

THE TRAVEL CLUB

Pre-Departure Itinerary Classic Tuscany A Week in Montecatini Terme Friday, October 8 – Saturday, October 16, 2010

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 you'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 Airline flights from Boston to Florence, via Rome
- Seven nights' four-star accommodations: Hotel Plaza, 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

\$1,649 per person double occupancy
\$1,939 for single reservations
Triple accommodations may be available upon request.
Add \$380 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.

DAILY ITINERARY

Day 1: Overnight Flight

Depart from Boston this evening on Alitalia Airlines. Dinner is served aloft along while crossing the Atlantic. Relax and enjoy in-flight entertainment.

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

Continental breakfast will be served on board before landing. You will clear immigration and proceed to your domestic flight for Florence. Upon arrival, you clear customs and meet your professional Tour Manager who will escort you to the Hotel Plaza in Montecatini Terme. After check-in and room assignments you'll enjoy lunch and have the balance of the afternoon to relax and get settled. In the evening you'll get acquainted over dinner at the hotel. (L, D)

Day 3: Siena and San Gimignano

After breakfast you venture to Siena, a fine example of the great past of Tuscan art and culture, which exhibits an untouched atmosphere. A local guide will lead you on a half-day walking tour. In the afternoon you continue to San Gimignano. This splendid, small medieval town is known throughout the world for a forest of towers emerging from its

ancient houses. San Gimignano also is proud of its long history – significant Etruscan remains have earned San Gimignano a spot on UNESCO’s World Heritage List. Return to Montecatini for dinner and overnight at the hotel. **(B, D)**

Day 4: Florence

Today you’ll set off for a full-day visit of Florence. Upon arrival you’ll enjoy a half-day guided walking tour featuring the Duomo, the Baptistery with the Gate of Paradise, Piazza della Signoria and Palazzo Vecchio. The afternoon is free to explore on your own or shop for Florentine leather and gold. You’ll return to Montecatini in the late afternoon. Return to the hotel. Evening at leisure. **(B)**

Day 5: Lucca

Today’s full day excursion is a lovely treat. First you’ll visit Lucca, the only medieval town in Italy still surrounded by its original 14th century walls. Lucca is a town filled with ancient Roman ruins, as well as great furniture, jewelry and antique shops. Enjoy a guided walking tour including admission to Palazzo Manzi. Continue on to Montecarlo in the beautiful Tuscan countryside to the “Fattoria Il Poggio” for a wine tasting and lunch – a real “Paesana Feast.” In the late afternoon return to hotel for dinner and overnight. **(B, L, D)**

Day 6: Montecatini

After breakfast you’ll visit Montecatini Alto – the original Montecatini settlement, lying a few hundred meters above the “new town.” The views from here are splendid and the delightful Piazza Giusti is home to some good bars and restaurants. Return to Montecatini for free time to visit the open-air market and mingle with the locals. In the afternoon a cooking demonstration will be held at the hotel. **(B, D)**

Day 7: Cinque Terre

Get ready for a highlight of your vacation. After breakfast you’ll depart for the Cinque Terre to enjoy a full-day guided visit. The Cinque Terre, also known as the Gulf of Poets, was the later home of 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, than the coast road between Genoa and La Spezia: a landscape consisting of sea and land, terraced vineyards and olive oil, the enchanting flora of the Mediterranean scrub and sweet fragrances.” You also enjoy lunch and wine tasting at a typical local restaurant. In the late afternoon you’ll return to the hotel for dinner and overnight. **(B, L, D)**

Day 8: Day of Leisure in Montecatini

Breakfast and dinner are provided today and the rest of the day is yours to spend as you wish. **(B, D)**

Day 9: Return to Boston

Early morning transfer to Florence airport for your return flight to Boston. **(B)**

Proof of Citizenship: *US citizens require a passport with at least six months' validity for entry into Ireland. Passports are the responsibility of the traveler.*

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.*

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.*