



# ELEFANTE TURISMO INCOMING

Roma- Gragnano - Italy

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## A BITE OF THE TUSCAN CUISINE - 6 days



### 1<sup>st</sup> day – MONTECATINI TERME

The arrival is scheduled in the morning at the Florence airport, where you will be welcomed by the tour leader who will be with you during your entire stay.

You will be taken on a tour of Tuscany, the breathtaking Italian region which is worldwide known for its beautiful landscapes, its architectural and artistic beauties, its crafts, its culture, its delicious culinary tradition and its precious wines. You will be transferred by coach to the hotel in *Montecatini Terme*, a quaint town in the heart of the Tuscan countryside which is noted for its spring waters and its relaxing spa complex, where, after checking in, dinner will be served. Overnight stay.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> day – THE CHIANTI AREA

After breakfast, you will be taken on a sightseeing tour of Chianti, a charming hilly area whose landscapes are meticulously cultivated with vineyards, olive and fruit trees. This particular district, in fact, is worldwide known for its rich cuisine and its remarkable wines which are listed as being *DOC* or *DOCG*, the Italian certification given to high quality food products.

You will be driven along *via Chiantigiana*, a double lane road which connects Florence to Siena and runs through the entire Chianti area. You will enjoy the panoramic view of these timeless landscapes and pass through the quaint lovely villages of: *Greve in Chianti*, a remarkable wine and food producing location, *Radda in Chianti*, renowned for its Medieval castles and *Castellina in Chianti*, famous for its lovely *taverne* where mouth watering dishes of the traditional Tuscan cuisine are served.

Your trip will end in the small Medieval village of *Gaiole in Chianti* where you will visit its precious *Castello di Meleto*, a military fortress which dates back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

You will stop for light lunch in the castle and you will be served a local menu.

You will enjoy a delicious meal by choosing among a wide selection of red wines produced in the vineyards of this enchanting castle. In the evening you will return to the hotel. Overnight stay.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> day – SAN GIMIGNANO & SIENA

After breakfast at the hotel, you will be taken for a lovely day excursion to two of the most interesting pearls of the Tuscan countryside: *San Gimignano* and Siena.

In the morning, you will be headed to your first destination, *San Gimignano*, a small and well preserved town enclosed by strong Medieval walls, which is located on a high hill of the *Val d'Elsa* area, in the province of Siena. San Gimignano is also called *the*



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*Manhattan of the Middle Ages* because of its massive towers that greatly stand out of the town's landscape. They used to be watching fortresses aimed to protect the town from external invasions. You will meet with a local tour guide who will take you walking around the precious beauties of this quaint small center. You will see: the Collegiata cathedral, Sant'Agostino church, which houses a wide collection of art works created by some of the major Italian artists of the Renaissance period, the Communal Palace, which has now been converted into an important art gallery that displays works by many Italian artists like: *Pinturicchio*, *Benozzo Gozzoli*, *Filippino Lippi*, *Domenico di Michelino* and *Pier Francesco Fiorentino*, and the four main squares of the historical part: *Piazza della Cisterna*, *Piazza Duomo* where the Collegiata cathedral is located, *Piazza Pecori* and *Piazza delle Erbe*. Free time to have your lunch.

After, you will be accompanied to your second destination, Siena, which is a small Medieval city renowned for: its cuisine, its fine art museums, its well preserved Gothic cathedral (the *Duomo*), the *Monte dei Paschi*, one of the oldest banks in Italy, which is now achieving excellence in the economic global market and the *Palio*, a colorful horse race which is held twice a year in *Piazza del Campo*, its main square. Siena is located in the heart of the Tuscan hills and it is characterized by its narrow streets and its cozy buildings whose colour is also known as *Terra di Siena bruciata* (Burnt Sienna), a warm mild brown colour typical of this particular Tuscany area. A local guide will take you visiting all the main sights of the city, from *Piazza del Campo* to the *Duomo*, renowned for its inlaid marble mosaic floor and the stunning colourful frescos of the ceiling of its Piccolomini Library. In the evening, you will return to the hotel where dinner will be served. Overnight stay.

## 4<sup>th</sup> day – THE VAL D'ORCIA AREA

After breakfast you will be led on a tour to *Montalcino*, *Pienza* and *Montepulciano*, three of the most relevant towns of *Val d'Orcia*. This enchanting Tuscan territory is famous for its refined foods and its excellent wines. You will be first headed to *Montalcino*, a small Medieval village which is worldwide renowned for the production of *Brunello di Montalcino*, one of the oldest and highly valuable wines of the Italian tradition. You will visit the Prehistoric cave of *Poggio alle Mura*, where Palolithic fossils of a whale were discovered, and the ancient *Fortezza di Montalcino* whose defensive walls contain an old church, *il mastio di Santo Martini* and Saint John's watching tower. Free time for lunch.

In the afternoon you will be headed to *Pienza*, an architectural pearl located on a high hill in the heart of *Val d'Orcia*. You will be taken on a tour of the town which can be considered one of the best examples of Renaissance urbanism. You will visit its Cathedral, its Town Hall, *Palazzo Borgia*, the bishop's house, and *Palazzo Piccolomini*, a residency commissioned by Pope Pius II which dates back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. You will then continue your trip to *Montepulciano*, a quaint town of Etruscan origins which is noted for its smooth flavoured red wines. (visit of the old Etruscan cellar of Cantina Ercolani in Montepulciano with degustations of their Montepulciano doc.)

In the evening you will return to the hotel where dinner will be served. Overnight stay.

## 5<sup>th</sup> day – LUCCA & ITS SURROUNDINGS

After breakfast you will be taken on a tour of Lucca, a splendid city of Roman origins which is noted for its outstanding architecture of palaces and churches. You will be taken on a walking tour of the city where you will visit: *la Basilica di San Frediano*, a Romanesque old church which dates back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, *la chiesa di San Michele in Foro*, noted for its elaborate facade which dates back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the *Duomo di San Martino of Antraccoli*, an outstanding example of Roman architectural style. Free time for lunch.

In the afternoon you will be taken to the *Villa Lenzi* country house where you will be able to taste the freshly squeezed olive oil made by the owners. You will visit their cellars, where an old fashioned olive press is displayed, and their lovely garden where slices of toasted bread topped with olive oil, the so called *bruschette*, will be served.

In the evening you will return to the hotel where dinner will be served. Overnight stay.

## 6<sup>th</sup> day – DEPARTURE

After breakfast you will leave Tuscany and its unforgettable landscapes and be transferred to the Florence airport for your departure.