to join the tour and would like to know more about the walking day itineraries please contact us. It is a very personalised tour and we try to adapt the itinerary to suit all participants. We recommend sturdy walking shoes/boots which can be used for walking around Siena as well. Sports/rubber sandals are useful when we are by the river as we may cross the river on foot.

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.

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