



 RICE  
ALUMNI TRAVELING  
OWLS

SEPTEMBER 11-19, 2025

with optional  
Florence Post-Tour

# FLAVORS OF TUSCANY

Orbridge





Dear Traveling Owls,

Join our small group for an unforgettable journey to Italy's enchanting Tuscany region—the bucolic rolling countryside that provides endless inspiration for artisans, chefs and vintners alike. Every day of this specially crafted itinerary presents a symphony of unique experiences and intimate excursions, each promising an authentic view into the history, traditions and genuine essence of Tuscany.

During this adventure you'll stay at the distinguished Castello La Leccia, an architectural gem steeped in medieval history. Picture yourself awakening to panoramic views of undulating hills and vineyards from your elegantly appointed room, where the captivating ambiance mirrors the enthralling beauty of the surrounding landscape.

Guided city tours, hands-on cooking demonstrations, and various tastings will thrill each of your senses. This immersive journey is an exclusive opportunity to deeply connect with the rich tapestry of Italian culture.

Space is limited. With significant savings of more than \$1,000 per couple, we anticipate this tour will fill quickly.

To reserve, visit [rice.orbridge.com](http://rice.orbridge.com), call 866-639-0079 or return the attached reservation form.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Deanna Perez'.

Deanna Perez, Ed.M  
Assistant Director, Alumni Engagement



# Flavors of Tuscany | Itinerary and Highlights (subject to change)

**Day 1: EN ROUTE FROM U.S.**

**Day 2: ARRIVE IN FLORENCE, ITALY | CASTELLINA**

Upon arrival an Orbridge representative will be waiting to assist with your transfer to the property. Take time to unpack and settle in before joining fellow travel companions for a convivial four-course welcome dinner.

Overnight: Castello La Leccia (D)

**Day 3: CASTELLO LA LECCIA** Today meet with chefs from the property for an informative, hands-on cooking experience, then indulge on your creations during a leisurely lunch. The remainder of the afternoon take advantage of free time to fully immerse yourself in Castello La Leccia's varied amenities. Later gather together for a guided vineyard tour and wine tasting.

Overnight: Castello La Leccia (B,L,D)

**Day 4: PIENZA** Set out for the charming village of Pienza. This UNESCO World Heritage Site was designed to exemplify the principles and philosophy of classical times and the great Italian Renaissance. Continue to Podere Il Casale, a small organic farm, to meet the owners for a tour followed by lunch. Return to the property with time to freshen up before another five-star gastronomic experience—a specially crafted four-course dinner.

Overnight: Castello La Leccia (B,L,D)

**Day 5: CORTONA** Travel to the hilltop town of Cortona where a local guide will escort you through neo-Gothic Santa Margherita Basilica, past Villa Bramasole, around Cortona's city center, and to the Etruscan museum. The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure to explore Cortona.

Overnight: Castello La Leccia (B,D)

**Day 6: VOLTERRA | SAN GIMIGNANO** Stroll through Volterra's bustling, narrow streets before reaching an overlook to view the ancient Roman theatre. Continue to San Gimignano for an inside visit to its Romanesque Duomo. Afterward meet Sergio Dondoli, master gelato creator and owner of Gelateria Dondoli and taste his decadent treats.

Overnight: Castello La Leccia (B,D)

**Day 7: MONTEBIGGIONI | CASTELLINA IN CHIANTI | GAIOLE** Visit the walled medieval village of Monteriggioni—a popular stop on the Via Francigena pilgrim trail. See the medieval abbey at Abbazia a Isola, then stroll through the shops in the small village of Castellina in Chianti. This evening visit Badia a Coltibuono for a cooking class with Benedetta Vitali who will demonstrate the simple techniques and preparations of classic Tuscan dishes. Afterward gather in the dining room for a special dinner.

Overnight: Castello La Leccia (B,L,D)

**Day 8: SIENA** Today explore Siena—a UNESCO World Heritage Site—including its celebrated Duomo and the Sanctuary of Santa Caterina. During free time wander the shell-shaped Piazza del Campo. This afternoon meet Lorenzo Rossi, a third-generation artisan baker and owner of Il Magnifico. He will share his special family traditions of baking unique Sieneese sweets. Tonight join fellow travel companions for a farewell dinner.

Overnight: Castello La Leccia (B,D)

**Day 9: CASTELLINA | FLORENCE | DEPART FOR U.S.** After breakfast transfer to the airport for flights home. (B)

(B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner)







## What's Included

- 7 nights accommodations
- 7 breakfasts, 3 lunches and 7 dinners served with wine
- All lessons, private tours and tastings, and unique small-group excursions noted in the 9-day itinerary
- Full guiding services of an Orbridge Travel Director and expert local guides
- Private motor coach transportation
- Luggage portorage
- Gratuities to Orbridge Travel Director, local guides, drivers, porters and wait staff for included meals
- Group airport transfers for guests arriving and departing during the suggested times



**Activity Level:** We expect that guests can enjoy two hours or more of walking, are sure-footed on cobbled surfaces, and can walk up and down stairs without assistance. Historic city centers are usually more accessible by foot than vehicle, and often it is not possible for your motor coach to drop you off at site entrances. Due to the structure of some buildings, facilities for those with mobility issues may be limited.

## Insider, Interpreter, Epicure, Host

Your Orbridge Travel Director will infuse your journey with an epicure's appreciation of food and wine, a local's knowledge and pride of place, and a travel aficionado's ability to gather the beauty of all senses to your discoveries in Italy.





## Accommodations *(subject to change)*

Become part of *la famiglia* as you settle into this authentic Tuscan wine estate. Sip a glass of Chianti on a sun-dappled terrace, stroll the grounds and admire vineyards draped with Sangiovese, Merlot and Petit Verdot grapes.

Historical sources cite that La Leccia castle's ownership was divided among 16 owners for strategic purposes. Near the mid-1400s, the Ricasoli family dominated a large part of the Chianti Classico region as well as the castle.

After being modified to serve more as a villa in the 18th century, the entire property was purchased in 1920 by Giuliano Daddi, great-grandfather of the current proprietors, and subsequently was the site of heavy bombardments during WWII that destroyed part of the tower, the last medieval testimony and devastated a wing of the villa.

Recently undergoing more than four years of careful and rigorous restoration, the castle and the surrounding garden have returned to life.

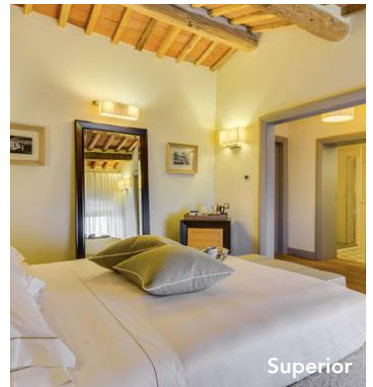
With a focus on sustainability and the environment, the original spaces remain intact but feature modern enhancements using eco-compatible materials and technologies. To warm the surroundings, wooden floors, beamed ceilings, pastel colors and furniture were designed exclusively for the common spaces and made by Florentine craftsmen.

Each room offers climate control, desk, LCD TV, complimentary Wi-Fi, phone, safe, minibar, and en suite bathroom with a shower or tub and shower, sundries and hairdryer.

### CATEGORIES

**Superior:** Enjoy elegant furnishings and a serene area to unwind after an enriching day of exploration (approx. 301-484 sq.ft.).

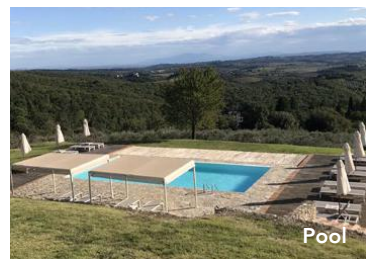
**Deluxe:** Delight in absolute refinement with beautiful views of the surrounding countryside. Each room is different from the others, but all provide modern comforts and tasteful décor (approx. 452-603 sq.ft.).



Superior



Deluxe



Pool





## Optional Post-Tour Florence

Florence is arguably the cultural capital of Europe and the showcase of Renaissance exuberance. Lovers of beauty, art and history can extend their experience in Tuscany to embrace the treasures of this magnificent city.

### Day 9: DEPART CASTELLINA | ARRIVE IN FLORENCE

Upon arrival meet a local art historian guide for a walking tour of the historic city center. Discover the city's beginnings as a Roman settlement, wander through narrow streets past the fortified houses and towers that marked the medieval town and emerge onto the open Piazza della Signoria, the political center of the city since the Middle Ages. See the Duomo and Ponte Vecchio, then visit the local market for lunch. Taste different local specialties then enjoy a sweet break with an Italian cappuccino or scoop of gelato. This afternoon explore the hidden craft workshops of artisans who create jewels and leather goods—flagships of Tuscan local production. And finally, weather permitting, set out on a private boat excursion on the river Arno. Sail underneath the Ponte Vecchio and capture views of the Uffizi Gallery and palaces that are part of Florence's history. Return to the hotel for an evening at leisure.

Overnight: Hotel De La Ville (L)

### Day 10: FLORENCE

Join your guide to visit the Baptistry of San Giovanni, one of the oldest churches in Florence. Next enjoy a tour of the Uffizi Gallery<sup>1</sup> which has drawn visitors to view masterpieces by important artists of the Renaissance, including Da Vinci, Giotto, Botticelli, Tiziano and Michelangelo. The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure.

Overnight: Hotel De La Ville (B)

### Day 11: FLORENCE | DEPART FOR U.S.

After breakfast guests departing during the suggested times take the complimentary transfer to the airport for flights home. (B)

### What's Included

- 2 nights at Hotel De La Ville (or similar)
- 2 breakfasts and 1 lunch (a local market experience and tasting, featuring three courses and a glass of wine)
- Guided art history and cultural tour, plus a panoramic walking tour of Florence's historical highlights
- Visit to an artisanal workshop (leather or jewelry)
- Private boat tour on the Arno River (dependent on river conditions)
- Admission to the Uffizi Gallery and Baptistry of San Giovanni
- Luggage portorage
- Gratuities to local guide, drivers and porters
- Airport transfers for guests departing during the suggested times

<sup>1</sup>The Uffizi Gallery tour is included in this itinerary because it holds a significant number of masterpieces. Touring will conclude at approximately 12:30 pm. Guests who would like to see Michelangelo's statue of David at Accademia Gallery may additionally schedule their own visit during leisure time. We recommend securing a reservation in advance online at: <https://www.galleriaaccademiafirenze.it/visita/>.



# FLAVORS OF TUSCANY

SEPTEMBER 11-19, 2025

Florence Post-Tour: September 19-21, 2025

## Reserve by Credit Card:

Online: [rice.orbridge.com](http://rice.orbridge.com)

Phone: 866-639-0079

Fax: 206-452-5655

## Reserve by Check:

Made payable to **Orbridge, LLC**

Mail to: Orbridge, P.O. Box 1376

Poulsbo, WA 98370

For questions and to learn more, call the Traveling Owls at 713-34-TRIPS (87477) or email [travelingowls@rice.edu](mailto:travelingowls@rice.edu).

## GUEST INFORMATION:

Guest #1 Name (Title/Salutation): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Class Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Alt. Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Guest #2 Name (Title/Salutation): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Class Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Alt. Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## DEPOSIT PAYMENT:

Check     ACH (*Automated Clearing House*)     MasterCard/Visa     American Express     Discover

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ CW: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (as printed on card): \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Address (if different from above): \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

## CATEGORY SELECTION & DEPOSIT:


Category Preference: 1st choice \_\_\_\_\_ 2nd choice \_\_\_\_\_

# \_\_\_\_\_ guests joining program (\$850/person) +

# \_\_\_\_\_ guests joining post-tour (\$500/person) = **TOTAL DEPOSIT: \$** \_\_\_\_\_

I/we have read, understand, and agree to the full Terms & Conditions at [terms.orbridge.com](http://terms.orbridge.com); and I/we agree that Orbridge, LLC is authorized to charge my credit card above and/or take my/our deposit for this program.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

 Orbridge takes seriously the responsibility to minimize our global environmental impact. Each year we plant 100,000 trees in U.S. State Forests with afforestation needs as an ongoing initiative among our evolving sustainability efforts. Learn more at [orbridge.com/going-green](http://orbridge.com/going-green).

Category	Standard Rate	Special Rate*
Superior	<del>\$6,499</del>	\$5,995
Deluxe	<del>\$7,899</del>	\$7,395
Single (Superior)	<del>\$9,899</del>	\$9,395
Florence Post-Tour		
Category	Standard Rate	Special Rate*
Double	<del>\$1,999</del>	\$1,795
Single	<del>\$2,399</del>	\$2,195

Rates are per person based on double occupancy except where noted as Single, in U.S. dollars.

\*Special group rate; limited offer. Airfare not included. Single availability limited. \*\*A complement to the educational component of this journey, Expedition Libraries are curated collections of useful resources and background reading tailored to this program. Place your deposit on or before the specified date, and one Expedition Library per household will be sent after receipt of final payment. Libraries may be purchased; please call for details.



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Houston, TX 77251-1892

# FLAVORS OF TUSCANY

SEPTEMBER 11-19, 2025

Special Alumni Rate:

Save more than **\$1,000** per couple

**30-DAY REFUND GUARANTEE**

**FREE EXPEDITION LIBRARY**  
AN EXCLUSIVE EARLY  
RESERVATION BONUS

Reserve by  
**January 24, 2025\*\***



Rice Traveling Owls guests on Orbridge's Flavors of Northern Italy 2024 travel program.

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## What Guests Are Saying...

Many highlights. The accommodations were truly impressive. The dinner service was a joy to behold. The staff enjoyed their work which added to the dinner. Food was excellent and wine was plentiful. Every day was a new experience in the life of Tuscany.

~Marvin & Pam S., Albuquerque, NM