



Tour Information



Lucca, Pistoia and Prato





Travel

Passports

You may need to renew your British Passport if you are travelling to an EU country. Please ensure your passport is less than 10 years old (even if it has 6 months or more left on it) and has at least 6 months validity remaining from the date of travel. EU, Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino and Swiss valid national identification cards are also acceptable for travel.

For more information, please visit: [passport checker](#)

Visas

As a tourist visiting from the UK, you do not need a visa for short trips to most EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland. You'll be able to stay for up to 90 days in any 180-day period. For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

For further information, please check here: [travel to the EU](#)

For all other passport holders please check 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.

Open Mon-Fri 0900-1200

Email: consolato.londra@esteri.it

Website:

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



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.

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 45 x 5 cm and a personal bag (handbag or computer case) no bigger than 45 x 36 x 20 cm.

Please contact the airline for further information.

<http://www.britishairways.com>

Labels

Please use the luggage labels provided. It is useful to have your home address located inside your suitcase should the label go astray.

Departure Tax

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

Border Control

At border control, you may need to:

- show a return or onward ticket.
- show you have enough money for your stay.
- use separate lanes from EU, EEA and Swiss citizens when queueing.

Taking food into EU countries

You are not able to take meat, milk or any products containing them into EU countries.

Transfers

On arrival in Pisa, transfer by coach to the city centre. After visits, transfer by coach to Lucca (approx. 30 minutes) and to the Albergo Celide.

Special Requests

If you haven't already done so, 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

Albergo Celide, Lucca

The four-star Albergo Celide Hotel is situated just outside the ancient walls that surround the historic centre and pedestrian area of Lucca, a short walk from the city's most important sights, and offers bar, restaurant and Spa with sauna, steam bath and jacuzzi. Various treatments are available for an extra charge. The comfortable bedrooms have private bathroom with bath/shower, and include hairdryer, air-conditioning, TV, telephone, minibar, safe and wi-fi.

For more information, please visit the hotel's website:
<https://www.albergocelide.it/en/>



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 (beef and game), 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 – *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 Florentine desserts include *Castagnaccio* (chestnut cake), *Bongo* (chocolate profiteroles), *Schiacciata alla fiorentina* (sponge cake), *Schiacciata con l'uva* (sweet grape bread), and *cantuccini* (almond biscuits).

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 holiday are:

Breakfast daily and two dinners, with wine, at the hotel.



Destination

This superb tour in the company of popular and erudite art historian Clare Ford-Wille visits three relatively unknown Tuscan gems – Lucca, Prato and Pistoia – as well as a rather more famous one, Pisa. All offer a wonderful collection of art, much of which is housed in beautiful Renaissance churches.

Details of places of interest included in the tour:

Pisa

Pisa came to importance under the Romans and went on to flourish as a commercial port for many centuries. By the 10th-century it had become an independent and formidable maritime state and a significant rival to Venice and Genoa. Two centuries later, Pisa controlled the Tuscan coast, Sardinia, and Corsica while its intrepid sailors brought back spices and exotic goods along with new ideas and inventions. The city's surviving Romanesque architecture stems from this period of glory with much of the sculptural work crafted by Nicola and Giovanni Pisano, a talented father-and-son team. The medieval heart of Pisa can be discovered north of the river and is an enchanting maze of lanes and alleys. These stretch from the bars and ice-cream parlours of the Piazza Cairoli to the daily market that overflows from the Piazza delle Vettovaglie. The Piazza dei Miracoli or Square of the Miracles is at the heart of Pisa and home to many of its major buildings and attractions. It was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987 and has a history that dates right back to the city's Etruscan and Roman periods. The piazza has always played a central part in the religious life cycle of Pisan citizens.

The Leaning Tower of Pisa is not only one of the most famous of monuments but also one of the most original in the world, absolutely unique in its kind. Its exceptional nature is not due only to its peculiar inclination because, even if it did not lean, the Tower of Pisa would still be one of the most remarkable belltowers in Europe. The ground on which Pisa is built is a flood plain and cannot withstand excessive weight. In fact, the leaning tower isn't the only thing that leans in Pisa, there are plenty of buildings all over the city that lean in every direction — palaces, churches, even simple houses. The leaning tower is the belltower of the Duomo, it is not placed next to the Duomo's facade as would be usual but is instead set apart from it. At

any rate, it is not by chance that it's placed in the most visible point of the piazza, at the intersection of two of the most ancient streets of the city: Via Santa Maria and Via Emilia that proceeds towards the Duomo.

The Duomo, a masterpiece of Romanesque - Pisa Style was started in the year 1063 by the great architect Buschetto. It is the first work undertaken in the spot that later became the "Piazza dei Miracoli". It was possible because of the enormous wealth amassed by the powerful Sea Republic Pisa was. The Cathedral was consecrated in the year 1118, even though still incomplete, by Pope Gelasio II. It was terminated in the 13th century, with the erection of the façade, unchanged up to today, by Rainaldo. With its stacked domes, ornate tracery, and the gilded bronze of John the Baptist on top, the Baptistery is one of Pisa's more unusual buildings. Dedicated to St. John, it is the largest baptistery in Italy and has always played an important part in the religious life encompassed by the Piazza dei Miracoli's monuments. The exterior of the Baptistery of St. John presents as one ornate layer on top of another and those with a close eye to detail will notice that it is just a few centimetres taller than the Leaning Tower.

For more information about Pisa, please visit: <https://www.italyguides.it/en/tuscany/pisa>

Lucca

Lucca lies in a green valley just northwest of Florence. This almost perfectly preserved jewel of medieval architecture and buildings, shows charm and history from every corner of its narrow winding streets. Beginning in Roman times, continuing through the Middle Ages, on to the Napoleonic era and finally to the Risorgimento, Lucca's monuments, churches, palaces and roads, even its very shape, have a story to tell. The broad, high walls, which characterize the city, are a feature of its past, and a pleasant element of its present. Completely surrounding the ancient city, the walls we see today date back to the 17th century. Now, no longer used for defence, they are crowned by green parkland. Rich families who embellished the city are closely connected with Lucca's many enchanting legends and tales. The central square, at the heart of the city, maintained the shape of the Roman amphitheatre and shows the outline of an

ancient arena. Likewise, via Fillungo, the main street in the city, was also born with the Romans. Though it was meant to be the Decumano (a straight main street) and though still central, its narrow, winding path and typical medieval characteristics testify how the shape of Lucca has been altered since antiquity. The majestic church of San Michele in Foro, with its medieval façade, and signs of refurbishment carried out during the Risorgimento, is built where Lucca's Roman forum once stood. Named after this ancient site, it collects several eras together in one building. In its façade the faces of famous Italian patriots can be seen; King Vittorio Emanuele, Giuseppe Garibaldi, and Camillo Benso, who were so important in Italy's reunification, as well as medieval figures peering between the arches. From the 13th century onwards the Guinigi family, who were rich merchants and a leading family of the town, concentrated their mansions between via Sant'Andrea and via Guinigi, which has preserved its medieval appearance practically intact. The National Museum of Villa Guinigi is the museum of the city and its surroundings, and exhibits one of the richest and most interesting collections of works of art. The main nucleus of the collection's dates back to the indementia of the ecclesiastical goods before and after the unification of Italy, to which were then added finds from excavations in the city, new acquisitions, gifts and deposits of various entities. In the rooms of the Villa, which was the home of Paolo Guinigi, lord of Lucca from 1400 to 1430, in the late Gothic style, we retrace the history of the city: beginning in the eighth century BC with the archaeological collection, to arrive at the eighteenth century with works mainly with a sacred subject.

For more information about Lucca, please visit:

<https://www.italyguides.it/en/tuscany/lucca>

Prato

The city of Prato is just half an hour outside of Florence and is the second largest city in the region. While the city has treasures from the Etruscan, Medieval and more modern times, the city is practically non-existent for most international visitors to Tuscany. This is what makes Prato perfect for anyone wishing to go "off the beaten path" and explore a city where not many visitors go. Prato's economy has historically been founded on the textile sector which is still alive and kicking even today. Prato also has great historical-artistic treasures waiting to be discovered. From Medieval times, as the letters of the famous "merchant of

Prato" Francesco Datini document, to its industrial growth in the 19th century giving it the nickname of the "Manchester of Tuscany". Palazzo Datini, located near 'Porta Fuia', was the merchant's main headquarters and it hosted many illustrious figures such as members of the Gonzaga Dynasty and the King of Sicily, Luigi II d'Angio. Purchased in 1354, the palace's decoration was entrusted to painter Niccolò di Pietro Gerini and his workshop in 1390. It is to him that we owe the palace's famed 'Saint Christopher' and the fresco cycles that grace its court. In the other rooms, there are works by other painters like Agnolo Gaddi, Niccolò Gerini, Bartolomeo di Bertozzo and Tommaso del Mazza. Prato's Piazza del Duomo occupies the middle of its historic centre, probably founded by the Lombards, near which stood a little village and parish church dedicated to Santo Stefano. Among the noteworthy works in the cathedral are the wooden Crucifix by Giovanni Pisano, a seven-armed bronze candelabra by Maso di Bartolomeo and the large transept conserving some very important fresco cycles, including the Stories of the Virgin and Saint Stephen by Paolo Uccello and the Stories of Saint Stephen and Saint John the Baptist by Filippo Lippi – one of the most important artworks of the Renaissance, known for its splendid Salome's Dance, set at a lavish Renaissance banquet. Castello dell'Imperatore has crenelated walls and towers. Built for the medieval emperor and King of Sicily Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor, it was built on top of a previous fortification of which two towers remain. When Frederick II died, building was stopped and the interior was never finished. The castle is open to the public and although some destruction took place during the fascist regime, reconstruction work has begun and is ongoing. It is possible to climb the stairs up to the top of the castle walls and walkways for a bird's eye view over the surrounding city of Prato.

For more information about Prato, please visit:

<https://www.discovertuscany.com/prato/>

Pistoia

Pretty Pistoia sits snugly at the foot of the Apennines. It thoroughly deserved its 2017 status as European City of Culture. A town that has grown well beyond its medieval ramparts, its Centro Storico (historic centre) is well preserved and stands guardian to striking contemporary art. At the very centre of this artistic and historic city is Piazza Duomo. Medieval buildings form an enticing circle embracing the space, making it a perfect venue. In the square, an imposing bell tower stands at a

proud height of 67 metres. Converted in the 13th century from a tower of the Lombard era, take a deep breath and climb the 200 steps to the top for an amazing panoramic view of the city. The Romanesque Polychrome Church of San Giovanni Fuorcivitas is just outside the city of Pistoia and is thought to have been built by the Lombards upon their conversion to Catholicism in the 12th century. Blind arches, two rows of loggias, and an arch and architrave by Gruamonte.

For more information about Pistoia, please visit:
<http://www.santacroceopera.it/en/default.aspx>

Tour lecturer / Guide

Clare has lectured in most areas of art history for over thirty-five years. She still teaches at the University of London, where she obtained her degree at Birkbeck, but also lectures regularly for Morley College, the City Literary Institute, the Victoria and Albert Museum and branches of The Art Society throughout Britain, Europe, Australia and New Zealand. Every year since 1978 Clare has led art study tours to places of artistic importance throughout Europe and the USA, including Amsterdam, Padova and Vicenza.

Clare will give two lectures at the hotel.

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.

Reading Suggestions

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.

Marina Belozerskaya, *The Arts of Tuscany*

Focusing on a series of Tuscan centres, from the Etruscan capitals of Cerveteri and Tarquinia to the great medieval and Renaissance city-states of Lucca, Pisa, Siena, and Florence down to the present day,



The Basics

Climate – The weather in Tuscany at this time of year is likely to be pleasant, but evenings can be quite cool and there is the chance of the odd shower. 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 – The guarantee of free mobile phone roaming throughout the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway has ended. Check with your phone operator to find out about any roaming charges that might be applied after 1st January 2021. A new law means that you are protected from getting mobile data charges above £45 without you knowing. Once you reach £45, you need to opt in to spend more so that you can continue using the internet while you are abroad. Your phone operator will tell how you can do this.

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.



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

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

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

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and 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)

Before you travel, make sure you have got a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or UK Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) or travel insurance with health cover.

You may not have access to free emergency medical treatment and could be charged for your healthcare if you do not have an EHIC or GHIC when visiting an EU country, or travel insurance with full healthcare cover when visiting Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein. If you have an EHIC it will still be valid while it remains in date. Your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) will be valid if you are travelling to an EU country.

For further information about the GHIC please visit: <https://www.ehic.org.uk>



Emergencies

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 7841 023807

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 2431.

Travel Editions

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