

## Colors of Tuscany



Tuscany is a land of warm honey-toned light where countryside and townscapes blend in an idyllic setting. This premier region of central Italy has remained virtually unchanged for centuries—blessed by nature, and renowned for its art and history, picturesque medieval hilltop villages, and bucolic pastoral landscapes that are some of the most photogenic in the world. In Tuscany, where timeless vistas are enveloped in gossamer light, exceptional imagery is always close at hand.

In late autumn, the Tuscan landscape of gentle hills, vineyards, fields and woodlands glows with warm tones of yellow and orange. This is not the obvious “in your face” fall-color riot of northeastern US hardwood trees. Tuscany exudes watercolor hues that blend from shade to shadow. Tuscany is woven tapestries of vineyard rows that sweep over rounded hills combined with silver-gray olive trees, and slender columns of deep green cypress trees that punch skyward.

Tuscany is soft, mellow light on weathered brick, terra cotta tile roof, and the golden limestone of medieval hilltop towns—Tuscany has some of the most beautiful stone buildings, constructed over many centuries, in the world.

Following the busy grape harvest, in the cooler days at the end of October and into November, vineyards unveil their autumn-cured shades of yellow, orange and red and olives reach their purple-black prime. It is time to settle in before the beginning of winter, enjoying the fruits of the woodlands—chestnuts, porcini mushrooms and truffles.



From the rounded hills of the Chianti region, dense with vineyards, olive groves and woodlands to the photogenic rolling landscapes near Pienza—all inspire our photography. In Pisa’s Piazza del Duomo, the Pisan-Romanesque cathedral with its white-gray façade—along with that unmistakable campanile, the Leaning Tower—is a lens-catching masterpiece. The thirteen prominent stone towers rise high above the skyline of San Gimignano and the beautifully-preserved walled city of Monteriggioni prompt striking imagery. Dark green cypress trees pierce the blue Tuscan skies and stand as sentinels beside isolated rustic stone farmhouses. On hilltops, brick-red or limestone-golden hued abbeys offer options for panoramic and close-up photography. Graphic patterns created by terraced vineyards, vine-laced ancient walls, and tiers of tiled rooftops stir countless abstract compositions.

Join us as we follow the ancient rhythms of the season and take time to enjoy a *Chianti Classico* or a *Brunello di Montalcino* and the bounty of a Tuscan autumn—bruschetta with freshly-pressed olive oil, a hearty boar stew, and wild porcini mushrooms.

## Tour Itinerary

### Day 1

Depart on flights from the US.

### **Day 2 (Oct 23)**

Arrive in Pisa, Italy, and transfer from the airport by hotel shuttle on your own. We meet in the hotel lobby at 7 PM and walk to a local restaurant for dinner. (D)

### **Day 3**

A full day to explore the cathedral city of Pisa. Our centrally-located hotel is only a short walk from the Piazza del Duomo (Piazza dei Miracoli) and Pisa's iconic Leaning Tower. (BLD)

### **Day 4**

We travel to Radda in the Chianti region of Tuscany, stopping for photography en route—this area boasts some of the most beautiful landscapes in the world. The region encompasses nearly 9,000 square miles where most of the land is rolling hills. Vineyards cover about 160,000 acres, interspersed with medieval towns on hilltops and demarcated by cypress-lined roads. Autumn is at its peak and, in the cooler weather, the vineyards and woodlands have turned from green to yellow and orange, and olives have ripened to a deep purple-black against silvery-gray foliage. (BLD)



### **Days 5–7**

For these three days we focus on the gently rounded hills draped with the rows of autumn-hued vineyards of the Chianti area. Colorful red vines cling to walls of weathered stone and brick, and olive groves provide a silvery contrast. From our convenient and comfortable hotel situated in the hills near Radda, we make daily excursions throughout the Chianti region. We photograph the castle and town of San Gimignano, the walled town of Monteriggioni, and travel to the hilltop towns of Radda, Panzano and Montefioralle. On one day we visit the Rampini Ceramics workshop, located in an old Tuscan farmhouse among vineyards and olive groves, for an opportunity to photograph the artists at work. (BLD)

### **Day 8**

We drive to Pienza, a UNESCO World Heritage site in the renowned *Val d'Orcia*, with time for afternoon photography after checking into our hotel. The entire valley in this iconic area has been designated a UNESCO World Cultural Landscape. Open vistas of agricultural land—ochre and tawny brown at this time of the year—stretch over low hills off into the far horizon, punctuated by serpentine rows or small groupings of dark green cypress and isolated farmhouses. Our five nights in one convenient hotel situated only a few steps from the historical center of Pienza allow us ample time for photography in the area. (BLD)

### Day 9

We explore Pienza, built as a utopian town in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, including the Duomo with its light-flooded interior, and Palazzo Piccolomini, where the spectacular view from its loggia overlooks the *Val d'Orcia* and the extinct volcano *Monte Amiata*. Photogenic hilltop towns, including car-free Montepulciano high on a limestone ridge overlooking the *Val di Chiana*, and Lucignano, a remarkable example of medieval town planning with its elliptical concentric rings of brick and stone buildings and narrow streets, are our focus today. (BLD)

### Day 10

In the morning we photograph at the beautiful Romanesque Abbey of Sant'Antimo near Montalcino. We visit *Castello Banfi*, a family-owned estate and winery in the Brunello region.

Photography of the extensive vineyards, opportunities for images of the cask and barrel rooms—racks of oak barrels create surprising patterns against warm woodwork and rustic tiled floors—and a delicious wine lunch highlight our day. In Montalcino at this time of the year the Sangiovese grapes for the area's noted *Brunello di Montalcino* have already been harvested and the vineyards draw our lenses with the autumn hues of the season. (BLD)

### Day 11

En route to Chiusure our road travels through the textured gray clay “badland” landscapes of the *Crete Senesi* region. The town of Asciano lies in the midst of these Sienese clay hills and the winding roads in this area are spectacular. The brick-red Abbey of Monte Oliveto Maggiore stands out in exquisite contrast on a hill green with cypress trees. To reach the photogenically-isolated hill town of Civita di



Bagnoregio we must walk a steep one-quarter-mile-long footbridge to a 2,500-year-old Etruscan gateway. Civita—stunningly-sited high on an ever-eroding tuff plateau—glows golden in the warm afternoon light. We follow crooked cobblestone lanes that wind among stone houses—a perfect setting to capture architectural details of stairways, doors and brilliant red of ivy-clad ancient stone walls and arches. (BLD)

### Day 12

We have one last morning to photograph in Pienza before we return to Pisa for an overnight at a convenient airport hotel. (BLD)

### Day 13 (Nov 3)

Depart for home. (B)

## Trip Details

**Oct 22 - Nov 03, 2020**

**Fee:** \$6,695 from Pisa, Italy

**Deposit:** \$800

**Limit:** 12 participants

**Activity Level:** Moderate

**CONTACT US ABOUT THIS TRIP**

## Tour Leader

Leader TBA

**SUBSCRIBE!**  
To Our eNewsletter  
(click here)



JOSEPH VAN OS PHOTO SAFARIS

PO Box 655, Vashon, WA 98070 • 206-463-5383 • photosafaris.com