



# Cook Like a Tuscan

*Hosted by The Chopping Block + Onward Travel*

*A hands-on  
culinary  
vacation!*

October 27th  
to  
November 3rd,  
2018

The  
**Chopping  
Block**

Tuscany's landscape says it all: medieval hilltop towns overlooking rolling countryside covered with grapevines and olive trees. The mountains, forests, cypress trees, and winding roads create the perfect backdrop for discovering one of the world's most revered destinations for culinary tradition, craftsmanship, fine art, historical preservation, and winemaking.

Join a small group of travelers for a week of culinary and cultural discovery in Italy. We'll visit Tuscany in autumn, when the olives and grapes are being picked and pressed to perfection. It's the perfect time of year to savor some of Italy's best wines and ingredient driven dishes. Explore regional Tuscan cooking and expand your culinary repertoire with four hands-on in-depth cooking courses. Time in the kitchen is complemented by epicurean field trips, visits to medieval towns and gothic Siena, and opportunities to walk amongst the vines and views.

From our stone villa in the heart of Chianti wine country, we'll travel throughout the region plus enjoy the charm of Panzano in Chianti. Join The Chopping Block's travel and food loving community for a once-in-a-lifetime culinary immersion in Tuscany.

Imagine yourself...

Spending a blissful week at a photogenic villa in the heart of Chianti.

Sipping Brunello at the source in medieval, fortified Montalcino.

Perfecting your pasta-making (and eating) skills.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW cook like a tuscan

Experience Tuscany with an apron tied around your waist and a glass of Chianti in your hand!

This unique week features four hands-on cooking classes, wine education and epicurean field trips.

### Learn How To...

- Prepare fresh pasta including gnocchi, spaghetti alla chitarra, ravioli, and maltagliati
- Taste and analyze wine
- Work with herbs and spices
- Get the most from cooking leafy greens
- Cook five iconic Macelleria Cecchini meat-based recipes including *Bistecca alla Fiorentina*
- Select the appropriate wines for a menu and describe them to your guests
- Beautifully plate your creations
- Prepare delicious bean-based dishes for vegetarians and omnivores alike
- Execute a Tuscan themed dinner party
- Create tasty pasta sauces including classic ragout (meat sauce), tomato sauce, and vegetable sauce variations
- Mix and knead pasta dough by hand
- Cook pasta properly
- Prepare fresh, seasonal vegetables

### Experience...

- Tasting fresh-pressed olive oil
- Tour a pasta factory and learn about pasta extrusion
- Local cheese tasting
- The Chianina cattle ranch at Fattoria di Fontodi
- Food and wine pairing
- Winery tours and tastings
- Wood-fired pizza preparation
- Stories and anecdotes about Tuscan culinary tradition

### Our Tuscan Villa...

We'll be based in the heart of Tuscany at a beautiful stone villa that is part of the Fontodi wine estate at Panzano in Chianti.



## PROGRAM OVERVIEW cook like a tuscan

### TEAM AT ANTICA MACELLERIA CECCHINI Cuisine of the Butcher Shop

Tuscany's iconic butcher shop, Antica Macelleria Cecchini is famous for top-quality meats, expert butchery, and proprietor Dario Cecchini's passion and personality. At Cecchini's they believe an animal must have four things: A Good Life, A Good Death, A Good Butcher, and a A Good Cook. Dario has two excellent restaurants in Panzano and the knowledge and expertise of this operation are top-notch.



## Your Chef Instructors



### BENEDETTA VITALI

Pasta & Sauces Workshop  
at Badia a Coltibuono

Chef Benedetta Vitali has lived and worked all her life in Florence, Italy. In 1979, she co-founded the popular restaurant Cibrè with Fabio Picchi, offering their fellow Florentines a connection to a traditional Tuscan cooking style that had been all but forgotten in the postwar trend of convenience foods. In 1999, Benedetta opened the trattoria Zibibbo, emphasizing fresh produce from nearby small farms and introducing her original interpretations of classic recipes. She is the author of *Soffrito: Tradition & Innovation in Tuscan Cooking* and of *La Cucina degli Affetti | Catering and Caring: 124 Recipes for Cooking with Love*.



### ALESSIO SEDRAN

Gourmet Entertaining

Born and raised in the Tuscan countryside, Alessio began cooking as a little boy, learning to prepare the products of his land. He began working in restaurants in 2004 and has worked alongside many great chefs. Like a good Tuscan chef, he is passionate about ingredient sourcing and quality. Alessio has worked in Michelin-starred restaurants and he prepares beautiful fine cuisine.



### MARCELLA ANSALDO

Traditional Tuscan Cuisine ft.  
Beans & Seasonal Vegetables

Born on the island of Giglio, off the coast of Tuscany, Marcella knows both seaside and countryside Tuscan cooking. Having grown up in a family that cooked and run her own restaurant for over a decade, Marcella knows the secrets to Tuscan delicacies. Passionate and knowledgeable, Marcella teaches both professional and non-professional students of cooking how to respect tradition while creating delicious meals.



VIKTORIJA

### VIKTORIJA TODOROVSKA & MOLLY CRIST Tour Hosts

Molly Crist grew up on a farm in PA where her mother and grandmother taught cooking classes to culinary enthusiasts for nearly 25 years. She co-owns Onward Travel and lives on an apple orchard in NY. Viktorija Todorovska is a wine educator and writer, formerly based in Chicago and now residing in Provence. She is a Sommelier, fluent in Italian and author of two books about regional Italian cuisine.



MOLLY

## Welcome to Italy!

DAY 1: SATURDAY OCTOBER 27

- See Italian craftsmanship in a terracotta workshop
- Enjoy a wine class and gourmet dinner in our stone villa

*Benvenuti!* Welcome to beautiful Tuscany. This morning we'll meet at the Florence Airport and then head straight to Chianti. The first stop: Impruneta, a Tuscan town famous for terracotta. The tradition of making terracotta in this area goes back to the 14th century and the clay and craftsmanship combine beautifully! We'll tour a workshop and kiln and then tuck into our first meal together, a leisurely lunch featuring the local food and wine. After a short transfer, settle in for a week at our villa in the vineyards on the edge of Panzano in Chianti. If the sun is shining, relax at the villa's swimming pool this afternoon or stroll into town.

We'll gather tonight on the loggia, or open air porch, to enjoy the million dollar vineyard views and a wine class held by Viktorija where we'll be introduced to the wines of Tuscany including some excellent whites and Super Tuscans. A seasonal gourmet dinner will be prepared by a local chef... his orange cake is divine and we've got the recipe! Local specialties will pair perfectly with the vino made from the grapes surrounding us. Cheers, indeed!

---

Meals Lunch, Dinner



## Sagra del Toro Festival

DAY 2: SUNDAY OCTOBER 28

- Participate in a Tuscan festival
- Gaze at the beautiful Val d'Orcia, the landscape is a UNESCO World Heritage site

If you're feeling energetic, venture into town to enjoy Panzano in Chianti's weekly outdoor market where the locals shop and gossip. This morning we're off to Montalcino for a wonderful festival: Sagra del Tordo aka festival of the thrush! This is Montalcino's most important annual festival and it includes food, dance, and celebration. The colorful flags and parades are so much fun to experience.

During Sagra Del Tordo townsfolk wear traditional Renaissance costumes and compete in Tuscan folk dances, archery, and... cuisine. Four food and wine tents, representing the four quadrants of the city, are set up with fabulous local foods: pici pasta, grilled porcinis, polenta, and so much more! It is an amazing culinary experience to sit in the sun enjoying the food, wine, and convivial atmosphere - so we'll do just that. And of course we'll drink Brunello di Montalcino; there are many enotecas in town. Enjoy a scenic ride as Montalcino lies in the Val d'Orcia, a region carved out by the Orcia river that inspires everyone from Renaissance painters to you (just wait). After a busy day, we'll enjoy a relaxing dinner at the villa prepared by an Italian nonna, Vittoria.

---

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

# Cooking at Badia al Coltibuono

DAY 3: MONDAY OCTOBER 29

- [Take a pasta and sauces workshop at an ancient abbey](#)
- [Explore quaint Radda in Chianti](#)

Today we head to the kitchens of Badia a Coltibuono for our first in-depth cooking class. Badia a Coltibuono is a place with a special history... the abbey was founded in 1051 and was home to some of the first vineyard plantings in the region. More recently, it was the home of the late Lorenza De' Medici, an internationally known cook, author, and authority on Italian cuisine. The estate is now owned by Lorenza's three adult children and the cooking school is in the hands of another well known Italian chef: Benedetta Vitali.

Benedetta will lead us in a hands-on pasta preparation workshop. Learn recipes for three pastas and three sauces, plus biscotti to pair with Badia a Coltibuono's prized Vin Santo (dessert wine). We'll also have the opportunity to tour the 1000-year-old abbey including the impressive wine cellar and Renaissance gardens. Midday, we will dine on our creations, complemented by the estate's organic wines and olive oils.

On our way back to the villa this afternoon, we'll stop in Radda in Chianti, a charming Tuscan town with a lively central piazza. Enjoy a bit of shopping and an espresso. You're on your own this evening to enjoy dinner at one of Panzano's restaurants.

---

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

# Drinking in the Landscape

DAY 4: TUESDAY OCTOBER 30

- [Experience olive oil, fresh from the press](#)
- [Taste wine at Fontodi; our villa is part of this estate](#)

Today we will enjoy two artisan field trips. First we will visit a local Frantoio for a tasting and demonstration on how olive oil is made using the traditional stone wheel method and the modern press. The green olive oil is stunning and so, so delicious. Learn about the role olive oil plays in local life. Next we'll tour Pasta Fabbri, a small pasta factory where Giovanni will share his passion and art with us. Enjoy lunch on your own in Strada in Chianti.

Early afternoon we're back to the villa. Enjoy a siesta or join Viktorija for a walk to the winery where we'll convene late afternoon. We've planned a special visit to the tasting room of Azienda Agricola Fontodi. Fontodi is a certified organic estate that has been owned by the Manetti family since the 60's. Our villa is part of the Fontodi estate and we'll enjoy their wines all week. So let's go to the source and learn about their winemaking and passion. This evening we'll dine together in Panzano at a spot recommended by the locals: Cantinetta Sassolini.

---

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

# Meat Cookery & Pizza Party

DAY 5: WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 31

- [See Medieval frescoes in a tiny church not usually open to tourists](#)
- [Spend an evening as you like in romantic seaside Rovinj](#)

Panzano is famous for its location in the heart of Chianti plus it's charismatic butcher: Dario Cecchini. Today we are going to focus on meat cookery at the most iconic place to do so, Dario's! We will prepare Chianti sushi (beef tartare), Bistecca Fiorentina, Arisa in Porchetta (roasted pork with garlic and herbs) and more. Learn about the passion and precision that goes into their craft plus the care that goes into raising the livestock. After a fabulous lunch, you may like to go for a hike, take an excursion to a nearby town, or simply relax.

It's Halloween and we have a fun party planned tonight! A pizzaiolo is coming to the villa tonight with a portable wood-fired oven to make us a pizza feast. You're invited to help cook and recipes will be provided. Sip a glass of bubbly while you enjoy a variety of pizzas, focaccia bread, and lemon vodka sorbet. The pizza party of your dreams!

---

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## *Tuscany in October*

Fall is a terrific shoulder season in Tuscany. Many of the crowds have disappeared and the agricultural harvest is in full swing (hello, olives!). The temperature varies – low of 50 °F and high of 65 °F – so layered clothing is best. It's a fertile region, so expect both sunshine and some rain throughout the week. The fall temperatures pair brilliantly with the bold Tuscan red wines and wood burning fireplace at the villa.

## Cucina Italiana

DAY 6: THURSDAY NOVEMBER 1

- [Spend the morning at your leisure](#)
- [Learn about traditional Tuscan cooking from an expert](#)

Today is All Saints Day, an important holiday in Italy. We'll enjoy a slow morning and you're welcome to attend holiday Mass in town if you'd like. Midday we'll have a picnic lunch al fresco and those who'd like may join Viktorija for a beautiful walk between Greve and Panzano.

This afternoon Marcella Ansaldo will join us at the villa for a hands-on cooking class. At its heart, Tuscan cuisine is peasant food driven by what can be easily grown or procured in the region. Marcella is well versed in all facets of Tuscan home cooking and this afternoon we'll focus on preparing dishes that feature vegetables and beans. On the menu: Tuscan crostini, ribollita, chestnut flour crepes, and more. We will also prepare a traditional All Saints Day bread: Pan de' Santi.

---

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



## Gothic Inspiration

DAY 7: FRIDAY NOVEMBER 2

- [Visit Siena](#)
- [Prepare a gourmet meal with Chef Alessio](#)

Today we will depart after breakfast, and drive to Siena, a UNESCO world heritage sight that exploded with art and architecture in the 13th century before the Black Death struck in 1348. We'll commence our visit with an orientation walking tour by a knowledgeable and charming guide, that includes Siena's Gothic cathedral, Duomo of Santa Maria Assunta, where the beautiful mosaic floors will blow you away. Enjoy time on your own to have lunch and explore Siena. We'll convene in the afternoon at Enoteca Italiana, Siena's acclaimed wine museum and tasting room.

Tonight is our last hands-on cooking instruction and a fun evening is in store! Chef Alessio will teach us how to prepare a sophisticated, gourmet menu, perfect for entertaining friends and family. The menu includes zucchini flan with crispy zucchini flowers and parmesan cheese fondue; potato and orange gnocchi with duck ragout, and sage-crusted veal. We'll finish with a beautiful little chocolate cake and a toast to our week of culinary discoveries!

---

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

## Arrivederci!

DAY 8: SATURDAY NOVEMBER 3

Our wonderful time together has come to an end. Transportation to Florence will be organized this morning. A 7am departure will get folks to the airport in time for international flights departing after 10am. *Buon viaggio!*

---

Meals Breakfast

## FAQ's cook like a tuscan

### Who is *Cook Like a Tuscan* for, and do I need culinary experience?

This tour is for any curious food enthusiast who would like to experience Tuscany through its food and wine traditions. No culinary experience is necessary, just a desire to spend time in a few Italian kitchens and a good appetite.

### How many people will be a part of this experience?

This culinary immersion is limited to 12 travelers plus Molly, Viktorija, and your Italian hosts. We are keeping the group small to make sure everyone has the opportunity to roll up their sleeves and learn by doing. Onward Travel's culinary tours are always limited to small groups; it's like a week long dinner party!

### I have a dietary restriction or preference, can this be accommodated?

Yes it should be fine but contact Molly to discuss. *Cook Like a Tuscan* is not *ideal* for someone with celiac disease. If in doubt, get in touch.

### Will I have time to [fill in the blank]?

We've planned a full week of cooking and sightseeing but do want to make sure you check off whatever's on your bucket list, including R&R. There are optional hikes and chunks of downtime throughout the tour.

### Can I extend my stay?

Yes, that's a great idea. Onward Travel is happy to help you make arrangements to extend your stay. We'll assist you (for free), give you some sightseeing ideas, and make sure your logistics are sound. We suggest arriving early and to enjoy a couple days in Florence. It's a beautiful city with lots to see and do and you can ease into la dolce vita.

### Can I join *Cook Like a Tuscan* as a solo traveler?

Absolutely! Our groups are usually made up of couples, friends, and solo travelers. The camaraderie and shared experience is one of the best parts of travel. Our travelers are usually from different parts of the country and all different ages, but the groups mesh and bond and have a lot of fun together. You are very welcome to come on your own and you'll be in good company! You may select single occupancy or we'll try to match you with a roommate.

### What is included?

The itinerary details out the specifics but to make the most of your time and money, this tour is mostly all inclusive. You'll have a few meals on your own but that is pretty much it. All activities, tastings, libations, gratuities, impromptu gelato, etc. are included. It is a lot of fun to have paid for your vacation in advance, you can really enjoy yourself.

### What should I do about [insert phone / credit card / hair dryer]?

Before the tour we'll provide you with a guide to answer all your questions about international travel: phone, money, packing list, etc! And of course we're there along the way to assist.

### I don't like [insert activity / food / attraction], is that ok?

Totally—this is *your* vacation. We are very happy to accommodate you whether you're dealing with a bad knee, not a fan of mushrooms, or really want to go cycling. Just let us know your request and we'll do our best to make it happen. And if you want to skip an activity to relax or wander the shops, we won't judge. We want you to enjoy your experience abroad on your terms.



Onward Travel is a boutique travel planning company that carefully crafts itineraries to create an authentic, engaging trip that exposes the destination and roots travelers to the place. Onward was founded by two sisters, inspired by their family's cooking school on a farm in Bucks County, PA that offered culinary-focused travel to customers for over two decades.

### Still have a few questions?

Get in touch with Molly at Onward Travel at 267-825-5880 or [molly@onwardtravel.co](mailto:molly@onwardtravel.co)



## TRIP ESSENTIALS cook like a tuscan

BEGINS	Saturday, October 27, 2018   Transfer provided mid-morning from Florence Airport to the villa.
ENDS	Saturday, November 3, 2018   Morning transfer provided to Florence Airport.
MOBILITY	This tour includes walking for 15-30 minutes at a time, plus stairs and cobblestones. If you have limited mobility, we can accommodate you, but it is essential to let us know at the time of registration. Travelers may always opt out of activities they deem too physically challenging but refunds will not be provided.
TRIP LENGTH	8 days, 7 nights
LODGING	This tour's lodging is very special: a 17th century stone villa that is part of the Fontodi wine estate. The villa is on the edge of town, just a ten-minute walk to Panzano in Chianti. The villa is surrounded by vines and garden plantings, with a peaceful atmosphere and a swimming pool. There is a wood-burning fireplace, panoramic terraces, and a tennis court nearby.
TOUR DATES & PRICE	October 27–November 3, 2018 Double Occupancy \$4,450 per traveler Single Supplement \$650 <i>Limited availability, please inquire</i>  Please note that air travel is not included and a current passport is required for travel to Italy. You are welcome to pay by credit card, please add a 3% surcharge.

### AIR TRAVEL:

The tour will start and end with transfers to/from the Florence Airport. Please confirm with Onward Travel that the tour is a "go" before booking non-refundable airfare. Onward Travel is happy to arrange transfers to Rome, Bologna, or other destinations at an additional cost. Travelers may enjoy extending their stay and spending time in Florence. Contact Onward Travel for assistance.

### Trip price includes the following:

- Airport transfers and ground transportation in Italy.
- Seven nights accommodations at a beautiful 17th century villa in Panzano in Chianti. Private en-suite rooms provided.
- Most meals: daily breakfasts, five lunches, daily aperitivo, and six dinners. We have fantastic gourmet experiences, wine included, of course!
- Onward Travel guide at your service plus a dedicated trip host and excellent local teachers and tour guides.
- Four hands-on cooking classes and a detailed recipe packet upon arrival.
- Activities, tastings, admission fees, and tours as detailed in the itinerary.
- Taxes and gratuities.

*Register now!*  
Visit [onwardtravel.co](http://onwardtravel.co) to complete the registration form and submit payment. Space is limited to only 12 travelers.

\$1250 deposit due upon booking, balance due by August 15, 2018.