

THE CUISINE OF CHIANTI REFINED TUSCAN COOKING

This is a 4 night holiday with hands-on cookery classes at the Relais Villa Belpoggio in Chianti, as well as a visit to a local market, a local baker or an organic farm and time to visit nearby Arezzo. During your stay there is time to relax and appreciate the local area and you can relax in the Villa's carefully tended grounds at any time, along with its unique swimming pool – formed from a former storage facility for the estate's water. This holiday operates with 2 to 6 people.

About the cookery

The group cookery classes are held at Relais Villa Belpoggio and a local bakery. The Villa's lessons are taken by English-speaking chef, Andrea Campani, who cooks using local, mainly organic, produce. All classes are hands-on and each participant will be invited to input ideas on menus and techniques. The emphasis is on explaining and instructing you in traditional cooking methods and regional dishes. Each of the lessons lasts between two and three hours and is followed by a meal together.

Where you stay

The Relais Villa Belpoggio is a boutique hotel of only 10 rooms and two apartments, in the countryside near the village of Loro Ciuffenna just 35 kms from Florence in the direction of Arezzo. It is set in a secluded part of the valley of the River Arno, upstream from Florence, and its belvedere looks out over the valley and its wooded hills. Hills, woods, fields, olive groves and vineyards are all to be found nearby. The Villa dates back to the 17th Century, having been built for the aristocratic Fiorilli family. Today it is a boutique hotel, run by a husband and wife team and combines charm and cosiness with high standards of service and comfort, thanks to a painstaking restoration first begun in 2003. Facilities at the hotel include its swimming pool for summer use and a nearby tennis court. They sometimes offer a dinner service at the hotel depending on occupancy but there are numerous restaurants within easy reach by car. The hotel is about 2 hours' drive from Pisa airport.

All rooms have bath or shower and WC, air-conditioning, heating, telephone, wi-fi internet access, in-room entertainment system with satellite TV, mini-bar and safe. We include a classic double in our basic price but the apartments are also available at a supplement and ideal if you want to stay longer than the four nights included in the course.



Dining room at Relais Villa Belpoggio



Hands-on pasta making



Relais Villa Belpoggio



Relais Villa Belpoggio



Breakfast at Relais Villa Belpoggio

DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

Day one: London to Chianti

Depart from London to Pisa, on the British Airways flight at 08.50 from Heathrow arriving at 12.00 at Pisa. You will be met and taken by mini-bus to the Villa Belpoggio in Loro Ciuffenna. The journey time is about two hours. If you want to travel by another airline, or to another airport or have a hire-car, we can adjust the details and the price for you. Once you have checked in to the Villa, there is time to explore it and its grounds, perhaps enjoying a refreshing drink before your invitation to join a guided tour at 6.30 taking you through the history of the villa and its gardens. Dinner with wine this evening at Villa Belpoggio is included.

Day two: Visit of Arezzo and cookery lesson in the afternoon

This morning we arrange for you to be taken into Arezzo (about 40 minutes' drive), birthplace of Piero della Francesca and home to numerous churches, mediaeval palaces, fine town square and Roman amphitheatre, for some free time to explore and then you are transferred back to the hotel ready for the first cookery lesson given by the chef, which takes place at 3pm, followed by dinner at 7.30 pm of the menu you have created in the afternoon.

Day three: Morning visit to local market and afternoon cookery lesson

This morning you will visit a local market from about 9.30 until 11.00 with an English-speaking guide. Then there is some free time before your afternoon cookery lesson at the Villa. This two hour session is hands-on and provides an insight into the preparation of regional dishes as well as traditional cooking methods. At the end of the session, you share the evening meal together.

Day four: Morning visit to bakery with lesson or organic farm visit and free afternoon

In the morning after breakfast there is a visit to a nearby bakery in a nearby mountain village, where you will be invited to make your very own 'schiacciata' (a Tuscan speciality

light lunch) by the baker. Lunch consists of the fruits of your labour after a pleasant walk in the surroundings. If the bakery is not available, it will be substituted with a visit to an organic farm that produces wine and vegetables or truffle hunting. The afternoon is free for you to walk, potter around nearby Loro Ciuffenna or relax beside the pool and in the gardens. Tonight dinner with wine at the Villa Belpoggio is included.

Day five: Chianti to London

After breakfast bid farewell to your charming hosts at the Villa Belpoggio and the transfer back to Pisa for the 13.05 hrs flight to London Heathrow arriving at 14.30 hrs.

Dates and prices

The holiday operates on the following dates:
23 April 2017, 21 May 2017, 4 June 2017, 17 September 2017

Price per person:

As part of a group of 4 or 6:
£1,630 when sharing a double in April and May
£1,680 when sharing a double in June and September

For just two people on dates on your choice with transfers provided:

£1,940 when sharing a double in April or May or **£1,475** if you want to have a hire-car and no arranged transport during the holiday.

£1,990 when sharing a double in April or May or **£1,525** if you want to have a hire-car and no arranged transport during the holiday.

Supplement per person:

£390 for single occupancy of a double room

Deposit payment required: **£300** per person

What's included

- Flights in Euro Traveller with British Airways London to Pisa return
- Mini-bus transfer from Pisa airport to the hotel and back
- Four nights in a double room with buffet breakfast
- Dinner with wine on two evenings at the Villa Belpoggio
- Two cookery classes at the Villa Belpoggio each of 2 to 3 hours' duration with a meal to follow.
- One baking class at a local bakery followed by lunch or visit to organic farm
- Visit with English speaking guide of a local market
- Transport to and from Arezzo line one morning

Alternative travel arrangements

If you want us to arrange flights on other dates allowing you more time in Italy before and/or after the course, if you want to fly into and out of a different airport or fly at different times to the ones suggested, if you want the use transfers from and to the airport or if you want to travel out and back by train instead of flying, all this is possible. Just discuss your travel plans with us and we will adjust the details and the price accordingly.

Important information

Flight times are subject to alteration and are confirmed at the time of booking.

COOKERY IN UMBRIA TRADITIONS OF UMBRIAN CUISINE

4 night holiday with hands-on cookery classes at the Villa di Monte Solare near Perugia plus wine-tasting, one gourmet dinner and two additional dinners. During your stay we recommend a visit to the historic cities of Perugia and Assisi. This holiday operates with 2-6 people on certain dates but can be operated for just 2 people on dates of your choice too.

About the cookery

The cookery classes are held at Villa di Monte Solare and are taken by the English-speaking chef, Nicola Fanfano, who cooks using mainly organic produce. The classes are hands-on with each of the 6 participants having their own work station. The emphasis is on explaining and instructing you in traditional cooking methods and regional dishes. Each of the two courses lasts approximately three hours and is followed by a meal together.

Where you stay

The Villa di Monte Solare, a member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World, is in the countryside near the village of Tavernelle di Panicale and a few miles south of Lake Trasimeno. Surrounded by undulating hills, woods, fields and olive groves, the Villa was the residence of a noble family and dates back to the 18th Century. Today it is a small hotel of just 25 rooms, family-run and combines a charm and cosiness with high standards of service and comfort. Antique and traditional local furniture complete the picture of terracotta floors, murals and original fireplaces. Facilities at the hotel include two swimming pools for summer use, clay tennis court, spa and cycle hire. The hotel is about 2 hours' drive from Rome Fiumicino airport.

All rooms have bath or shower and WC, air-conditioning, heating, telephone, wi-fi internet access, in-room entertainment system with satellite TV, mini-bar and safe.

We include a superior double in our basic price but classic rooms are possible at a reduction.



The equipe at Villa di Monte Solare



Fresh pasta making



Example of fine dining at the Villa di Monte Solare



Villa di Monte Solare



DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

Day one: London to Umbria

Depart from London Heathrow on the British Airways flight at 08.35 arriving in Rome Fiumicino at 12.05. (Flight times may vary according to departure date). You are met and transferred to the hotel Villa di Monte Solare. The journey time is about two hours. Once you have checked in, there is time to explore the villa and its grounds, perhaps enjoying a sandwich or tea and cakes before changing for dinner. Enjoy an aperitif and then you are served dinner (drinks not included).

Day two: Your first cookery class

After breakfast your first cookery class starts at 10 am. This three hour session is hands-on and provides an insight into the preparation of regional dishes as well as traditional cooking methods. At the end of the session, you share a meal together. Free time this afternoon to explore on your own or to relax at the hotel. Dinner is not included tonight.

Day three: Free day

Today is a free day but if you have a hire-car with you it is worth visiting the famous wine town of Torgiano and the Lungarotti Wine Museum, one of the best in the world. There is also an olive oil museum to visit. Then you could continue Assisi, birthplace of St Francis, World Heritage Site and a symbol of peace or visit the nearby university city of Perugia. Dinner (without drinks) is included at the Villa di Monte Solare tonight.

Day four: Your second cookery class

The class this morning starts after breakfast at 10 am. Once again it is hands-on and will focus on yet more aspects of regional dishes and traditional Italian methods of cooking. A meal together follows the course. Spend the afternoon relaxing or perhaps walking in the nearby countryside. Own arrangements for dinner.

Day five: Umbria to London

A leisurely breakfast and then some free time before a departure about midday in your luxury minibus for the

journey of about two hours back to Rome Fiumicino airport for your flight which departs at 17.20, arriving in London Heathrow at 18.55 hrs.

Dates and prices

The holiday operates on 23 April 2017, 14 May 2017, 4 June 2017 and 10 September 2017.

This holiday can be operated for just 2 people with departures on a Sunday or Tuesday with the cookery lessons taking place on Mondays, Wednesdays or Fridays.

Price per person:

£1,590 when sharing a superior double or twin room.

Supplements per person:

£320 for a suite
£280 for single use of a classic room

(We can operate a version of the holiday for 2 people and not being part of the group, so with own hire-car, 4 nights, 2 dinners and 2 cookery lessons for £1,390 per person)

Deposit payment required: £300 per person

What's included

- Flights in Euro Traveller with British Airways London Heathrow to Rome return
- Transport by luxury mini-bus from Rome airport to the hotel and back
- Four nights in a superior double room with buffet breakfast
- Two dinners included
- Two cookery classes each of 3 hours' duration

Prices are based on two people sharing a double or twin room and are based on 2-6 people taking part. The maximum in the group is 6.

Alternative travel arrangements

If you want us to arrange flights on other dates allowing you more time in Italy before and/or after the course, if you want to fly into and out of a different airport or fly at different times to the ones suggested, if you want the use of a hire-car for

your holiday or if you want to travel out and back by train instead of flying, all this is possible. Just discuss your travel plans with us and we will adjust the details and the price accordingly.

Important information

This holiday is based on 2-6 people participating.

COOKERY IN SICILY REGIONAL SICILIAN CUISINE

4 night holiday for a minimum of just 2 people, with two hands-on cookery classes at the 5 star Eremo della Giubiliana set on an immense estate near Ragusa, in south-eastern Sicily, about 90 minutes' drive from the airport at Catania. You have time to visit the Baroque towns of Ragusa and Modica. We can offer you private car transfers or the use of a hire-car.

About the cookery

The cookery at the Eremo della Giubiliana will instruct you in how to recreate the aromas of Sicily in your own home. A hallmark of the cuisine here is how the tried and tested recipes of the local aristocracy are skilfully adapted to suit contemporary taste. Only the finest organic ingredients are used to execute a typical Mediterranean diet. The two classes you receive are hands-on tuition from the chef and give you some flexibility tailored to your own preferences and experience.

Where you stay

You stay at the five star deluxe Eremo della Giubiliana, which lies in its own estate on the fertile plains between the historic town of Ragusa Ibla and the seaside resort of Marina di Ragusa. The current owners have had possession of the Eremo since the 18th Century and heirlooms such as portraits and antique furniture feature in both the bedrooms and the public rooms. The thick stone walls, once used to protect the property from pirates, now create a cool and tranquil atmosphere. The bedrooms, converted from what were once hermitage cells and used by the Maltese Knights of the Order of Saint John, are simple but comfortable and are beautifully furnished. There is a swimming pool, spa, restaurant and cycle hire. In the summer months, service is outside under the Mediterranean skies.

All rooms have bath and wc, satellite television, air-conditioning, mini-bar, safe, hairdryer and telephone.

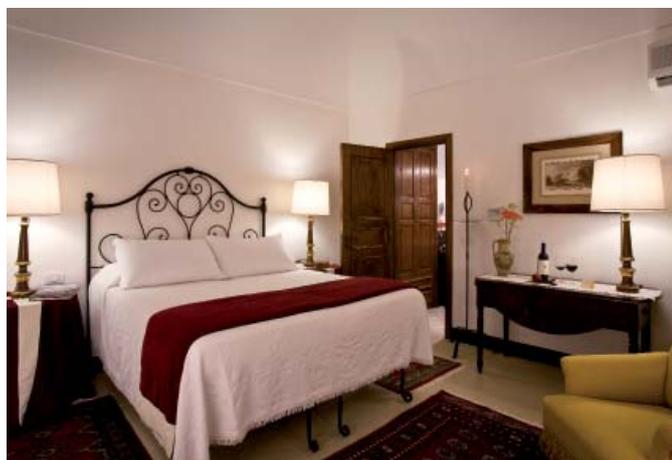
We include a classic double in our basic price but superior rooms and suites are also available at a supplement. If you want to extend your stay and explore the region, then one of their cottages on a bed and breakfast or self-catering basis might suit you.



Pasta-making at the Eremo della Giubiliana



Sicilian desserts at the Eremo della Giubiliana



Bedroom at the Eremo della Giubiliana



Historic exterior of the Eremo della Giubiliana



Bread-making at the Eremo della Giubiliana

HOLIDAY DATES OF YOUR CHOICE

Day one: London to Sicily

Depart from London Gatwick on the British Airways flight at 14.30 arriving at Catania at 18.30 (Flight times may vary by about an hour according to departure date). You collect your hire-car for the drive to your hotel, the Eremo della Giubiliana, near Ragusa, about 90 minutes' from Catania. We can also arrange for you to have a car and driver if you don't want a hire-car. You arrive in time to have something to eat in the hotel's restaurant (the restaurant closes at 10 pm but in case you arrive too late, the hotel can prepare you a cold plate).

Day two: First cookery lesson with the chef

This is a three hour practical lesson with the chef. Today's hands-on lesson with the chef is based around your own choice of theme for the three hours' tuition. You can choose between the secrets of home-made pasta where you learn how to combine the right sauce with the right type of pasta, using only the tastiest ingredients, or a comprehensive course on the cuts and preparation of meat, with suggestions for the accompanying vegetables, or you visit a fish market and learn how to select the best fish followed by a variety of traditional methods for its preparation, or Sicilian desserts!

Day three: Day at leisure

A day to unwind and relax at the hotel, in the grounds, perhaps taking walk or enjoying a spa treatment. Or take a taxi (or drive yourself if you have the hire-car) into nearby Ragusa or Modica (setting for the TV detective series Montalbano).

Day four: The second cookery lesson with the chef

Today's hands-on lesson with the chef is based around your own choice of theme for the three hours' tuition. You can choose between the secrets of home-made pasta where you learn how to combine the right sauce with the right type of pasta, using only the tastiest ingredients, or a comprehensive course on the cuts and preparation of meat, with suggestions for the accompanying vegetables, or you visit a fish market and learn how to select the best fish followed by a variety of traditional methods for its preparation, or Sicilian desserts!

Day five: Sicily to London

The day is at leisure until you need to leave in the afternoon for your evening flight from Catania to London Gatwick departing at 19.15 and arriving at 21.30 hrs.

Price per person

The holiday operates on any day of your choice for a minimum of two people.

£1,250 from 7 Jan to 31 March, and from 1 Nov to 27 Dec 2017

£1,320 from 1 to 31 July and from 1 to 31 October 2017
£1,390 from 1 April to 30 June, 1 Aug to 30 Sep 2017

All above based on two people sharing a classic double or twin and including hire-car.

Special offer

Stay one extra night free of charge on bed and breakfast with just a supplement of £25 per person for the use of the hire-car for the extra day. This does not apply to stays from 1 to 31 August 2017.

Additional nights can be added either here or at any of our other hotels in Sicily.

Supplements per person:

£120 for a private car transfer instead of the hire-car

£60 for a superior double room

£220 for a deluxe double room

£350 for a single except from 1 April to 30 June and from 1 Aug to 30 Sep when it is £410

£47 per person per night for dinner (short menu)

Deposit payment required: £300 per person

What's included

- Flights in Flights in Euro Traveller with British Airways London Gatwick to Catania return. Flights with other airlines on request. Flight times can vary according to the day of the week.

- Use of a group B hire-car for the duration of the holiday (private transfers possible at a supplement)

- Four nights in a double or twin classic room on bed and breakfast

- Two cookery classes each of 3 hours' duration

Prices are based on a minimum of two people and are subject to availability at the time of booking.

Alternative travel arrangements

If you want us to arrange flights on other dates allowing you more time in Italy before and/or after the course, if you want to fly into and out of a different airport or fly at different times to the ones suggested, if you want the use of a hire-car for your holiday or if you want to travel out and back by train instead of flying, all this is possible. Just discuss your travel plans with us and we will adjust the details and the price accordingly.