



Tour Information



Andrea Bocelli in Tuscany





Passports

Please ensure your 10-year British Passport is not out of date and is valid for a full three months beyond the duration of your visit. EU, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino or Switzerland valid national identification cards are also acceptable for travel to Italy.

Visas

British and EU passport holders are not required to have a visa.

For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

Italian Consulate-General: "Harp House", 83/86 Farringdon Street, London EC4A 4BL.

Tel: (0)20 7936 5900. Fax: (0)20 7583 9425.

Email: consolato.londra@esteri.it Website:

http://www.conslondra.esteri.it/Consolato_Londra

Open Mon-Fri 0900-1200



Tickets

Included with your detailed itinerary is an e-ticket, which shows your flight reference number. You will need to quote/show this reference number at the check-in desk and you will be issued with your boarding pass. **Online check-in is not available for this booking.**

Your Group Scheduled or Club Class ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.



Baggage allowance

We advise you to check the baggage allowances carefully as you are likely to be charged the excess if you exceed the weight limit. Maximum weights for single bags apply.

With British Airways your ticket includes one hold bag of up to 23kg plus one cabin bag no bigger than 56 x 45x 25cm including handles, pockets and wheels, and a personal bag (handbag or computer case) no bigger than 45 x 36 x 20cm including handles, pockets and wheels.

For more information please visit

www.britishairways.com

Transfers

On arrival in Bologna, transfer by coach to Florence for check in for a five-night stay at the Grand Hotel Mediterraneo. Approx. transfer time is 2 hours.

Departure Tax

The departure tax is included in the price of your flight tickets.

Special Requests

If you haven't already, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements. Please note that some airlines may charge for use of wheelchairs.



Accommodation

Grand Hotel Mediterraneo

Located on the 'Lungarni' the Grand Hotel Mediterraneo is a modern four-star hotel perfectly placed to explore Florence on foot and close to the main city landmarks. The hotel has three restaurants, bar, lounge, and bedrooms are comfortable with air-conditioning, TV, telephone, wi-fi, minibar, safe and hairdryer.

For more information please visit the hotel's website:

<http://www.fhhotelgroup.it/en/grand-hotel-mediterraneo-firenze/index>



Food

Italian food rivals French in the hearts and taste buds of many gastronomes and the regional cuisine, of which the locals are very proud, wonderfully reflects the climate and local produce. Delicious pizza, pasta and risotto dishes are present everywhere throughout Italy with provincial specialities and sauces.

Tuscan cuisine is based on four core ingredients: unsalted bread (crisp crust on the outside, light and airy inside), olive oil, meat, and wine. Traditional food is simple and abundant, using the produce from the surrounding countryside, with most dishes being meat-based – *bistecca alla fiorentina* (large T-bone steak), *tagliata* (sliced rare beef), *arista* (roast loin of pork), *bistecchine di maiale* (pork chops), and well-braised game (boar, deer, rabbit).

Bread salad (*Panzanella*) or thick and rich soups are a popular first course – *sullo scio* (tomato, garlic, tagliatelle and Parmesan soup), *zuppa di cipole* (onion soup), *pappa al pomodoro* (bread and tomato soup), *ribollita* (vegetable and bread soup), and *stracciatella* (egg and parmesan cheese soup).

Sliced meats (prosciutto and salame), *Crosti toscani* (sliced bread topped with a chicken liver pate), and *Fettunta* (bread with olive oil) are common *antipasti*. Side and vegetable dishes often use chick-peas and beans.

Typical Tuscan desserts include *Castagnaccio* (chestnut cake), *Bongo* (chocolate profiteroles),

Schiacciata alla fiorentina (sponge cake), *Schiacciata con l'uva* (sweet grape bread), *cantuccini* (almond biscuits), and Pisa's *Torta con i Bischeri* (rice, milk and lemon tart). Ice-cream and sorbet are also favourites, even more so during the summer months.

Strong Italian espresso coffee is served after the meal and will be black, in small cups, unless a *cappuccino* is requested.

Table service is common in most restaurants and bars. Usually, a discretionary service charge is added to your bill in restaurants and bars, and no further tipping is required.



Drink

The world's largest wine producer, Italy is home to some of the oldest viticulture regions. The wines are named according to their grape variety or after their village or area of origin. Excellent wines are produced throughout Italy and Sicily, with local wines offering great value and quality.

Tuscany's viniculture regions produce a wealth of high quality, world famous wines, with 80% of the production being reds, predominantly based on the *Sangiovese* grape variety. *Chianti*, *Brunello di Montalcino*, and *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano* are popular reds, the dry *Vernaccia di San Gimignano* an excellent white.

The renowned Tuscan dessert wine *Vin Santo* (holy wine) is generally made from *Trebbiano* and *Malvasia*, although *Sangiovese* is also used to produce a rosé version.

Apéritifs such as *Campari* and *Punt e Mes* are excellent appetisers, while Italian liqueurs include *Grappa*, *Stregga*, *Galliano*, *Amaretto*, *Sambuca* and *Limoncello*.

Meals included in the price of your holiday are:

Breakfast – daily



Destination

This year sees the 15th anniversary of the Bocelli-hosted event in his hometown of Lajatico. Once again, it will be song (and the voice of the most beloved tenor in the world) to cast the spell with an unforgettable experience beneath the Tuscan stars. The fifteenth edition of the Teatro del Silenzio will reinvent the experience of opera music, making it a memorable journey, to be embarked upon with Andrea Bocelli and many of his friends, big international stars who have been applauded in the most important theatres throughout the world. We will find them in the informal and extremely special atmosphere of the birthplace of Maestro Bocelli, sharing with the audience those ingenious creations that undoubtedly express the best of the best: the greatest composers, the best loved songs and the most popular classics, mixed with utterly magnificent choreography – which is now the distinctive signature of the Teatro del Silenzio – and stage designs that will feature the sculptures of an artist who is already in the history books and universally renowned (whose name will soon be announced), under the artistic direction of Alberto Bartalini. Combined with a stay in Florence and visits to some of Tuscany's most lauded sights, this is a tour not to miss.

Places of interest included in the tour:

Florence

A centre of European trade and finance in the Middle Ages, Florence became an artistic and cultural hub during the Renaissance, partly thanks to the patronage of the wealthy and powerful Medici family. The majority of the town, now considered one of the world's most beautiful, was built during the Renaissance; statues, art, architecture and history turn the town into an open museum, with a hidden gem to be discovered at every street corner. Artistic highlights include the *Uffizi Gallery*, *Duomo*, *Accademia Gallery*, *Piazza della Signoria*, *Basilica of San Lorenzo* and the *Ponte Vecchio*. The vibrant markets, the atmospheric café-lined squares and the many *gelateria* are equally delightful.

For more information about Florence please visit:
<http://www.visitflorence.com/>

Fiesole

Up in the hills to the north of Florence lays the lovely village of Fiesole. Offering wonderful views of the city below, Fiesole is also full of delightful churches and buildings, and plenty of places for a leisurely coffee stop.

Lucca

The beautiful medieval town of Lucca is most notable for its Renaissance walls surrounding the old town, which have remained intact as the city grew and that offer splendid vistas of the city. It is also the birthplace of famous composer Giacomo Puccini. Highlights here include the *Casa di Puccini* (Puccini Museum House), the lovely *churches of San Martino* and *San Michele in Foro*, *palaces*, the gorgeous hidden alleys of the city, and a visit to Puccini's favourite café.

For more information about Lucca, please visit:
<http://www.luccatourist.it/>

Siena

Florence's long-term rival (though now in terms of attracting tourists!) Siena is, if anything, even more beautiful than its near neighbour. At its heart is one of the world's greatest squares, the stunning semi-circular *Piazza del Campo*, lined with shops and restaurants on one side and the magnificent 14th century *Palazzo Pubblico* town hall on the other with the splendid *Fonta Gaia* fountain in its centre. Other highlights of the largely-pedestrianized and compact old town include atmospheric cobbled streets, the exuberant 12th century striped marble *Duomo*, one of Italy's greatest cathedrals, the *Loggia del Mercanzia* arcade dating from 1418 and *Torre del Mangia*, the town hall's bell tower built in 1348, whose 505 steps lead to a wonderful view of the city and the surrounding countryside.

For more information about Siena, please visit:
<http://www.terresiena.it/en>

San Gimignano

The thirteen towers that dominate the town's majestic skyline were built as a status symbol by rival noble families during the 12th and 13th century when its position on the pilgrimage route to Rome brought it great prosperity. This declined after the Plague of 1348 but the town has retained its medieval

atmosphere. Sights include the *Collegiata church*, *Palazzo del Popolo* town hall, the *Palazzo Vecchio del Podesta* dating from 1239, several charming squares including the *Piazza del Duomo* and *Cisterna*, and the *Civic Museum* that provides access to the tallest of the remaining towers (there were 72 originally).

For more information about San Gimignano, please visit:
<http://www.sangimignano.com/en/>

Bologna

Fusing haughty elegance with down-to-earth grit in one beautifully colonnaded medieval grid, Bologna is a city of two intriguing halves. One side is a hard-working, high-tech city located in the super-rich Po valley where suave opera-goers waltz out of regal theatres and into some of the nation's finest restaurants. The other is a bolshie, politically edgy city that hosts the world's oldest university. No small wonder Bologna has earned so many historical monikers. La Grassa (the fat one) celebrates a rich food legacy (ragù or bolognese sauce was first concocted here). La Dotta (the learned one) doffs a cap to the city university founded in 1088. La Rossa (the red one) alludes to the ubiquity of the terracotta medieval buildings adorned with miles of porticoes, as well as the city's long-standing penchant for left-wing politics.

For more information about Bologna, please visit:
<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/italy/emilia-romagna-and-san-marino/bologna>

Bocelli Concert

Enjoy a performance at the charming *Teatro del Silenzio* in Lajatico. Surrounded by hills, this natural, open air theatre plays host every July to a concert by Bocelli, and stays silent the rest of the year.

Please note that the walk back to the shuttle buses will be uphill and there will be long waits to transport everyone back to the car park and coach. Due to the waiting time for the shuttles it may take some time to get everyone back on the coach before returning to Florence. Return to Florence and the hotel is expected approximately 02.00-03.00hrs.

There is a significant walk (approx. 1.5 to 2km) from the car park to the concert auditorium so this tour is not suitable for those with walking difficulties.

Teatro del Silenzio website:
<http://www.teatrodelsilenzio.it/>

Important information

In the unlikely event of the total cancellation of the performance due to weather, ill-health, or any other reason the concert will take place a day later on Saturday 25th July 2020 only. No ticket refunds will be available.

Reading Suggestions

Andrea Bocelli, *Andrea Bocelli: The Music of Silence*.
A splendid autobiography, by one of the best known and successful male singers in the world.

Julian Haylock, *Puccini: His Life and Music*.

An excellent biography of one of the world's most popular opera composers.

Judith Testa, *An Art Lovers Guide to Florence*.

More than a guidebook, Judith Testa offers an in-depth description of Florence's Renaissance art, putting the works she studies into a political, religious and familial context. A fascinating and inspiring read.

Henry James, *Italian Hours*, 1909.

Published at the end of his life, Henry James portrays his love of Italy through this series of essays, written over nearly four decades.

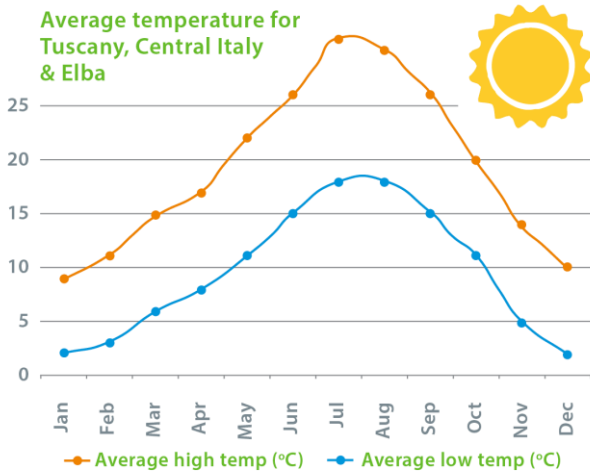
Tour manager

Your tour manager will be on hand throughout the tour to ensure that everything operated according to plan. If you have any problems or questions please see him or her immediately – it is often possible to resolve complaints or problems very quickly on the spot, and do everything to help you enjoy your holiday.



The Basics

Climate – The weather in Tuscany at this time of year is likely to be hot, but there is always the chance of the odd shower or thunderstorm. Our best advice is to come prepared.



Time – GMT +2 hours (Summer time Apr-Oct); GMT + 1 (Standard time Nov-Mar).

Language – Italian

Religion – Roman Catholic

National holidays – New Year's day (01 Jan); Epiphany (06 Jan); Easter Monday; Liberation day (25 Apr); Labour Day (01 May); Republic day (02 Jun); Assumption of Mary (15 Aug); All Saints' Day (01 Nov); Immaculate Conception (08 Dec); Christmas day (25 Dec); St Stephens day (26 Dec).

Currency – Euro. €1 = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

Banks – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are located in all towns and cities, as well as airports, major train stations and other spots. They usually offer an attractive exchange rate. Those banks that still exchange foreign currencies into local money will always charge a transaction fee, so withdrawing money from an ATM usually represents the most logical means of obtaining euros.

Credit cards – American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted across the country. If you're eating at a restaurant, check prior to the meal that your card will be an acceptable form

of payment. Even in cities, it's advisable to carry a supply of cash with you at all times. Varying amounts of commission can be charged.

Electricity – 220 volt, two-pin continental plug.

Drinking water – Tap water is safe to drink. (Although you'll find a huge amount of bottled water for sale too)

Shops & Museums – Department stores are open 0830-1930 Monday to Saturday. Most shops are closed between 1230-1530. Please note that some museums close on Mondays.

Although very common in tourist towns in Italy, please note that street vendors selling all kinds of designer knockoffs are illegal and could land you with a hefty fine. Care should also be taken when buying antiques since Italy is renowned for skilled imitators.

Clothes & Shoes – You may like to bring a warm sweater for cool evenings. Light rain wear for the occasional storm and good flat/grip walking shoes are recommended.

Camera – bring plenty of memory cards/film and any spare camera batteries as these are not always available. Please check with your guide before photographing people.

Bath plugs – The hotel has plugs for basins, but it is useful to carry a 'universal' one with you.

Telephones/mobiles – You should be able to use your mobile phone in Italy, depending on your operator and contract.

Tipping – To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that when receiving a good service, one does award with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services, but for your guidance about £2-3 per person per day for the tour manager is the norm. We would like to reiterate that tipping is an entirely optional payment and this information is given purely to answer any questions you may have about it.



Health

Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your tour manager if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a doctor.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.



Hospital

Your tour manager/hotel reception will arrange hospital transport.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.

General Health Advice

We suggest you take a good supply of your own individual medicines with you and always keep some in your hand luggage in case you get delayed or your luggage goes astray. General-purpose supplies for bites, stings, or scratches, and your usual medication for headaches, or stomach upsets are always recommended. Oral re-hydration sachets are excellent for topping up salt and glucose levels.

Visit the NHS Fit For Travel website for more generally information specific to the country you are visiting – www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

Sun Protection

Always ensure you take sufficient sun protection and moisturiser. A sun hat and sunglasses are also advisable.

Inoculations

You should check with your own doctor and take their advice as to which inoculations are required for the country you are visiting, as only they know your medical history and recommendations are liable to change at short notice.



Insurance

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and also telephone the emergency number of your insurance company. You will **NOT** be covered for any claim unless this procedure is carried out. Your insurance company will then decide on the best course of medical attention.

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

The EHIC replaced the old E111 in 2006. Valid in all EEA countries, the card lets you get state healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes for free. It will cover you for treatment that is needed to allow you to continue your stay until your planned return. It also covers the treatment of pre-existing medical conditions.

Please note that the EHIC **is not** an alternative to travel insurance. It will not cover any private medical healthcare or costs such as being flown back to the UK, or lost or stolen property. Therefore, it is important to have both an EHIC and a valid private travel insurance policy. It is also important to note that each country's healthcare system is slightly different, so the EHIC might not cover everything that would be generally free on the NHS.

We strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy when you travel abroad.

For more information about the EHIC please visit:

<https://www.ehic.org.uk>



Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:
00 44 20 7251 0045

Outside office hours (Mon-Fri 0900-1700), telephone our emergency staff on:
00 44 7899 796542 or
00 44 7831 133079

PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.

If you find that you are in need of consular assistance during your holiday:

British Consulate general Milan
Via S. Paolo, 7
20121 Milan
Italy
Tel: +39 (0)6 4220 2431
Fax: +39 (0)2 8646 5081
Italy.consulate@fco.gov.uk

Open Mon-Fri 0930-1230 and 1400-1600. Phone lines open 0900-1700. Outside these hours a consular Emergency Service is in operation and can be contacted on +39 (0)6 4220 2413.

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