

HARVEST AND PILGRIMAGE

A Week in the Hills of Tuscany with David Whyte

SEPTEMBER 4 = 11, 2018



From the first evening standing on the threshold of an ancient Etruscan tomb with the light slanting across the stone, imagining centuries of mothers, fathers and children making their lives amongst the olive groves, to the closing night's celebration under the stars, the week in Italy is a moveable feast both literally and imaginatively; a true celebration of the senses; a shaping of the mind and the body through walking, seeing, listening and tasting.

As with all of David's tours, you are invited into a circle of friendship that takes you deep into the local culture, whether being introduced by Lori De Mori to the almost reverential relationship to food that runs throughout the Tuscan hills, listening to Dante in the original by an original as dusk settles on the rooftops of Panzano or partaking of a moonlit meal. We bring our own contribution to the circle in the form of musical phenomenon Micheal O'Suilleabhain, an Irishman who can sing Gregorian chant in an eleventh century chapel or hush the catacomb-like darkness of an Etruscan tomb with song.

Tuscan culture is about standing in one's place in the world, choosing what you do and doing it well, no matter how simple the task and no matter how many times it has been done before, finding the note you can hold in the song and the path you make yourself by walking. We will do the same, setting one foot after another through the countryside while contemplating our individual futures, emboldened by David's poetry and thought, and by food, wine and good company: a good holiday and a necessary pilgrimage in one remarkable experience.

Most mornings begin (after breakfast) with a session by David, followed by lunch at our beautiful agriturismo. Each afternoon, we travel to the location of that day's hike. The local artisans whom we have the privilege to meet are very deeply connected to the land, literature and culture of Tuscany.

THE PARTICIPANTS.

An eclectic, often international group of 30-35 fellow adventurers with a shared interest in David's work and the culture of Tuscany.

ACCOMMODATIONS.

Our accommodations are in two or three beautiful agriturismos and a twelfth century convent along a road lined with vineyards. The location is 20km south of Florence in the heart of the Chianti Classico region, with a stunning view of the neighboring hills and countryside. The rooms are lovely apartment-style accommodations, each with its own unique character, varying from studio to three bedroom configurations.

Bedrooms are shared with one other person, with a limited number of single bedrooms available for a supplemental fee of \$750. If you would like a single room, please be sure to check the box on the application form.

Please note that a single bedroom does not guarantee a private bathroom or a studio accommodation; you may still be sharing a bathroom and living room.

THE WALKING & HIKING.

You need to be able to walk two to four hours over hilly terrain in very warm weather. Most of the walks are on seldom-used dirt roads, but there may be short walks through fields and on more rugged pathways. Several of the walks have steep uphill portions. As these walks are an important part of the tour experience, please be as realistic as possible in assessing your level of fitness.

A WORD ABOUT MEALS AND DIETARY RESTRICTIONS.

A breakfast buffet is available in a common area at Fattoria la Loggia each morning. We provide all meals, with the exception of one dinner or the occasional lunch you will need to purchase on your own. Meals are buffet feasts. There will always be a hearty vegetarian option, as well as plentiful fruit and vegetables. We do our best to cover all bases, however, we are unable to offer gluten-free pasta or bread options. If you are gluten-free, vegan, or have other food intolerances, please bring along a few things to fill in the occasional gap, as there is not a market nearby.

AMENITIES.

Our accommodations have wifi throughout, however it is not strong enough to accommodate much more than checking your email. Cell phone coverage is good. There are no laundry services available. Hair dryers are provided.

ARRIVAL.

The closest airport is Florence (FLR); train station Santa Maria Novella. Whether arriving by air, train, or car, you will make your way to Piazzale Michelangelo, a large car park overlooking the city, by 2:00pm on September 4th. Any taxi driver will know where it is, and you should plan about 30 minutes for the trip from the airport, 10 minutes from the city center. We meet at the replica of the statue of David in the middle of the piazzale.

DEPARTURE.

We determine departure logistics at the end of the trip based on everyone's itineraries. We will return you to the Piazzale Michelangelo in Florence in plenty of time to catch a taxi to your point of departure. We apologize that due to driving restrictions in the city of Florence, we are not able to take people directly to their hotels or the train station. Please note that we need to be out of our accommodation by mid-morning, so we are not able to transport people in the afternoon.

NOTE REGARDING DEPARTURE TIMES. If your flight departs before 9:00am, you may need to independently book a taxi from Fattoria la Loggia. Ivana, our hostess extraordinario, will be very happy to assist with this on-site.

PASSPORT.

Each participant needs a valid passport.

COST.

Total cost for the tour is \$5100. If you request a single room, there is an additional charge of \$750, bringing the total to \$5850.

If all payments are made by check, the cost is \$4950.

WHAT THE TRIP PRICE INCLUDES.

David's services as seminar leader and local guide. All accommodations for the nights of September 4th through 10th, inclusive. All breakfasts, with the possibility of the occasional lunch or dinner on your own, depending on the day's activities. All transport in country during the trip and transportation between our accommodations and the Piazzale Michelangelo in Florence.

NOT INCLUDED. Airfare. The possibility of an occasional lunch or dinner.

APPLICATION PROCESS.

We do not accept participants on a first come, first served basis. Instead, we collect applications and notify you of the status of your application by March 1st, 2018.

CANCELLATION POLICY.

If, after you are accepted on the trip, you should need to withdraw your application prior to April 1st, 2018, we retain 10% of the trip cost, or \$495. If you withdraw after April 1st, any refund will depend upon whether we are able to find someone else to fill your place, but in any case, will still be subject to the 10% retention fee.

WHAT TO BRING.

Your selection of clothing for the trip should be based on thoughts of comfort for walking, with one entirely optional, slightly dressier option for the last night's party. You will need sturdy walking shoes, and you should be prepared for rain with a waterproof jacket. Temperatures can be anywhere from the 60s to the 90s, fahrenheit. It can be cool in the evenings, and we eat outdoors, so a sweater or light jacket is advised. Please bring a day pack and water bottle for the walks. Sunscreen and a hat are highly recommended, as is mosquito repellent.

Please limit yourself to one medium-sized bag and one small carry-on, as we have limited space for luggage in the minibuses.

CURRENCY AND SPENDING MONEY.

Italy uses the euro. There are no ATM machines near our accommodation. Credit cards are widely accepted, but please bring a little cash for incidentals. You can visit an ATM at the airport or train station when you arrive.

WE STRONGLY ADVISE THAT YOU COVER YOURSELF FOR BAGGAGE, ACCIDENT AND TRIP CANCELLATION INSURANCE.