

The Italian Cultural Society of Sacramento Presents:

Thanksgiving in Tuscany

Florence, Siena, Lucca, Chianti Wine Region, Pisa,
San Gimignano, Vinci and Volterra



November 17 -25, 2017 9 days
Price coming soon*/double occupancy

☆☆ Tour Includes:☆☆



- ♥ 7 nights in Tuscany 4 Star Villa Hotel
- ♥ All buffet breakfasts
- ♥ All Multi Course Italian Dinners
- ♥ Full time Tour Escort private and English Speaking guides
- ♥ Welcome Cocktail and Wine tasting tour
- ♥ Sightseeing Tours and Admissions
- ♥ Incredible Olive Oil tasting and Farmhouse Lunch
- ♥ Pre-Tour Orientation and Travel Guide Booklet

* Prices are per person based on a minimum of 16 passengers: Airfare and tips are not included:



See Italy at its Best with the Italian Cultural Society

Phone: 916 ITALY00 (916 482-5900) fax 916 ITALY09 (916 482-5909)



***Welcome to the Heart of Italy!* Benvenuti in Toscana!**

Discover the heart of Italy with this *Italian Cultural Society* exclusive tour. This tour highlights the romantic, legendary region of Tuscany. Discover a region that is brimming with the finest Italian art, history, culture, scenic beauty and culinary delights.

In Tuscany travelers will discover **Florence**, known as the *“little flower.”* Florence is a living museum, and the Cradle of the Renaissance. But Florence is just one of the many spectacular cities in Tuscany’s rich bouquet!

Tuscany is also Pisa, with its famous leaning tower and the Piazza of Miracles. Tuscany is Siena, with its stunning Piazza del Campo, where each July 2 and August 16, the breathtaking *“Palio delle Contrade”* the world’s most exciting horse race takes place.

Tuscany is a land of lush olive groves, sweet hillsides, Chianti vineyards, and romantic hamlets. Tuscany is the wonderful walled city of Lucca, the city of *“one hundred churches.”* Lucca is the birthplace of famed Italian Opera composer Giacomo Puccini, who

wrote *“La Boheme,” “Madame Butterfly,” “Tosca”* and many other famous operas!

Our grand tour of Tuscany will take us to the rich Etruscan city of Volterra, famous for its beautiful alabaster, and to picturesque San Gimignano with magnificent towers built in the Middle Ages and cobblestone streets lined with wonderful shops. We will wine taste on the legendary Chianti wine and visit the town of Leonardo da Vinci. In Vinci we will visit his museum and his home, as well as enjoying lunch on a hillside olive oil estate. All the splendors which have brought travelers to Tuscany for hundreds of years await you on this **THANKSGIVING IN TUSCANY** tour.

ITINERARY:

Day 1: Depart for your flight to Florence. Italy is 9 hours AHEAD of California. Tour begins in Florence Airport where you will enjoy airport pick up and transportation to our Villa hotel with portage service.

Day 2: Arrival at Florence Airport and transfer to your hotel: **Villa delle Rose**, where you will be staying for the next 7-nights. Hotel Villa delle Rose is located in Pescia, a wonderful area at the foot of the Abetone Mountains, alongside the Pescia River. Enjoy welcome cocktails and a delicious multi course dinner at the hotel. *Welcome to Italy!!*



Day 3: After breakfast depart for **Full day excursion to Siena and the Chianti wine road:** Siena- as legend has it, was founded by Senus, Remus's son. Remus was one of the legendary founders of Rome along with his twin brother Romulus. Siena is a city of remarkable color. During the famous Palio her 17 contrade proudly display their colorful flags. Everywhere you look Siena’s gorgeous colors will reveal themselves. Even the color *“Sienna”* takes its name from this brilliant city. We will admire the famous Piazza del Campo, Siena’s bowl like shaped piazza and the zebra striped marble cathedral. We will see the public palace with the Mangia Tower, which is one of the tallest medieval Italian towers.

We will visit Siena’s great cathedral begun in the 12th century in the Romanesque style, but transformed in the 13th century into one of the finest examples of Italian Gothic. The church’s interior is covered with black and white marble, and its marble floors have decorative inlays by Domenico Beccafumi, treasures by Nicola Pisano and Michelangelo, painted frescoes by Pinturicchio, a magnificent baptismal font by Jacopo della Quercia, Donatello, and Lorenzo

Ghiberti all make this one of the world’s most thrilling cathedrals! Lunch on your own. Siena is famous for its delicious Panforte and delicate Ricciarelli almond cookies. Enjoy!

In the afternoon we will drive through the famous Chianti Wine Road, and stop at a Tuscany Winery for wine tasting and to enjoy one of the most beautiful Tuscan sunsets in the heart of Chianti Hills. ~Breakfast & Dinner at your hotel in



Day 4: Vinci and Pisa: Today we drive to Leonardo da Vinci's hometown. We go through some of Tuscany's magnificent countryside and see a part of Italy seldom seen by tourist. We have arranged your visit to the Leonardo Da Vinci Museum and to his family home in Vinci. End your visit to Vinci overlooking the ancient city from a beautiful hillside "frantoio" (olive oil estate) where we will sample the estate's own olive oil and enjoy a fabulous farmhouse lunch prepared by the farmer's wife and sister including homemade wine! After Vinci we will head for the famous town of Pisa with the Fantastic "Campo Dei Miracoli", the Baptistry and the Cathedral and the world famous Leaning Tower. (Travelers wishing to climb the 296 steps to the top must purchase tickets in Pisa at 18 euros per person.) ~Breakfast & Dinner at your hotel.



Day 5: A full day excursion to Florence: Upon arriving in Florence meet your step-on guide to visit the famous Accademia Art Gallery which was founded in 1563 and was the first school in Europe to teach the techniques of drawing, painting and sculpture. The highlights of this museum are Michelangelo's colossal David and the Four Prisoners. See Dante's home and stroll where he strolled. Discover the Cathedral of St. Mary of the Lily Flower, considered one of most impressive examples of Italian Gothic Style, the Campanile, also called Giotto's Bell Tower and the baptistry with the "Gate of Paradise" by Lorenzo Ghiberti. See the elegant Signoria Square with the Public Palace and the Loggia Del Lanzi, which is a real open air museum of marble and bronze statues. Magnificent day in Florence continues with a glance at the Uffizi Palace and a stroll over Ponte Vecchio (old bridge famous for sumptuous gold shops).

The last stop of our unforgettable tour is the Holy Cross Church considered the Pantheon of Florence, with its monumental tombs of famous artists such as Michelangelo, Galileo, Machiavelli, and others. We will take a last breathtaking view of Florence from the Piazzale Michelangelo from which we will say "arrivederci" to Florence. ~ Breakfast & Dinner at your hotel.



Day 6: Full day excursion to Lucca: Once the capital city of Tuscany and the most important city in Tuscany during Roman times, Lucca remains a city of great charm and beauty. After your buffet breakfast, depart by private motor coach for this Tuscan jewel: the walled city of Lucca. Half day guided tour of Lucca to walk on the famous walls built in the 16 century. We will visit the church and Piazza of San Martino which houses Lucca's most famous and beautiful pieces of art "il Volto Santo" and incredible wood carved crucifix and the white marble sarcophagus of Illaira del Carretto. We will see the lovely San Frediano church with its mosaic front, The beautiful facade and square of San Michele St, see the home of Giacomo Puccini, Stroll the city's most famous street -Via Fillungo and the Roman amphitheater, climb the mysterious Torre Guinigi. **Highly recommended optional lunch. ~Breakfast and Dinner at your hotel

Additional time in the afternoon for strolling the city, shopping and sightseeing.

Optional: A wonderful concert of Puccini Arias will be offered this evening if possible. Price will be announced in Tuscany.

****Optional Lunch:** Join us for lunch at Lucca's most famous restaurant "La Buca di Sant'Antonio" a Michelin Star Rated Gourmet Restaurant (the restaurant dates back to at least 1700s and is one of the oldest in Italy). Traditional Lucchese 7 course lunch including Lucchese wines and bottled water, coffee, tax and tip. € 50. (Collected at our orientation meeting.)

Day 7: Day at Leisure- Now that you have seen many cities in Tuscany you will have a free day to rest or to select one city to return to. Our hotel is just 500 meters from the train station making excursions from the hotel very easy. Your tour hostess will be happy to assist you. ~Breakfast & Dinner at your hotel in Pescia



Day 8: Full day excursion to Volterra and San Gimignano: Volterra is famous for its Etruscan roots and its beautiful alabaster. We visit this ancient Etruscan town whose original walls still stand, and explore the historical downtown with the Priori Palace, the Duomo or you can visit the Guarnacci Museum on your own. A favorite chocolate shop sells chocolate salamis and chocolates depicting love making positions. Lunch is on your own, and you will have many nice choices of eateries!

Continue to San Gimignano, one of the most charming towns in the heart of the Tuscan

region rich in works of art, good shops and with a formidable gastronomic tradition. San Gimignano is famous for its excellent white wine called Vernaccia di San Gimignano, saffron, honey and wild boar called “cinghiale”. **We will be stopping at a farm-winery to sample the Vernaccia!**

We will visit the ancient medieval center with its beautiful squares and picturesque narrow streets, the People Palace and the Duomo. Walk to the castle's ruins in the historical center and admire the breathtaking view of the hills and the vineyards surrounding San Gimignano. Time at leisure to shop and sightsee. ~Breakfast and Dinner at your hotel in Pescia.

Day 9 Breakfast at the hotel and transfer to the airport for the flight home.

*** All Sightseeing subject to changes***

Italy is a dream that keeps returning for the rest of your life – Anna Akhmatova
Thank you for trusting the Italian Cultural Society with your Italian Dream
Vacation!

Nota Bene: Guest must be able to walk approximately 1.5 miles over uneven and cobble stone surface, inclines and 40 to 65 steps. Comfortable walking shoes are highly recommended. Due to the nature of this tour, it is not recommended for guests using walkers or wheelchairs.