



# Barrington Community School

presents

## Christmas Markets of Tuscany

December 3<sup>rd</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Whereas Christmas Markets are usually associated with Germany, they certainly do not have a monopoly on the concept in that country. Italy has embraced the idea with open arms - and even taken it to new heights. After all, at an Italian Christmas Market the food is, well, Italian! Christmas is taken very seriously and is widely celebrated in Italy, so when you combine this with the natural Italian love of market shopping, the results are often spectacular.

For this tour, we are going to focus on the region of Tuscany, where the Christmas Market tradition is well established, and make a base for our excursions at the lovely spa town of Montecatini Terme, just outside Florence. From here we'll explore the coast of the Cinque Terre, spend a day in Florence, and visit the ancient medieval towns of Siena and Lucca.

There will also be time to visit local museums, marvel at the glorious scenery and indulge ourselves in the local culinary (and liquid) delights of the region. So if you want to make your Christmas shopping fun this year, join Sandi Tinyk and others from the Barrington Community School and come and explore the Christmas Markets of Tuscany.

**Please note** that the actual order of events on this itinerary is subject to change as some of the events listed have not yet published their official dates of opening.



Italian Christmas Market



Christmas in Florence

The cost of this itinerary, per person, double occupancy is:

Boston departure:	<b>\$3590</b>
Land only (no airfare included):	<b>\$2470</b>
Single supplement:	<b>\$ 640</b>

*Airfares are available from many other U.S. departure cities.*

The following services are included:

- Airfare:** Round trip airfare from Boston to Pisa.  
All airport taxes and customs charges included.
- Hotels:** 6 nights accommodation in first-class hotels.  
All hotel taxes and service charges included.
- Coaching:** All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary.
- Meals:** Breakfast daily, 3 dinners with wine included.
- Guides:** Discover Europe tour guide and BCS director, Sandi Tinyk throughout.
- Expenses:** Porterage of one large suitcase per person.
- Entrances:** Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary.

Please note that travel insurance is not included on this tour.

**For further information & registration please contact:  
Sandi Tinyk at the Barrington Community School  
(401) 245-0432**



**Thursday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**Overnight: Plane**

This afternoon you meet at the Barrington Community School parking lot for the private transfer to Logan Airport, where you board your overnight flight.

**Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup>**

**Overnight: Montecatini**

This morning you will connect with your onward flight to Pisa. On arrival 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 olive trees just 24 miles from Florence. This evening we'll enjoy a welcome dinner at the hotel. **(D)**

**Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup>**

**Overnight: Montecatini**

We'll spend the day in Florence today where the Weihnachtsmarkt – a traditional German Christmas market in Piazza Santa Croce – will be taking place. This Christmas market will feature wooden houses decorated in Christmas style, bringing a bit of Germany to the heart of the city. Here you will find German food like sausages, grilled pork, pretzels, strudel and other delicacies. The afternoon will be free to visit some of the city's fabulous museums – or just to do more shopping – before we head back to our hotel in Montecatini. The evening is free to sample a local restaurant. **(B)**



*Piazza San Michele, Lucca*

**Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup>**

**Overnight: Montecatini**

We'll begin our day with a short drive to neighboring Lucca – a charming medieval town with its city walls intact. Here we'll experience Natale nel Medioevo, (Christmas during the Middle Ages) – that will take you back in time and let you taste the traditional and ancient local flavors, surrounded by a wonderful location (Lucca's old city center) that still preserves its fascinating medieval aspect. Time and weather permitting we'll make a detour on the way home to visit the small village of Colognora. Today (subject to confirmation) is the Borgo dei Sapori (Hamlet of Flavors) – dedicated to local traditions and typical dishes, having Santa as the festival's special guest. Wine and food stands will offer typical products, and will also have decorations for houses and trees, every kind of item you can think of related to Christmas. We return to Montecatini for dinner. **(B, D)**

**Monday, December 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Overnight: Montecatini**

A free day in Montecatini to explore the town's own Christmas market. The House of Santa Claus at the Castello delle Terme Tamerici, features elves, animations, workshops, performances, puppets, clowns, and much more. You can also enjoy the spa facilities for which the town is famous, or 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)**

**Tuesday, December 8<sup>th</sup>**

**Overnight: Montecatini**

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 a area of such unspoiled natural beauty that it was added to UNESCO's World Heritage List in 1997. We'll stop in Viareggio to visit the Villaggio di Babbo Natale (Santa's Village) and then carry on along the coast, arriving in Manarola for the lighting of Mario Andreoli's giant presepe (the largest illuminated nativity scene in the world). We'll return to Montecatini late this evening. **(B)**

**Wednesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>**

**Overnight: Montecatini**

Our final day features an excursion to Siena in the heart of Tuscany. Here the Piazza del Campo is transformed to take you back to the Middle Ages. One of the most beautiful squares in Italy hosts a sort of re-enactment of the "big market" that was held in the fourteenth century. Here you will find local Sieneese food as well as delicacies from other Italian regions. In the Public Palace (the Ancient Salt Warehouses) there is a wine tasting where you can sample the local varieties. We'll return to Montecatini mid-afternoon to have time to try to pack all our new possessions, before we gather for a farewell dinner at the hotel. **(B, D)**



*Mario Andreoli's Giant Presepe in Manarola*

**Thursday, December 10<sup>th</sup>**

**Overnight: Home**

Morning transfer to Pisa Airport for returning flights to the U.S. Your arrival in Boston will be met for the bus transfer back to Barrington. **(B)**

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