

## TASTE & TEXTILES

22–27 May 2010

**Feed the silkworms and yourself on a small-group escorted tour of the artisan food and textiles of Lucca and the Garfagnana**



Sapori e Saperi means flavours and knowledge — knowledge of how our food is produced, but also of the culture of the people who produce it, which leads us to textiles and two exciting projects of renewal.

In mediaeval and renaissance times the wealth of Lucca was based on silk production and banking. Banking continues unabated, but silk working gradually declined until it died out in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. We visit a young Lucchese woman who is passionately recovering the skills of her grandmother and husband's grandmother who reared silkworms.

The other resuscitation project aims to save from extinction the native sheep of the Garfagnana, a spectacularly beautiful mountainous region to the north of Lucca. We spend a day at the alpine paradise of Cerasa, where the *signora* uses the milk of this breed to make pecorino cheese and ricotta, while her daughter has learned the skills of making natural dyes and preparing the wool to be woven on traditional handlooms and looks forward to exchanging ideas with other weavers.

Five percent of your fee will be donated to these two projects.

### ITINERARY

#### Day 1

From Pisa Airport or Lucca train station we go straight to visit Stefania Maffei and her silkworms, which will be gorging themselves on mulberry leaves at this season. Transfer to Agriturismo 'Vallecchia', Treppignana. Welcome dinner.

#### Day 2

Festa della Primavera — Festival of Spring, at the walled town of Castiglione. We're going for the exhibition of contemporary Italian woollen textiles, and we'll be able to meet many of the weavers. The festival lunch will be based around wild and cultivated spring greens, along with bread baked by villagers in their wood-fired ovens. We return home for a hands-on cooking lesson with a local chef.





### Day 3

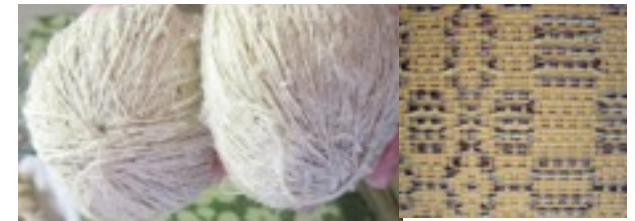
At Cerasa farm Signora Gemma shows us how she makes pecorino and matures it and we find out why ricotta isn't cheese. After lunch, composed almost entirely of food produced on the farm, we spend the afternoon with her daughter Ombretta sharing information about making vegetable dyes, dyeing wool and developing felt products. For dinner, pizza cooked in a wood-fired oven at our agriturismo.



### Day 4

In the morning we have a private tour of the Laboratorio Maria Niemack. Niemack made a definitive collection of traditional local textiles and dress, handsome and simple fabrics made of wool, cotton and locally grown hemp; the collection includes a traditional countermarch loom.

Then free time to go sightseeing and shop in Lucca. With its renaissance walls, its churches, its towers, its amphitheatre and its human size, Lucca offers many attractions. On our way home we visit Romeo Ricciardi who, as a pensioner, has learned to weave traditional textile patterns of Lucca with hand-spun hemp. Dinner at a friendly family restaurant.





### Day 5

Visit to modern mill that weaves cashmere scarves for top international fashion houses on traditional Garfagnana handlooms, and opportunity to shop at factory outlet. For lunch a tasting menu that allows you to feast on an extraordinary array of the best produce the Garfagnana has to offer. After lunch we explore Barga, followed by our farewell dinner at Scacciaguai, Barga's most interesting restaurant which uses traditional ingredients to produce intriguing dishes with a modern twist.

### Day 6

Transfer to Lucca train station or Pisa Airport.



### ACCOMMODATION

#### Agriturismo 'Vallecchia', Località Treppignano, Fosciandora

I fell in love with Vallecchia the moment I entered its 15<sup>th</sup>-century hall. Owners Luciana and Dario have not gone for a makeover by an interior designer. The house remains as it has always been (except for electricity, modern plumbing and a swimming pool) with its open beam ceilings, terracotta floors, antique furniture and stupendous views of the Alpi Apuane across the Serchio Valley. Luciana works for the Comunità Montana, where she oversees the Cerasa wool project — the perfect host for our tour.



### BOOKINGS

Contact Heather at [info@saponi-e-saperi.com](mailto:info@saponi-e-saperi.com)  
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**PRICE PER PERSON:** €950 (Euros) (*minimum 6 people*)  
**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT:** €320 (Euros)

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

#### INCLUDES

- Accommodation for 5 nights
- Local ground transportation for 6 days
- Daily continental breakfast, 3 lunches, 5 dinners
- Entrance to Niemack collection, cooking lesson, guided visits with artisans

#### DOES NOT INCLUDE

- Airfares
- Travel and cancellation insurance
- Wines and beverages, other than those served with meals, additional meals
- Personal expenses such as telephone, souvenirs, *etc.*

#### MEETING POINTS

Pisa airport (Galileo Galilei) or Lucca train station between 12:00 & 14:30

#### RECOMMENDED FLIGHTS

EasyJet: London Gatwick to Pisa  
 British Airways: London Heathrow to Pisa  
 Ryanair: London Stansted to Pisa  
 Flights to Pisa also available from other airports.

#### ATTIRE

Informal. Jeans or smart casual is acceptable everywhere.

#### WEATHER IN MAY

10°–22°C, precipitation 61 mm