



THE TRAVEL CLUB

Pre-Departure Itinerary **Classic Tuscany**

Montecatini Terme

Saturday, October 24 – Sunday, November 1, 2009

A gorgeous, sun-drenched climate; romantic, rustic surroundings; traditional, delicious cuisine—if you want to experience the Italy of your dreams, this exploration of Tuscany is perfect. You'll begin by flying to Rome before connecting to Florence and checking into a beautiful hotel in the exclusive spa resort of Montecatini Terme for the next seven nights. From there you'll embark on an excursion through the Tuscan countryside, visiting Florence—"The Cradle of the Renaissance" and home to the Academy of Fine Arts, the Duomo and Palazzo Vecchio—stunning Lucca and astonishing San Gimignano. Next, you'll revel in the beauty of Siena and the fine wine of Montecarlo. Near the end of the week we'll explore the Cinque Terre, five small villages accessible only by foot or by boat. This fabulous trip is led by expert guides, so instead of struggling with guidebooks, you'll be clued in to all the "can't miss" spots along the way. Whether it's your first or your tenth visit to Italy, join us on this truly special vacation. It's the Italy you've always imagined.

Includes

- Round-trip regularly scheduled Alitalia flights from Boston to Florence, via Rome
- Seven nights' four-star accommodations at the Hotel Plaza in Montecatini Terme
- Sixteen meals: seven buffet breakfasts, three lunches, six dinners
- Round-trip, private airport/hotel transfers with assistance
- Wine tasting and light lunch at Fattoria Il Poggio
- Wine tasting and light lunch in the Cinque Terre
- Services of professional local tour manager

Rates

\$1,599 per person double occupancy

\$1,869 for single reservations

Triple accommodations may be available upon request.

Add \$395 for current air taxes, fees, charges and surcharges. Passport required.

Features

Full-day excursion to Florence with guided walking tour, full-day excursion to Lucca with guided walking tour and visit to Montecarlo with lunch and wine tasting at Fattoria Il Poggio, full-day excursion to Siena with guided walking tour and visit to San Gimignano, full-day guided excursion to the Cinque Terre with light lunch and wine tasting, visit of Montecatini Alto, cooking demonstration at hotel

Accommodations

GRAND HOTEL PLAZA E LOCANDA MAGGIORE

Piazza del Popolo 7, 51016 Montecatini Terme

Tel: 011 39 0572 75831

Fax: 011 39 0572 767985

In the main square of Montecatini this small classic European-style hotel has 100 bedrooms with private bathrooms, featuring air-conditioning, direct dial telephone, TV and hairdryer and a large reception area, off which there are a number of elegant lounges as well as the restaurant, bar & piano bar. There is also a terrace and a rooftop swimming pool.

<http://www.hotelplaza.it>

DAILY ITINERARY

Day 1: Overnight Flight

Evening departure from Boston to Rome on Alitalia Airlines. Dinner will be served on board along with complimentary wine and beer. Relax and enjoy the in-flight movie and entertainment.

Day 2: Arrive Rome – flight to Florence – transfer to Montecatini

Continental breakfast will be served prior to landing in Rome. Proceed through immigration formalities at Rome airport and connect to your domestic flight for Florence. After clearing customs formalities in Florence you'll be

met by the professional Tour Manager who will assist you with the transfer to the Plaza e Locanda Maggiore in Montecatini, a renowned spa resort town close to Florence. Check in and receive room assignment. The afternoon is free to relax and get acquainted to your new surroundings. In the evening enjoy dinner at the hotel. (D)

Day 3: Siena – San Gimignano

Depart this morning for Siena, perhaps the gentler example of the great past of Tuscan art and culture, with its still untouched serene atmosphere. Half day guided visit of this beautiful town. In the afternoon, continue to San Gimignano, a splendid medieval small town situated between Florence and Siena, known throughout the world for its forest of towers emerging from the ancient houses. It is a city of towers but also one with a long history, starting from the significant Etruscan remains that placed San Gimignano among the cities on UNESCO'S World Heritage List. Return to Montecatini for dinner and overnight at the hotel. (B, D)

Day 4: Florence

Today enjoy a full-day excursion to Florence, "The Cradle of the Renaissance." This wonderful town flourished under the rule of the Medici family; not only clever bankers but also patrons of the arts. For this reason many great artists like Michelangelo and Brunelleschi lived and worked in Florence and left their mark here. A local guide will lead you on a walking tour to discover the great artistic heritage featuring the Duomo with its distinctly-colored marble topped by the "Cupola" (dome by Brunelleschi), symbol of the Renaissance. Admire the bell tower by Giotto and the Baptistery with the famous "Gates of Paradise" by Lorenzo Ghiberti. Continue to Piazza della Signoria dominated by Palazzo Vecchio, symbol of the might of the Medici. Your afternoon is free to explore Florence on your own pace or shop for Florentine leather and gold. In the late afternoon return to Montecatini. Dinner is on your own this evening. (B)

Day 5: Lucca

After breakfast at the hotel you'll depart for Lucca, the only medieval town in Italy still surrounded by its 14th century walls, a town filled with ancient Roman ruins as well as great furniture and jewelry antique shops.. With your local guide enjoy a walking tour of the elegant town including admission to Palazzo Manzi. After the visit continue to Montecarlo in the beautiful Tuscan countryside to the Fattoria Il Poggio for a wine tasting and lunch a real "Paesana Feast" Return to Montecatini for dinner and overnight. (B, L, D)

Day 6: Montecatini Alto

This morning you will depart for a visit to Montecatini Alto which is the original Montecatini settlement, laying a few hundred metres above the 'new' town. The Tuscan views from here are splendid, and you will delight in the Piazza Giusti home to some very good bars and restaurants. Return to Montecatini to enjoy free time to visit the open air market and mingle with the locals and shop. In the afternoon at the hotel there is a cooking demonstration followed by dinner.(B, L, D)

Day 7: Cinque Terre

After breakfast at the hotel depart for a full day guided visit to the Ligurian coast. Here you will enjoy the picturesque Cinque Terre also known as the Gulf of Poets and was later home to Lord Byron, Percy B. Shelley and many others. The landscape and quaint villages exude an inspirational charm that undoubtedly drew these writers to the region. Charles Dickens in Pictures from Italy wrote: "There is nothing in Italy, more beautiful to me, that the coast road between Genoa and La Spezia: a landscape consisting of sea and land, terraced vineyard and olive oil, and the enchanting flora of the Mediterranean scrub and sweet fragrances". Each of the five villages of the Cinque Terre has its own character. Enjoy lunch and wine tasting at a local restaurant. Late in the afternoon return to Montecatini for dinner and overnight at the hotel. (B, L, D)

Day 8: Montecatini-Day at leisure

Today is yours to do as you wish. Breakfast and dinner are provided for you at the hotel. (B,D)

Day 9: Return flight to Boston

This morning depart the hotel by motorcoach for the Florence Airport for your flight to Rome. Upon arrival in Rome transfer to your connecting flight to Boston. Meal service will be available en route to Boston. (B)

PLEASE NOTE: *This pre-departure itinerary is designed to give you an idea of how this itinerary is structured.*
We reserve the right to make any changes to your final itinerary if deemed necessary, at any time prior to departure. Flight schedules are approximate, and will not be guaranteed until 30 days prior to departure.

PLEASE NOTE: *This is not your final itinerary. You will receive final documents (itinerary, tickets (if applicable), etc.) approximately 2 –3 weeks prior to departure. Although we try our best to ensure that information is accurate at the time of publication, we are not responsible for any error, omission, misprint or liability that results from the use (or misuse) of this information.*