

# Touring holidays of Italy

*Expressions*



## From Tuscany to the Alban hills near Rome



## From Tuscany to the Alban hills near Rome touring holiday

10 NIGHTS / 11 DAYS

Pisa

Panzano in Chianti

Loro Ciuffenna

Orvieto

Frascati

Rome



**Discover the wine, cookery, gardens, history and culture of central Italy.**

**This ten night fly-drive touring holiday allows you to discover the cuisine, landscape, history and culture of central Italy as you travel southwards through the pretty regions of Tuscany, Umbria and Latium. Sample local wines, learn how to cook regional cuisine, visit stunning gardens, and visit sites of cultural and historical interest.**

Begin your touring holiday by flying into Pisa where you collect your hire car. Drive for just over one and a half hours southeast to Villa le Barone, located in the heart of the Chianti region of Tuscany. Set just outside the picturesque village of Panzano, the charming four-star hotel has outstanding views over the vineyards which stretch into the distance. From here, continue eastwards to the Relais Villa Belpoggio, an intimate boutique hotel set within landscaped gardens. Located in the Chianti Region just north of Arezzo, the property is an excellent base for experiencing rural Tuscany and offers the opportunity to learn about regional cuisine and take part in a cookery lesson with the hotel's chef. Following a three night stay here, drive about one and a half hours south to the Hotel Palazzo Piccolomini in Orvieto. This small four-star hotel provides a discreet base in the centre of the dramatic Umbrian hill town, located just a few minutes' walk away from the magnificent Cathedral, which is considered to be one of the finest in Italy. After staying in Orvieto for one night, travel further south towards your final hotel in Frascati. Along your route you can visit two stunning gardens and villas in Tivoli – Villa d'Este, a UNESCO World Heritage Site which is resplendent in its structure and use of structure; and Villa Adriana, a complex which was built for the Emperor Hadrian and even in its ruined state is one of the most spectacular Roman gardens. From here it is a short drive to Park Hotel Villa Grazioli, an art-filled property in a commanding hillside position overlooking Tivoli, Rome and the Tyrrhenian Sea. The former Cardinal's villa has been carefully restored as a four-star hotel to combine its history with modern comforts, set in an area which is rich in natural beauty and cultural heritage. Following your time in Frascati, return to Rome where you drop off your hire car and catch your flight back to the UK.

### PRICES

**From £1,820 per person.**

Based on two people sharing a double or twin room.

Alternative hotel options can be offered in most locations as well as room upgrade supplements.

### DATES

This holiday can be arranged throughout the year, however some hotels may close during the winter season.

### WHAT'S INCLUDED

Accommodation on bed and breakfast as below:

- 3 nights at the Villa le Barone in Panzano, Tuscany
- 3 nights at the Villa Belpoggio in Loro Ciuffenna, Tuscany
- 1 night at the Palazzo Piccolomini in Orvieto, Umbria
- 1 night at the Park Hotel Villa Grazioli in Frascati, Latium

One cookery lesson per person at the Villa Belpoggio

Scheduled flights with British Airways London

Heathrow to Pisa, returning from Rome

Fiumicino to London Heathrow.

Group B hire car for the duration of your holiday

### WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

Early check-in or late check-out at any hotels (though we can arrange this on request at additional cost).

Any other services not mentioned above, such as transfers and meals except breakfast at hotels.

## **DAYS ONE TO THREE: Arrive in Pisa and drive to Panzano in Chianti, where you will stay for three nights**

After arriving in Pisa and collecting your hire car, spend a few hours in the city, taking in the famous historical sights – namely, the Torre Pendente, or ‘leaning tower.’ Aside from the iconic image, Pisa has a lot to offer in the way of culture and history. Take time to visit the Duomo, which dates back to 1064, and the triple-spired Chiesa di Santa Maria della Spina, or explore the Museo Nazionale di San Matteo and its vast collection of medieval artworks. This list is, of course, merely scratching the surface of the inspiring opportunities available in Pisa. From here, begin the drive to Panzano in Chianti, and the Villa le Barone, which will be your hotel for the next three nights. During your stay, we recommend beginning your exploration of the immediate surrounding area on foot or on bike. On your rambles enjoy wine-tastings and tours at local Chianti Classico vineyards. In Panzano specifically you will find a number of establishments open for wine-tasting experiences and vineyard tours. The Accademia del Buon Gusto, for example, is an independent business with a very friendly and accommodating local host offering tastings of wine, olive oil, and even truffled chocolate sauce. The Fattoria Montagliari is best known for its balsamic vinegar, though its wine is also excellent. Or head out into the countryside to villa Vafaggio for a vineyard tour that culminates in a tasting session. A key aspect of your hotel is its convenient location, situated halfway between the cultural city of Florence, and its former rival, Siena. Spend the best part of a day exploring Florence. From the architectural brilliance of the Duomo, the baptistery, the numerous churches and the monastery, which houses a fine selection of Florentine paintings, to Michelangelo’s ‘David,’ now on display in the Accademia, the sights available in Florence are world renowned. If you are spending an evening in Florence, have dinner at the Enoteca Pinchiorri, a double Michelin-starred restaurant serving traditional and experimental Florentine cuisine. Siena, however, is less well-known than Florence, though it remains on a par in terms of outstanding historical monuments and atmosphere. The most impressive spectacle is the incomplete extension to the Duomo di Siena, which was originally commissioned in response to Florence’s own expansion. All that remains is a free-standing archway at the front of the Piazza del Duomo, which would have been the cathedral’s interior, and still has the colourfully tiled floor. On the 2nd of July and 16th August, the Piazza del Campo plays



*Chianti vineyards*

host to a riotous, but atmospheric, medieval tradition. A horseman from each of the 17 districts competes in a horserace around the semi-circular piazza. Nearby San Gimignano is another testament to Italian aspiration. Like Siena, San Gimignano remains incomplete, with the only evidence of its earlier dreams being the many looming towers that rise out of the village squares. Perhaps also take a brief trip into Volterra, a brooding village of tall buildings and exceptionally narrow streets, known for its austere beauty and charm. Many other Chianti villages are within driving distance; such as Certaldo, Colle di Val d’Elsa, with its imposing fortified façade and former moat and drawbridge, and Monteriggioni, a small hilltop hamlet still encased in its original walls, and surrounded by vineyards and olive groves. Of an evening retire to your ivy-covered hotel to indulge in traditional Chianti foods and your luxurious room.

## **DAYS FOUR TO SIX: Drive southeast to Loro Ciuffenna, where you will stay for three nights**

From Panzano, remain in Chianti Country but drive on to Loro Ciuffenna, a higgledy-piggledy village that clusters around the gorge of a rocky river, and your hotel, Relais Villa Belpoggio. Loro Ciuffenna was voted one of the most beautiful villages in Italy, and wandering along its irregular streets, it is easy to see why. Cross over the mediaeval single-arched bridge over the ravine, and seek out the two remaining original castle gates, one of which is now the clock tower. Look

around the Church of Santa Maria Assunta to see the 14th and 15th century frescoes. Or drive three minutes out of Loro Ciuffenna to see the Pieve de Gropina, reputed to be the most beautiful Pieve (church with the right to baptise) in Tuscany. Arrange your visit with a tour guide to ensure you can visit the haunting underground Romanesque tombs. One of the crowning glories of Loro Ciuffenna, however, is the lesser-known Mulino ad Acqua, a beautiful old watermill at the bottom of the village. As pretty as something out of a fairy-tale, this mill really captures the spirit of the old village. Drive no more than 43 minutes south to Arezzo and its neighbouring villages, where the Valdarno Valley meets its three neighbours, to see one of Tuscany’s most illustrious areas. Arezzo’s history in gold-smithing has made it one of the wealthiest Tuscan towns, and is therefore a centre point for the exploration of magnificent architecture. At the mediaeval Piazza Grande you can sit beside the impressive façade of the Santa Maria della Pieve, with its large bell tower and quadruple layers of grand arches, watching the artists at work in the square and sipping an Italian coffee. Twice a year, this square hosts a large jousting competition, with an atmosphere much like the horserace in Siena, accompanied by costumed parades, numerous competitions and a wealth of exuberant celebrations. Arezzo’s compact layout means that all points of interest are visitable in just a single day, from the mediaeval fortress, the Roman Amphitheatre, and the Church of San Francesco, to the wooden crucifix in the Church of San Domenico. The Duomo San



Villa Grazioli, Latium

Donato is adorned with original stained glass dating back to mediaeval times. The Duomo itself is an imposing building, grand despite its minimalist exterior detail, with a warm regal charm that suits the Arezzo style. For wine-tasting opportunities, head out into the neighbouring villages. The Villa la Ripa, for example, is a grand private home, surrounded by vineyards that fuel the independent, family business. The Villa offers vineyard tours, tasting sessions, and an opportunity to pick up some aromatic Tuscan souvenirs. To further escape the tourist spots, head into Cortona, Aghieri, or Monterchi on the hunt for the local goat's cheese or Florentine steak.

### **DAY SEVEN: Drive south to Orvieto, and stay overnight**

Continue south on your seventh day, out of hilly Tuscany and onto the jagged volcanic landscape of Orvieto in southwestern Umbria. Orvieto is a surreal settlement that seems to merge with its surrounding landscape, as vertical rocky walls become the walls of the picturesque village houses and the cathedral rises from the centre like a mountain peak. With limited time in Orvieto, it is essential to take a tour of the famous underground city. An ancient network forgotten about until its recent rediscovery, the underground city is comprised of over 1200 caves, as well as wells, rooms, and the remains of an old mill and animal enclosures. Descend into Il Labirinto di Adriano to navigate a smaller network that existed underneath a popular pastry shop and explore the private museum.

Above ground, Orvieto has its own beautiful cathedral; much more ornate than the Duomo in Arezzo and with a colourful façade. Or visit the Torre del Moro clock tower, the Etruscan Temple of Belvedere and the necropolis, or the Palazzo del Popolo. Just south of the town are the gardens of Sacro Bosco at Bomarzo, a wooded park with a collection of intriguing and eccentric stone sculptures which date from the 16th century. Your hotel for the night is the elegant and unassuming Hotel Palazzo Piccolomini, set in a building once owned by nobility.

### **DAYS EIGHT TO TEN: Drive further south to Frascati, where you will stay for three nights**

From understated luxury to the overtly grand and ornate, your next stop on this touring holiday is at the Park Hotel Villa Grazioli in Frascati, located in the historic region of Latium. Spend your days relaxing by the pool or in the hanging gardens and exploring the noble rooms and their wealth of exquisite art on the ground floor of the hotel. Taste the delicate Frascati white wines at nearby wineries, go walking in the Alban Hills where charming towns and villages are scattered throughout, or visit the coastal city of Anzio, known as being a landing site during World War II. Also within easy reach are two spectacular yet vastly different gardens – the Giardini della Landriana, an unusual garden which is a mass of colour from April to October, combining luxurious English planting and formal Italian structure; and the Giardino

di Ninfa, an amazingly special place with a fantastic collection of plants from all over the world, all of which flourish in the idyllic site. Frascati is one of the hilltop villages that makes up the Castelli Romani, famed for their popularity with Romans seeking fresh air and a break from the city. The most impressive building in Frascati is the Villa Aldobrandini, a palace that seems to dominate the town built for a nephew of the Pope. The main attraction of the town, however, is its relaxed atmosphere and excellent cuisine. The 23rd of June, for example, is the date of the Sagra della Lumaca, an outdoors feast of snails, and in October, Frascati holds the Sagra del Vino, the local wine festival. Either choose to spend your final day in Rome before catching your return flight, or take a trip the day before to make sure you have enough time to explore. The beauty of the world's most romantic city and hub of the Roman Empire needs no introduction; the imposing Colosseum, the Pantheon, the Roman Temples, the various Forums dedicated to the emperors, and the Roman Baths all have reputations as outstanding cultural and historical sites that precede them. However, for something lesser-known in the tourist world, head to the Church of San Clemente behind the Colosseum. This single small site holds an incomprehensible degree of history; the current church was built upon the ruins of one of the first Christian basilicas, which, in turn, was built on top of the ruins of the Temple of Mithras, which dates back to the time of Augustus. From the Church of San Clemente, you can walk out onto a perfectly preserved Roman alleyway that is well worth the investigation. After scratching the surface of what Rome and the Alban Hills have to offer, retire to Frascati for some of the good food and hospitality it is known for.

### **DAY ELEVEN: Drive into Rome for your return flight to London**

Return to Rome for one final tour before embarking your return flight to London to complete this touring holiday.

#### **DRIVING TIMES**

Pisa to Panzano: 1 hour 40 minutes  
 Panzano to Loro Ciuffenna: 1 hour 5 minutes  
 Loro Ciuffenna to Orvieto: 1 hour 30 minutes  
 Orvieto to Frascati: 1 hour 30 minutes  
 Frascati to Rome: 30 minutes

#### **OPTIONAL**

It is possible to add extra nights in any of these locations. Please contact one of our Personal Travel Specialists for recommendations of additional stops.

## HOTELS

These are the charming hotels featured in this touring holiday from Tuscany to the Alban Hills near Rome. Alternative hotels are available in some destinations - please contact us for full details.

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### TUSCANY

#### **Villa le Barone 4 star**

The Hotel Villa le Barone is a charming hotel just outside the picturesque village of Panzano in the heart of the Chianti Classico wine producing region, with outstanding views over the vineyards which start right at the hotel and stretch into the distance. It was once the home of the famous Della Robbia family and today is owned by their descendants Count and Countess Aloisi de Larderel. In its transformation from private house to hotel it has retained all its charm and character. The Villa le Barone today consists of four separate houses, in which the bedrooms are located, surrounded by a shady garden with reclining seats and hammocks, terrace and swimming pool. The main villa is built in the style of the region with creamy white walls, terracotta tiles and stone roof, brown wooden shutters and thick stone walls. The ceilings are vaulted inside and in the charming lounge there is an open fire-place (where a log fire burns in cool weather), wooden panelled doors, comfortable chairs and original library of antique books. Flowers or fresh fruit and bottled water are supplied regularly. Some of the rooms enjoy wonderful views of the vineyards and the village of Panzano. The Villa le Barone is a charming and relaxed hotel full of regional flavour.

#### **Villa Belpoggio Country house**

A charming boutique hotel in the Chianti region, Relais Villa Belpoggio boasts an authentic Tuscan style within refined landscaped gardens. Surrounded by olive groves, these gardens are characterised by pristine lawns and rose bushes, while expansive views typify the region, looking over the Pratomagno woods, the Chianti Mountains and the Arno Valley. The elegant mansion itself dates back to the 17th century and its rich history is evident in the antiques that decorate the warm and welcoming interior. Guest accommodation is certainly boutique, with each of the mere 10 guestrooms individually decorated to reflect the uniqueness of each room's dimensions. Some feature exposed stone floors and walls and others offer a distinctly Tuscan feel with terracotta floor tiles, dark wood furniture, log fires and wrought



*Villa le Barone, Tuscany*

iron bedsteads. Of the nine double rooms and one Junior Suite, certain room configurations make up apartments suitable for up to six people. This makes Relais Villa Belpoggio an excellent option for families. The restaurant is as authentic as it gets, with exposed stone walls and an arched redbrick ceiling taking a carriage shape. Dine here twice a week and spend your other evenings exploring the number of rustic dining venues in the vicinity. You may also participate in onsite cookery courses, which are a fabulous introduction to regional cuisine. Also within the grounds is a small swimming pool, which is a wonderful place to take in the spectacular scenery, and a small chapel is a characterful addition. The natural environment beyond the estate promises an array of outdoor pursuits to help you get to know the landscape, from horse-riding, mountain-biking and trekking. More subdued options include golf, treatments at the thermal spa as well as the onsite cookery courses. Relais Villa Belpoggio is an intimate base for experiencing rural Tuscany, whilst Florence, Siena, and Arezzo are just a daytrip away.

### ORVIETO

#### **Palazzo Piccolomini 4 star**

Former home of the wealthy Piccolomini pontificate family, Palazzo Piccolomini is a remarkable 16th-century building where a combination of Renaissance, medieval and Etruscan architectural elements come together to create a refined and atmospheric property of exceptional heritage and character. Situated in the heart of hilltop Orvieto, just steps from the cathedral and shopping area of Piazza della Repubblica and facing Piazza Ranieri, the Palazzo Piccolomini has undergone extensive renovation and restorative works to bring it back to its original historical splendour, yet with a nod to the contemporary, too. Serving a delicious breakfast each morning, the breakfast room is full of authentic character with a giant stone pillar supporting a coved ceiling, an ancient well and medieval stone staircase, whilst the frescoed lounge bar pays homage to the hotel's opulent past. The Hotel Palazzo Piccolomini consists of 32 rooms and suites, simply decorated in neutral tones with chestnut wood furnishings and terracotta tiled floors. Dining opportunities are plentiful in the many excellent and atmospheric restaurants and cafes surrounding the Hotel Palazzo Piccolomini.



*Palazzo Piccolomini, Orvieto*



*Villa Belpoggio, Tuscany*



*Villa Grazioli, Frascati*

## LATIUM

### **Park Hotel Villa Grazioli 4 star**

Built by Cardinal Antonio Carafa in the 16th century, the Park Hotel Villa Grazioli occupies a commanding hillside position below the slopes of Monte Tuscolo in over 15,000 square metres of arboreal parkland, overlooking Tivoli, the sea, and the ancient city of Rome. Today a member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World group, this refined establishment offers sumptuous elegance in abundance, with an ornate gallery, beautiful spiral staircase and wood-panelled and frescoed ceilings exuding an air of grandeur and opulence. A veritable museum of 16th- and 17th-century artworks, Park Hotel Villa Grazioli is brim full of artistic masterpieces by renowned names such as Ciampelli, Carracci and Pannini. The 62 rooms are situated between the main villa and two 18th-century annexes located in the secular park, connected to the main house through two underground tunnels. The Paggeria plays host to Classic rooms which are decorated and furnished in a country style in hues of peach, burnt orange and cream. There are also a number of rooms with terrace

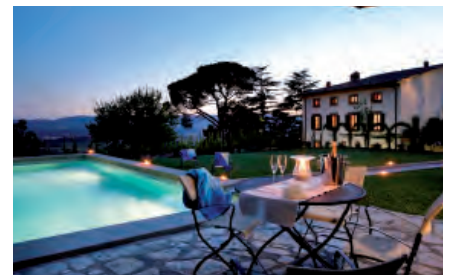
overlooking the Hill of Tuscolo. The Limonaia meanwhile offers classically-decorated, garden-facing rooms, whilst Elite rooms are slightly larger and boast wood ceilings. With splendid views over the gardens and towards Rome, the Charme Deluxe rooms and suites are situated in the main building as are the elegant Acquaviva Restaurant, serving a menu of Mediterranean specialities, and the vaulted Eliseo Bar, decorated with reproduction monochromatic stuccos. In summer, the Park Hotel Villa Grazioli's restaurant moves outdoors to the terrace, with wonderful panoramic vistas of the hanging gardens and Rome beyond. There's an inviting outdoor pool in the grounds, with golfing, water sports and a wellness centre all just a short distance away. The Park Hotel Villa Grazioli offers a complimentary shuttle service to and from Frascati railway station, where direct services run to Rome Termini station, bringing the multitude of treasures of the Eternal City within easy touching distance. All in all, a traditional and historical hotel tranquilly situated amidst the Frascati winelands and Castelli Romani.



*Villa le Barone, Tuscany*



*Villa Grazioli, Frascati*



*Villa Belpoggio, Tuscany*

# MAP OF TOUR FROM TUSCANY TO THE ALBAN HILLS NEAR ROME

The map below illustrates the route outlined in this touring itinerary, with overnight stops and places of interest highlighted.



## GENERAL INFORMATION

This tailor-made touring holiday is one of several suggested touring holidays we can offer you exactly as it is but also with any alterations you might want including extra nights in one or more places or adding in extra places. All our tours can be extended so that you can include a longer stay in one mountain or lake resort too, perhaps at the end of the itinerary. Do call to discuss the options with our travel consultants.

### OUR TOURS

**Our tailor-made touring holidays are suggested itineraries which can be adapted in numerous ways. They can be fly-drive (with flight and hire-car included), self-drive (with ferry or Eurotunnel included with your own car) or rail and hire-car.**

### FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENTS

Our arrangements are very flexible in that you choose to travel on any day you want, subject to availability of your chosen transport and hotels. As mentioned above, additional nights can be added at any point.

### OUR PRICES

The sample prices mentioned in this leaflet are generally a 'from' price based on the cheapest season of travel. However, train fares and hotel rates can change (up and down depending on offers), so we give you an accurate price for your holiday when we provide you with a quotation. Our sample prices should be used as an indication of how much a particular combination will cost and to show the differences on average between the hotel categories on offer.

### PRICE INFORMATION IN MORE DETAIL

Prices from **£1,820 per person** based on two people sharing a double or twin room.

#### What's included?

Accommodation on bed and breakfast as below:

- 3 nights in a Classic room at the Villa le Barone in Panzano, Tuscany
- 3 nights in a Classic room at the Villa Belpoggio in Loro Ciuffenna, Tuscany
- 1 night in a Standard room at the Palazzo Piccolomini in Orvieto, Umbria
- 3 nights in a Classic room at the Park Hotel Villa Grazioli in Frascati, Latium

One cookery lesson per person at the Villa Belpoggio

Scheduled flights with British Airways London Heathrow to Pisa, returning from Rome Fiumicino to London Heathrow.

Group B hire car for the duration of your holiday

#### What's not included?

Early check-in or late check-out at any hotels (though we can arrange this on request at additional cost).

Any other services not mentioned above, such as transfers and meals except breakfast at hotels.

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### BOOKING CONDITIONS

Our booking conditions apply to all holidays. A copy can be found on our website and a copy is also sent to you with a written quotation and when you make a booking.

### FINANCIAL PROTECTION

Expressions Holidays offers full financial protection for all holidays you book with us. If your holiday includes a flight, the ATOL (3076) covers the costs of the holiday. If the holiday does not include a flight, it is the ABTOT bond that protects the cost of the holiday. We are also members of AITO (the Association of Independent Tour Operators) and ABTA.



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### HOW TO BOOK

To make a booking, just phone us on

**01392 441275**

and we can take you through the details we need and start the booking process. A deposit is required to confirm the arrangements and this can be paid by debit or credit card over the phone. The level of the deposit will be confirmed at the point of booking and will depend on the ticketing deadlines of the rail tickets involved in your booking.