NAT HAB
CULTURAL JOURNEYS

Vibrant Traditions & Personal Connections



Tuscany: La Dolce Vita

Food, Wine & Rural Life in the Heart of Italy

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Trip Details:

Days
8 Days / May–Jun, Sep–Oct

Price
From $8995

Tuscany: La Dolce Vita

Food, Wine & Rural Life in the Heart of Italy

From the wooded clay hills, rolling valleys and vineyards of the Crete Senesi region to the ancient hot springs of our indulgent spa hotel at Saturnia, Tuscany offers the consummate immersion in a classically Italian way of life. In an intimate setting defined by our small group size, explore medieval hilltop villages, savor fresh local cuisine (and learn to prepare it), taste the region's famed wines, and unwind at our private luxury farmhouse villa, complete with an enticing pool and afternoons devoted to aperitivos and culinary delights. Along the way, meet local people who carry on traditions that have endured for centuries, and revel in the natural beauty of the Tuscan countryside, quilted with olive groves, sunflowers, cypress-lined lanes and fields of wheat. After your respite far from the standard tourist track, you'll come away enlightened and rejuvenated on a rare encounter with Italy at its most enchanting.

Trip Highlights

Immerse Yourself in Culinary Culture

Enjoy exclusive vineyard tours and wine tastings, private cooking classes with local gourmands, and indulgent meals prepared fresh by our onsite chef

Live "the Sweet Life" Like Tuscan Locals

Given the exclusivity of our small group, make personal connections with artisans, winemakers, restaurateurs and community members passionate about regional heritage

Stay in a Luxurious Private Country Villa

Set within a vineyard in the Crete Senesi region, our historic farmhouse estate blends Tuscan tradition and contemporary luxury for a memorable retreat



Tuscany: La Dolce Vita Itinerary

Food, Wine & Rural Life in the Heart of Italy

Itinerary at a Glance

Day 1	Florence / Asciano
Day 2	Montepulciano
Day 3	Bagno Vignoni
Day 4	Montalcino
Day 5	Monte Oliveto Maggiore
Day 6	Saturnia
Day 7	Maremma
Day 8	Saturnia / Florence



Ready to Book? Call an Adventure Specialist at 800-543-8917

Day 1

Florence / Asciano

Dine at a family farm before settling into a private Tuscan villa

- Visit Pacina, a family farm and winery tied to Italy's modern sustainability movement
- Travel through the Crete Senesi to a private villa near Asciano
- Join your Expedition Leader for a welcome aperitivo and dinner

Our journey into the essence of Tuscany begins this morning in its fabled capital of Florence, where we meet our Expedition Leader and fellow guests in the lobby of Hotel L'Orologio. Our small group then travels south into Siena province, crossing an iconic Tuscan landscape of vineyards, olive groves, cypress-lined lanes and hilltop hamlets. This is a renowned wine-producing region, also known for its pecorino cheese and white truffles, among other gastronomy highlights. We'll tour and dine at Pacina farm, a small family-owned farm and winery known as the birthplace of Italy's modern sustainability movement.

Continuing south, we wind through the heart of Crete Senesi, a highly scenic region of clay badlands, verdant valleys and picture-postcard hill towns surveying the rolling landscape from on high. Golden fields of wheat and sunflowers unfurl before us en route to our destination —a luxurious private villa near the small town of Asciano. The area's roots are ancient, with evidence of Etruscan, Roman and Lombard settlements nearby. Enjoy a relaxing afternoon at the villa, followed an aperitivo and a special welcome dinner celebrating the start of our Tuscan adventure.

Day 2

Montepulciano

Descend into Montepulciano's "Cathedral of Vino"

- Walk the cobbled streets of this Renaissance hill town above the Val d'Orcia
- Tour the historic De'Ricci cellar beneath a palace dating to the 14th century
- Taste Vino Nobile before a private-chef dinner at the villa

Today we discover Montepulciano, perched atop a 2,000-foot limestone ridge overlooking the fertile fields, flourishing vineyards and olive groves of Val d'Orcia and Val di Chiana. One of the finest winemaking regions of the world, Montepulciano is legendary for its Vino Nobile, as well as its cheeses, honey and *pici* pasta. Architecturally, Montepulciano has been shaped by the Renaissance, its design the 15th-century masterpiece of Antonio da Sangallo, who also helped design St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. The best way to encounter the town is on foot at a pace that reveals its multilayered delights. Stroll the main thoroughfares and cobblestone side paths leading to little-known surprises, as our local guide reveals nuanced insights into the food, wine, culture and history of our environs.

After exploring the city, a private tour of the De'Ricci wine cellar awaits. Venture into the depths of the ancient Ricci Palace, dubbed the "Cathedral of Vino" and considered by many to be the most beautiful wine cellar in the world. Learn the history of the Ricci family's prized estate firsthand from one of the winery's owners, who recounts its roots dating from 1337 with the construction of the first wine cellar on the site. After our tour, enjoy a private tasting featuring the famous Vino Nobile, followed by lunch. In the late afternoon, return to our villa for a fabulous dinner of local fare complemented by a selection of Montepulciano's finest wines. As our own private chef is on site, we can meet special dietary needs for all our meals.

Day 3

Bagno Vignoni

Taste pecorino and explore Pienza before a private cooking class

- Sample local pecorino during a light lunch near Pienza
- Explore Pienza's Renaissance streets and piazzas on a guided tour
- Make several varieties of pasta with a local chef, then enjoy them together at dinner

The town of Pienza is a UNESCO World Heritage Site in the Val d'Orcia, which is itself a UNESCO Cultural Landscape. Renowned as a touchstone of Renaissance urbanism, Pienza's harmonious 15th-century design principles influenced the development of other Italian cities and beyond. Pienza is also famous for its robust pecorino cheese, made from sheep's milk and aged in tuff caves, and we'll taste it during a light lunch before a guided tour of the town.

This afternoon, return to our villa for a cooking class with local chef Elisa, learning to make multiple varieties of pasta and other regional fare. In 2025, Italian cooking was officially added to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity list, recognizing it as "a cultural and social blend of culinary traditions…associated with the use of raw materials and artisanal food preparation techniques. It is a communal activity that emphasizes intimacy with food, respect for ingredients, and shared moments around the table…and the transmission of flavors, skills and memories across generations." In our intimate group, we certainly feel those connections with our esteemed teacher, whose warmth and expertise inspire us to pursue Tuscan culinary adventures of our own. After aperitivos, we'll enjoy another fine dinner consisting of the pasta we made this evening.

Day 4

Montalcino

Visit a small family-owned winery for a private Brunello tasting

- Walk the medieval hill town's cobbled streets and fortress walls
- Explore the Bellaria vineyards with local wine expert Ilaria
- Sample acclaimed Tuscan wines over a home-cooked lunch prepared by the winery's owner

After a leisurely breakfast, visit the picturesque town of Montalcino, one of Tuscany's highest hilltop villages. Encircled by 13th-century walls and crowned with a majestic medieval fortress, Montalcino commands sweeping 360-degree views across three fertile valleys—an intricate tapestry of olive orchards, vineyards and fields. During the late Middle Ages, Montalcino thrived as a strategic stop along the Via Francigena, the main road between France and Rome. Its prominence, however, soon drew the attention of powerful neighbors. Over time, the town came under the influence of the larger city of Siena, caught up in ensuing conflicts with rival Florence in the 14th and 15th centuries. Ultimately, in 1855, both Siena and Montalcino fell to the Florentines under the Medici dynasty, remaining under their rule until the Grand Duchy of Tuscany was unified with the new Kingdom of Italy in 1861.

Today, Montalcino is celebrated for its renowned Rosso and Brunello wines crafted from Sangiovese Grosso grapes grown in the surrounding hills. After a guided walking tour, enjoy free time to explore the medieval town's cobbled streets and charming piazzas or join our guide for an espresso at a local cafe.

Next, travel to Azienda Bellaria, a small family-run winery, where we'll be welcomed by our friend and local wine expert Ilaria. As we stroll through the vineyards, Ilaria explains the estate's grape-growing traditions and winemaking process, then leads us to the tasting room. Here, sample some of Tuscany's most acclaimed varietals paired with a hearty home-cooked lunch prepared by Bellaria's owner Gianni.

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Day 5

Monte Oliveto Maggiore

Walk through the Crete Senesi to a living Benedictine abbey

- Follow a country path from Chiusure to Monte Oliveto Maggiore
- See 35 frescoes depicting the life of St. Benedict in the cloister
- Visit a library holding more than 40,000 restored volumes and parchments

Return this morning to the scenic village of Chiusure, our starting point for a short walk through the striking Crete Senesi landscape to the Abbey of Monte Oliveto Maggiore. Surrounded by a thick forest of cypress and oak, this still-active Benedictine monastery dates to 1393, when construction began, which was completed in 1526. For centuries, it was one of the largest landowners in the Siena region. The splendid monastic complex is notable not only for its persistence through the centuries, but also for its remarkable cloister, with 35 vivid frescoes depicting the life of St. Benedict, and its carved wooden choirs. An imposing tower and drawbridge built to defend the abbey stand at the entrance. Inside the courtyard, we see the botanical garden that supplied medicinal plants for the monks. The library holds more than 40,000 volumes, pamphlets and parchments that the monks have painstakingly restored. The abbey produces wine, honey, olive oil and distilled herbal spirits, priding itself on traditional and organic production methods that preserve biodiversity, in keeping with the Benedectine tradition of careful land stewardship. Afterward, return to Chiusure for a lunch consisting of local fare, followed by a leisurely afternoon at the villa. We've begun to discover the benefits of slow travel by now...a richer immersion in fewer places and incorporating time to breathe deeply and contemplate.

Day 6

Saturnia

Bathe in Saturnia's mineral springs, sacred since Etruscan times

- Arrive at Terme di Saturnia, built around ancient thermal waters
- Soak in hot springs that flow from beneath Mount Amiata
- Learn how local legend connects the springs to the Roman god Saturn

After saying goodbye to the villa staff, we depart for the ancient spa town of Saturnia. Near the village, a powerful spring pours over a waterfall and down a cascade of natural turquoise pools formed by calcareous rock. Saturnia takes its name from the Roman god Saturn, who legend holds had lost patience with humans who were constantly at war. He hurled a thunderbolt at the earth, and hot, sulphurous water gushed from the crater at just the right temperature to calm the spirits of the people, bringing serenity, harmony and a golden age of agriculture. The ancient Etruscans considered the springs sacred, with evidence existing for a settlement at Saturnia in the 4th century BC. Saturnia became a Roman colony in 183 AD, formed around the town's medicinal hot springs, which flow underground from the 5,700-foot lave dome peak of Mount Amata, percolating through layers of rock and accumulating minerals before emerging into the stream and dramatic natural pools—a process that takes 40 years! Following lunch en route to Saturnia, we arrive at the luxurious Terme di Saturnia Resort to spend the next two nights. After a brief tour of this magnificent property built in 1919, settle in and prepare to experience the famed therapeutic waters and spa amenities during our restorative stay.

Day 7

Maremma

Forage wild herbs and unwind in Saturnia's thermal pools

- Spend the morning soaking in mineral pools or choosing a spa treatment
- Walk an organic farm to gather wild herbs for fresh pesto
- Taste the farm's olive oils and wines before a farewell dinner in town

The 5-star Terme di Saturnia in the Maremma countryside, surrounded by 300 acres of unspoiled nature, is one of the world's most renowned spa destinations. And the morning is ours to enjoy the sublime rejuvenation that comes with a stay here. The mineral-rich springs of Terme have long been coveted for their healing properties, thought to nourish the skin, improve circulation and aid in the healing of various ailments. The morning at the spa is yours to spend as you wish, with massage, mud wraps, hydrothermal tubs and other personal treatments available. Or just relax and soak in the resort's private thermal pools, revered for their antiseptic and antioxidant properties. We also offer an optional sunrise walk to the Cascate del Mulino, a natural cascade of steaming waters just beyond the resort, where thermal pools flow over smooth limestone terraces in a breathtaking setting.

This afternoon, take a guided walk on a local organic farm where we learn to identify wild herbs and harvest them for culinary uses. With the bounty we have foraged, we learn to make pesto (which of course we'll sample) while tasting the farm's fine olive oils and wines. This evening, we gather in town for a farewell dinner.

Day 8

Saturnia / Florence

Depart Tuscany after a final morning in the Maremma

- Check out of Terme di Saturnia
- Transfer to Florence for homeward flights

After breakfast, we check out of the resort and drive to Florence for onward travels, concluding our gratifying immersion in Tuscan nature and culture.



Tuscany: La Dolce Vita Accommodations

Food, Wine & Rural Life in the Heart of Italy



Podere Bellaria

Our private villa is a restored 19th-century Tuscan farmhouse set on a 75-acre organic agricultural estate, featuring a pool, gardens and farm-to-table dining surrounded by olive groves and vineyards.



Terme di Saturnia

Set in southern Tuscany's Maremma countryside, this 300-acre estate centers on ancient thermal springs and a restored travertine villa, with elegant rooms, gourmet dining and holistic spa offerings.

For detailed descriptions, visit nathab.com/cultural-journeys/tuscany-cultural-tour/accommodations.

What Makes Cultural Journeys Different?

Tuscany: La Dolce Vita

On this indulgent small-group journey into nature and culture with Nat Hab Cultural Journeys, discover the Tuscany of your imagination, which few travelers get to experience. Far from the crowds that besiege much of this region, our itinerary—made possible only through our intentionally intimate group size—immerses you in peaceful settings and personalized experiences that reveal all that makes Tuscany an enduring traveler's dream.

1 **Discover Tuscany Beyond the Tourist Trail**

Most travelers rush between heavily touristed destinations like Florence, Siena and San Gimignano without pausing to truly savor Tuscany. On a Nat Hab cultural journey, you'll go deeper. Our focus is on slow travel—immersive, meaningful and rooted in local ways of life. At our pace, you're steeped in unspoiled countryside, slow food, artisan communities and tucked-away villages few visitors see.

2 **Explore from our Private Luxury Villa Base**

Reflecting the highly personalized nature of this travel experience, we stay on a restored farmhouse estate that melds Tuscan tradition with contemporary luxuries, set within a vineyard in the less-traveled Crete Senesi region.

3 **A Small Group—No More Than 12—Ensures Authentic Encounters**

With just 12 guests or fewer, we're able to get to places larger tours can't: quiet mountain roads, family-run trattorias, hidden hot springs. Our more intimate group size means deeper conversations, more personal connections, and a greater sense of closeness to the community spirit of Tuscany. It also allows us to stay in smaller, traditional settings that bus-based tour groups and river cruise ship passengers don't have access to.

4 **Personal Connections Reveal the "Real Tuscany"**

Enjoy exclusive access to elements of Tuscany most visitors don't get to encounter: generations-old family farms, local chefs, traditional winemakers, and cultural guardians who open their homes and stories to us. Whether you're sharing a glass of wine with a beloved local restaurateur or savoring a private cooking class with a renowned local chef, these are encounters you won't find in any guidebook.

5 **A Rich Immersion in Italian Cuisine, Recognized by UNESCO**

In 2025, UNESCO added Italian cooking to its list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, with this acknowledgement: "A cultural and social blend of culinary traditions, the element is associated with the use of raw materials and artisanal food preparation techniques. It is a communal activity that emphasizes intimacy with food, respect for ingredients, and shared moments around the table." And that is exactly what we'll experience with us. This isn't a trip where food is an afterthought. Here, it's the heartbeat. You'll enjoy multi-course meals prepared by renowned regional chefs, learn the stories behind each wine you sip, and savor dishes crafted from ingredients grown just steps away. We celebrate Tuscany's rich culinary heritage in every meal.

Vibrant Traditions & Personal Connections

6 **Luxury That's Rooted in a Deep Sense of Place**

Forget standardized hotels—our accommodations are a restored farmhouse villa and historic spa resort— countryside retreats that reflect the heritage, elegance and tradition of Tuscany. Our accommodations are hand-selected not just for comfort and aesthetics, but for their authenticity and connection to place.

7 **Thoughtfully Led by Regional Experts**

Your journey is led by locals—historians, artists, chefs and guides who know Tuscany not just as a destination, but as home. With Nat Hab Cultural Journeys, interpretation comes from lived experience, offering layers of context, tradition and storytelling that deepen your appreciation for the region around you.

8 **Rooted in Respect & Sustainability**

Every element of this trip is designed to support local communities and minimize impact. We partner directly with family businesses, support regenerative agriculture and avoid over-touristed spots. When you travel with us, you're contributing to the preservation of Tuscany's authentic cultural heritage and natural treasures.

9 **Designed for the Curious Traveler**

This trip isn't for those who are satisfied with a generic vacation. It's for travelers who relish cultural context, story and surprise. Your mind and heart alike will find delight as we meet winemakers reviving ancient techniques, chefs experimenting with seasonal ingredients, and villagers preserving centuries-old traditions in a landscape renowned for its bucolic beauty.

10 **Community Is at the Heart of Everything**

Our strongest partnerships are personal ones—with local families, artisans, farmers and community leaders. These relationships are the soul of our itineraries, and they're what make your experience intimate and unforgettable. "Authentic" may be an overused claim in the world of travel, but it's absolutely warranted when it comes to characterizing the kind of encounters you'll find on our Tuscany immersion.

Ready to Book? Call an Adventure Specialist at 800-543-8917



Dates & Pricing Summary:

Price
From $8995

Group Size
Limited to 12 Travelers

Tuscany: La Dolce Vita Dates, Pricing & Info

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2027 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
May 9 - May 16, 2027	**From $9295**	
May 14 - May 21, 2027	**From $9295**	
May 19 - May 26, 2027	**From $8995**	
May 24 - May 31, 2027	**From $9295**	
Jun 5 - Jun 12, 2027	**From $9295**	
Jun 19 - Jun 26, 2027	**From $9295**	
Jun 24 - Jul 1, 2027	**From $8995**	
Sep 10 - Sep 17, 2027	**From $9295**	
Sep 15 - Sep 22, 2027	**From $9295**	
Sep 20 - Sep 27, 2027	**From $9295**	
Oct 2 - Oct 9, 2027	**From $9295**	

2028 Departures

Departure – Return	Pricing	Notes
Prices and dates not confirmed for 2028		
May 9 - May 16, 2028	**From $9495**	
May 14 - May 21, 2028	**From $9495**	
May 19 - May 26, 2028	**From $9495**	
May 24 - May 31, 2028	**From $9495**	
Jun 5 - Jun 12, 2028	**From $9495**	
Jun 19 - Jun 26, 2028	**From $9495**	
Jun 24 - Jul 1, 2028	**From $9495**	
Sep 10 - Sep 17, 2028	**From $9495**	
Sep 15 - Sep 22, 2028	**From $9495**	
Sep 20 - Sep 27, 2028	**From $9495**	
Oct 2 - Oct 9, 2028	**From $9495**	

See https://www.nathab.com/cultural-journeys/tuscany-cultural-tour/dates-fees for the latest pricing details.

Included

Transfers to and from Florence, accommodations at private villa and Terme Di Saturnia Resort, all meals, wine, and liquor at the villa, private wine tastings and vineyard tours, cooking classes and culinary experiences, services of Nat Hab guides and staff, all other guided activities.

Not Included

Travel to and from the start and end point of your trip, some alcoholic drinks, some gratuities, passport and visa fees (if any), optional activities, items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry, etc.), airline baggage fees, airport and departure taxes (if any), required medical evacuation insurance, optional travel protection insurance.

Important Information About This Trip

By focusing on the Tuscan countryside, we're away from busier areas, offering an encounter with regional traditions and lifestyles you'd be unlikely to discover on your own or on a more standard tour. We stay in a private, luxury villa built on a vineyard and at a hidden resort surrounded by ancient hot springs. Because of the remote nature of Saturnia, located in a valley surrounded by winding hills, guests who get motion sickness very easily will want to prepare accordingly for our drive on this day.

Given ample time, our team can accommodate most dietary needs and restrictions.

Getting There & Getting Home

We recommend arriving in Florence the night before Day 1 so you can rest from your travels and begin the trip refreshed. For guests who come in early, recommended hotels in Florence will be included in your pre-departure materials.

If you plan to arrive on Day 1, you must reach Florence no later than 9:30 am in order to be at our meeting point near the Santa Maria Novella train station by 10:30 am. **You may depart from Florence any time after 3 pm on the final day.**

Our Natural Habitat Adventures Travel Desk can best assist with your travel reservations, as our staff is familiar with the specific requirements of this program and can help arrange the most efficient itinerary. Please call us at 800-543-8917. While we offer the best available rates to us on airfare and additional nights' accommodations, you may occasionally find special web rates or lower fares online.

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