

Treasures of Tuscany

*Palaces & Great Estates in
Siena and its Countryside*

October 14–20, 2024

With an optional post-tour extension
to Florence, October 20–23, 2024



Heritage Tours
by American Ancestors



DICAMILLO
TRAVEL

ITINERARY

Monday, October 14

Our program begins in Florence, with private transfers arranged to greet all arrivals at Peretola Airport (FLR), making the 1-hour transfer along the Chianti hills to Siena. Upon entering Siena's imposing medieval walls, guests will be dropped off at the five-star **Grand Hotel Continental**, ideally located on the Via Banchi di Sopra. Touring begins with an afternoon walking tour introducing Siena and its one-of-a-kind medieval urban fabric, virtually unchanged since the 1400s. A highlight will be a visit to the **Palazzo Pubblico** and its **Civic Museum**, where two great artistic masterpieces from Siena's Golden Age in the 1300s – Simone Martini's *Maestà* and Lorenzetti's *Allegory of Good and Bad Government* - provide context for understanding the city. Our first day concludes with a splendid dinner at a restaurant specializing in truffles, which will be fully in season.

Tuesday, October 15

The entire day is dedicated to a slow and in-depth discovery of Siena's unique treasures, both public and private. The morning is spent in the city's cathedral complex, perched on the Siena's highest hill. Our first stop is the magnificent black-and-white-striped **Duomo** itself, with its spectacular marble floor and many art masterpieces. Immediately adjacent, we find two other treasures – a recently reopened **Crypt** discovered 15 years ago and filled with colorful frescoes from the 13th century, and the **Cathedral Museum**, with its panoramic views over the medieval city and the dazzling *Maestà* altarpiece by Duccio, unquestionably the greatest glory of Sienese art. We break for an independent lunch at a local restaurant or trattoria of your choosing. In the afternoon, two private homes are opened for us. One boasts an unexpected garden – a luscious green oasis inside a city of bricks. The other is a gracious family home where our hosts will offer a delightful wine and cheese reception while showing us their gorgeously painted ceiling (1529) by the Sienese Mannerist master Beccafumi. After free time, we reconvene for a dinner at one of Siena's lovely restaurants.

Wednesday, October 16

We spend today immersed in some of the world's most gorgeous landscapes, meandering between the spectacular hills of the Crete Senesi and the Val d'Orcia. Our first stop is the remote abbey of **Monte Oliveto Maggiore**, a tranquil spiritual oasis amidst the beautiful but wild hills of the Crete. Its architectural



Allegory of Good and Bad Government
by Ambrogio Lorenzetti (1338-1339)



Duomo di Siena (Joe de Sousa)



Pienza (Jordan Cook)



Pienza (Jordan Cook)



Valdimontone di Siena (Dimitry B)



Piazza Salimbeni at night (Jordan Cook)

beauty, precious Renaissance frescoes by Sodoma, and homemade products made by the monks and their helpers in the monastery shop make for a memorable visit. For lunch, we are invited into one of the **area's most astonishing private estates**, where the owners have prepared a home-cooked seasonal meal for us. The house has spectacular views over the UNESCO-protected Orcia Valley. In the afternoon, we take in the beauty of **Pienza**, a small "ideal Renaissance town" shaped by favorite son Pope Pius II in the 1450s. The combination of Renaissance harmony and shopping makes Pienza a worthwhile stop. We return to Siena where dinner and the evening are on your own.

Thursday, October 17

Our morning is at leisure with time to rest, shop, or explore Siena's delightful medieval streets independently. At midday, we head out to a **beautiful family-owned and operated vineyard in the Chianti hills**, where we'll stroll amongst the vines and then join our hosts for a rustic country lunch inside the lovely old stone house. Back in Siena, we'll have a special **afternoon walking tour** built around Siena's truly unique Palio horse race and the "contrada" neighborhoods at the heart of it. Our expert guide will help you understand this fascinating medieval heritage, and we'll visit the home church and small museum of one of the contradas, with a chance to admire historic palio banners. Before returning to the hotel, we are invited into a **beautiful private palazzo** for an inside look at this historic property with a reception featuring traditional Tuscan food and wine offered in our honor.

Friday, October 18

Having explored the countryside south and east of Siena, today we head west into the more rustic, forested Montagnola region. A scenic drive takes us to the remote **Abbey of San Galgano**, a magical half-ruined medieval church and complex in a beautiful setting - a romantic Italian countryside idyll, with elegant architecture but no roof and the church open to the Tuscan sky. Next is the tiny hamlet of **Torri**, where a **private historic residence - opened just for us** - hides a stunning medieval architectural surprise. In the early afternoon, we are the **guests of Rome's famous Aldobrandini family in their Sienese country home**, exclusively opened for us. Our visit will begin with a hearty Sienese lunch served in the estate's lovely old limonaia. Next, we continue with a visit to Perruzzi's perfect Renaissance family chapel and a stroll through the remarkable 16th-century gardens. Back in Siena, the remainder of the day is yours to enjoy at leisure.

Saturday, October 19

Our morning tour today is devoted to some of Siena's "minor" monuments that are nonetheless well worth a visit. This will include the **church of San Domenico** (home church of St. Catherine of Siena), the fascinating medieval complex of San Francesco (including the university's beautiful Economics library), and the **State Archives of Siena**, housed inside a richly decorated Renaissance palazzo. There is time for an independent lunch, while this afternoon a guided tour is offered at the **Pinacoteca Nazionale**, a must for art lovers because it contains the world's best single collection of Siennese art, with many "pre-Renaissance" masterpieces from the 14th and 15th centuries. Later today, we make one last short trip into the countryside, this time to the **home of a local nobleman who will open his beautiful family villa for us**. We'll tour the gardens, which include a green theater and a kitchen garden with a panoramic view, and then the house's fascinating interiors, many still preserving fine late 18th-century interiors. Our farewell dinner will be served in the grand old kitchen of the villa, accompanied by fine wines produced on site.

Sunday, October 20

Our main tour comes to a close this morning, with private transfers to the Florence FLR airport provided for those flying home today.



Piazza del Campo, Siena (Alessandro Stech)



Maestà by Duccio di Buoninsegna (1308)



Siena (Alessandro Rossi)

OPTIONAL FLORENCE EXTENSION

Sunday, October 20

Transfer by private coach to Florence, where we will spend three days discovering spectacular art and amazing places. This morning we focus on the great Franciscan **church of Santa Croce**, with its monuments to great Italians, frescoes by Giotto, and the serene Pazzi Chapel. Next, we are guests of a noble family for a tour of their **stately 16th-century palace home** as well as a delicious lunch served in one of the beautifully frescoed salons. Our afternoon features two outstanding museums – the **Bargello**, with its treasure trove of Renaissance sculpture, and the **Museo dell’Opera del Duomo**, which houses fine sculptures by Donatello and the original Baptistry door panels by Ghiberti and Brunelleschi. We check into our luxurious rooms in the Hotel Helvetia and Bristol, an iconic Old World style five-star hotel ideally located in the old city. Dinner is on your own.

Monday, October 21

Today, we visit a number of extraordinary places not commonly found on Florentine itineraries. First, we are guests inside **one of Italy’s most revered art restoration laboratories** for an up-close look at how skilled technicians preserve Florence’s vast array of historic art masterpieces. We then head just outside Florence for a private guided tour and elegant lunch at the **Villa Gamberaia**, one of the prettiest historic villas nestled in the scenic hills that surround the Renaissance city. This afternoon, we’ll delve into Florence’s artisan traditions with a **private opening of the Antico Setificio Fiorentino**, a workshop that still produces fine silk products using antique machinery and techniques. Dinner and the evening are independent.

Tuesday, October 22

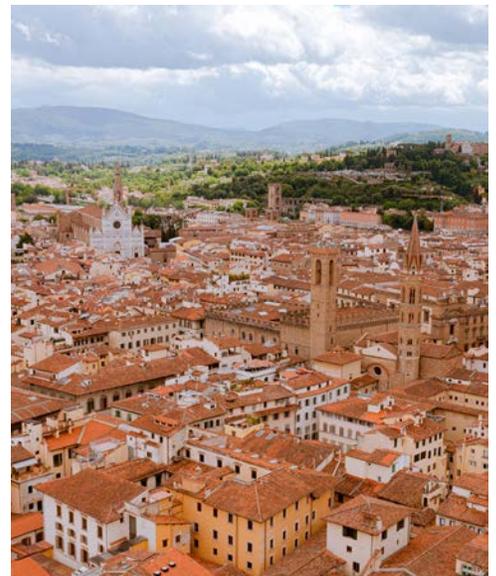
Our morning is dedicated to a carefully planned exploration of the legendary **Uffizi Gallery**, where our guide will share fascinating stories behind many great masterpieces, and free time will also be given to explore on your own. After a light lunch at a nearby café, we cross the lovely **Ponte Vecchio** in order to spend the afternoon in the Oltrarno, where our highlights include the **Pitti Palace** and its **Palatine Gallery**, plus the newly restored/reopened **Brancacci Chapel** with landmark frescoes by Masolino and Masaccio. Tonight, celebrate the conclusion of our great Tuscan adventure with a grand farewell dinner at one of the city’s finest restaurants.

Wednesday, October 23

Private transfers are provided to the Florence airport to meet individual flights home.



Duomo, Florence



Florence Cityscape (Drew Dempsey)



Primavera by Sandro Botticelli (ca1477-1482) at the Uffizi Gallery

ABOUT OUR TOUR LEADER



Curt DiCamillo

Curt is the Curator of Special Collections at New England Historic Genealogical Society (NEHGS). Before he came to NEHGS he worked for the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the National Trust for Scotland. Curt is a noted historian and a recognized authority on the British country house, about which he has written, lectured, and taught in the U.S. and abroad. Since 1999 he has maintained an award-winning database on the web, TheDiCamillo.com, which seeks to document every English, Scottish, Welsh, and Irish country house ever built, standing or demolished. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, is listed in *Who's Who in America*, *Who's Who in the World*, is a Fellow of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and a member of the Council of the American Museum in Britain.

ACCOMMODATION

Grand Hotel Continental, Siena

Housed in the impeccably restored 16th-century Palazzo Gori Pannini and located directly on Siena's most beautiful shopping street, the Grand Hotel Continental is easily the finest and most luxurious hotel in the old city of Siena. With only 50 rooms, service is attentive, and the spacious rooms feature both historic refinements and modern comforts. Special highlights include a soaring atrium bar, a spectacular wine cellar, and beautifully frescoed salons and gathering spaces. A generous buffet breakfast will help you start each day in style, and many of Siena's great attractions and fine shopping are within an easy walk. The hotel's location on the pedestrianized "main street" of Siena – the via Banchi di Sopra – means almost no traffic noise and lots of local color right outside the main door.



Lobby of the Grand Hotel Continental, Siena

Hotel Helvetia & Bristol, Florence

Steeped in history and glamour, Hotel Helvetia & Bristol has been enchanting guests since 1885, when Florence was a popular stop on the Grand Tour. A recent renovation added a new wing with interiors by celebrated designer Anouska Hempel and a large luxury spa. The hotel is also a culinary destination with two restaurants, a bar and a variety of culinary experiences.



Lobby of the Hotel Helvetia & Bristol, Florence

American Ancestors/New England Historic Genealogical Society is America's founding genealogical organization, the most respected name in family history, and one of the leading non-profit organizations in the field. We create enriching opportunities for members and the public to research their own family history, attend educational programs and tours, exhibitions, and other inspirational experiences that communicate the power and importance of family history.

To learn more, visit AmericanAncestors.org: <https://www.americanancestors.org>

TREASURES OF TUSCANY

October 14–20, 2024

with optional extension to Florence, October 20–23, 2024

Tour Cost:

Land Package, Main Tour: \$8,995

Single Supplement, Main Tour: \$1,495

Land Package, Extension: \$3,995

Single Supplement, Extension: \$1,095

Tour price is per person, based on double occupancy, with a minimum of 12 paying participants.

Deposit & Final Payment: A deposit of \$1,500 per person is required to reserve a spot on the main tour; an additional \$500 per person is required to reserve a spot on the post-tour. Deposits are payable by check or credit card (MasterCard, Visa, or American Express). Final balance will be invoiced and is due on or before July 1, 2024. Final balance payments are payable by check, bank wire, or ACH transfer to International Seminar Design, Inc. Registrations will be accepted beyond this date on a space-available basis.

Activity Level: Moderate to strenuous; good walking ability is advised. Some museum and palace visits require use of staircases, and there will be a moderate amount of walking on uneven ground. The topography of Siena is very hilly, and some steep ascents and descents are unavoidable.

Flights: Airfare is not included in the tour price. Participants are responsible for all aspects of their round-trip air arrangements to Florence. Please do not purchase airline tickets until the operation of the tour is confirmed.

Terms & Conditions: American Ancestors and International Seminar Design, Inc. (ISDI) require that all tour participants be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to participate on the tour. Upon receipt of registration, ISDI will send registrant a Participant Tour Agreement detailing the full terms and conditions for this tour. This document must be signed and returned to ISDI before participant's registration is considered complete and any arrangements can be confirmed.

Travel Insurance: Travel Insurance is not included in the tour cost, but participants are strongly encouraged to purchase a travel protection plan in conjunction with this tour, including coverage of trip cancellation, trip interruption, emergency evacuation/repatriation, medical expenses, lost or damaged baggage, and other expenses and/or losses incurred due to unexpected situations. Should a participant cancel at any time after registering for the tour, American Ancestors and ISDI must strictly abide by the cancellation policy outlined herein. Travel insurance information will be sent upon tour registration.

Tour Price Inclusions:

Main tour: 6 nights' accommodation at the Grand Hotel Continental, Siena; breakfast daily at the hotel, 3 lunches, 3 dinners, 3 receptions in private homes/venues; wine with included lunches and dinners; private airport transfers upon arrival and departure

Post tour extension: 3 nights' accommodations at the Hotel Helvetia & Bristol, Florence; breakfast daily at the hotel, 3 lunches, 1 dinner; group transfer from Siena to Florence; private airport transfers at conclusion of the tour

Both Segments: water, non-alcoholic beverages, and wine with all lunches and dinner; land transportation by private motor coach; entrance fees to sites and visits listed in the itinerary; leadership of Curt DiCamillo for duration of the tour; services of an American Ancestors tour manager; expert local guides for all touring; gratuities for guides and drivers and at included meals; handling of 2 pieces of luggage per person upon arrival and departure from the hotel; bottled water on coach; service charges and taxes.

Tour Price Exclusions: Airline tickets, airline taxes and surcharges, and baggage fees; airport portorage; passport, visa, or ETIAS fees; meals other than those specified in the itinerary; gratuities for hotel housekeeping; personal items such as telephone calls, room service, valet service, à-la-carte orders, specialty wines and liquors, laundry charges, travel extensions, or tour deviations; entry or departure fees levied by local governments; travel insurance; any other items not specifically included in the itinerary.

Cancellations & Refunds: Cancellation by participant must be made in writing to American Ancestors and is effective only upon acknowledged receipt by American Ancestors. There is a non-refundable registration and planning fee of \$500 per person regardless of cancellation date. Written cancellation received by American Ancestors on or before July 1, 2024: full refund minus \$500 per person registration and planning fee. Written cancellation received by American Ancestors between July 2 and August 30, 2024: full refund minus \$5,000 per person cancellation fee (includes registration and planning fee). Written cancellations received by American Ancestors on or after August 31, 2024: no refund. Tour registration is non-transferable. In the case of cancellation, substitutions are not allowed. After the tour has commenced, no refunds will be issued for any reason including, but not limited to, unused portions of tour. If the tour is cancelled by American Ancestors or ISDI due to low enrollment, active registrants will receive a full refund of all tour payments.

For more information:

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