

## **Puglia and Tuscany Culinary Wine Tour**

Itinerary

Sept. 22/23 - Oct. 2, 2020

11 days/ 10 nights

### **OPTIONAL - Tuesday, Sept. 22:**

Arrive Rome on International flights and transfer on your own to the hotel. **Optional:** dinner and walking tour.

**Overnight:** Rome

### **Wednesday, Sept. 23:**

***For those that do the optional arrival into Rome on the 22<sup>nd</sup> -Transfer to Rome airport as a group for our 9:20 am flight and fly to Brindisi.***

**For those who want to start on the 23<sup>rd</sup> – you would meet at the Brindisi Airport at the appropriate time!**

Prior to our arrival in Lecce, visit the UNESCO World Heritage site, Alberobello, known for its famous Trulli cone-shaped houses. Continue on to Lecce, the Florence of the South.

**Included:** Breakfast (for those on the Rome option), welcome dinner at hotel terrace

## **Accommodations:**

Palazzo di Noha, Lecce

<https://palazzodenoha.it/>

### **Thursday, Sept. 24:**

After a leisurely breakfast, step out of your hotel to experience Lecce, known as the Florence of Southern Italy and enjoy our walking tour of this beautiful Baroque city including the Roman Amphitheater, the Basilica of Santa Croce, the Duomo with the imposing Cathedral. As we walk, see the beautiful aristocratic palaces (palazzi,) fountains, obelisks, the Arcs de Triumph. Talk with local artisans and visit some of the world famous papier mache producers and restorers.

**Afternoon:** Free time to relax, meander through the streets of Lecce

**Evening:** Aperitivo & dinner at private Palazzo

**Included:** Breakfast, dinner

**Overnight:** Lecce

### **Friday, Sept. 25:**

Following a leisurely breakfast, enjoy a tour to the seaside town of Otranto. Meet our guide in Lecce as we journey to Otranto. Enjoy a walking tour of this pretty, seaside town

with its narrow and winding streets including a visit to the Aragonese Castle, the Norman Cathedral with its unique 12 century mosaic (Tree of Life,) one of the most important examples of Medieval art that still exists today. Continue on with a visit to the Byzantine Church of St. Peter and admire the panoramic views on the sea at the Roman-era stone pier.

Following our tour, visit a small, typical winery of the Salento region and enjoy lunch there.

Afterward, transfer to the Castle for our overnight stay.

**Evening:** Welcome dinner and cocktail reception at the Castle

**Included:** Breakfast, lunch, dinner

### **Accommodations:**

Castello di Ugento, Ugento

<https://castellodiugento.com/>

### **Saturday, Sept. 26:**

Following a leisurely breakfast, meet our resident art historian and art restorer for a tour of the Castle and it's 17<sup>th</sup> century frescoes.

Afterward, meet Chef Tomasso or Chef Odette for our first cooking class. Prior to our cooking class, enjoy a tour

through the garden with one of the resident chefs as they explain the herbs and local vegetables which we will use to help prepare our lunch. Perhaps you will run into the CIA, Culinary Institute of America, up and coming chefs on their study abroad program at the Castle too!

### **Early afternoon:**

Free time to relax at the Castle, walk in town **or** *Optional Excursion: guided bike ride to the beach for sunset (guest expense.)*

**Evening:** Dinner at the Castle

**Included:** Breakfast, lunch with cooking class, dinner

**Overnight:** Ugento

### **Sunday, Sept. 27:**

Following breakfast, meet our guide at the Castle and take a short ride to Gallipoli for a walking tour of this charming fortified, peninsula island. Discover the Greek fountain, the fortified Castle, the Cathedral, an underground olive press too. Experience the beautiful panoramic views and maybe take a swim or stop for a cappuccino. Continue with a walk through the fish market, one of the most famous in the entire region.

Drive to the Duca Carlo Guarini winery in Scorrano to visit their grand Palazzo, winery and L'Ocra ceramic's studio. Following our tour, enjoy lunch under the flower- covered pergola in the garden pairing our wines with local

specialties. Grapes indigenous to this region include Primitivo, Negroamaro and Malvasia to name a few.

**Late afternoon:** Return to the Castle and relax prior to dinner

**Evening:** Dinner at the Castle or their Masseria

**Included:** Breakfast, lunch & dinner

**Overnight:** Ugento

**Monday, Sept. 28:**

After breakfast, transfer to Brindisi airport for our flight to Rome departing at 11:15 am. Arrive in Rome at 12:25 pm and transfer to the village of Montepulciano and enjoy a private visit to a winery for wine tasting and lunch. Surrounded by the beautiful and picturesque Val D'Orcia, a UNESCO World Heritage site, the Vino Nobile Montepulciano DOCG is located in this southern part of Tuscany. Primarily made from the Sangiovese grape, it is known as more of a rustic wine and not as coveted as the Montalcino Brunello's. Following a delicious lunch and wine pairings, continue on

Check in to our hotel on the hillside of Cortona and relax prior to our welcome dinner.

**Evening:** Welcome dinner

**Included:** Breakfast, lunch, dinner

## **Accommodations:**

Il Falconiere Cortona

<https://www.ilfalconiere.it/en/>

### **Tuesday, Sept. 29:**

Following a leisurely breakfast, we will walk or take a cab to our cooking class with Donatella & Lucia. Prior to starting our cooking class, enjoy visiting their garden to see the vegetables and herbs we will be using to help prepare our lunch. Get your hands ready for making Pici pasta, the pasta from this region.

Following lunch, return by foot or cab to our hotel. Enjoy a restful late afternoon by the pool or in the garden.

**Evening:** At your leisure

**Included:** Breakfast, cooking class with lunch

**Overnight:** Cortona

### **Wednesday, Sept.30:**

After breakfast, meet our guide at the hotel for our full day tour to Pienza and Montalcino. Our first stop will be Pienza, a UNESCO World Heritage site and a great example of Renaissance architecture with grand Piazzas (squares) and Palazzi (palaces.) Explore the city with our guide and enjoy picturesque views from this beautiful city over the Val D'Orcia valley.

Following our visit to Pienza, we will travel (to the Montalcino DOCG known for its Brunello di Montalcino and have lunch and wine tastings at a selected winery. Try some of the best Brunello wines which are made from 100% Sangiovese grapes at 1500 ft. above sea level which is unique to wine making.

After lunch, we will continue on to Montalcino, a fairytale like small village in Tuscany, rich in artistic treasures. The historical center is dominated by the imposing Rocca or fortress built in 1361 when Montalcino was under Siena rule. Admire the views from its ramparts all across the Val D'Orcia valley. The fortress has remained practically intact since the Middle Ages and is often used for special festivals and concerts.

Another landmark of Montalcino is the tall and slender clock tower that is part of the Palazzo dei Priori, the city's town hall,; below lies the main square known as Piazza del Popolo with its Gothic loggia( archway.)  
Well stop to enjoy some wine at a local enoteca in Montalcino before our return to Cortona.

**Evening:** At your leisure

**Included:** Breakfast, lunch

**Overnight:** Cortona

**Thursday, Oct. 1:**

Enjoy a relaxing day with a visit to the walled city of Cortona which is very close to our hotel. Our walking tour will take us through one of the 7 gates entering these historic Etruscan fortified walls. Cortona is a great example of a Medieval city. Take in the sites as we meander through the narrow, hilly streets to see the imposing Piazza della Repubblica, the 13<sup>th</sup> century town hall; the Duomo with its Renaissance Cathedral and gothic façade and more.

After our tour, enjoy shopping or a light lunch in the Piazza della Repubblica or one of many with a view over the valley. After lunch, have a private visit to a jewelry showroom and shoe factory in the heart of Cortona. See the unique Tuscan workmanship in this beautiful jewelry and shoes and meet the owners as they explain the history of their business.

**Early evening:** Wine tasting in Piazza della Repubblica with the locals

**Evening:** Farewell dinner at a Cortona restaurant

**Included:** Breakfast, dinner

**Overnight:** Cortona

**Friday, Oct. 2:**

Following breakfast, transfer to Florence or Rome for your international flight.

**Price:** \$**5195** per person, double occupancy

4 rooms are included in this price at Castello di Ugento

<https://castellodiugento.com/castle-hotel-in-italy/>

Upgrades at Castello di Ugento include:

\$175 per person for Deluxe suite

\$320 per person for larger Deluxe suite

\$776 per person for the Grand suite

**Rome option** – Arriving September 22<sup>nd</sup> – Hotel, Dinner, breakfast and air travel to Brindisi the morning of Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup> - \$445 Per person

### **Includes:**

\*9 nights luxury accommodations in Lecce, Ugento & Cortona

\*Flight from Brindisi to Rome

\*Daily breakfast

\*7 dinners

\*5 lunches

\*Transportation, Private English speaking guides

\*2 cooking classes; one in Ugento, other in Cortona

\*Visits to wineries in Puglia, Montalcino, Montepulciano regions

\*Walking tours of Alberobello, Lecce, Gallipoli, Otranto, Cortona

\*Visits to private palaces (Palazzi)

\*Airport transfers (except incoming Rome to hotel, Cortona to Rome or Florence)

\*Free time for shopping, exploring

- \*Wine education with accompanying sommelier
- \*Services of tour hostess