

Taste your way through Italy with a food lover's tour

BY NORMA SCHONWETTER AND WENDY SCHONWETTER
CORRESPONDENTS

The "Enchanting Italy" tour offer travelers an opportunity to spend 12 days tasting some of Italy's finest cheese, wine, balsamic vinegar, pasta and olive oil in the facilities where they have been produced for many generations. They also enjoy history, art and culture in the cities of Genoa, Parma, Bologna, Florence, Siena, San Gimignano, Orvieto and Rome. The highlight of this trip is a visit to an authentic 15th century villa located on top of winding Tuscan hills surrounded by olive groves.

This is a unique chance to descend into the vast cellars beneath the villa to view the equipment, both ancient and modern, for producing and storing olive oil. Everyone has the chance for "hands on" experience in preparing a Tuscan dinner, later served with wine in the villa's charming dining room.

Travelers visit a local Parmesan cheese facility in Parma and learn that cheeses are aged for at least 18 months. Nothing is wasted; ricotta cheese is a by-product and pigs raised on the farm eat the whey, making the meat ideal for Parma ham, the true prosciutto.

Parma, in the agricultural

IF YOU GO

- **Clothing** - Travel light. Pack walking shoes, a collapsible umbrella and a raincoat or windbreaker.
- **Money** - Use traveler's checks in euros, credit cards and some U.S. dollars in small denominations. Wear a money belt.
- **ID** - Make photocopies of your passport and itinerary, one to leave home and one to carry separately.
- **Shopping** - Best buys are ceramics in small towns. Shop at Lorenzo market in Florence for leather wallets, scarves, mosaics, Florentine paper items and T-shirts.
- **Essentials** - Pack a cloth shopping bag to hold travel literature, reading material, snacks and film. All hotels have hair dryers.

region of Emilia-Romagna, is the home of conductor Arturo Toscanini and the National Gallery, containing paintings from the 13th to 16th centuries. The dual gardens contain the Fountain of the Trianon, given to the people of Parma by Maria Luisa, second wife of Napoleon.

In Modena, tourists discover the secret of the unusual taste and rich flavor of traditional balsamic vinegar, called the "condiment of kings." It's fermented in wooden casks under controlled conditions for a minimum of 12 years.

The most expensive balsamic vinegar is aged 25 years and sells for more than \$70 for 100 ml (3.4 ounce). This is not the

type commonly used for cooking or in salads, although it has been made from the same grapes.

UNIVERSITY TOWN

En route to Montecatini Terme, the tour stops in Bologna, site of one of the oldest universities in the world and known the world over for the gastronomic specialties that originated there, including tortellini, lasagna, fettuccini and mortadella.

Attractions include the Fountain of Neptune, the Town Hall, clocktower and two tall leaning towers from the Middle Ages.

In Montecatini Terme, pasta-makers at a family-owned shop demonstrate making pasta dough. Their specialty is Ravioli Michelangelo which has chopped French ham added to the classic ravioli filling (spinach, ricotta and Parmesan cheese).

Since the Middle Ages, the mineral springs of Montecatini Terme have made it one of the most frequented and fashionable thermal spas in Italy. From there it's a short ride to Florence, Siena and San Gimignano, all in the Tuscany region, and Orvieto, which borders the area.

Florence is the capital of the arts from Roman and Renaissance times. Few people leave here untouched by its beauty. Highlights include the



A chef prepares stuffed veal in a cooking class.

Ponte Vecchio (old bridge), built in the 10th century, the Academy Gallery which houses Michelangelo's David and Piazza del Duomo, which contains the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore, third largest in the Christian world.

The Church of Santa Croce, the largest Franciscan church, contains the monuments and tombs of 270 prominent people, among them are the tombs of Michelangelo, Machiavelli, Rossini and Galileo.

MEDIEVAL CITY

Siena is Tuscany's most fascinating city after Florence

because of its medieval atmosphere. It was a major city in Europe in the 12th and 13th centuries.

The city is built on three red clay hills (from which the color "burnt sienna" is named). Its narrow Gothic streets converge on the Piazza del Campo, a shell-shaped square, paved with brick.

The focal point is the elegant Gothic Town Hall with a bell-tower that offers a superb panorama of Siena's rooftops and countryside.

No visit to Italy is complete without seeing Rome, the "Eternal City." There are remnants of the Roman Empire

everywhere. Christian Rome features the Basilica of St. John Lateran, St. Peter's in Chains, (which houses the famous statue of Moses by Michelangelo), Vatican City (highlighted by the Sistine Chapel ceiling and the Last Judgment) and St. Peter's Basilica (with the great Pieta sculpture).

The restoration of the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and Last Judgment were completed in 1994 to reveal their brilliant colors.

For information on this gourmet and educational tour, "Enchanting Italy," call Collette Tours at (888) 344-5578 or contact your travel agent.

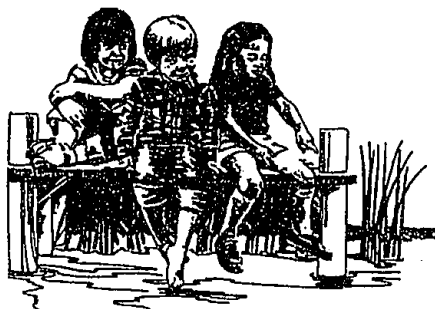


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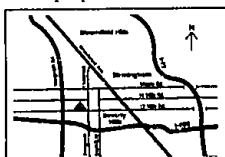
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