



Following the trail of Piero della Francesca

You are invited to take part in a week's historic tour on location in and around the lovely hill town of Cortona in Tuscany. The tour will include visits to important cultural towns such as Siena, Arezzo and Orvieto, where you will see some of the most significant works by artists of the Early Renaissance era.

The itinerary has been carefully designed to allow study and discussion (supported by slides) of the political, social and religious climate that influenced many of the works. There will also be lots of time for sight-seeing and leisure activities.



Day 1) Cortona

Our day begins with a tour featuring the works of three artists important to the history of Cortona: Fra Giovanni Angelico, Luca Signorelli and Pietro Berrettini whose works are on display in the Cathedral of Cortona, the Museo Diocesano (where Fra Angelico's famous "Annunciation" masterpiece is housed) and the Museo del Accademia Etrusca.



After lunch we visit the 13th century monastery of Le Celle and the Sanctuary of Santa Margherita, where the mummified body of St. Margaret is on display, followed by a walk down through the upper town with an overall look at the city gates, walls and Medieval houses.

Return to the Villa for dinner.





Day 2) Assisi



Half day tour with free time in the afternoon.

We arrive first in lower Assisi at the Baroque church of Santa Maria degli Angeli which is built over and around the ancient church reconstructed by St. Francis of Assisi. Continuing up the hill to upper Assisi we visit the Church of Santa Chiara, the central Piazza with its evidence of the earlier Roman city and lastly the magnificent Basilica of San Francesco. The upper church is where frescoes by Giotto and his followers depicting the life of St. Francis can be seen, the lower church includes a "Deposition" by Pietro Lorenzetti and a Madonna by Cimabue, and the foundation of the church below houses the tomb of St Francis.



Day 3) Monte Oliveto

Perched on one of the rolling hills above the Val D'Orcia is the Benedictine monastery of Monte Oliveto. Here we see the large cloister with frescoes by Giovanni Bazzi (also called "il Sodoma") and Luca Signorelli depicting the life of St Benedict. After a picnic lunch at the monastery we drive through some very beautiful countryside to arrive at the abbey of Sant'Anna in Camprena where "The English Patient" was filmed, to see further works by Sodoma in the abbey refectory.



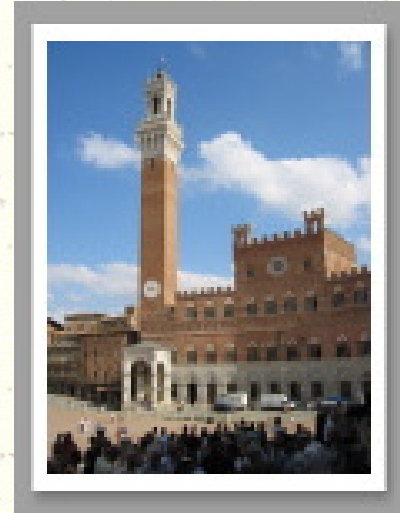
The town of Pienza, famous for the production of cheeses, is a short distance away and is our next stop. There will be free time here and also at our last stop at Bagno Vignoni where you can enjoy a soak in the thermal baths, followed by dinner.



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Day 4) Siena

Our visit to the city of Siena will begin in what has been called the most beautiful piazza in Italy, Piazza del Campo, followed by a survey of Siennese art and architecture including The Lorenzetti brothers and Simone Martini in the museum of the Palazzo Comunale and sculpture by Giovanni Pisano and the Piccolomini library in Siena's Cathedral. After lunch we will return to Cortona about mid afternoon with free time to relax before our evening meal.



Day 5) Free Day

Suggestions: a trip to Florence, Perugia or perhaps discover more hidden treasures in the streets and alleyways of Cortona. Early evening (before dinner) there will be a short lecture with slides on the works of Piero della Francesca, in preparation for day 6.



Day 6) Arezzo

After a brief walk through the town we begin our tour dedicated to early Renaissance painter Piero della Francesca. Our first stop will be the Church of San Francesco to see the newly restored cycle of frescoes depicting the Legend of the True Cross. Then we visit the Romanesque church of Santa Maria della Pieve and Piazza Grande. After lunch we make our way to Sansepolcro, the birthplace of Piero della Francesca, and visit the Museo Civico to see "The Resurrection" and "The Madonna della Misericordia". Finally we visit the little town of Monterchi to view the "Madonna del Parto".



Day 7) Orvieto

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Our visit to Orvieto, a town whose origins date back to Etruscan times, begins with a visit to the Pozzo di San Patrizio (St. Patrick's well), designed by architect Antonio da Sangallo. Its double helix staircase is indeed a feat of engineering. Then up to Orvieto's elaborate Gothic Cathedral and inside the San Brixio Chapel with what are probably Luca Signorelli's most important works, the "Last Judgement" frescoes.



Cost per person including transfer from and to the airport (Pisa-Florence-Rome): **€ 2270**

Cost per person without transfer from and to the airport (Pisa-Florence-Rome): € 2200

Single occupancy supplement: **€ 350 p.p.**

Included in the price:

7 nights accommodation in a double / twin room with en-suite bathroom, at a private Villa in the area of Cortona or at a 4 star hotel in Cortona, with breakfast and Vat included.

Welcome dinner (wine is not included)

5 lunches in local restaurants (wine is not included)

4 Evening meals (wine is not included)

Lecture—seminar + English speaking tutor

All above mentioned excursions (with transport included) + English speaking guide

Entrance tickets for museums, spa, galleries and churches