



Under the Tuscan Sun



Friday, October 16th

Evening departure from your chosen US gateway city aboard an overnight flight.

Overnight: Plane

Saturday, October 17th

This morning you will connect with your onward flight to Florence. On arrival at the airport you are met for the short transfer to your hotel in the beautiful resort town of Montecatini Terme. There will be time to unpack, relax, and begin exploring the neighborhood this afternoon. Montecatini is Italy's most fashionable thermal spa town, set in a charming valley of flowers and olive trees just 24 miles from Florence. This evening we'll enjoy a welcome dinner at the hotel. **(D)**

Overnight: Montecatini

Sunday, October 18th

A full day excursion to San Gimignano, the "city of beautiful towers," and the Chianti Classico Wine Region. We'll start with a walking tour of San Gimignano, followed by a visit to the Collegiata, a 12th-century Romanesque church with a superb fresco cycle of Biblical scenes. You'll have free time to explore; our return route to Montecatini takes us through the rich wine-growing area of Chianti, where we'll stop for an agriturismo lunch, and at a wine estate and vineyard for tasting and buying. Free evening in Montecatini. **(B, L)**

Overnight: Montecatini

Monday, October 19th

A full day excursion today takes us to the coast to explore the region known as the Cinque Terre (the Five Lands). The name comes from the five towns that are perched along this stretch of cliffs as they tumble into the sea and it is an area of such unspoiled natural beauty that it was added to UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1997. Along the way, we'll stop for lunch in Portovenere and then take the train line along the coast that joins the five towns — there is no road! — before returning to our hotel for dinner. **(B, D)**

Overnight: Montecatini

Tuesday, October 20th

A free day enables you to enjoy the spa facilities for which the town is famous. If that does not interest you, why not explore the town, visit the Museum of Modern Art (an interesting collection mainly by Italian artists, but also housing some of the personal belongings of Verdi and Puccini), and take the funicular railway up to Montecatini Alto. **(B)**

Overnight: Montecatini

Wednesday, October 21st

A full day in nearby Florence. We'll meet our local guide and begin with a tour of the Uffizi Gallery. We then enter the Piazza della Signoria where we'll admire the graceful Loggia dei Lanzi, the Neptune Fountain, and the copy of Michelangelo's *David*, standing where the artist intended it to be. We'll continue on foot to the Duomo, contrasting its extravagant exterior to its rather austere interior, and concluding with a climb (for those who want to) up to Brunelleschi's magnificent dome to admire the unforgettable views over Florence. We continue to the Baptistery; Ghiberti's famous east doors of the Baptistery depict Old Testament scenes and Michelangelo dubbed them the "Gate of Paradise." These are copies; the original doors are in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo and this inconspicuous building contains some of the finest works of art in Florence. The remainder of the day is free before we return to our hotel in Montecatini for dinner. **(B, D)**

Overnight: Montecatini

Thursday, Oct 22nd

Our excursion today takes us first to Pisa for a visit to the famous Leaning Tower. Returning to Montecatini we'll stop in the walled city of Lucca for lunch and then enjoy a walking tour of the old town with a local guide. The evening is free in Montecatini. **(B)**

Overnight: Montecatini

Friday, Oct 23rd

A final free day at leisure in Montecatini. Alternatively you can choose to spend another day in nearby Florence. There is a direct train from Montecatini straight into the heart of the city leaving every hour and the journey takes less than an hour. We'll gather for a farewell dinner at the hotel on Friday. **(B, D)**

Overnight: Montecatini

Saturday, October 24th

Early morning transfer back to the airport for connecting flights to the US. **(B)**

Overnight: Home

Key to included meals:
B - breakfast, **L** - lunch, **D** - dinner

