

## Italy 2024 **A culinary escape to Tuscany**



**Ah, Italy. Once you've been there, you're hooked! And once you've tasted Italian food in the heart of Italy, your culinary expectations will never be the same. Italian cooking is a passion. Tuscan cooking is an art. Join us in the heart of Tuscany for an amazing week.**



**HOSTED BY VETERAN TRAVELERS AND ITALIAN FOODIES** [Gail Norton \(The Cookbook Co. Cooks\)](#) and [Judy Wood \(Chef, Caterer\)](#)

We are familiar with pasta; we have memorized a handful of favourite sauces, happily doused Parmesan on most anything; we have been up close and personal with risotto. But to understand Italian cuisine, we found we had to experience it at its source. Thousands of years have contributed to a vast, rich culinary legacy that we now want to help you explore in one of the most beautiful locations in the world – Tuscany.

As cooks, we have always drawn inspiration from French and Italian cuisines: the local produce, the recipes and the dining style. The trip we are planning is the culmination of years of exploring the love that Italians have for their regional foods and wines. We can think of no better experience than to gather together a group of passionate food people, like you, who would like to join us for this unique opportunity in one of our favourite parts of Tuscany.

Cortona is a historic hillside village in the Tuscan hills, dating back to the 4th century B.C., close to Siena and Florence. Surrounded by olive groves and lush vineyards, it looks out on the stunning Valdichiana countryside and overlooks Lake Trasimeno. The area abounds with wonderful food markets and restaurants, and amazing history. In autumn the air is warm, and is perfect for our excursions.

Our accommodations are a beautiful villa on the outskirts of Cortona. The villa is a converted 17th century farmhouse, with large, lovely gardens surrounding a huge pool. The kitchens and dining areas are perfect for our cooking classes and demos, and have every convenience. We will begin every day with fresh fruit, bread and pastries and, of course, the Italian necessity, strong coffee. Our program will revolve around the local culture regarding all things culinary. We will explore the region's products and learn how to cook with them. You, too, can live like an Italian, and bring some of the Italian zest for life home with you. Come with us and learn how to create *la dolce vita!*

# Italy 2024 Cooking demos and classes

Gather around as we cook the dishes that we have enjoyed for our whole lives. We'll explore local products and how to cook with them to achieve the best flavour possible. Cooking together is a great fun.



# Italy 2024 The truffle hunt

What better way to spend a morning than walking through the lush Tuscan countryside with your truffle guide and his dogs! Be a part of the action as you hunt for that prized truffle.



# Italy 2024 Our itinerary for the week

**1st evening:** We gather everyone at I Pagliai, our home for the week, for a light dinner to get to know one another and talk about how our culinary adventure will unfold.

**2nd day:** We visit the ancient village of Pienza, a quaint and picturesque village renowned as the birthplace of Pecorino. Stroll the shops, have a espresso and enjoy one of the most breathtaking views from the walkway that circles the town. From there, if you choose, walk through the hills to the neighbouring village Montechiello where we will lunch on the patio overlooking the spectacular hills and valleys. Daria, the charming owner of La Porta, prepares a special menu for us. We return to I Pagliai where we prepare our dinner.

**3rd day:** We head out to Il Casale organic farm to participate in a truffle hunt. A morning of walking through the area with the little dogs being egged on to 'dove dove' (find, find!)! Ulisse and Sandra's farm is perched on top of a hill and is completely sustainable. We will return with the truffles and enjoy a lunch enjoying the beautiful vista from the patio. We will tour their farm including their impressive cheese making facility. We will return to I Pagliai, have a break – a swim or lounging, then prepare a light dinner.

**4th day:** We start the day with a cooking class and preparing our lunch. Relax after our endeavours at the villa, then we are joined later by local wine merchant Marco Molesini as he takes us on an overview of Tuscan wine – grape by grape, delicious glass by delicious glass. As we sip, Chef Deborah from the renowned Cortona restaurant Pane y Vino, will give us a lesson in making pasta and prepare a remarkable dinner for us.

**5th day:** We head off into the hills towards Montacino, home of the cult wine favourite, Brunello. We visit one of the more interesting wine makers of the area, Sesti. A stunning restored property that we will tour and see and taste their wine making. Then we head to the lovingly restored church on the property to eat a spectacular meal, often from ingredients gathered from the property. A great setting, great food, all with Sesti's delicious wine.

**6th day:** We board the bus to visit the historic Montepulciano – beautiful but also the BEST shopping of the week. Little shops offer the best of fashion and leather. Lunch is on your own, so you can choose from a variety of restaurants. Returning home for a short break then to Cortona, where we have an aperitif at Molesini Wine Shop then on to a dinner at Arnoldo's restaurant Pane y Vino.

**7th day:** A morning enjoying our lovely property then we walk or drive to Cortona for stroll around this historic village. Walk to the top of the hill and visit the St Margerita church or stay in the village and look in the fantastic little shops along the promenade. Don't forget to stop for a glass of prosecco to watch the town activities. We return to I Pagliai for our last night feast with the owners of the villa and local chefs preparing our dinner. Along with our feast of stuffed zucchini blossoms, various fritti, prosciutto, focaccia and working our way to the traditional porchetta cooked whole in the forno.

Please note: Our itinerary is subject to change.



# Italy 2024 Frequently asked questions

## Where do I plan my arrival to?

The final destination is Cortona. You can fly into either Florence or Rome and then take the train to the neighbouring town of Terontola (trains from Florence run hourly and the trains from Rome run every 2 hours). We will schedule pick ups the day of the camp starting at 16:00 at the train station in Terontola, then we will drive to our villa in Cortona. There will be a drop off at the train station at Terontola between 9:00 - 12:00 on the last day of the camp.

## Where is the camp?

We will spend the week on the outskirts of Cortona, a small, steep hillside city of which dates back to the 4th century B.C., south of Florence and north of Rome. This picturesque Tuscan city is surrounded by olive groves and looks out on the Chianti countryside to Lake Trasimeno.

## Where are we staying?

The camp is situated in a beautifully restored villa 3 kilometers outside of Cortona. It has private gardens, a stunning view of the Cortona hillside and a pool. The house is a large, comfortable, charming bed and breakfast. It has a lovely yard that includes a heated pool. The \$5300.00 cost is based on double occupancy. There is a \$500.00 single supplement for those not wanting to share a room.

## What does the trip include?

Accommodation, transportation during the week, almost all meals, cooking instruction, and all excursions.

## What is the weather like?

In the fall the weather is usually quite beautiful, but variable. It's never "cold". Bring layers and a wind proof jacket; be prepared for hot and chilly, and swimming in the pool!

## What is the booking procedure?

We need a deposit of \$1000.00 to secure your registration. Once the trip is full, the balance is required. This deposit shows that you are committed to the trip and once the remainder is paid the cancellation policy is in effect. You will be required to sign a standard release form.

## What is the cancellation policy?

60 days before, 50% refund. No refunds within 60 days before the trip leaves. You are encouraged to buy trip insurance for those unaccountable life circumstances that do not allow you to follow through with your plans. We will confirm that the trip is a go as soon as our minimum number of registrants have booked. In the event of pandemic issues that do not allow ease of travel we reserve the right to postpone the trip and your reservation will be forwarded to the new dates.



### The address of our Agriturismo villa:

I Pagliai  
loc, Montalla 23, 52044  
Cortona AR, Italy  
Province of Arezzo

### Phone numbers:

Gail Norton (Calgary cell #):  
403 667 2945  
Gail Norton (cell # while in Italy):  
001 403 667 2945

### Email:

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**Italy is 8 hours ahead of Calgary.**

A CULINARY ESCAPE TO TUSCANY – FALL 2024: Week 1: October 6th-13th / Week 2: October 14th-21st  
Cost: \$5300+GST, single supplement \$500, excluding airfare. For more information please contact:

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