



UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN

A WEEK IN THE HEART OF ITALY

MAY 19TH - 27TH 2023

Tuscany in Spring. We probably don't need to say any more than that and, if we tried, words could not really do justice to the sights, smells, tastes, and all the other sensations that combine to create the Tuscan experience.

This tour is more about the region, not just about Florence. Of course, we'll spend a day in the city (and more if you choose) — it would be rude not to visit the “Cradle of the Renaissance” when we are so close — but we'll make our base for the week in the thermal spa town of Montecatini Terme just up in the hills overlooking the plain of the River Arno.

From here a variety of excursions will take us through the surrounding area and there will also be time to enjoy the spa town for its own sake. One day will be spent visiting the Cinque Terre, an area of outstanding natural beauty on the Ligurian coast.

Another day will be spent in the nearby Tuscan town of San Gimignano, known as “San Gimignano of the Fine Towers” (San Gimignano delle belle torri), and then exploring the vineyards of Chianti. We will stop at an “agriturismo” for lunch on this day to sample some of the local delicacies.

This Spring, join Discover Europe, for a week in heaven — or Tuscany, as it is sometimes known!



TUSCANY



FLORENCE

THE COST OF THIS ITINERARY, PER PERSON, DOUBLE OCCUPANCY IS:

LAND ONLY (NO AIRFARE INCLUDED): **\$3390**
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: **\$ 640**

Airfares are available from many U.S. cities. Please call for details.

THE FOLLOWING SERVICES ARE INCLUDED:

HOTELS: 7 nights' accommodation in a first class hotel, including all hotel taxes and service charges
COACHING: All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary
MEALS: Breakfast daily, 1 agriturismo lunch and 4 dinners
EXPENSES: Portage of one large suitcase per person
ENTRANCES: Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary
GUIDES: Discover Europe tour leader throughout, local guides for half day in Florence and a walking tour of Lucca.

Please note that travel insurance is not included on this tour. Insurance information will be mailed to each registration on receipt of deposit.

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FRIDAY, MAY 19TH - Evening departure from your chosen US gateway city.
OVERNIGHT: PLANE

SATURDAY, MAY 20TH - This morning you will connect with your onward flight to either Pisa or Florence. On arrival at either airport you will be 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, MAY 21ST - 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 on your own before returning to Montecatini. Our return route 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. Your evening is free in Montecatini.
(B, L) OVERNIGHT: MONTECATINI

MONDAY, MAY 22ND - 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. 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, MAY 23RD - 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, MAY 24TH - 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 Baptistry; Ghiberti's famous east doors of the Baptistry depict Old Testament scenes and Michelangelo dubbed them the "Gate of Paradise." These are copies; the original doors are in the Museo del'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, MAY 25TH - A 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.
(B) OVERNIGHT: MONTECATINI

FRIDAY, MAY 26TH - 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. We return to our hotel with time to freshen up before we gather for our farewell dinner.
(B, D) OVERNIGHT: MONTECATINI

SATURDAY, MAY 27TH - Early morning transfers back to the airport for connecting flights to the US. **(B) OVERNIGHT: HOME**