




Hidden Treasures
TOURS

Master Gardener Tour of Tuscany

October 5 – 14, 2019

From \$3,950

Oct. 5 Arrive Florence (D)

Private transfer from Florence airport to the **4 star Hotel Home** in the historic center of Florence. Just a short distance from the city's main tourist attractions, the hotel features a rooftop terrace with stunning city views, www.hhflorence.com.

Welcome **dinner** in Florence, walking distance from the hotel.

Overnight in Florence.

Oct. 6 Florence at leisure [B]

Overnight in Florence.

Oct. 7 City tour Florence (B) - Torrigiani Gardens

Meet your **guide** at the hotel for a 3 hour guided walking tour through the historic center of Florence. You will enjoy a private guided visit of **Torrigiani Gardens**, the largest privately-owned garden in Europe. It's located in the heart of Florence (Santo Spirito district). One of the owners will lead the visit through the garden.

Overnight in Florence.

Oct. 8 The Orcia Valley & Siena (B,L,D)

Today we drive through the Chianti area to reach the countryside around Siena where we will visit the **Gardens of Villa Vico Bello**. We will enjoy a light lunch at the Villa along with an olive oil tasting.

After lunch we reach Siena for a short walking tour.

We then head to Montalcino where we will visit a flagship winery. A wine tasting will follow at Le Potazzine winery.

Our day concludes as we depart for the farmhouse where we will be staying the next 3 nights - **Fattoria del Colle**, <https://www.cinellicolombini.it/en/tourism/stays/>.

Dinner at the farmhouse (drinks not included).

Oct. 9 Castello di Celsa and Villa La Foce (B,L)

Today we will have a full day excursion to the magnificent Gardens of Siena.

Pick up from the hotel and transfer by private bus to **Villa La Foce**, home of Iris Origo, author of the famous *Merchant of Prato*. Designed by Cecil Pinsent for his friend the Marchesa Iris Origo in the 1920's, the gardens were constructed on a site which had been, for presence of clay soil and lack of water, considered too poor even for farm crops. Pinsent and Origo managed to create not only one of the jewels of Italian garden design, but a working farm which in its day supported an entire community. The architect's English style blended with a sensitivity to the surrounding landscape results in a truly unique work of landscape design.

Then we will reach **Castello di Celsa**, where we will have a **light lunch** in the garden and the visit The Villa. Part of the gardens were designed by the 16th century Sienese architect Baldassare Peruzzi. The design of the main garden overlooking the spectacular Senese countryside was originally laid out in 1500. The additions made to the garden during the Baroque period are the semicircular pool in the main garden and a large fishing pond on the edge of the holm oak wood. In more recent times, the parterres in the main garden and the cypress hedging leading to the fishing pool were added. The most recent additions to this garden are the large conifers which reflect the English Landscape style of the 1800's.

Transfer back to Farmhouse.

Oct 10 Pienza and Palazzo Piccolomini - Montepulciano (B,L,D)

Today we drive to Pienza where we will meet our guide for a visit of the historic center then we will visit one of the Pienza gems: Palazzo Piccolomini and the gardens. **Palazzo Piccolomini** is one of the main architectural feats in Pienza built according to the humanist project of the "ideal city" imagined by Enea Silvio Piccolomini, also known as Pope Pius II. Built in 1459 as a summer home for the Pope, it is considered the first example of Renaissance architecture.

The visit to this Palace will step you back in time, the Palace was built as a home and continued to be used as one throughout the centuries up until very recently. The Piccolomini family lived here until 1962 and therefore it contains the original furnishings. You get to see the dining room, the music room, the room used as an office and library, and several bedrooms, including Enea's. The loggia from the second floor offers an incredible view over the entire Val d'Orcia.

Palazzo Piccolomini, like almost all Renaissance villas, aims to integrate the Villa into the landscape via the medium of a formal garden.

From the portico on the rear of the palazzo unfolds an extraordinary view of the Val d'Orcia and Monte Amiata. Placed within the foreground of this panorama, on the ground floor level of the palazzo, is a square garden bound by walls and with a well in the center. These are the **Piccolomini Gardens**, the first "hanging garden" of the Renaissance, and an Italian garden almost without equal – only the garden of Villa Gamberaia comes near to it in terms of aesthetic value and pleasure.

Then we will stop near Pienza for the visit of an organic cheese maker. We will visit the cheese dairy and have **light lunch** based on typical products such as Pecorino cheese and cold cuts (**Podere Il Casale**).

Transfer to Montepulciano, time at leisure to wander and shop, then **dinner** at a restaurant in Montepulciano.

Transfer back to Farmhouse.

Oct. 11 Florence Villa di Maiano, Villa Gamberaia (B,L)

This morning we will meet our guide as we visit the **Villa di Maiano Gardens and the ground floor of the Villa** (Fiesole).

Built in 1400 by the Pazzi family, it then became the property of the Tolomei family during the 18th century, and was then purchased by Sir Temple Leader, a rich Englishman with a passion for Tuscany during the 19th century. Temple Leader became owner of all the artwork belonging to the previous

owners and decided to renovate the house, making significant changes, but leaving its artistic heritage and artwork intact. The Villa has 5 halls on the ground floor splendidly furnished with original 17C and 18C furniture and a panoramic garden overlooking all of Florence. James Ivory, the director, chose the villa as the location for the "Italian" interior and country scenes for the famous film, "A Room with a View".

The Maiano estate includes **Fattoria di Maiano**, which originates back to the 15th century. It covers an area of nearly 300 hectares mainly used for growing olives (20.000 olive trees on 110 hectares) and it's a completely organic agricultural estate. Frantoio and Moraiolo olives are picked entirely by hand in the months of November and December then pressed in the estate mill. The premium product is Laudemio, an excellent extra virgin oil with a high nutritional value. We will have an **olive oil tasting and lunch** at the Fattoria.

After lunch, your visit at **Villa Gamberaia in Settignano** will start. Edith Wharton wrote of Gamberaia: 'Probably the most perfect example of the art of producing a great effect on a small scale...' The history of this garden dates back to the 16th century yet most of the garden as it is now laid out was designed by the Capponi family who bought the property in the 18th century. Many modifications, including the famous water parterre were commissioned in the 1920's by the then-owner Hungarian princess Ghyka whose head gardener, Martino, was the father of one of Italy's leading landscape designers, Pietro Porcinai.

You will leave Villa Gamberaia and head to the hotel on the hills around Florence, **Villa Olmi Resort**, <http://www.villaolmifirenze.com/>.

Dinner on your own. A great Tuscan Trattoria is just 200 meters from the hotel.

Oct 12 Florence Gardens (B,D)

Today we visit **Villa Medici di Petraia**.

The gardens of Villa Petraia have changed quite significantly since they were commissioned by Ferdinando de' Medici in 1568. The original terraces have remained but many of the beds have been redesigned through the ages creating a more gentle and colorful style. Behind the villa we find the park which is a perfect example of Middle-European landscape design.

Time at leisure for lunch in a local restaurant.

In the afternoon we will visit Boboli Gardens in the historic center of Florence.

Giardino di Boboli & Bardini gardens

If one had time to see only one garden in Florence, this should be it. The Boboli gardens are a living history course in Italian garden design from the Renaissance to the 19th century. This garden contains every element essential to the Italian garden from the amphitheatre to the island garden, citrus trees, and long winding avenues through the woods. The gardens have recently been restored with several thousands of shrubs being replanted, bringing it back to the magnificent park that it once was.

We then visit **Bardini garden** which has a romantic feel and a varied layout with some of the best views of Florence. This garden has four hectares (c. 10 acres) of woods, garden and fruit orchards flanked by

the medieval walls of the city. Situated between Costa San Giorgio and Borgo San Niccolò, it preserves in the center of the city, a pristine place to discover. Beginning in medieval times, the Bardini Garden belonged to wealthy families who followed one after another. Created with an agricultural purpose, it was transformed over the course of the centuries into a splendid Italianate garden. In the first years of the 1900's it was used by the owner for whom it is named, the collector Stefano Bardini, known as the "prince of the antiquarians." The **Bardini Garden** integrates the following three gardens, diverse as to epoch and style:

- The Italianate Garden with the magnificent baroque staircase
- The English Wood which, with its exotic elements, represents a rare example of an Anglo-Chinese garden
- The Agricultural Park in which a new fruit grove and the splendid pergola of wisteria have found their place

Transfer back to Villa Olmi.

Farewell dinner at the gourmet restaurant of the hotel (drinks not included).

Oct. 13 Florence (B)

Pick up from Villa Olmi and private transfer to Florence city center accommodation at the **4 star hotel Atheneum**, www.hotelatheneum.com.

Day at leisure.

Oct. 14 depart (B)

Pick up from your hotel and private transfers to Florence airport.

PRICES

\$3,950 per person based on double occupancy
+ \$750 single supplement

Prices include

- Accommodations as specified
- Private transfers and excursions by luxury minibus
- Two US-based tour guides
- Private expert Italian botanical guide for the visits as follows:
 - Oct 7 (full day Florence)
 - Oct 8 (half day visit of Villa and gardens at Villa Vicobello and Siena)
 - Oct 9 (full day visit of Villa La Foce and Castello di Celsa)
 - Oct 10 full day visit of Pienza and Palazzo Piccolomini
 - Oct 11 (full day Villa di Maiano and Villa Gamberaia)
 - Oct 12 (full day Villa Medici Petraia and Bardini & Boboli gardens)
- All breakfasts
- 4 dinners - Oct 5, 8, 10 and 12 (Drinks not included)
- 4 lunches (Drinks included) - Oct 8 (Vicobello), Oct 9 (Castello di Celsa), Oct 10 (Podere il Casale) and Oct 11 (Fattoria di Maiano)
- Olive oil tasting (Oct 8), wine tasting Montalcino (Oct 8), cheese tasting (Oct 10), olive oil tasting Fattoria di Maiano (Oct. 11)
- Entrance fees for the gardens
 - Torrigiani Gardens
 - Villa Vico Bello
 - Villa Celsa
 - Villa La Foce
 - Palazzo Piccolomini in Pienza
 - Villa Maiano
 - Villa Gamberaia
 - Boboli Gardens
 - Bardini Gardens

Not included:

- International flights
- Travel insurance
- Meals other than those specified
- Personal purchases
- Tips for local guide
- Hotel taxes (varies by city, approximately 3-5 Euros per person per night)
- Any other charges or expenses other than those specified

**Hidden Treasures Tours Registration Form
Tuscany 2019**

Please record name EXACTLY AS IT APPEARS ON YOUR PASSPORT and attach a photocopy to this registration form.

TRAVELER 1

Name _____

Passport # _____ Passport Exp. Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (home and/or cell) _____ Email _____

Emergency Contact Name and Phone _____

TRAVELER 2

Name _____

Passport # _____ Passport Exp. Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (home and/or cell) _____ Email _____

Emergency Contact Name and Phone _____

ROOM ARRANGEMENTS

- Single Room (*Single supplement fee will apply*)
- Double Room (Roommate: _____)
Single supplement fee will apply if you do not list a roommate and we are unable to match you.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS***

Please mark your preferred travel arrangements:

___ I will make my own airline reservation/arrangements

___ I would like Hidden Treasures Tours to arrange airline reservations from the following airport and bill me for the airfare. Departure Airport: _____

OPTIONAL BOOKINGS:

Yes, please book additional nights at the arrival hotel prior to the start of the tour
___ # of additional nights

Yes, please book additional nights at the departure hotel at the conclusion of the tour
___ # of additional nights

Please contact me to make other custom arrangements

PAYMENT INFORMATION

You will be invoiced a deposit rate of \$1,000 per person when tour is confirmed viable (minimum number of registrants is met).

Final payment is due 90 days prior to trip departure. A full refund will be given up to 90 days prior to the departure date, minus a \$250 administrative fee. There are no refunds within 90 days of trip departure as all invoices have been paid in full at this time on a non-refundable group rate basis.

******Hidden Treasures Tours reserves the right to make necessary changes to the itinerary due to unforeseen circumstances. A minimum number of spots are required for the tour to be viable. Please do not book flights until tour is confirmed. This trip is custom designed and very inclusive with no hidden costs. Mail this form and direct inquiries to:***

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