

# *Discover the World of the Medici*

*By*

## *IN QUEST OF THE CLASSICS*

**Day 1: FLORENCE.** Upon arrival at Florence Airport, we will be met and privately transferred to the **Helvetia & Bristol Hotel**. This five-star hotel in the elegant heart of Florence is one of the most prestigious places to stay in the city. The hotel evokes a world of refined elegance, with silk curtains, drawing rooms with precious figured-tile floorings, and valuable 17<sup>th</sup>-century Florentine paintings as part of the decor. Today, as in the past, in the exclusive cocktail bar, the “Giardino d’Inverno”, you can meet artists, writers, international celebrities and the aristocracy of Florence. Five nights are included here.



**Day 2: POGGIO A CAIANO / FLORENCE.** Enjoy a tour with our driver and English-speaking escort to Poggio A Caiano. Sightseeing here will include viewing Villa Il Gioello Arcetri from the outside (tours not possible) and a visit to Artimino Medici Villa. Our touring today will culminate with a stop at Bellosguardo for a view of the city, and our escort will point out the major points of interest, with special emphasis on the places we will be visiting. Return to Florence mid-afternoon for free time to explore on our own.

**Day 3: MEDICI NEIGHBORHOOD.** After breakfast and our morning lecture, we will embark on a guided walking tour including San Lorenzo’s Church, The Chapel of the Princes and the New Sacristy. Other stops/visits will be made time permitting – some places do not require entrance fees. The afternoon is free for exploring on our own.



**Day 4: FLORENCE SIGHTSEEING.** Today enjoy another walking tour, including visits to San Marco Convent, the Bargello Museum, Piazza della Signoria and the Duomo. Free time again this afternoon.



**Day 5: LOCAL SIGHTSEEING.** After breakfast we’ll enjoy another half-day of guiding, including a visit to Santa Groce Church, Uffizi Gallery, Palatine Gallery and Boboli Garden. We will also visit the Pitti Palace but the Uffizi Museum will likely be undergoing enlargement and this will likely prevent a tour from the Uffizi via the Vassari Corridor. Free time this afternoon.

**Day 6: SAN GIMIGNANO / PIEVESCOLA.** After breakfast this morning, depart for San Gimignano, a wonderful 14th century medieval hill town with narrow, cobblestone streets, which seem to belong to another century. It is encircled by ramparts topped by fourteen towers of nobility. Originally there were 72 towers which the lords built as high as they could. From various vantage-points there are spectacular views of the surrounding countryside. The Piazza della Cisterna is the center of town where the locals gather to gossip and the occasional market sets up. Then to Siena for a lunch stop (lunch not included) and visit to the Baptistry and Opera Museum. Late this afternoon we'll continue to Pievecola, east of Siena, for three nights at **Relais La Suvera**, formerly a papal villa and today a fascinating country hotel, welcoming a refined clientele from all over the world. The Marquis Giuseppe Ricci Paracciani Bergamini and his wife, the Princess Eleonora Massimo, have jointly created a place that is definitely out of the ordinary. The grounds and settings of La Suvera are spectacular. As soon as you pass the gate you find a large square with its aviary. In the middle of all the buildings is the church dedicated to San Carlo Borromeo. Further on, by the beautiful Italian gardens and the ancient fishing lake, which is now a swimming pool, you discover the soft landscape of the Sienese countryside.

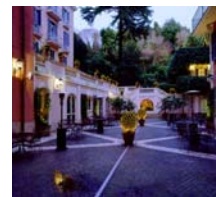


**Day 7: FREE DAY.** No touring included today. A day to relax!

**Day 8: CHIANTI.** After breakfast this morning, we will be joined by a local guide for a morning tour through the heart of Chianti country, along the Via Chiantigiana, a most scenic route taking us past miles and miles of vineyards. There are many interesting towns along the way, where we may stop at an enoteca, or wine bar, and learn about the various kinds of Chianti. One of the very best is in the town of Greve. We will visit a local winery for a tour, wine tasting and snack. A stop will also be made at a fun local restaurant for lunch (not included), followed by additional sightseeing this afternoon. Return to La Suvera for overnight.



**Day 9: ORVIETO / ROME.** After breakfast, a leisurely drive to Orvieto for some free time on our own for lunch and independent sightseeing. Orvieto sits on a pedestal of volcanic rock looking down over lovely vineyards in a green valley below. This former Etruscan city, just 75 miles from Rome, has, perhaps, the most magnificent setting of all the hill towns in Umbria. Orvieto is home to one of the most magnificent cathedrals in Italy, noted for its mosaic facade with bas-reliefs by Maitani. The interior is adorned with notable frescoes begun by Fra Angelico. From the ramparts there is an excellent view of the valley below. Don't leave without enjoying a glass of the white wine Orvieto is known for. Continue to Rome for four nights at the **De Russie Hotel**.



**Day 10: BORGHESE GALLERY.** Today we will be taken to the Borghese Gallery, for a pre-reserved visit and tour. (*NOTE: The Villa Medici is only open to the public during special events – closer to the arrival date, we will see what will be possible during your stay*). Another free afternoon to explore on our own.



**Day 11: THE VATICAN / VATICAN MUSEUMS.** After our breakfast we will have some free time to explore on our own. This afternoon we will meet up back at the hotel for a transfer to the Vatican City and Vatican Museums (this will be much better than a morning visit, as it can be especially crowded at that time of day). We will be guided through the city with special emphasis on the Medici. Free time on our own this evening.



**Day 12: ST. ANGEL'S CASTLE / SANTA MARIA SOPRA MINERVA.** Today enjoy a visit to Castel Sant'Angelo and Santa Maria Sopra Minerva. Free time this afternoon and this evening we will meet together for dinner and a cocktail party.



**Day 13: DEPART.** A departure transfer to the Rome airport and at this time, our services will end.

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