

Flavours of Tuscany

An intimate culinary adventure in Tuscany



ENSEMBLE

Bon Vivant

ADVENTURES IN CULINARY TRAVEL

Tour and tasting at the Giuseppe Giusti's Balsamic Vinegar Gran Deposito

Experience a day in the life of a Tuscan organic farm at La Petraia

Hands on cooking classes at La Toscana Saporita in Viareggio & Dante Alighieri in Siena

Join the excitement of market day in Colle Val d'Elsa, shop, learn and cook with Judy Witts Francini of Divina Cucina



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October 6, 2011
10 Days

\$4,499

Per person, land only

INCLUDED FEATURES

- Private airport transfers
- Accommodation in first and deluxe class hotels
- Hotel taxes and service charges
- Tour escort
- English-speaking local guide in Rome
- Boat excursion in Cinque Terre
- Meals as per the itinerary: breakfast daily, five lunches and six dinners
- Cooking class at Divina Cucina
- Bufalciuffi factory cheese tasting
- Corsini Factory chocolate and sweet tasting
- Cooking class at Toscana Saporita Farmhouse
- Balsamic Vinegar Factory visit
- La Petraia tour and tasting lunch
- Tolaini Winery tour with dinner and wine tasting
- Pecorino Cheese Factory tasting
- Complimentary Cucina Divina apron, shopping bag and copy of *Secrets of my Tuscan Kitchen* cookbook

ACCOMMODATIONS

- HOTEL VITTORIA **** (5 nights) – Montecatini
HOTEL GARDEN **** (2 nights) – Siena
HOTEL LA GRIFFE ***** (2 nights) – Rome

CULINARY HIGHLIGHTS

Join Chef & Author Judy Witts Francini and discover the simple pleasures of Tuscan cuisine

Your culinary journey begins in Colle Val d'Elsa, a medieval town perched high on the Tuscan hills with a spectacular view of the surrounding countryside. In this magnificent location you will join Chef and Author Judy Witts Francini for a stroll through the open air market and select a bounty of locally grown products which will be used to cook up a true Tuscan feast. Back in the Divina Cucina Studio the group will prepare a home-made lunch to enjoy with local wines.

Hands On Cooking Class in Toscana Saporita

In a 15th century Tuscan villa, enjoy a three-hour hands-on cooking class at a school helmed by Sandra Lotti. Our Bon Vivant group will prepare fresh stuffed pasta, vegetables, meats and always the Tuscan favourite – Cantucci biscotti. And then enjoy the fruits of your labour. Each dish will be expertly paired with local wines and to complete this feast - the world-famous Vin Santo for dessert.

Gran Deposito Aceto Balsamico Giuseppe Giusti: highlighted in the book *101 Things to Buy Before You Die* as one of the 'musts' for a true Bon Vivant

In Modena, visit the award-winning balsamic vinegar producers and enjoy a very intimate tour of the facilities and a tasting led by Claudio Stefani, a 17th generation descendant of the Giusti family. A cozy lunch at the nearby Locanda delle Quattro Stagioni, a family run restaurant, will include local dishes drizzled in mouth-watering balsamic vinegars. The restaurant is located amidst the rolling hills of Modena surrounded by vineyards and farms for a truly memorable experience.

Fresh air, organic food and Chianti wines: a glimpse of daily life at La Petraia

Canadians Susan McKenna-Grant and Michael Grant, owners of this luxury 12th century farmhouse and agriturismo, organic farm and winery will host our Bon Vivant group and lead a tour of their farm, gardens, olive groves and vineyards for a truly once-in-a-lifetime experience. Susan, who is also an accomplished chef, will prepare a 'Daylight Tasting Menu' featuring a four-course tasting meal and locally produced wines.

ITINERARY

Day 1 – Thursday October 6 Florence/Montecatini

Arrival in Florence, welcome by your local tour escort and transfer to hotel in Montecatini area. Welcome dinner at the hotel. (D)

Day 2 – Friday October 7 Montecatini/Divina Cucina/ Colle Val d'Elsa

After breakfast enjoy a leisurely drive to Colle Val d'Elsa. Chef and Author Judy Witts Francini will escort the group for a stroll through the outdoor market to purchase fresh local grown products that will be used to prepare a delicious typical Tuscan lunch. The group will then move to the Divina Cucina Studio to cook and enjoy lunch paired with local grown wines. To commemorate this special event each guest will receive a complimentary apron, shopping bag and a copy of 'Secrets from my Tuscan Kitchen'. Return to the hotel. Dinner will be at a local restaurant (B,L,D)



Day 3 – Saturday October 8 Montecatini/Bufalcioffi/Corsini

Breakfast. Transfer to the Bufalcioffi where you will visit the family-owned cheese-making factory that produces some of the best mozzarella in the region as well as many local sheep's milk cheeses. The visit includes Mozzarella, Ricotta cheese, Stracciatella cheese demonstration and tasting.

Afternoon, enjoy a Chocolate and Sweet treat Odyssey (including the famous confetti almond candies) at Corsini, a confection shop in Pistoia run by women. Return to the hotel. (B)

Day 4 – Sunday October 9 Montecatini/Toscana Saporita/ Cinque Terre

After breakfast, depart for Montecatini. In the morning, transfer to Toscana Saporita near Viareggio, a beautiful agriturismo outfit and cooking school helmed by Sandra Lotti in a 15th century villa. In the three-hour hands-on cooking class, the group will prepare fresh stuffed pasta, vegetables and meats and the Tuscan favourite Cantucci biscotti. You will enjoy the fruits of your labour and each dish will be expertly paired with local wines, including the world-famous Vin Santo for dessert.

In the afternoon, transfer to La Spezia. From here take a ferry boat for a tour of the Cinque Terre; five small villages are suspended between sea and earth, nestled in the cliffs overlooking the sea and green hills. Stop in Portovenere, one of the most beautiful areas of the Ligurian Region. Return to the hotel. (B, L)

Day 5 – Monday October 10 Montecatini/Modena

Breakfast. In the morning after breakfast, depart for Montecatini. En route, you'll stop in Modena- home of one of Italy's most prized exports- Balsamic Vinegar. You will visit one of the oldest producers in Italy- the Gran Deposito Aceto Balsamico Giuseppe Giusti where 17th generation family member Claudio Stefani will conduct a guided tour of his family's facility. There will be a complete tasting of the 4 qualities of Balsamic Vinegars of Modena and 2 Traditional Balsamic Vinegars of Modena. There is a well-stocked store on premises for those who want to shop. Lunch will be served next door at Locanda delle Quattro Stagioni where several local dishes will be made using Giusti Balsamic Vinegars. Return to the hotel. Dinner at local restaurant with transfers included. (B, L, D)

Day 6 – Tuesday October 11 Montecatini/Chianti area/Siena

Breakfast. Today, we head into the region of Chianti- known for its olive oils, wines and rolling hills. We'll stop by the beautifully manicured and ancient La Petraia farmhouse (or "Place of Stone" in Italian) - owned by Canadians Susan McKenna Grant and Michael Grant. A luxury working farm and B&B, La Petraia produces its own wine, mead (from their own honey), olive oils and has its own organic garden. You'll enjoy a tour of the farm and property starting at 12 noon and then Susan (an accomplished Chef), will prepare what she calls a "Daylight Tasting" - 4 fresh courses with wine featuring whatever is seasonal from her farm's organic produce, meats, oils, and other artisanal food stuffs.

Afternoon visit to the Tolaini Winery, meet with the winemaker, walk through the vineyards, visit the winemaking facilities and then sit down and enjoy a wine pairing dinner. Leisurely drive back to Siena. (B, L, D)

Day 7 – Wednesday October 12 Siena/Montepulciano/Pienza

Breakfast. Early departure to Montepulciano for visit where Montalcino has its Brunello. Montepulciano is famed for the red wine called Vino Nobile or "noble wine". Montepulciano is also in the South of Tuscany and is favoured by the climatic conditions that prove to make great red wines. Funnily enough, it also produces the greatest Vin Santo dessert wines (that are aged up to 10 years).

Wine tasting & lunch will be enjoyed at the "Taverna" of Avignonesi, producer of Nobile di Montepulciano, famous for its round vineyard that you will visit after lunch together with their cellars.



Afternoon, visit of Pienza. Pienza is a very small village in the middle of the Crete Senesi, very famous for art and the production of Pecorino cheeses. Today you will visit a Pecorino cheese producer and enjoy tastings of this delicacy. Return to the hotel, evening at leisure and overnight. (B, L)

Day 8 – Thursday October 13 Siena/Rome

Breakfast. Morning transfer to Rome. Upon arrival enjoy a half day city tour. The tour starts at Via Veneto, famous for Fellini's *Dolce Vita* film. Before reaching Via Nazionale cross Piazza della Repubblica. Then walk into the historical centre of Rome to visit the Trevi Fountain and then Piazza Navona. Continue by coach to St. Peter's Square passing by St. Angel's Castle. Visit St. Peter Basilica to admire, among others, the Pietà by Michelangelo. After the tour, transfer to the hotel for check-in. Evening, dinner at restaurant "Da Meo Patacca". (B, D)



Day 9 – Friday October 14 Rome

Breakfast. Today enjoy a half day tour of the Rome Markets (4 hours)

Explore the shops and outdoor markets on a private tour. Your guide will take you to visit bakeries, pastry shops, cheese mongers, fruit and vegetable shops and markets where the Romans like to shop, eat, and drink. Rest of the day at leisure to do some last minute shopping or a stroll. Evening, farewell dinner at restaurant "Il Bagatto" (B, D)

Day 10 – Saturday October 15 Rome

Breakfast. Transfer to the airport. (B)



Is your inner bon vivant salivating at the idea of discovering the world's best kept gastronomic secrets? At bonvivanttravel.ca, we have an appetite for culinary travel and a nose for unearthing the best in food and wine abroad. If you are yearning for a taste of the good life, Bon Vivant is the first stop on your culinary journey.



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