



**10-DAY ITALIAN COUNTRYSIDE TOUR  
VAL D'ORCIA TO LUCCA  
11 – 21 OCTOBER 2010**

Indulge in Italian culture and gastronomy, music and sculpture, whilst exploring the villages, hill towns and ancient cities of Tuscany. From Val d'Orcia in the south, to Lucca and the Garfagnana in the north, enjoy an evening concert of Puccini and sail the Cinque Terre with local *Heather Jarman*, of Sapori e Saperi Gastronomic Adventures and *Robyn Vulimovich* of Slow Tours to Italy and Croatia.

Together we'll discover culinary treasures of autumn — unpasteurised cheeses, incomparable wines of Montepulciano, olive oil of Lucca and chestnuts of the Garfagnana, and much more.



**ITINERARY**

**Monday, October 11**

Transfer from Rome Fiumicino airport to agriturismo **La Palazzina**, Radicofani, our accommodation in the beautiful Val d'Orcia for the next four nights. Steeped in history, this villa atop a hill rests in an oak and cypress parkland. The site dates back to the Etruscan era and was later a monastery before being rebuilt as a hunting villa for a notable Siena family. Fully modernized and refurbished, La Palazzina has been receiving international guests for more than 20 years. Our day concludes with a welcome dinner at La Palazzina prepared especially for us by our hosts *Silvano* and *Eliana*.

Visit : [www.fattorialapalazzina.net](http://www.fattorialapalazzina.net)

**Tuesday, October 12**

This morning we visit a *family dairy* where the owners Sandra and Ulisse show us how to make pecorino cheese and ricotta. We meet their family and flocks and then settle down to taste their delicious produce.

*Montepulciano* is our next stop, where you are free to have lunch and explore. You can visit some of the historical wine cellars or sit and admire the Renaissance magnificence of the *Piazza Grande*. Next to the Piazza is a coppersmith, one of the last in Tuscany.

Our next indulgence will be a tasting of the famed *Nobile di Montepulciano* wine at a nearby vineyard. Then we head home for dinner along '*la Foce*', a panoramic route on which many car commercials have been shot!



**La Palazzina**

**Wednesday, October 13**

Today our destination is *Mount Amiata* - a majestic, extinct volcano that still generates the hot springs at Bagno Vignoni and Bagni San Filippo. The mountain is renowned for its wild mushrooms, truffles, chestnuts, olive oil, game and wild berries. It is also home to the Cinta Senese pig, a breed dating back to at least the 14th century, which until 20 years ago had almost disappeared. After a visit to the farm, we have lunch in the nature reserve where you can taste the Cinta and find out for yourselves how lucky it is that it was saved from extinction. After lunch we return to La Palazzina for a *cooking lesson* with Eliana. We will then relax and enjoy the dishes we've cooked with local wines and great company!

**Thursday 14 October**

The delightful Gianni and his dog take us *truffle hunting* on his estate, after which we taste his extra-virgin olive oil and the truffles you've found (we hope). The afternoon is free to visit the ancient hill town of *San Casciano dei Bagni*, partake in treatments at the award-winning spa *Fonteverde*, or simply relax at La Palazzina.

Visit: [www.fonteverdespa.com](http://www.fonteverdespa.com)





### Friday 15 October

A lazy start and an unhurried journey through Tuscany, stopping for a special lunch, before arriving at the beautiful sculptors' town of *Pietrasanta* in northern Tuscany, our base for the remainder of the tour. Here we will stay at the Albergo Pietrasanta — a 4-star luxurious boutique hotel situated in a seventeenth-century palace just steps from the cathedral and the medieval square, in the historic centre. A lovely terrace in a garden with century-old palm trees connects the two buildings of the palace. In addition to its beautifully appointed rooms, the hotel is home to an exceptional collection of contemporary art.

Visit: [albergopietrasanta.qntdev.com](http://albergopietrasanta.qntdev.com) (select the English link)

### Saturday 16 October

A free day to explore the exquisite walled town of Lucca. Among its treasures are its landscaped Renaissance walls, the amphitheatre still bearing traces of its Roman and mediaeval origins, many churches, paintings and sculptures. This is the weekend of the monthly antiques fair when the streets and piazzas are bustling with vendors of everything from furniture and paintings to silver, kitchen implements, embroidery and books.

In the evening a Puccini concert followed by dinner in the intimate dining room of All'Olivo restaurant.

### Sunday 17 October

We spend today in the wild, rugged mountains of the Garfagnana because it's the beginning of the chestnut season. We'll visit a chestnut-drying hut, a water mill and end up at a chestnut festival in a romantic hill-top village. On the way we visit an eerily beautiful abandoned marble quarry and lunch at Il Vecchio Mulino in Castelnuovo, where the tasting menu allows you to feast on an extraordinary array of the best produce the Garfagnana has to offer.



### Monday 18 October

Olive oil is fast food. In ideal circumstances the olive gets from the tree to the oil drum in a single day. In the morning we help pick olives at Azienda Antico Uliveto, an organic estate which grows a rare variety of olives called *quercetano*. After lunch at the estate's restaurant in the middle of the olive grove, we take our olives to the modern press where we watch as our extra-virgin oil pours out. We also visit a traditional press and find out which is best.

### Tuesday 19 October

The Cinque Terre — the Five Lands — is one of the most beautiful stretches of Italian coastline. The best view of the vertiginous cultivated terraces and rocky cliffs is from the sea. We travel by boat which stops at each of the picturesque villages, giving you time to explore. Or you can walk between villages on the well-marked trails and join the boat when you're tired.

We return to a home-cooked dinner with an Italian family.

### Wednesday 20 October

We join Chef Roberto Sabadini in his kitchen at the Antico Uliveto for a cooking lesson preparing typical Tuscan dishes based on our new olive oil. We have a tutored tasting of several distinctly different oils from the province of Lucca. You learn how to compare oils, how to recognise good ones in shops at home and how to store them. For lunch we have the satisfaction of eating the results of our labours.

Five minutes' walk from our hotel is Studio Sem, a sculpture studio which is one of the few left that carries on the tradition of marble artisans. Many works by celebrated sculptors such as Henry Moore and Joan Miró have been realised here. We have a private tour to meet sculptors and view their works.

Farewell dinner at La Dogana, Capezzano Pianore.

### Thursday 21 October

Departure. Transport provided to Viareggio station or Pisa airport. If you are going to the *Salone del Gusto*, see next page.



*Heather buys a basket from the maker at the chestnut festival*

## USEFUL INFORMATION

### Dress

Informal. Jeans or smart trousers are acceptable everywhere.

### Weather in October

Val d'Orcia: 9°-15°C, precipitation 69 mm

Lucca: 11°-21°C, precipitation 119 mm

## SLOW FOOD SALONE DEL GUSTO

In Turin : 21-25 October

Transport from Lucca to Turin can be arranged if enough people request it.

Recommended 4-star hotel :

**Hotel Victoria:** [www.hotelvictoria-torino.com](http://www.hotelvictoria-torino.com)

**PRICE PER PERSON:** €3300 (Euros)

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT:** €475 (Euros)

Itinerary is subject to change if necessary due to weather or agricultural conditions or other events outside our control.

### INCLUDES

- Luxury accommodation for 10 nights
- Local ground transportation for 11 days
- Daily continental breakfast, 6 lunches, 6 dinners
- Entrance to wine tasting, cheese tasting, truffle hunt, concert, sculpture studio, cooking lessons, guided visits with producers

### DOES NOT INCLUDE

- Airfares
- Travel and cancellation insurance
- Spa treatments
- Wine and drinks, other than those served with meals, additional meals
- Personal expenses such as telephone, mini-bar, *etc.*



## BOOKINGS

**Heather Jarman**

**Sapori e Saperi Adventures**

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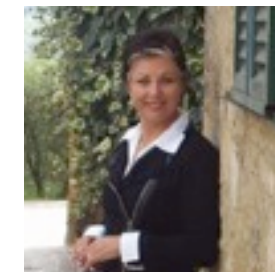
## TOUR MANAGERS

### Heather Jarman

Following her careers as archaeologist, orchestra and artist manager and chef, Heather came to Lucca to pursue her passion for traditional artisan food. Her tours, inspired by her infectious curiosity, open captivating new worlds to her guests.

### Robyn Vulinovich

Well-known Australian ex-restauranteur and Slow Food Leader, Robyn has vast experience in tour escorting both in Italy and Croatia. She delights in sharing her passion and time with her guests, ensuring care is taken so all participants have a wonderful and memorable time.



### Lucia Norrito

Lucia founded Viaggi Senza Fretta (Travel Without Haste) to share her community's valued traditions, culture and countryside with people who travel to learn, compare cultures and exchange ideas as a means of relaxing and regenerating their minds, bodies and souls.

