

# “Tour de Bel Sogno”

*The Beautiful Dream of Tuscany and the Amalfi Coast*

***Tuscany: Siena, Monteriggioni, Montalcino, Montepulciano, Pienza and Bagno Vignoni. The Amalfi Coast: the three islands of Ischia, Procida and Capri, Positano’s annual Seafood Festival and Naples***



**A THIRTEEN DAY ITALIAN JOURNEY**

**September 20<sup>th</sup> – October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017**

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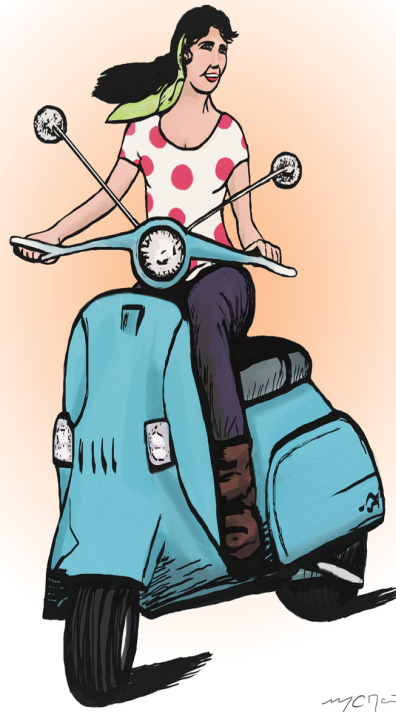
# Day#1: Departure for Tuscany

**Wednesday: September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

In conjunction with AAA Travel (Ithaca, NY), Keyrow Tours is pleased to make all flight arrangements, including primary flights originating from anywhere in the United States and international flights.

We will depart from a major international airport located on the east coast of the United States [usually JFK (NY) or Philadelphia (PA)] and fly into Florence, Italy with one international layover.

Transportation to and from your primary airport of departure is each person's responsibility.



***“What is the fatal charm of Italy? What do we find there that can be found nowhere else? I believe it is a certain permission to be human, which other places, other countries, lost long ago.”***  
~ Erica Jong

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# Day #2: “Life in the Tuscan Hills”

Thursday: September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017

## **Flight arrival into Florence’s Peretola Airport**

After passport control and collecting our luggage, private minivans will carry us to our private Tuscan villa.

## **Mid-afternoon villa check-in**

Welcome to the glorious hills and countryside of the Tuscany Region, where simple pleasures are elevated to an art form. Our home for the next five nights is a beautiful private Tuscan villa, situated in a charming and secluded setting. Our villa will be an oasis as we explore, celebrate and enjoy the heart and bounty of Tuscany.

## **Orientation with time to relax and explore our new surroundings**

## **Light snacks and drinks provided**

## ***Cena!* (Group Dinner!)**



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## Day #3: “Medieval Time Travel”: Monteriggioni and Siena

**Friday: September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2017**

### **Italian Breakfast**

### **Departure for Monteriggioni**

Monteriggioni is located in the Province of Siena. The town is architecturally and culturally significant: As a medieval walled town, it is referenced in Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*. Monteriggioni was built by the Sienese in 1214-1219 as a front line in their wars against Florence. Its circular walls are crowned with fourteen towers. Standing frozen in time, this little gem is a real showcase of medieval architecture and life.

### **Siena**

The historic center of Siena has been declared by UNESCO a World Heritage Site. It is one of the nation's most visited attractions, and is famous for its cuisine, art, museums, medieval cityscape and the *Palio*, a horse race that is held twice a year.

Siena, like other Tuscan hill towns, was first settled in the time of the Etruscans (c. 900–400 BC).

According to local legend, Siena was founded by Senius and Aschius, two sons of Remus and thus the nephews of Romulus, after whom Rome was named. Legend has it that after their father was murdered by Romulus, they fled Rome, taking with them the statue of the she-wolf suckling the infants and appropriating that symbol for the town.

The most famous daughter of this important medieval city is Saint Catherine of Siena: a medieval mystic, poet and feminist-figure of her time. We will learn about Saint Catherine over lunch... and why she referred to God as an “inebriated lover.” Cheers!

***Pranzo!*** (Lunch on your own)

**Return to our villa**

**Day's recap and *Cena!* (Dinner!)**

*“As with circling round of turrets, Monteriggioni crowns his walls;  
E'en thus the shore, encompassing the abyss,  
Was turreted with giants, half their length  
Uprearing, horrible, whom Jove from heaven  
Yet threatens, when his muttering thunder rolls.”*  
~ Dante Alighieri, Hell, canto XXXI, lines 40-45

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# Day#4: “Beautiful Brunello di Montalcino”

**Saturday: September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017**

## **Italian Breakfast**

## **Departure for Montalcino**

The drive to Montalcino is under 2 hours. This hill town is famous for its Brunello di Montalcino wine. The village is located in the beautiful Val d'Orcia area. Like much of Tuscany, the hill upon which Montalcino sits has probably been settled since Etruscan times and records indicate that a church was built here in the 9th century.

The high altitude of the town offers stunning views over the Asso, Ombrone and Arbia valleys that are dotted with olive orchards, vineyards, fields and villages.

## **Tour of the city**

## **Formal wine tasting and *Pranzo!* (Lunch)**

## **Free time to explore Montalcino**

## **Bagno Vignoni**

The ancient village of Bagno Vignoni is located in Tuscany's Val d'Orcia Natural Park. It's famous hot springs and thermal water baths have been used since Roman times. In fact, the spa of Bagno Vignoni was attended by eminent personalities such as Pope Pius II, Saint Catherine of Siena, Lorenzo de Medici and many others who elected the village as their main holiday resort.

## **Return to our villa**

## **Day's Recap**

## ***Cena!* (Dinner on your own)**

*“Traveling forces you to lose sight of all the familiar comforts of home. Nothing is yours except the essential things – air, sleep, dreams, the sea, the sky – all things tending towards the eternal or what we imagine of it.”*

~ Cesare Pavese



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## Day#5: “Florence and Villa Life”

**Sunday: September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

### **Italian Breakfast**

### **Mid morning departure for Florence**

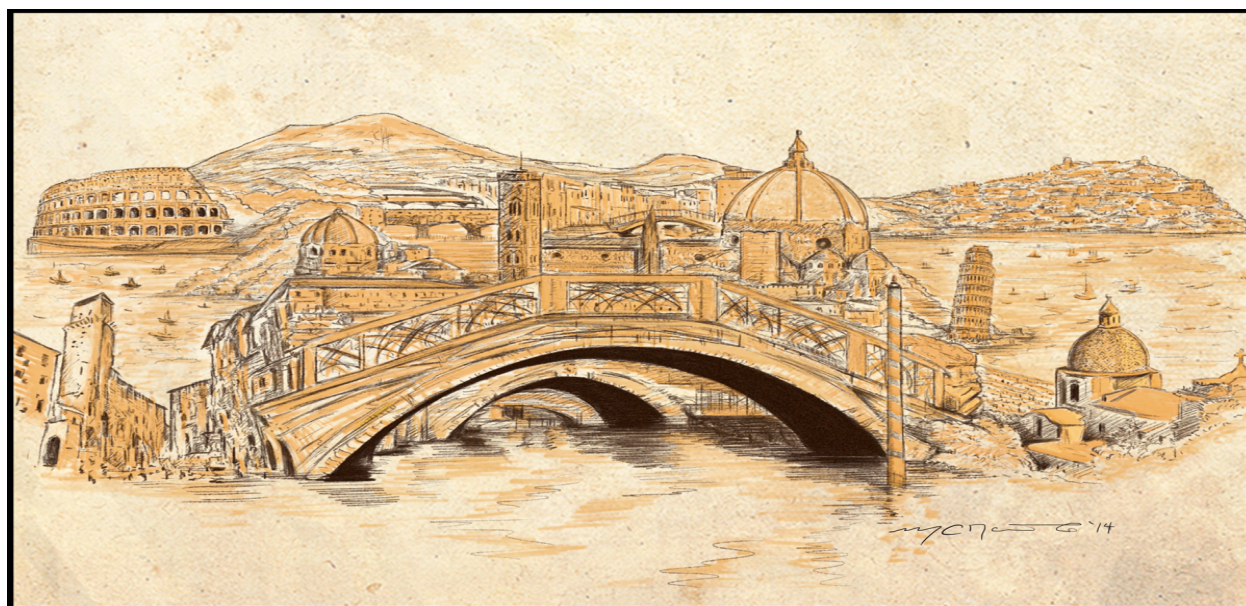
Enjoy a free day in Florence. Book a reservation with Paolo to a museum that you haven't seen: The Uffizi Gallery or the Academia Museum is 20 Euros per person.

Visit the Boboli Gardens, the Duomo Cathedral, the Ponte Vecchio Bridge, Santa Croce Church where Michelangelo is buried, Florence's famous Farmer's Market, “shop ‘til you drop,” or just park yourself at a café on Piazza Signoria to people watch and sip vino.

***Pranzo!*** (Lunch on your own)

**Mid afternoon** return to the villa

***Cena!*** (Group Dinner!) and day's recap



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## Day #6: “Noble Wine and Nibbles”: Montepulciano and Pienza

**Monday: September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

### **Italian Breakfast**

### **Departure for Montepulciano**

The Medieval and Renaissance village of Montepulciano is one of the most attractive hills towns in Tuscany. It is built on the ridge of Monte Poliziano, and its main street stretches for 11.5 kilometers from the Porta al Prato to the Piazza Grande at the top of the hill. The cathedral was built in 1619, and the castle of Montepulciano was first mentioned as a fortified center in the year 715. Of course Montepulciano is famous for not just one, but two excellent wines: **Vino Nobile di Montepulciano** and **Rosso di Montepulciano**. For those who partake in the fruit of the vine, you will have the opportunity to try both!

***Pranzo!*** (Lunch)

### **Pienza**

Nestled between the towns of Montepulciano and Montalcino, this small village was rebuilt by Pope Pius II who was born there, as the ideal Renaissance city and as a retreat for the Pope from Rome. It produces some of the best Pecorino cheese in the world which we will sample! Pienza is known for its annual Pecorino tossing contest. Pass the Pecorino, *per favore!*



***Cena!*** (Dinner) and day's recap

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# Day#7: “Setting Sail for Ischia”

**Tuesday: September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

## **Italian Breakfast**

Morning departure for Florence’s train station

High-speed train to Naples (3 hours)

Boat transfer to the Island of Ischia (40 minute boat ride)

Minivan transfer to the hotel and hotel check-in at Ischia Porto.

***Pranzo!*** (Lunch)

## **Introducing Ischia:**

This volcanic island is the largest of three islands on the Bay of Naples. It is an intriguing collection of spa towns, gardens, forests, white beaches, vineyards and picturesque Mediterranean Sea views. Ischia attracts only a small fraction of the foreign tourists who are usually bound for Capri. Don’t tell them that the beaches and food are much better on Ischia!

Eating is one of the island's great pleasures; while seafood is an obvious specialty, Ischia is also famed for its rabbit, bred on inland farms. Another local specialty is rucolino, a green, liquorice-flavoured liqueur made from arugula (rocket) leaves

Stroll through the “new town”

Free time

***Cena!*** (Group Dinner) and day’s recap

***“The Mediterranean has the color of mackerel, changeable I mean. You don’t always know if it is green or violet. You can’t even say it’s blue because the next moment the changing reflection has taken on a tint of rose or gray.”***

~ Vincent Van Gogh

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# Day #8: "Ischia's Offerings"

**Wednesday: September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

## **Italian Breakfast**

## **Morning Island Tour and afternoon at the Negombo Hydrothermal Resort**

Today we will circle the island. From our village of "Ischia Porto" we will head south to "Ischia Ponte" and the great Aragonese Castle, originally built in 474 BC by Hiero I of Syracuse.

## **Tour of the Aragonese Castle and its gardens**

## **The village and vistas of San Angelo**

## **The village of Forio**

## **An afternoon at the *Negombo Hydrothermal Resort* in S. Montano Bay**

A unique opportunity to relax in the European tradition. This famous outdoor European spa not only features one of the very best beaches on Ischia, but 8 natural outdoor thermal pools of varying temperatures (from 86F to 106F), a seawater swimming pool (ambient temperature), a Turkish steam room (130F), massage therapy (prices not included) and more.

Since the days of the Etruscans, thermal waters have been used by priests in religious rites. As the Romans spread through Italy, they popularized thermalism with the creation of numerous thermal centers throughout the peninsula. Thanks to its volcanic origins, the island of Ischia has one of the richest and most varied hydrothermal resources in the world, with over 100 thermal springs. *Negombo* was conceived to combine the extraordinary therapeutic properties of its thermal waters with a healthy, pleasurable experience. Hit the beach, swim in hot thermal mineral water pools and live in the moment.

***Pranzo!*** (Lunch on you own)

## **Return to hotel**

***Cena!*** (Group Dinner) and day's recap

*"Eternity. It is the sea mingled with the sun."*

- Arthur Rimbaud

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## Day #9: "Procida Promises"

**Thursday: September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

### **Italian Breakfast**

### **Procida Island**

Transportation by public boat will carry us to the smallest island on the Bay of Naples, and its best-kept secret! Procida is a mosaic of lemon groves and pastel-painted houses that is memorably picturesque. Off the tourist radar, this gem is perfect for personal exploring. With ancient Mycene origins dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century BC, its panoramas and typical Mediterranean architecture has made Procida a film set for numerous famous movies including *Il Postino* and *The Talented Mr. Ripley*.

***Pranzo!*** (Lunch on your own in Procida)

Return to Ischia for free time to shop or hit the beach

***Cena!*** (Group dinner in the Old Town) with day's recap



*"Poetry doesn't belong to those who write it; it belongs to those who need it."*

- Mario Ruoppolo in *Il Postino*

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# Day #10: “Life on the Mediterranean Sea”

**Friday: September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

## **Italian Breakfast**

Today we travel and explore the Mediterranean Sea in style. With our own beautiful private boat for the day, we will journey from Ischia to the Island of Capri, and then from Capri to the shores of beautiful Positano.

## **Morning private boat pick-up**

### **A.) The island of Capri**

Our private boat will take us from Ischia to the Island of Capri... a 40 minute boat ride that offers magnificent views of the entire Bay of Naples. We will have time on shore to take in the sights, explore, shop and people watch. Capri is a glamorous island that features high fashion shopping, but also breathtaking panoramic views and hiking...

**Pranzo! (Lunch)** A picnic lunch for the boat ride will be provided.

### **B.) The Blue Grotto**

While we are at Capri, we will experience the famous Blue Grotto: a cave inside of the island. This is a true natural wonder! As the Mediterranean sun shines through the mouth of the cave, it illuminates the water in an incredible display of turquoise blue light. *Availability is dependent on weather conditions.*

### **C.) Departure for Positano/ late afternoon hotel check-in**

The Amalfi Coastline winds its way along scenic cliffs, following the Mediterranean Sea. For many, this is “*Paradiso in Terra*” or “Paradise on Earth!” Enjoy the panoramic views... Our hotel in Positano is an absolute treat: a beachside resort on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Stroll the winding roads of Positano. Take a walk on the beach. There are great ceramic shops, clothing, and opportunities for hiking. Positano is not a place to be “busy” seeing things. It is a place to relax and allow nature’s beauty to touch us in positive and happy ways. Don’t forget to try a little *limoncello* along the way ☺.

### **D.) Free afternoon to enjoy the great outdoors, walk the beach, and explore this little slice of paradise.**

**Cena!** (Group dinner) with day’s recap

# Day #11: "Positano's Annual Seafood Festival"

**Saturday: September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

**Italian Breakfast**

**Free Day in Positano:** Enjoy Positano or take a public boat to either Sorrento or Amalfi

**Pranzo!** (Lunch on your own)

**Cena! (Dinner): Positano's Annual Seafood Festival**

On the last Saturday in September, to mark the end of the summer season on the Amalfi Coast, a Festa del Pesce or Fish Festival is held on Positano's Fornillo beach. A fleet of little fishing boats transports tourists and locals to the beach in front of our hotel! Here, accompanied by live music, visitors taste any number of delicious dishes made with freshly caught fish. The evening's activities include a concert, a demonstration of night fishing and fireworks.



***"Life for the Italians was what it was, no more and no less,  
an interlude between meals."***

~ Abraham Verghese in "Cutting for Stone"

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# Day #12: Happily in Napoli

**Sunday: October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

**Italian Breakfast**

**Free Morning to explore, shop and relax in Positano**

***Pranzo!* (Lunch on your own)**

**Early-afternoon hotel departure for Naples**

Our hotel in Naples is situated on the waterfront bay of Naples, offering breathtaking views of Mount Vesuvius and the Castle dell 'Ovo. After check-in, enjoy a two hour guided walk through the historic district that will include the Cathedral of San Gennaro, the *Via San Gregorio Armeno* (famous for its stalls selling Christmas Nativity scenes), a visit to one of Naples' great shopping districts and couple of other surprises...

***Cena!* (Closing Dinner Pizza Night) with day's recap**

*“When the moon hits your eye like a big pizza pie,  
that's amore!”*

The natives of Naples claim that their city is the original home to authentic pizza. The world's first pizzeria opened its doors in Naples and still remains in business today. Using the simplest of ingredients, Pizza Margherita is a triumph of Neapolitan cuisine... the humble ingredients of fresh San Marzano pomodori (tomatoes), fresh aromatic basil and mozzarella (di bufala) on char-marked dough is all that is required to make this highly-praised and delicious pizza. The colors of red, white, and green represent the official colors of the Italian flag. Fresh, and bubbly-hot straight out of a wood-fired oven... pizza in Naples might change your life!

*“Our battered suitcases were piled on the sidewalk again; we had longer  
ways to go. But no matter, the road is life.”*

*~ Jack Kerouac*

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## Day#13: “Ciao, Italia!”

**Monday: October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2017**

- A.) Early morning departure for Naples airport
- B.) Departure for the United States
- C.) Arrival in U.S.A



**“Open my heart and you will see, graved inside of it, *Italy*.”**  
~ Robert Browning

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# Italy in 2017

## WHAT IS INCLUDED

### Centrally Located Hotels

Double room occupancy in our historic Tuscan villa and three and four-star hotels located in Ischia, Positano and Naples. 5 nights in Tuscany, 3 nights in Ischia, and 2 nights in Positano and 1 night in Naples.

### Meals

Daily Italian breakfast  
Daily exquisite traditional main meal with local wine (lunch or supper)  
Two light meals (lunch or supper)

### All Ground and Sea Transportation

Private mini-van service in Tuscany and Campania  
High speed train from Florence to Naples  
Boat service on the Mediterranean Sea (private and public)

### Keyrow's Services

Paolo will serve as your personal full time director. Together with local experts, he offers daily walking tours and shares his knowledge of each site and region visited.  
Please make known any special needs well in advance of the trip.

*"You may have the Universe, if I may have Italy." ~ Giuseppe Verdi*



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