

A Tuscan Table: Montecatini Terme, Italy

Alumni Cuisine Art Program



This tour is designed for wine and food enthusiasts looking to combine the fun of cooking with historical perspective of the region, scenic sightseeing, and a touch of spa relaxation. You will experience the local, simple, but often hearty cuisine of Tuscany that includes olive oil, tomatoes and beans. You will learn how to shop for fresh ingredients, prepare traditional dishes and above all, enjoy eating authentic food. Tuscany is an incredible destination with preserved hill towns, fabulous art, beautiful countryside, and possibly the best cafes in the world and fantastic wine. Join us and experience a new and flavorful side of Italy.

ROUND-TRIP AIR TRANSPORTATION; Round-trip flights from New York (JFK) or Washington Dulles airports.

FOUR STAR ACCOMMODATIONS; Hotel accommodations for seven nights, at the centrally located four star property of The Grand Hotel Vittoria including hotel tax and service.

SUPERB CUISINE; Buffet breakfast, three lunches and six dinners (wine and mineral water included at lunch/dinner).

ALL-INCLUSIVE SIGHTSEEING TOUR PROGRAM; Extensive sightseeing program as per the day to day plan and specially arranged events such are three hands-on cooking classes and wine tasting.

GRADUATION CERTIFICATE; Upon completion of your cooking class you will be presented with a Italian cuisine art certificate.

PROFESSIONAL TOUR MANAGER; Services of a professional tour manager throughout the program upon arrival in Italy.

FIRST CLASS MOTORCOACHES; First class motorcoaches and experienced drivers escort you for all transfers, tours, and guided excursions.

COMPLIMENTARY PLACES; We have complimentary places for faculty on all our group departures

LUGGAGE HANDLING AND TRANSFERS; Round-trip airport to hotel transfers, including luggage handling for one piece of checked luggage.

LOCAL TAXES AND SERVICE CHARGES; On all included features and all applicable entrance fees and admission charges.

MARKETING PACKAGE; To assist in getting the message out we will provide brochures, e-brochures, Web PDF's and Alumni brochure placement costs.

FUNDRAISING; All our group departures offer fundraising amounts for every paying passenger.

EXPERIENCE AND ADVICE; ABC Destinations holds over 45 years of experience in the travel industry offering assistance and advice in group travel programs.

FOR PRICING AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT ABC DESTINATIONS AT 1-800-227-5858



Depart the U.S. for Italy.

From New York (JFK) or Washington Dulles via Delta Airlines (or similar) for Italy.

Day 2: Montecatini

After clearing customs you will be met by the ABC Destinations representative and transferred to the four star Grand Hotel Vittoria Montecatini, in one of Tuscany's top spa resort towns. The setting is spectacular, the ambiance is elegant, and you will love the panoramic views of the surrounding valleys and the ancient medieval town of Montecatini Alto. All rooms have air conditioning, satellite TV, telephone, minibar, hair dryer, and a safe. In addition to the magnificent Italian gardens, the hotel features an outdoor pool, a fitness room, tennis, discounted golf at nearby La Pievaccia Golf Club, and a full service spa, Liberty Beauty Farm. Treatments include aromatherapy, sauna, mud wraps, facials, manicure/pedicure and a variety of massages. Enjoy a tour of the town where you will learn about the history of the area. Back at the hotel, we will have an orientation tour, followed by a welcome aperitif to get better acquainted and discuss the itinerary for the week. Dinner is at the hotel. (dinner)

Day 3: Montecatini

Today we learn first hand the Italian secret of how to live La Dolce Vita! The art of eating well begins today at our cooking school. After breakfast, we will enjoy our first lesson at the hotel's private Tuscan Villa. First, we visit a local market with the chef. He will show how only the finest and freshest ingredients are chosen. Back in the hills at our villa, we will experience the culinary traditions. After the delicious lunch, continue to the charming town of Lucca. Its peaceful narrow lanes wind among the medieval buildings, opening suddenly to reveal churches, tiny piazzas and many other reminders of the city's long history, including a Roman amphitheater. Lucca is well known for its magnificent 16th and 17th century ramparts, having remained intact, encircling its narrow streets, which are lined with many medieval building. (breakfast, lunch)

Day 4: Montecatini/Pisa/Montecatini

After breakfast, you will enjoy your second cooking experience of the Tuscan cuisine. First, you will visit a local market to prepare for the lesson. After your cooking class and lunch, continue to Pisa to see its incredible leaning tower and the bell tower of the 900-year-old Cathedral of Pisa. Your visit of Pisa will also include a sightseeing tour of Pisa's Campo dei Miracoli, or Field of Miracle, to see the Baptistery, Duomo; all fine examples of the Pisan-Romanesque architectural style. Dinner is at the hotel. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 5: Montecatini

Enjoy this morning at your leisure. Spend time exploring the town of Montecatini where the local market stalls sell everything from clothes to shoes, scarves, and accessories or treat yourself to a hour or two of rejuvenation at the hotel Spa.. In the afternoon, enjoy your third cooking class. Today's class is making pizza: our chef will show how only the finest and freshest ingredients are chosen to make the perfect Italian pizza. The cooking class will end with a wonderful pizza dinner in our Tuscan Villa. (breakfast, dinner)

Day 6: Montecatini/Chianti region wine tasting/Montecatini

After breakfast depart for the Chianti region, known for its wineries. The beauty of this area is evident by the many images found here: the soft landscape, the vibrant colors, the ancient castles, secular parishes and beautiful villas. After a visit to the town of Greve, we will stop for wine tasting and light lunch in the magnificently restored Castle of Verrazzano. The castle is located on a hilltop in the Chianti Classico area. This was the first grape growing and wine producing area in the world decreed by an official proclamation. Through years of changing ownership, the castle has been returned to its ancient splendor, thanks to the patient work of the present owner, Cavaliere Luigi Cappellini. There is a great tradition of wine making here. The "vineyards situated in Verrazzano" are mentioned in a manuscript dating back to 1170 which is preserved at the Abbey of Passignano. We return to Montecatini for dinner at the hotel. (breakfast, light lunch with wine tasting, dinner)

Day 7: Montecatini

Enjoy this morning at your leisure. Take the funicular to Montecatini Alto and spend time exploring this ancient medieval village. Montecatini Alto is the old historical center of Montecatini. It was the headquarters of an ancient 14th century castle that was encircled by more than a kilometer of town-walls, with seven gates and 25 towers. Here you could have lunch and visit a local Torrefazione for a truly Italian "espresso" experience. Later at our private villa, we toast our culinary expertise with a farewell aperitif followed by cooking school graduation and dinner. Not only will you return home with lots of great recipes, but your chef will also have a little gift to take with you. (breakfast, farewell dinner and cooking school graduation).

Day 8: Montecatini

Today enjoy a full day at leisure or join us for an optional excursion to San Gimignano & Siena. Set in the most beautiful Tuscan countryside of rolling hills, lush vines and gray-green olive trees, Siena offers much to see, from the fine palaces that line the narrow cobbled streets and the superb Duomo, to the celebrated Piazza del Campo where the famed Palio horserace is run yearly. Continue to San Gimignano, a town of Etruscan origin. Built by noble families, the fourteen remaining towers that lined the ramparts look like medieval skyscraper. Tonight dinner is at the hotel. (breakfast, dinner)

Day 9: Montecatini/Florence/U.S

Transfer to the airport for your return flight home. (breakfast)

Please note: Though rare, it may be necessary to substitute hotels and adjust itineraries due to local conditions. Every attempt has been made to produce this information accurately. We reserve the right to correct errors.

2011 DEPARTURE DATES: MARCH 30-APR 8, APR 6-12, 13-19, 20-26 OCT 5-11, 12-18, NOV 2-8, 9-15, 16-22

2012 DEPARTURE DATES: OCT 31-NOV 6, NOV 7-13

