

For tours departing beyond 2010, itineraries may be subject to change. This will be confirmed by the publication of the 2011 brochure (issued in Oct 10).

2010
Tour Dossier

EXPLORE!

ITALY Dossier Ref. LTY

Chianti Classico

Amended 31 Mar 2010. Valid from 01 Jan 2010 to 31 Dec 2010

Since first issue this dossier has been updated with amendments to the following sections: accommodation; destination airport

As our itineraries may be amended from time to time, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers, please ensure you have the most up-to-date copy of this dossier immediately before you travel. You can download the dossier from our website, www.explore.co.uk. Of course we will notify you of any significant changes, but sometimes minor changes may simply be added to the tour dossier.

JOINING TOUR ABROAD

8 days/7 nights Land Only
Florence back to Florence

Join Florence Airport (day 1)

End Florence Airport (day 8)

Clients booked on 'Land Only' arrangements should make their own way to the joining point in Florence. Please refer to separate 'Joining Instructions' for name and address of joining point and time of rendezvous with Tour Leader.

GROUP TRAVEL FROM LONDON

8 days/7 nights Tour including Connecting Group Flights
London-Florence-London

Depart from London Gatwick Airport to arrive in Florence (day 1 of Land Only itinerary). Transfer to hotel.

Return from Florence (day 8 of Land Only itinerary) and arrive London Gatwick the same day.

Passengers with non-group flights booked through Explore should refer to their individual confirmation invoice for flight details. Transfers to and from the airport are not included unless purchased in addition to the tour package.

SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Among the many highlights featured on this tour, we particularly mention:

- * **TUSCAN LANDSCAPES** Walks amongst vineyards and Cypress trees.
- * **CHIANTI** Fine wine country.
- * **SAN GIMIGNANO** Hill town with distinctive defensive towers.
- * **GREVE IN CHIANTI** Stay in traditional Tuscan villa.

Carbon Offsets Included

As part of our responsible tourism policy we offset carbon emissions from all customer and staff flights booked by Explore. Our carbon offset partner is Climate Care. If you are making independent flight arrangements to join one of our tours, may we urge you to offset your carbon emissions through Climate Care, or a similar offsetting scheme.

- * **SIENA** Day trip to medieval city.
- * **FLORENCE** Treasures of Renaissance art.

Tuscany is perhaps one of the best-known regions of Italy and has long attracted poets, artists and philosophers who have fallen in love with the romantic cities, steep but rolling landscapes and fine wines for which this region is famed. The countryside is a patchwork of vineyards, olive groves and forests of oak and chestnut and most of Italy's better wines and many of its fine dishes come from this area. Staying in the heart of Chianti, in a traditional villa, our tour includes easy day walks through the lush countryside; visits to evocative Florence and Siena; opportunities for wine tasting and ample time to relax. Our tour offers four markedly different walks through the region, allowing an overview of the classic landscapes that have been so inspirational to artists and travellers alike. We walk through a timeless vista, where lonely farmhouses nestle in amongst the gentle landscape and miles of quiet sandy tracks meander their way between vineyards and acres of forest. Perched on scattered hilltops are fortified towns such as Monteriggioni Castle and the incredible medieval towers of San Gimignano. For many no trip to Tuscany would be complete without a visit to the beautiful cities of Siena and Florence. Steeped in art, culture and architecture, we include a day in each. Our visits allow ample free time to explore their rambling streets, cobbled squares and an unrivalled collection of churches, galleries and museums. This one-week, centre-based tour allows you to enjoy the best of classical Tuscany.

Walking Grades and Fitness:

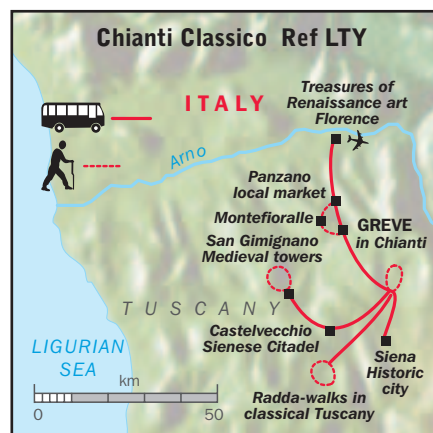
Grading is a somewhat difficult topic as much depends on the individual's own perception of his or her abilities. The following is intended as a general guide to our walking grades. This is rated **Grade easy to moderate**.

Easy Tend to be short day walks and rambles at low altitudes. Easy walks can be enjoyed by anyone who leads a reasonably active life and no special preparation is required.

Moderate: will usually involve some longer walks (4-6 hours/day) at low altitudes (below 3000m). Some previous hill walking experience would be beneficial but these walks should be within the capabilities of those who lead a normal active life. Moderate walking tours may contain some optional strenuous days, and in order to get the best out of the trip we would advise that you tone up your fitness before you join.

Earth Matters

- As recycling is very rare in these parts, we recommend you bring your own water filter.
- Learning a few words of Italian is a great way to make contact with the local people.
- For further information on responsible travel go to <http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/>



LAND ONLY ITINERARY

Be Prepared: While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day route printed below, a degree of flexibility is built into the itinerary. We may have to change the order of the walks depending on weather conditions.

Accommodation and Included Meals: please find the key to our accommodation ratings overleaf, and note that included meals are indicated in the itinerary below and are shown on the day they are provided (B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner).

Day 1. Join tour Florence Airport; transfer to Greve in Chianti

Arriving in Florence today, we transfer by bus to our hotel. On arrival there will be time to relax and enjoy the stunning surroundings of the villa, before settling down to enjoy our first evening meal (not included). **7 nights Tuscan villa H+.**

Day 2. Walking in the Greve region

This morning we take a short drive out to Panzano in Chianti, where we will have time to visit the local market. From here we will then head out on a very scenic walk towards the walled village of Montefioralle situated above Greve in Chianti. From this lovely village we head for the small medieval borgo and old church of San Cresci and the villa of Zano. We will pass by the castle of Uzzano and way-marked trails through vineyards and great local scenery before heading back to our villa, where you are free to spend the evening relaxing (**Included meals: B, L**).

Day 3. San Gimignano and Monteriggioni

After breakfast, we transfer to the outskirts of San Gimignano. We will enjoy a walk through the Tuscan countryside using some of the local trails, before heading to the town of the towers, San Gimignano itself. The approach is greeted by the magnificent sight of the thirteen towers of this medieval town, perched majestically on the hilltops above. San Gimignano is a beautifully preserved example of a classic Tuscan Medieval town. It prospered during the 12th and 13th centuries, until a combination of local aristocratic rivalry and the arrival of the Black Death devastated trade. You will then have free time to take a walk around the town, have a relaxing lunch in one of many cafes and perhaps walk up to the "Torre Grossa", or visit the Duomo. Alternatively you could just relax in the shade of some olive trees. A short bus journey takes us to Monteriggioni, a beautifully preserved hill top village, where we can walk

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around the walls before we drive back to the villa later this afternoon. **(Included meals: B).**

Day 4. Day visit to Siena

Today you will have a full day free to look around the medieval city of Siena, with its magnificent Gothic architecture (please note there is no guide today). Once a rival to Florence in power and trade, the city controlled the trade routes between France and Rome, as well as the southern Tuscan wool industry. It was again the Black Death that trumpeted the downfall of the city, decimating it in the 14th century and killing a third of its population. Today it stands as a classic Italian city, with its magnificent central square, Il Campo, and the awe inspiring grandeur of the Duomo overlooking the Via di Citta. The centre of this city is traffic-free, making it ideal to wander around on foot, soaking up the many intriguing sights. The focal point is the Piazza del Campo, a semi-circular area surrounded by ancient buildings, and overlooked by the 100m bell tower (Torre del Mangia). Enjoying the view here with a coffee or a glass of beer is a good way of spending a few hours – though you'll find the prices drop considerably if you wander along the back streets. The Piazza is also used for a horse race twice a year – the famous Palio, when horses and their riders hurtle dangerously around the square to the delight of the crowds. Whatever your fancy there will be ample time to enjoy this wonderful city before we head back to the villa after dinner. **(Included meals: B).**

Day 5. The Hills of Chianti: Volpaia & Radda

After breakfast we drive close to the town of Volpaia, near to Radda in Chianti. We will walk from the small chapel of Santa Maria Novella and slowly climb up to this picture perfect village. From this lovely village we walk through vineyards before reaching the marked trails that take us up into the hills of Chianti. We then take to waymarked trails, local paths and old drovers roads, cutting through vineyards and fields of the castle of Castelvecchi. Finally we descend back to Santa Maria Novella for a well-earned rest in the olive groves of the church and our picnic lunch. A short bus ride takes us to Radda for time to explore and look around, have a gelato or two before returning to Greve. This afternoon there may be the opportunity to do some wine tasting (optional). **(Included meals: B, L).**

Day 6. Visit to Florence

Today is the turn of Florence, the spiritual home of the Renaissance and considered to be one of the most beautiful cities in Italy. During our visit (which is unguided) you may wish to visit the Ponte Vecchio, the oldest and most famous bridge in Florence and the only one that was not demolished during the German retreat of 1944. The present construction dates back to 1345 and is now cluttered with goldsmiths' shops. The religious centre of the city is, of course, the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore with its giant dome or 'duomo'. It took 14 years to build and dominates the city skyline. Close by are other artistic wonders, including the Baptistry, the East door, which was called the Gate of Paradise by Michelangelo, and Giotto's

famous bell tower as well as the Piazza della Signoria. Again, there will be plenty of time to sample the sights and sounds of this eclectic city before we return to the relative solitude of our Tuscan retreat after dinner (entrance fees not included). **(Included meals: B).**

Day 7. Castellina and Vineyards of Chianti Classico

Following breakfast we take a short bus ride to Castellina in Chianti, a country town with Etruscan and roman origins. From Castellina we take to waymarked trails dropping off the main ridge on which Castellina lies, onto the southwest facing slope, to be rewarded with some amazing views down into the lower valley. Our walk will take us through Mediterranean pine forests with the sounds of cicadas accompanying us as we pass through several wine estates. Views are wide and open towards Siena and the distant towers of San Gimignano, with fields of poppies and sunflowers in season. En route we pass through Lilliano and Rocca della Macie, before completing the loop and returning to Castellina A short drive takes us back to the villa for our final evening in this beautiful region. **(Included meals: B, L).**

Day 8. Tour ends Florence Airport

This morning we drive to Florence where our tour ends. **(Included meals: B).**

Booking a Single Room

All of our tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. On this particular tour we are pleased to be able to offer customers the option of pre-booking a guaranteed single room for each night of the tour.

PERSONAL EXPENSES

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Foreign Exchange

Local Currency: Euro.

Recommended Currency for Exchange:

Euros.

Where to Exchange: Banks or 'Forex' offices in main towns/cities.

ATM Availability: In major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance: In larger restaurants.

Travellers Cheques: In Florence and Siena.

Additional Information: Owing to the difficulties of changing money in a rural setting, please bring spending money in Euros with you from home.

Up-to-date information re:global exchange rates can be obtained at <https://www.currency-express.com/explore/>

Meal Plan

Local Food and Drink: 7 breakfasts and 3 lunches are included on this trip; please be prepared to pay for all other meals. Please note that we have not included dinners on this trip, allowing you the flexibility to choose for yourself. You may choose to eat in the hotel restaurant or travel a little further into Greve itself. Prices quoted are correct as of the date this dossier was originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location and the prices below are given as an average guide only.

	UK	Italy
Coffee	£1.20	£1.80
Soft Drink	0.80	2.00
Bottle of water	0.80	1.20
Bottle of beer	2.50	2.00
Bottle of wine	10.00	12.00
2 Course Meal*	10.00	15.00
3 Course Meal**	18.00	25.00

*Cheap local fare in a small cafe or restaurant.

**Typical food in a simple, reasonably comfortable mid-range restaurant.

Tipping

Tour Leader: At your discretion you might consider tipping your tour leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Other Sightseeing

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date this dossier was originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

FLORENCE Uffizi and Accademia £10 per person. Please note that these tickets should be bought in advance to be sure of entry (£3 fee). This can be done online at www.uffizi.com Your tour leader can help you book via telephone whilst on tour – although this method is slightly cheaper please note that the tickets may be sold out.

SIENA Sightseeing ticket £8.

GREVE Wine tasting £8.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Seasonal Climate

April/May and October/November are pleasantly warm. June/August are the hottest months.

Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at <http://www.explore.co.uk/weather>. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. Up-to-date information on the weather worldwide can be found by following the BBC weather link on this page.

EXPLORE ACCOMMODATION RATINGS : An important feature of many Explore tours is the wide range of accommodation used, and since the beginning our philosophy has been to select accommodation to suit the itinerary - not the other way round.

To help gauge the comfort level on your chosen tour, we have graded the accommodation standards at all night-stops using the rating guide below. Please keep in mind however that standards can vary from one trip to the next, and occasionally we may need to change a night-stop without advance warning.

Hotels / lodges / guesthouses - or similar

H++ : Comfortable hotels, lodges or guesthouses with twin or single rooms and en suite facilities. With air-conditioning/heating where appropriate and with reliable hot and cold water. Generally good levels of service and often with added amenities such as restaurant, bar, gardens or swimming pool.

H+ : Standard hotels, lodges or guesthouses, usually with twin or single rooms and en suite facilities. These are generally standard, no-frills hotels with adequate amenities and service standards. Whilst comfort levels are perfectly acceptable to most, please don't expect too much! These are often small, family run establishments.

H : Basic hotels, lodges or guesthouses (also village houses, mountain huts, hotels etc often come into this category). Accommodation may be communal or dorm-style, and WC / washing facilities are usually shared. Running hot and cold water may be unreliable or even unavailable. These can be the most rewarding and memorable places to stay, but comfort levels are low.

We will spend the week in the family run Agriturismo La Camporena, a traditional villa with colonial style rooms located a few kilometres from Greve in Chianti, known also for their Chianti Classico wine production and Olive Oil that we will be able to taste during the week. This Agriturismo is in a superb location with wide open views over the Chianti Hills, allowing easy access to some of the beautiful walks in the Tuscan countryside. Traditional Italian breakfasts will be served on site, and we will be able to spend some evenings relaxing at the Villa.

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Visa Requirements

Visas are not required by UK, AUS, NZ, USA, or CAN citizens. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

Vaccinations & Protection

Nothing compulsory. Tetanus recommended. **Special Note:** Vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

This is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

Electric Supply and Plugs

For comprehensive information regarding voltages and plug types in use in the countries visited, follow the relevant link at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Traveladvice/>

Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory for all bookings. You must take your policy document with you on tour, as your tour leader will ask to see this at the start of the trip. Your documentation must state in writing that you are the named policyholder and that the cover is valid for your period of travel. Your policy document must also indicate that you have medical expenses and emergency repatriation cover and a 24-hour contact telephone number for your Insurance Company must be shown on your documentation in case of emergency.

If you are unable to provide all this information at the start of the trip you will not be allowed to join the trip.

If you have purchased Explore Insurance you should carry the Master Certificate leaflet with you, which outlines the conditions of the policy together with a copy of your Confirmation Invoice, which is your proof of purchase of insurance. Explore Worldwide are an Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited, who is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services authority.

Know Before You Go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination including safety and security, local laws and customs, entry requirements and health. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Traveladvice/>

PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP

A complete list of clothing and personal gear is contained in Explore's '**General Information Booklet**', available only after a booking has been accepted. Here we make a few specific recommendations with regard to your tour.

Luggage: One main piece of baggage and daysac (essential for walking). Total allowance: **44lbs/20kgs**.

Clothing: Pack essentially for '**Hot Conditions**'. During the day you can expect to wear in T-shirts and shorts, but you may wish to bring smart casual wear for the evenings. Bring a warm fleece for cool evenings and raingear for occasional rain. May, June and September may be slightly cooler.

Footwear: Well broken in walking boots or shoes, plus sandals or trainers for relaxing.

Equipment: Insect repellent, sunglasses, walking poles, sunscreen, water bottle, torch and a swimming costume are all recommended.

Need help on clothing or equipment?

Then we suggest you contact Nomad Travel, our equipment partner, who specialise in kitting people out for adventurous travel. You receive a special 10% discount in-store or online. Visit one of their stores, phone 0845 260 0044, or visit their website www.nomadtravel.co.uk/explore for further information.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Area: 301,230 sq km.

Population: 58 million.

Language: Italian, with some English and German.

Religion: Roman Catholic.

Local Time: GMT +1.

Electric Supply & Plugs: 220v, 50HZ.

Recommended Maps: Italy; Michelin 1:1,000,000, Itinerari nella Montagnola Senese 1:25,000 Club Alpino Italiano.

Recommended Books: E.M. Forster: A Room with a View, Eyewitness Travel Guide Florence and Tuscany, Christopher Hibbert: The House of the Medici: Its Rise and Fall.

