



Craig
travel

HIKING THROUGH **TUSCANY**

SEP 28 - OCT 11, 2024 | 14 DAYS | 31 MEALS
JOURNEY LEADERS: DETLEF AND BARB DRANSCH

Bask in the beauty of the rolling hills of Tuscany, Italy

Experience the varied landscape of the beautiful central Italian region of Tuscany. Hike through the scenic terrain of the Apennines in the North, over the rolling hills in the center, to the vast plains and sandy shores of the southern Mediterranean islands. Hike on trails, some of which are more than 2000 years old, founded by the Etruscans and Romans. These trails will lead us to villages and cities whose appearance has changed very little since the Middle Ages. Delight in the renowned culinary offerings of Tuscany, savouring the excellence of its main agricultural products - the finest wines and olive oil.

With your journey leaders and our local guides, we will hike this beautiful region and learn about the country, its people, history, and native flora and fauna. This is truly the most magical way to experience the Garden of Italy!



The famous Leaning Tower of Pisa

Inclusive Features

- Return economy group airfare between Canada and Italy
- 12 nights in comfortable hotels as indicated or similar
- Baggage handling for one piece of luggage per guest at hotels
- Sightseeing and excursions as cited in the program
- Welcome reception and dinner
- Glass of wine and mineral water provided with lunches and dinners
- 31 meals included as noted in the itinerary (B - 12 breakfasts, L - 7 lunches, D - 12 dinners)
- Services of your Canadian journey leaders and an experienced tour director and hiking guide in Italy
- All gratuities, surcharges, taxes and fees for included services
- Airport transfers in Canada or equivalent value with purchase of group airfare



Book With Confidence

For peace of mind, your deposit for this journey is fully refundable until: **June 25, 2024**

Tour Highlights

- 8 guided hikes through the beautiful Tuscany countryside
- 6 nights in Montecatini Terme, 6 in Castiglione Della Pescaia
- Day trip and tour of Elba Island
- Special lunch at Chianti winery Verrazzano, including tour and wine tasting
- Discover the Piazza dei Miracoli, or "Miracle Square" and see the Leaning Tower of Pisa

Journey Leaders

Detlef and Barb Dransch are thrilled to be the journey leaders for this upcoming hiking trip in beautiful Tuscany. They enjoy visiting new places, experiencing local culture, and meeting people. Together their travels have included South America, Costa Rica, Iceland, Australia, and various destinations throughout Europe. Detlef has also organized private motorcycle tours in the Alps, Norway and North America. Detlef is retired from a high-tech career in Ottawa and Barb from a career in finance in the non-profit sector. Both enjoy hiking and are active volunteers in their church community. Detlef enjoys photography, playing squash and alpine skiing. Barb has an open and curious mind and has recently delved into the issues of climate change and affordable housing. They look forward to their next adventure, sharing their experiences with fellow travellers, and creating new memories.



SEP 28, Saturday**DEPART CANADA**

Group members gather in Toronto for the transatlantic overnight flight to Rome, Italy.

SEP 29, Sunday ARRIVE ROME / MONTECATINI TERME

Upon arrival in Rome, our national guide will greet us and accompany us throughout our journey until we return home. We will venture north along the picturesque Appennin Mountain range to the popular hill town and spa centre of Montecatini Terme. This evening, enjoy our welcome reception and dinner at our hotel which is centrally located and has exceptional spa facilities.

Hotel Columbia Wellness & Spa (6 nights)

D

SEP 30, Monday**FLORENCE**

Our coach will take us to the Florence area today, where we will hike on top of the hills from Fiesole along the Arno Valley down into Florence. Enjoy lunch on your own in the old town with choices from traditional Florentine menus. Spend the afternoon on your own in the cradle of the Renaissance, a fountainhead of genius, and still one of the art world's most prestigious cities. Return to Montecatini for dinner and overnight stay. (2 hours hiking)

BD

OCT 1, Tuesday ELSA RIVER VALLEY / SAN GIMIGNANO

Embark on a scenic hike from Colle di Val d'Elsa, passing through vineyards and wooded areas until we reach a charming garden restaurant. Here, we'll enjoy a rustic meal with crostini and various types of pasta, wine, and water. For those interested, there will be various draft beers on tap (optional). Travelling by bus, we continue down a busy road to reach our destination of San Gimignano. In medieval times, each merchant family built its own fortress tower and residential area. Many still remain today, hence the nickname "Town of the Fine Towers." Free time in San Gimignano provides you with the chance to visit the most famous ice cream parlour in all of Tuscany. Later we return to Montecatini. (3 hrs hiking)

BLD

OCT 2, Wednesday**CHIANTI CLASSICO**

We drive to the world-famous Chianti Classico wine region. Our hike takes us from the picturesque wine village of Greve in Chianti through the wonderful landscapes of central Tuscany, through forests, and past vineyards to another world-class winery called Verrazzano. After a tour of the centuries-old wine cellars, we will have a traditional wine-grower's lunch, featuring homemade sausages and other ham specialties. Of course, we will also have our choice of excellent wines. Return to Montecatini for dinner. (3 hours hiking)

BLD

OCT 3, Thursday**VINCI**

Walk along the low Montalbano mountain range through olive groves and vineyards. We start in Vinci, the hometown of the world-renowned genius, Leonardo da Vinci. Our path takes us to his picturesque birthplace where we'll stop at a vineyard and olive oil mill. During a traditional oil farmer's lunch, a specially appointed sommelier will familiarize us with all of the different types of wines we'll be served. In the afternoon, we'll take a short walk from the small village of San Baronto to an Italian Villa for some wine and appetizers, before heading back to Montecatini. (1.5 hours hiking)

BLD



Revel in the magnificence of Florence, the cradle of the Renaissance



Enjoy a glass of wine in picturesque Chianti Classico



Take a ferry to explore Tuscany's most important island, Elba Island



Discover the quaint old town of Pitigliano, which dates back to the Middle Ages

OCT 4, Friday **MONTECARLO / LUCCA**

Today we hike around the hills of the wine village of Montecarlo. Lunch will be in an old farmhouse with excellent cuisine and wines. After, we'll visit the well-known art city of Lucca with free time for shopping in the many elegant boutiques or perhaps enjoy a cappuccino in a cozy café before we return to Montecatini. (2.5 hours hiking) BLD

OCT 5, Saturday **PISA / CASTIGLIONE DELLA PESCAIA**

After bidding farewell to Montecatini Terme, we drive west in the direction of Pisa. Visit the Piazza dei Miracoli, or "Miracle Square," where the Leaning Tower is a must-see in Tuscany. After a brief stop, we'll continue along the coast of the Tyrrhenian Sea, driving south to Castiglione della Pescaia, likely the most beautiful seaside village in Tuscany. Tonight we enjoy a cocktail and a dinner of local dishes. **Hotel L'Aprodo** (6 nights) BLD

OCT 6, Sunday **MAREMMA NATURAL PARK**

During today's hike we will explore the Natural Park of Maremma, a completely untouched area with rich, unspoiled flora and fauna. Afterwards, we transfer to a small medieval town for lunch at a traditional Maremma restaurant featuring local cuisines like homemade pasta, wild boar stew, and more. We return to Castiglione with free time to explore the beautiful city. (3 hours hiking) BLD

OCT 7, Monday **SOVANA / PITIGLIANO**

Hike between the towns of Sovana and Pitigliano, both of which were important in Etruscan times and went on to become powerful republics in the Middle Ages. Enjoy a packed lunch and free time in Pitigliano to explore before returning to Castiglione. (2.5 hours hiking) BLD

OCT 8, Tuesday **ELBA ISLAND**

We travel by bus to the port of Piombino where we board a ferry to the Island of Elba, which is famous for being the site of Napoleon's first exile. During our journey, we will take a brief bus tour of the island and make several stops along the way. BD

OCT 9, Wednesday **CASTIGLIONE DELLA PESCAIA**

Today has been left completely free to enjoy our hotel's amenities, unwind at the beach, or head out and explore this beautiful seaside village. BD

OCT 10, Thursday **PORTO ERCOLE / PORTO SAN STEFANO**

For our last hiking day, we have chosen a spectacular area and an ambitious route. We'll walk along the Lagoon of Orbetello down to Monte Argentario. Originally part of the Tuscan archipelago, Monte Argentario's rocky massif is now connected to the mainland by two dunes. Our main destination is the historic port village of Porto Ercole with its three fortifications. After a short visit, our bus will take us to a restaurant with select local fish specialties. At the end of our journey, we drive to the elegant, main town of Porto San Stefano for free time. Back in Castiglione, we gather for our farewell dinner. (3.5 hours hiking) BLD

OCT 11, Friday **RETURN TO CANADA**

All too soon we say goodbye to Italy as we transfer to Rome's Fiumicino Airport for our return flights to Canada. B

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CT Rating 4.5/5 - Extremely Challenging: This journey involves a number of difficult hikes on hilly, uneven surfaces for up to 4 - 5 hours per day. Hiking times listed are estimated and refer to the total time spent hiking throughout a full day. Travellers must be in excellent physical condition and be able to maintain the group pace. Alternate activities may be available for those unable to complete some of the hikes. Depending on weather and location conditions, daily activities may have to be altered or adjusted. Accommodations will be in comfortable traditional European hotels with atmosphere and character. Trail conditions may vary and are subject to change.

Tour Cost in Canadian Dollars Per Person

Land-Only* (Join first hotel / Leave last hotel)	\$5,245
Toronto	\$6,545
Ottawa / Montreal	\$6,695
Halifax.....	\$6,795
St. John's / Fredericton / Winnipeg	\$6,895
Saskatoon / Regina	\$6,945
Calgary / Edmonton / Vancouver	\$6,895
Victoria.....	\$6,945
Single Supplement	\$1,175

*Land-only price is based on joining at the hotel in Montecatini Terme and leaving at the hotel in Castiglione della Pescaia. Airfares from other gateways are available on request. Airfares and air carriers are subject to change and will be confirmed prior to final payment. Refer to inclusive features for details.

Tour price is based on sharing a twin-bedded room at hotels. Prices are based on a minimum of 15 members and on rates, taxes and fees effective November 2023. Prices are subject to change due to factors beyond our control.

Insurance is NOT INCLUDED but is highly recommended. Premiums are calculated based on the individual's age, destination (country), trip length, and trip booking window – please contact our staff to receive a quote. Your coverage starts on the effective date of your confirmation of coverage. Please discuss your insurance coverage prior to booking. Check our website for the most current information. Refer to the enrollment form for terms and conditions.

Final payment is due on June 26, 2024
Deposit is \$700 per person

To reserve your places on this tour, complete the enclosed enrolment form, indicating the tour and your home city, and forward it with your deposit to:



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