

# Hiking Through Tuscany

October 6 - 19, 2023 • 14 Days • 31 Meals

Journey Leader: Mary Taylor



*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 beautiful terrain of the Apennines in the North, over the rolling hills in the center, to the vast plains and sandy beaches of the Mediterranean islands in the south. 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. Enjoy the famous Tuscan cuisine and the main agricultural products: excellent wines and olive oil at its finest.

With Mary Taylor and our local guides, we will hike this beautiful region and learn about the country, its people, history, and local the 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, coffee or tea included after dinner
- 31 meals included as noted in the itinerary (B - 12 breakfasts, L - 7 lunches, D - 12 dinners)
- Services of your Canadian journey leader and an experienced tour director and hiking leader 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: **July 4, 2023**

### 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 Leader

Throughout her life, **Mary Taylor** has always travelled for pleasure, for work, for family, and to indulge her love of watersports. Born and raised in England, she came to Canada in 1974 and has spent almost four decades in education, working in schools, educational program development, research, and teacher education. She has coordinated university travel exchange programs and both visited and volunteered in schools overseas. Her travel experiences have brought her to places such as Australia, Africa, the Solomon Islands, the Maldives, India, and Peru, with many in-depth visits to Europe and the Caribbean. Mary loves to explore different cultures and is keen to use technology to share her travel experiences with others. She looks forward to sharing new adventures with you!





**OCT 6, Friday****Depart Canada**

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

**OCT 7, Saturday****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** (6 nights)

D

**OCT 8, Sunday****Florence**

Our coach will bring 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. (2 hours hiking)

BD

**OCT 9, Monday****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 hours hiking)

BLD

**OCT 10, Tuesday****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 11, Wednesday****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. Back to Montecatini. (4 hours hiking)

BLD



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



*Enjoy a glass of wine in the picturesque village of 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 12, Thursday 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 a cappuccino in a cozy café before we return to Montecatini. (2.5 hours hiking) BLD

**OCT 13, Friday Pisa / Castiglione della Pescaia**

After bidding farewell to Montecatini Terme and 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'Approdo** (6 nights) BD

**OCT 14, Saturday 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 15, Sunday 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 16, Monday Elba Island**

Travel by bus to the port of Piombino where we board a ferry to the Island of Elba, which is the most important of all the Tuscan islands. During our journey, we will take a brief bus tour of the island and make several stops along the way. Finally, we will return to Castiglione in the afternoon. BD

**OCT 17, Tuesday Castiglione della Pescaia**

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

**OCT 18, Wednesday 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 bring 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 19, Thursday 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

**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).....	\$4,925
Toronto .....	\$6,095
Ottawa / Montreal .....	\$6,295
Halifax.....	\$6,395
St. John's / Fredericton / Winnipeg .....	\$6,495
Saskatoon / Regina .....	\$6,545
Calgary / Edmonton / Vancouver .....	\$6,495
Victoria.....	\$6,545
Single Supplement .....	\$875

\*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 January 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 will be due on July 5, 2023****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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