



Tuscany ... or "La Bella Toscana"

"There is nowhere like Tuscany. Its beauty is not only physical, but meta-physical. It has inspired the world's finest artists and architects, composers and singers. No camera can capture its beauty, nor can any author describe it adequately. It is the obsessive passion of its lovers, who never tire of its wondrous charms. And as if these are not enough, it is home to some of the finest wines in the world and a cuisine whose simple honesty makes it the envy of all." From his "Introduction to Tuscany" by Eliao di Monte d'Oro, traveler and bon-vivant

For the committed Jew, the discovery, in this "heaven on earth", of a rich tapestry of Jewish life makes a visit here all the more remarkable. At Naomi Boutique tours, we have created an itinerary which includes all the highlights of the most exclusive tours of the region, and enhances the experience by providing the very best Tuscan cuisine and program content for today's savvy observant Jewish traveler.

To name but some of the stops, many familiar, others less so: the main cities of Florence of the Renaissance and Siena of the Palio horse race, Pisa of the tower and Lucca of the walls, beautiful Pitigliano a.k.a. "la piccola Gerusalemme", the awe-inspiring Cinque Terre (hike), an agriturismo, an operatic performance and some master classes with master chefs.

All this comes with authentic Tuscan cooking (under strict hashgacha), washed down with superb kosher Chianti, Montalcino and Rosso di Montepulciano (as available).



Since 2006, a unique tour concept has evolved, providing luxurious cultural and gastronomic enjoyment for intimate groups of discerning kosher travelers.

"Taste of Tuscany": the classic tours, 2011 *with master cooking classes*

The tours offer:-

- beautiful hotel accommodation in a historic building restored to the highest level while maintaining authentic features
- one hotel for the entire duration of your stay – no packing and unpacking, with resulting freedom to take days "off"
- intimate groups of like-minded, cultured individuals, who appreciate the finer things in life (and who don't usually travel with groups)
- day trips of general and Jewish interest – ancient Pitigliano, fabulous Florence, Pisa and its tower (but not only), proud Siena, lovely Lucca, San Gimignano, Barga and the Garfagnana
- visit to a noble villa, to help understand better the current demography of "old Europe"
- breath-taking (pun intended) hiking in the hills of the Cinque Terre
- an opportunity to meet some of the remaining local Jewish people and hear their fascinating stories
- authentic Tuscan cuisine, prepared by renowned local chefs, with minimal adaption for reasons of Kashrut
- unlimited Italian non-mevushal wines – Pitigliano light red and white, Chianti rosso and rosso di Montalcino
- the world's best ice cream and coffee – decide yourself whether San Gimignano, Lucca or Barga is better
- fashion, household and leather shopping in the markets and towns
- hands-on cooking with "maestros" - master chef teachers; Tuscany is famous for its multitudinous cooking schools
- cycling – a "must" around the walls of Lucca; for serious bikers we can arrange serious cycling with/out a professional guide

Kashrut: a mashgiach tmidi will represent the Chief Rabbi of Florence, Rabbi Levi; we use regular milk, but chalav yisrael observers can be accommodated.

"Taste of Tuscany"

Typical itinerary based on Friday start: the program will be tweaked if start day is different and according to season

subject to change - due to any one of a hundred Italian variables



Friday:

Meeting point: Rome Airport Hilton Hotel: Minyan 07.15, kosher breakfast 08.00, depart 09.00

Please see note below re arriving the day before

Pitigliano: "little Jerusalem"

This striking cliff-top village was until the 1930's home to a thriving Jewish community – we'll visit the former ghetto with its synagogue and museum.

Lucca: our base - hopefully there will be time for an overview tour of Lucca, preferably by bicycle around the famous city walls, before driving to the hotel to prepare for Shabbat.

Shabbat:

Short stroll in vicinity of hotel

Before the end of Shabbat: walk into Lucca town

After Shabbat, leave Lucca for Pisa

No trip would be complete without seeing the tower – at night the day-trippers and souvenir vendors are gone; Jewish Pisa is also featured

Sunday:

Florence - guided walking tour

Statue of David, the cathedral (duomo), Piazza della Repubblica, Ponte Vecchio and famous synagogue

After lunch, free time in Florence

If you wish to visit the Uffizi Gallery you should pre-book. Otherwise you can explore this gorgeous city in greater depth according to your interests, visiting palaces, museums and galleries, the leather market and stores, many of which are open on Sunday.

Depart Florence, via Piazzale Michelangelo

From here you will get the best panorama of the city. Those wishing to stay longer in Florence may return later by train or bus.

Hands-on cooking session with the master chef

Monday:

Villa Torrigiani

Lucca is famous for its aristocratic villas; this one is most interesting as we'll be able to tour both inside the villa and the gardens

Barga

In this medieval mountain top village where time has stood still for hundreds of years you'll climb the winding narrow streets to the duomo at the top of the village to breathe the clean air and enjoy the 360° panorama

Garfagnana nature experience

By bicycle, on horseback or on foot, we offer a choice of activities in this most peaceful area of Tuscany, visiting an eco-friendly Agriturismo, il Corniolo, where they produce farro and chestnut flour for which the area is famous

Opera: mini concert in Lucca, Puccini's birthplace

Tuesday:

San Gimignano – the “Manhattan” of Tuscany

Free time to explore the famous city of towers – climb to the top, see the stores, enjoy a coffee, take lots of pictures

Agriturismo “Bibbiano”

Uniquely Italian concept: producers of wine and oil and a thriving vacation rental business with the ultimate view: picnic lunch and swim

Siena

Visit the famous Piazza del Campo, home of the Palio horse race, the beautiful synagogue, daven mincha, and, if we are lucky, meet one of the community's leaders; free time for wandering around this bustling ancient university city: depart 1900

Wednesday:

Forte dei Marmi – market day

Tuscany's most elegant seaside resort, home to Andrea Bocelli and a great weekly country textile market; wander around, shop, sip coffee and people-watch

Viareggio – capital of the Versilia Coast

One of the busiest seaside resorts, dating from the mid-19th century

Hike on the Cinque Terre

For years one of the highlights of this trip – a 2-hour challenging hike overlooking the sea

Hands-on cooking session with the master chef

Thursday:

Lucca – last chance

free time for shopping, before collecting you and taking you to Pisa airport for the 13.45 flight to Lon/NYC or the 1300 express train to Rome for evening flights to TLV. In summer Delta fly direct Pisa – JFK.

Every day: 3 minyanim, full buffet breakfast, light lunch on the move, elegant served dinner

Price from 2950 euro per person sharing
(DLX room and single supplements apply)

Pre-Tour Rome Option: for those arriving Rome Wednesday morning we can offer a wonderful 2-day program including 4* hotel, all meals and 3 guided tours, or just great prices for rooms at the FCO Hilton

We will be pleased to help you arrange flights and extra hotels.

not included in the price of your trip

- **flights:** most (but not all) tours run from Friday a.m. to Thursday a.m. You will be met at Rome Fiumicino airport **0900**; on departure day, we will bring you to Pisa Galileo Galilei airport or to Pisa/Lucca train stations.
- **"serious" cycling:** your ride around the walls of Lucca is included, but for serious bikers we can arrange professional cycle rentals with or without professional guides.
- **spending money for shopping:** Lucca's stores are gorgeous and not overpriced as the town is not too touristy. The village markets of Tuscany are a must. Free time will be given in Siena, Florence and San Gimignano for you to choose whether to sight-see or spend!!
- **upgrades:** deluxe rooms (DLX), and single occupancy are available at an additional price (see booking form).
- **extensions:** if you wish to arrive in Lucca before the trip commences or (more commonly) stay for a few days after, on a kosher full board basis, this is sometimes possible.
- **insurance:** all clients should be aware that while all efforts are made to avoid any problems before during or after your trip, Naomi carries no insurance for your health or luggage. While using the services only of registered suppliers, we recommend that you purchase **fully comprehensive travel insurance as Naomi cannot be held liable for any mishaps during your stay.**
- **tips:** we recommend **100 euro** per person for the week for drivers, chefs, waiters and chambermaids: we will collect and distribute for you.

important suggestion:

- **Whether or not you intended to spend time in Rome before your tour, we strongly recommend you stay the night before the tour starts in a hotel by the airport (the Hilton is IN the airport with shuttles to the city), in case your flight is delayed. We cannot wait for late arrivals as it is unfair to other guests. The cost of "catching up" by taxi/plane is MUCH greater than the cost of a night at the airport hotels!!**

Dates in 2011

May 6 – 12

July 8 – 14

September 2 - 8

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