

FLAVORS OF TUSCANY

A wide-angle photograph of a Tuscan landscape. In the foreground, there are rows of green vineyards on a hillside. A dirt road or path cuts through the vines. In the middle ground, more vineyard rows extend towards a valley. On the right side, there's a cluster of traditional Italian houses with red roofs. The background consists of rolling hills covered in green vegetation, leading to a horizon where a warm, orange and yellow sunset is visible.

A Culinary & Cultural Adventure in Italy
May 9–16, 2020

ONWARD TRAVEL 
EST 2014



Tuscany's landscape says it all: medieval hilltop towns overlooking rolling countryside covered with grapevines and olive trees. The mountains, forests, cypress trees, wildflowers, 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.

Visit Tuscany in spring and enjoy pleasant temperatures and the lush countryside. Savor some of Italy's – that is to say the world's – best wines and ingredient driven dishes.

Immerse yourself in culinary and cultural discovery in Tuscany. While based at a stone villa surrounded by organic vineyards, the tour features a slow food, experience driven, behind-the-scenes theme. Taste olive oil, visit medieval towns and gothic Siena, reside in a village in the heart of Chianti wine country, stroll cobblestone streets with expert local guides, expand your culinary repertoire with a hands-on cooking class, dine at some great local restaurants, and laugh into the night with new friends.



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

TOUR HOST

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. Viktorija will share her knowledge of wine and the local culture, deepening your experience in Chianti, while she facilitates a lovely week.



DON'T MISS FLORENCE!

This itinerary does not include time in Florence but it is such a fabulous and beautiful city, do consider arriving early for a few days of self-guided fun in the seat of the Italian Renaissance! Florence is walkable and photogenic... full of markets, museums, cultural sites, and great restaurants.

Onward Travel is happy to help you make arrangements to spend a few days in the Tuscan capital city, just get in touch!

DAILY ITINERARY Flavors of Tuscany May 9–16, 2020

Welcome to Italy!

DAY 1: SATURDAY MAY 9

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

Benvenuto! Welcome to beautiful Tuscany. This morning we'll organize pickups at Florence Airport and Hotel Pendini, then head straight to Chianti. The first stop: Impruneta, a Tuscan region 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. This gourmet restaurant is owned by one of our favorite local chefs.

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 this evening for a special *aperitivo*, tour host and Sommelier Viktorija Todorovska will lead the group in an informative wine class. Learn how to taste and evaluate wine, plus get an introduction to Tuscan wines. A seasonal gourmet dinner will follow, prepared by a local chef... his orange cake is divine! Local specialties will pair perfectly with the vino made from the grapes surrounding us. Cheers, indeed!

Meals Lunch, Dinner

Drinking in the Landscape

DAY 2: SUNDAY MAY 10

- Savor a wine tasting lunch at our favorite small scale producer
- Experience Dario Cecchini's landmark steak restaurant

Today, ease into the Chianti lifestyle. Enjoy a lovely breakfast spread, prepared daily by the villa's lovely housekeepers. We'll walk into town to enjoy Panzano in Chianti's weekly outdoor market where the locals shop and gossip. After a leisurely morning we're off to visit Onward Travel's favorite local winemakers. Agricola Altiero is a small family operation producing excellent wines. Samuela is a fabulous cook and her signature jams pair perfectly with crostini, pecorino, and salumi. Winemaker Paolo will lead us through a tasting as we enjoy lunch in the sunshine.

Let's stretch our legs after lunch. We'll stop in Montefioralle to explore this tiny, hilltop stone village, with 360 degree views of the Tuscan countryside. You'll feel like you've landed in a movie set, but this is real life in Tuscany!

Tonight we'll head back into Panzano in Chianti for a dinner featuring an icon of Toscana: Bistecca Fiorentina. Dario Cecchini is a famous Italian butcher and at his restaurant the food is served with pride and gusto. Enjoy steak, wine, and a bit of theater as the steaks are grilled right before our eyes on the searing hot grill. *Delicioso!*

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Cooking at Badia a Coltibuono

DAY 3: MONDAY MAY 11

- Admire Badia a Coltibuono's special and atmospheric setting
- Lunch on handmade fresh pasta

Today we head to the kitchen of Badia a Coltibuono for an 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 cooking workshop. A highlight will be biscotti paired 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.

You're on your own this evening to enjoy dinner at one of Panzano's restaurants or have a light supper prepared by the villa's housekeepers.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Light Dinner



FONTODI WINE ESTATE

The 17th century villa we'll reside at is owned by the Manetti family. This family is known for producing Florentine terracotta tile and in the 60's they purchased the Fontodi wine estate. The villa sits in the middle of Azienda Agricola Fontodi's organic vineyards, and the villa will be stocked with their wines throughout the week. Fontodi wines are well distributed in the USA and you'll enjoy their Chianti Classico and world renowned Super-Tuscan, Flaccianello.



Val d'Orcia Beauty

DAY 4: TUESDAY MAY 12

- Go back in time in Montalcino
- Find gems in the Val d'Orcia: hot springs, olive oil, and gardens

We're heading south to the Val d'Orcia, a region carved out by the Orcia river that inspires everyone from Renaissance painters to you (just wait). The valley's unique beauty was recently recognized as a UNESCO world heritage site. We will spend the morning in Montalcino, a medieval walled hilltop city with a fortress and a 16th century go-back-in-history vibe. Be sure to enjoy a glass of Brunello di Montalcino; there are many enotecas in town.

After a medieval morning, we're off to the village of Bagno Vignoni to admire the steaming waters in the central piazza. The therapeutic hot waters have been bubbling since ancient days and it's a unique site. By now you've noticed the ethereal olive trees. This afternoon, at an estate that has been making exceptional olive oils for generations, we're treated to an olive oil tasting, complete with tastes of traditional recipes. We have one more treat this afternoon: a guided visit of La Foce's renowned gardens that expertly blend Italian and English traditions and taste.

We'll drive back to the heart of Chianti as the sun starts to dip and nothing beats driving in Tuscany at the magic hour! After a busy day, we'll enjoy a relaxing dinner at the villa prepared by an Italian nonna. And of course we'll bring back a few bottles of wine from Montalcino.

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

In the Heart of Chianti

DAY 5: WEDNESDAY MAY 13

- Visit charming Greve in Chianti
- Learn about Italian cuisine with an excellent local Chef

This morning we'll drive a few miles north to Greve in Chianti, a charming town with nice shops and a picturesque central square. After some time to browse, we'll lunch at an excellent pizzeria. Midday we're back to Panzano to visit Accademia del Buon Gusto where Stefano will educate and entertain us as he pours wine tastings and uses illustrations to tell his story.

Chef Alessio will come to the villa to teach us how to prepare a sophisticated, gourmet menu, perfect for entertaining friends and family. His cooking is based on traditional techniques acquired from his grandmother but enhanced by a sophisticated and elevated influence. It's a great combination! We'll work together in the kitchen to prepare a fabulous feast (homemade pasta of course) and then enjoy a fun and festive dinner together.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Medieval Manhattan

DAY 6: THURSDAY MAY 14

- Get schooled in history *and* gelato
- Enjoy local specialties at a wonderful local restaurant

Today we're off to walled San Gimignano, often called Medieval Manhattan because of the skyline formed by the towers that date back to the 12th-century. It's market day so the town will be particularly fun and lively. Make sure to try San Gimignano's famous white wine, Vernaccia. We'll have a guided tour to learn about this town that was originally an Etruscan village and visit the Romanesque cathedral with vivid frescoes. Enjoy time for wandering, photos, shopping, and lunch before we convene again for a special gelato class at renowned and quality obsessed Gelateria Dondoli. We'll make and enjoy some fabulous gelato!

After some R&R at the villa this afternoon, we'll enjoy a delicious dinner together in Panzano at a spot recommended by the locals.

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

Gothic Inspiration

DAY 7: FRIDAY MAY 15

- Stand in Siena's iconic Piazza del Campo
- Enjoy an unforgettable pizza party at the villa

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 Asunta, where the beautiful mosaic floors will blow you away. Enjoy time on your own to have lunch and explore Siena.

Stroll the vineyards this afternoon, squeeze in a little more shopping, or relax. Our last dinner at the villa will be unforgettable! A talented pizzaiolo is coming to the villa tonight with a portable wood-fired oven to make us a pizza feast. 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, Dinner

Arrivederci!

DAY 8: SATURDAY MAY 16

Our wonderful time together has come to an end. Transportation to Florence will be organized this morning. *Buon viaggio!*

Meals Breakfast

Trip Essentials

BEGINS	<p>Saturday May 9, 2020</p> <p>Arrival transfer provided mid-morning from Florence Peretola Airport. Arrive to FLR Airport by 10:30am. If you're flying into Italy before the tour start date, contact Onward Travel to coordinate pickup.</p>
ENDS	<p>Saturday May 16, 2020</p> <p>Departure transfer provided to Florence Peretola Airport or Santa Maria Novella train station. A 7am transfer from the villa will get travelers to the airport in time for international flights departing after 10am. Book a flight departing between 10am-12pm or contact Onward Travel to discuss options for other arrangements. No activities are scheduled for this day.</p>
SUITABILITY & MOBILITY	<p>This tour includes walking for 15-30 minutes at a time, plus stairs and cobblestones. Travelers may always opt out of activities they deem too physically challenging but refunds will not be provided. The villa is located a 10-minute walk from the center of town, mostly uphill, and a few stairs are required to access the villa. Note the charming bathrooms have shower/tub combos.</p>
TRIP LENGTH	8 days, 7 nights
LODGING	<p>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 10-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.</p>
TOUR DATES & PRICE	<p>Two departures are available: May 9–16, 2020 Double Occupancy \$3750 per traveler Single Supplement \$575 (please inquire, limited availability)</p> <p><i>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.</i></p>

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, four lunches, and seven dinners. We have fantastic gourmet experiences, wine included, of course!
- Onward Travel guides at your service plus excellent local tour guides.
- Activities, tastings, cooking class, admission fees, and tours as detailed in the itinerary.
- Taxes and gratuities.

Register now!

Visit onwardtravel.co to complete the registration form and submit payment.

Space is limited to only 14 travelers per week.

\$1,250 deposit due upon booking, balance due by February 1, 2020.

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. Contact Onward Travel for assistance. Onward Travel is happy to arrange transfers to Rome, Bologna, or other destinations at an additional cost, plus there are good train connections between Rome and Florence and Bologna and Florence.

TRIP INFORMATION

Flavors of Tuscany May 9–16, 2020

About Onward Travel

Onward Travel is a group tour operator owned by sisters Molly Crist and Katerina Dhand. Onward Travel is focused on unique, thoughtful small group tours with itineraries that are researched and pieced together carefully to ensure authentic, engaging trips that foster genuine connection to places and people.

Tuscany in May

May is a lovely time to visit Tuscany. Spring is sprung but the summer crowds haven't arrived yet. This agricultural region is looking lush and long days complement sightseeing. Temperatures are pleasant, expect 60s–70s and be prepared for sunshine and rainfall. The villa has a pool and air conditioning, plus heat and a fireplace... depending on what we need. Onward Travel will provide detailed packing notes in advance of the trip.

Miscellaneous Travel Information

- Passports are required for American citizens travelling to Europe. Visas are not required until 2021. Note your passport should be valid for at least six months beyond the date of travel.*
- To determine the current exchange rate, Google "USD to EUR."*
- Travel Protection: Onward Travel recommends that you purchase a travel protection plan to help protect you and your travel investment against the unexpected. Travel protection plans include coverage for Trip Cancellation, Trip Interruption, Emergency Medical and Emergency Evacuation/Repatriation, Trip Delay, Baggage Delay and more. For more information on the recommended plans or to enroll, contact Travelex Insurance Services at 800-228-9792 and reference location number 32-0704. For a summary of plan details on benefits, coverages, limitations and exclusions, please refer to the applicable Description of Coverage. Travel Insurance is underwritten by Transamerica Casualty Insurance Company, Columbus, Ohio; NAIC #10952. 1308294*



Get in Touch!

Contact Molly with questions or special requests:

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