



TRULY TUSCAN, IT'S MAGIC. Hear the stories behind Michelangelo's brilliance in painting and sculpture... learn what elevates an olive oil from ordinary to a delicacy and how an expert prepares pasta *al dente*... converse with a concert pianist and a master of art restoration who specializes in mother-of-pearl... discover the beauty inside a Carrara marble quarry and along the waterfront on the Ligurian Riviera... bicycle atop the massive walls that encircle medieval Lucca and hike Cinque Terre footpaths through terraced hills that look out over a sea of blue...



TUSCANY & CINQUE TERRE

8 Days / 7 Nights from \$4,390 plus airfare



1. WELCOME TO FLORENCE

Tour begins: 3:00 PM, Hotel L'Orologio.

Buongiorno! Look for us at the Peretola Airport for your included transfer to the Hotel L'Orologio in Florence. Freshen up for a fresh look at this Renaissance city, a work of art in itself, on a walking tour with our local guide. Cocktails, canapés and conversation follow at the hotel. Dinner is steps away at a historic Florentine restaurant tonight housed in a sixteenth-century *buca* (cellar), once used to store salted meats and wine. **Meals D**

2. RENAISSANCE ART

Get to know Michelangelo and his fellow master artists through the eyes of a Florentine art history scholar who shares tales of their talents and tribulations during an exclusive insider lecture. Get a real-life perspective of the works that defined and survived them during guided tours of two museums that showcase their art. Da Vinci's *Annunciation*, Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* and Michelangelo's *Doni Tondo* are among the head-turning paintings you'll see in the Uffizi, built in the 16th century for the Medici family and regarded as the oldest gallery in the world. At the Galleria dell'Accademia, see many of Michelangelo's famous works, including his statue of *David*. The rest of the day is free for you to experience the treasures

“A flawless and near-perfect tour. Everything worked like a well-oiled machine. Highest praise goes to our Tauck Director – a combination of art historian, translator, mother hen, and efficiency expert. I could not imagine a more capable person for this position. I cannot say enough about her.”

– Tauck Traveler Review, www.tauckculturious.com

of the city as you wish – be sure to keep an eye out for the moving pageantry of art you may see on city sidewalks and in lively squares; look closely and you just may catch those street sculptures in action as they entertain surprised passers-by. Traveling is always a lot more fun when you can talk with the locals; learn a few handy phrases of *italiano* before heading out for dinner on your own this evening. **Meals B**

3. LIVING THE FLORENTINE LIFE

Explore the artisan-lined streets of the Oltrarno District where workshops and galleries are kept active by artisans who still ply trades started centuries ago. Go inside two working restoration studios

today to meet the people behind the art, including Art Restoration Specialist Bettina Schindler-Pratesi who gives new life to antiques dressed in ivory, bone and mother-of-pearl. Next door, see a multitude of locals at work restoring and immortalizing art from all genres; their meticulous expertise deftly erases the ravages of time. A short drive brings you to the Basilica of Santa Croce, eternal resting place for Michelangelo, Galileo, Rossini and others. Back in Florence, sample local culinary delights at the Mercato Centrale – cheeses, cured olives, fish, sausages, pasta, wine and more tempt your taste buds here – and spend the afternoon exploring as you wish. This evening, concert pianist Gregorio Nardi



BETTINA SCHINDLER-PRATESI, Art Restoration Specialist

“I work in the old San Niccolò district of Florence, surrounded by workshops belonging to talented and creative artists. San Niccolò is the essence of artisan Florence, and I love being part of the inventiveness, imagination and traditions that have flourished for centuries in our narrow streets and alleys. I am a Restoration Specialist, and when you wander into my workshop I'll share with you the secrets of my work. Antiques are my life – and I play a very special part in their lives. Ivory, bone, mother-of-pearl, horn, wood and many other natural materials need loving attention every century or so to survive – I'll happily share my craft!”

and his wife Annegret invite you to their home, a private Renaissance palace, for a personal tour of their home and garden, a piano recital, engaging discussions on history and politics and an *aperitivo*. Dine as you wish tonight. **Meals B**

4. CINQUE TERRE

Say *arrivederci* to Florence today as we drive west to the Mediterranean coast of Tuscany and Liguria. Our road trip twists and turns through Tuscan hill country. En route, you'll see mountains of white marble at Carrara; get a closer look as you ride aboard a 4 x 4 vehicle* on a guided tour of the quarries, in operation since Roman times. The marble from Carrara was used for some of the most remarkable buildings in ancient Rome, including the Pantheon and Trajan's Column, and for many Renaissance sculptures, most notably Michelangelo's *David*. Stop for a simple lunch in the hidden gem village of Colonnata,

sampling regional specialties. Changing landscapes continue to mesmerize as you drive along the coast to Portovenere on the Gulf of Poets; orange and yellow houses dot the hillsides, enjoying a picturesque perch over the azure sea below. Walk through the town's narrow alleyways, perhaps pausing for a taste of gelato to add to your enjoyment here. Weather permitting, ride a boat to the Cinque Terre village of Monterosso, where your hotel overlooks the harbor from its idyllic hilltop setting. Have dinner in the hotel tonight. **Meals BLD**

5. A HIKE OR A TRAIN RIDE

Wake up in paradise, the picture perfect spot to take an early morning dip in the refreshing waters of the Mediterranean on the nearby beach before breakfast. Immerse in the breathtaking scenery of Cinque Terre as you follow a footpath

that links the villages. Walk through terraced vineyards overlooking the sea from Monterosso to Vernazza, the "pearl of Cinque Terre," or, linger longer in Monterosso and ride the train to Vernazza. The rest of the day is free for you to experience as you wish, perhaps having lunch in a sidewalk café before continuing your walk between the villages or returning to your hotel by train. Dinner is on your own this evening. **Meals B**

Find yourself someplace new!

- Small groups, averaging 18 guests
- Learn about the life & works of Michelangelo at a lecture by a Florentine art scholar
- Go inside an artisan's workshop and studio with a Restoration Specialist & art professor
- Ride a guided 4x4 vehicle through a Carrara marble quarry
- Taste wine, olive oil & pasta magic before bicycling atop the massive walls of jewel-box Lucca
- Hike Cinque Terre's ancient footpaths; take a walking tour through Siena's medieval alleys
- Learn some handy italiano to make your travel more fun!
- 12 meals, service charges, gratuities to local guides, admission fees, taxes and portorage, airport transfers upon arrival & departure as noted



Soar over Siena on an optional hot air balloon ride, followed by a champagne breakfast that warms body and soul





Follow a footpath to Vernazza, the “pearl of Cinque Terre”



6. CYCLING & COOKING

Drive through the Tuscan hills to the walled town of Lucca, which, unlike neighboring towns, is relatively flat and a bicyclist’s dream. Pedal atop the town’s walls on a bicycle* tour led by a local guide who shows you the sights. Tuscany is all about the food and this afternoon a hands-on lesson with local chefs at a cooking school in the Tuscan hills tempts with an olive oil and wine tasting, and a pasta-making class that can best be described as *delizioso*. Continue to your hotel in the heart of historic Siena, where dinner is on your own. **Meals BL**

7. SIENA & TUSCAN WINE

Rise early for an optional hot air balloon ride* and champagne breakfast (additional \$350 per person). This afternoon, join our local guide for a walking tour of Siena. Highlights include the red brick Palazzo Pubblico, the frescoed Baptistery, the Gothic black and white striped Duomo and the Santa Maria della Scalla, one of Europe’s first hospitals and today a museum. Learn about Tuscan wines in an afternoon wine-tasting class. Delight in regional fare during tonight’s farewell dinner in an ancient wine cellar. **Meals BD**

Piccolo Lusso Albergo (your luxury hotels)



HOTEL L'OROLOGIO

Florence, Nights 1, 2 & 3

You’ll be graciously welcomed to Italy during your stay in this luxury Firenze property... set within walking distance of historic Santa Maria Novella Square... and designed with a stylish theme of paintings and photographs of elegant timepieces



HOTEL PORTO ROCA

Monterosso, Nights 4 & 5

Wake up to nature’s beauty at this elegant 40-room villa suspended between the azure sea and expansive sky, with antique furnishings and cliffside views... dine on a garden terrace overlooking the Mediterranean... find paradise...

8 DAYS FROM \$4,390*

(7 Breakfasts, 2 Lunches & 3 Dinners)

BEGINS FLORENCE

Apr 18, 25 May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 Jun 6, 13, 20
Aug 29 Sep 5, 12, 19, 26 Oct 3, 10, 17
/= Sold Out!

Go to www.culturious.com for up-to-the-minute space availability.

PRICE PER PERSON

April – May 8

Double \$4390 Single \$5496 Triple \$4138

May 9 – June 7, October 17 – 31

Double \$4690 Single \$5813 Triple \$4432

June 8 – October 16

Double \$4890 Single \$6082 Triple \$4616

Group Size: Average of 18 guests

***International Airfare is additional.** Call Tauck for special rates on international air for travel originating in the U.S. (subject to availability).

Optional Hot Air Balloon Ride and Champagne Breakfast, Day 7: Add \$350 per person; ask at booking.

Ask about our additional hotel nights and about our comprehensive Guest Protection Product.

Some days include 2-4 miles of walking up steep hills or on uneven terrain and easy biking on relatively flat roads. The pace is up to you.

Note: You will be required to sign Tauck’s liability waiver for participation in certain activities.

Note: Tour of Jun 20 will stay at Hotel Vis a Vis in Sestre Levante nights 4 and 5.

8. ARRIVEDERCI, TUSCANY

Tour ends: Florence. Fly home anytime. A transfer is included from Siena’s Grand Hotel Continental to Florence Airport, Peretola.

Allow three hours for flight check-in. **Meals B**



GRAND HOTEL CONTINENTAL

Siena, Nights 6 & 7

Seated just steps from famed Piazza del Campo, home to the famed Palio races, you’ll find a romantic retreat set within a 17th-century palazzo, adorned with frescoes and priceless antiques – an ideal base for discovering the heart of Siena