

May 3-13 2020

Ten Days in Tuscany:

A Yoga, Food & Wine Experience



*A unique, guided tour of Tuscany
By Jason Capps with Tymi Howard*

Italy is unmistakably one of the most beautiful and bountiful countries on the planet. Its diverse blend of people, terrain and cuisine offer an unlimited number of possibilities to the eager traveler. Unfortunately, when it comes to maximizing vacation time, veering off the tourist's path can be daunting and often more expensive than necessary. Most play it safe and book visits to the larger cities, Roma, Milano, Firenze and Venezia, then rush to the internet and friends for advice on popular attractions and good restaurants. Now, after a decade of drilling down to what I feel is "the best of the best", I am finally ready to share with you an experience like no other... deep into the outlying villages of the region, deep into small town Tuscany. Put the cuisine and wines of the region together with a yoga retreat led by world-renowned Tymi Howard, and you have an experience unmatched on the planet. Don't worry, I am even offering an "add-on advice option" to the large cities if you are able to extend your stay ... which I highly recommend!

Being a chef has opened a lot of doors for me in Italy; not only to some of the finest kitchens, but also the doors into people's homes. I find myself consumed with the freshness and simplicity of the dishes, talking for hours with otherwise strangers about the way they shape their pasta and why. Their passion is undeniable and their commitment to sourcing ingredients from as close to the kitchen as possible is evident in every bite.

Tymi Howard, one of the pioneers of vinyasa yoga, will be with you each day to enhance your yoga practice and help you to integrate it into your daily life. The 10-day experience can be life-altering and your guide to this change is one who has taken so many yoga students beyond asana.

It has always been a dream of mine to visit and explore Italy! When the opportunity came to combine my passions for yoga, food and travel into a 10-day retreat that I could share with other yogis, I knew this was it!

Calling all yogis who aren't afraid to eat, drink and practice yoga! This is going to be an adventure and experience of a lifetime. I am honored to be partnering up with Chef and Guide Jason Capps, who will be educating us on all facets of Italian food and wine. We will also be weaving in expeditions focusing on art, history, architecture and more... Oh yeah, not to mention daily yoga and meditation.

Space is extremely limited. Join us for a journey into some of the most spectacular experiences Italy has to offer. Ten days of la dolce vita. Every aspect of the journey has been carefully vetted by Jason and his wonderful Italian assistant, Alessandra. She's fluent in Italian and English and just as excited as we are!!

DAY 1

ARRIVE IN TUSCANY & CAMPOROMANO



YOGA HOUR:

Arrival Evening Flow at Villa Camporomano

Arrive at Pisa International Galileo Airport where I will greet you. A private coach will take us to the host villa, a short 20-minute ride to quaint accommodations for the first few nights. Camporomano is a secluded, medieval property located toward the top of a lush green mountain, near the northern Tuscan coast. It has all the modern amenities, yet is a true testament to the era from which it was born.

Upon our arrival, enjoy a typical Tuscan afternoon aperitivo, antipasti and a warm welcome orientation from our friendly host, Niccolo. Take your time to unpack, unwind and enjoy the breathtaking atmosphere. You've come a long way, but **RELAX**, you're in Tuscany!

Dinner tonight is at La Piazzetta, a very traditional and casual trattoria in the heart of an ancient borgo. Get some sleep, tomorrow the journey really begins!

DAY 2

CINQUE TERRE, SARZANA WINE TASTING, BBQ



YOGA HOUR:

Morning Vinyasa at Villa Camporomano
Evening Flow in Cinque Terre or at the marina in La Spezia at sunset

We will need to rise early for a full day of adventures on land and sea. After breakfast we board our luxury touring vans and depart for the harbor of La Spezia where we've arranged for our private charter - an old world wooden ferry boat to carry us along. A history lesson full of magical tales will put things into perspective as we go.

We will be cruising the jagged and colorful Cinque Terre coastline with some onboard surprises, tastefully prepared for us along the way. Accessible only by train, foot and a few by car, there simply isn't a better vantage point from which to first witness these ancient towns than from the sea.

Docking at a few select villages, we will roam the narrow streets and absorb the aromas and of course the sounds of the sea crashing into the coves in front of you. Mingle with the locals, shop and taste bites of regional fare, but save room for dinner!

Eventually motoring back to our port of origin at sunset, we will be ending the day with a unique party in a quaint vineyard above the harbor. Here we can decompress and enjoy our first wine tasting, private Ligurian barbecue and our own live jazz trio.

DAY 3

CARRARA, COLONNATA & PIETRASANTA



YOGA HOUR:

Morning Meditation at the Villa, inside the marble caves at Carrara or top of the marble mountain

Evening Flow near the statue facing the mountain in Colonnata or in the famous piazza of Pietrasanta

After yesterday's experience among a palate of colors, the color of the day today will be **WHITE**.

We will first find ourselves in a quarry, then deep inside a cave, surrounded by the world renowned marble of Carrara. Hard hats required! Welcome to Fantiscritti, one of the most prestigious quarries in the entire Carrara area. Our personal tour guides will provide some of the fascinating history and process of extracting this precious stone.

Coming out from the center of the earth, when most would begin their descent, we will promptly start to climb ... **UP UP UP** ... toward the sun and to the very peak of the mountains in our chartered rugged 4 x 4 Jeeps. Here we will enjoy the spectacular vistas that reach far into the sea ... and the sounds of silence, not to mention an aperitif and some chicchetti.

When we've had our fill of photos and prosecco, it's now time for lunch! **DOWN DOWN DOWN** we go, into the postcard village of Colonnata - so well known for the delicious lardo and the unique anarchist atmosphere. Our host is a vibrant soul, but be sure to give him three kisses!

After lunch, and fully recharged with local red wine, we are going to visit one of the most important sculpture "laboratories" in Italy, and possibly the world. Meet artists whose craft is seemingly as old as the material they shape.

Time now for a visit to the charming and artsy village of Pietrasanta, where the piazza booms with modern and vintage works. Ready for some gelato? To round out the day, we will soon find ourselves sitting comfortably upon the breezy terrace of an asteria, serving us more local fare for dinner and another memorable sunset.

DAY 4

PASTA LESSON, OLIVE OIL, SHOPPING & BEACH



YOGA HOUR:

Morning Session at the Villa before the pasta lesson

Evening at the beach at sunset in Viareggio

Now it's time to properly appreciate our special hosts and property. Today we are spending the morning "home" at Camporomano to kick back and learn about pasta making and olive oil. After a relaxing breakfast, we will enjoy a tour of the Frantoio to understand the process of olive oil production, passionately explained by Niccolo.

Next we will be getting our hands a little dusty with a little flour and a pasta lesson led by an expert, Niccolo's mom - a sweet and talented culinarian, right in the beautiful photo-worthy kitchen of the property.

Pay attention, our work will be carefully supervised and become our first course for today's lunch! All of our efforts will be turned into steaming pots of pasta with tender ragu and tasty tortelli, accompanied by bruschette, local salume, olives and fresh tomatoes just picked from the garden.

After a short siesta and change of clothes, we are heading to the beach! Viareggio to be exact ... for strolling and shopping along the stylish belle epoque promenade. You may wish to enjoy another epic Tuscan sunset falling down into the sea with your toes in the sand.

Dinner will be only a few steps away, **FRESH** fish and seafood (of course). This beachside setting is befitting of its reviews, serving only the highest quality menu options. Then it's back to Camporomano to pack and prepare for Round Two.

DAY 5

LUCCA LUCCA LUCCA



YOGA HOUR:

Morning Meditation on the walls of Lucca or at our new Villa Principessa

Evening Flow at Principessa by the pool at sunset before dinner

Today after breakfast, we bid farewells to our gracious hosts and head East to the medieval walled city of Lucca. Spend the next couple of hours on a guided tour, walking off the meals of days prior, past spectacular churches, through narrow streets and grand piazzas.

Next up, it's time for lunch at our dear friend Nilo's property, Trattoria Buralli. He's been serving up some of the most delicious and typical Lucchesi cuisine in town for decades, and his charming personality adds extra warmth to every meal.

After lunch we will enjoy a meandering bicycle ride atop the sycamore-lined city walls, an almost obligatory point-of-view way to experience this unique and beautiful town.

The next couple of hours this afternoon are yoursfree for shopping and gelato along Via Fillungo. Discover wonderful jewelry and leather shops, locally crafted chocolates and pastries, ceramics, wines and shoes...lots of shoes!

We are moving into our new digs for the next three nights a magnificent villa/hotel tucked perfectly in the middle of the nearby countryside only a few kilometers from centro storico.

Time now for a shower, perhaps a short siesta, then back into the city for a casual night of pizza and beer at arguably the best pizzeria in town. You get to choose your own thin-crust pizza; my favorite has thin-sliced potatoes, fresh rosemary and sharp provolone .

DAY 6

TRUFFLES & TOWERS



YOGA HOUR:

Morning Session at Principessa or in San Miniato estate after Truffle Hunting

Evening Vinyasa on the walls of Lucca or at Principessa before dinner

Can you smell it? Truffles will absolutely capture and keep our attention for the first half of the day.

We are heading a little south to the Tenuta di Camugliano where we will be welcomed by some friendly and excited dogs. They are the expert hunters of the highly coveted and elusive black and white truffles. Keep in mind, though, we aren't just anywhere, we are in the best area in Tuscany for tartufi.

After a long walk in the stunning property filled with game birds and porcupines, we will move down the road to San Miniato to visit one of the most important truffle companies in the region. Marco and family at Savitar furnishes their fresh finds to some of the best restaurants in the world.

After a brief tour of the pristine facility, we will be invited to the table and delighted with aromatic and tasteful bowls filled with pasta and truffles. Eggs, cheeses and locally aged prosciutto topped with glasses of local wine will soothe the soul.

On our way back to Lucca it's important we stop for a few pictures in Piazza dei Miracoli, home of the grand duomo and the gravity defying Leaning Tower of Pisa.

Dinner will be in Lucca tonight, at my favorite ristorante, La Cecca. It's very close to our villa/hotel, so we will be able to shower and relax a little bit before enjoying this last part of the day. The atmosphere, selected wines and Cuban cigars, make for a meal you'll never forget.

DAY 7

VILLA TOURS & PONTE DEL DIAVOLO



YOGA HOUR:

Morning on the wall of Lucca or at the Villa Reale
Evening yoga eveiniat Principessa or sunset at Devil's

This morning we step back in time to experience a full immersion into the Renaissance period of the Medici era and lifestyle. After an early breakfast, we depart for nearby Villa Reale di Marlia, the neo-classical style home of Elisa Bonaparte Baciocchi, Napoleon's sister. The property boasts a grand estate and several annexes situated on 16 hectares of land. Getting lost in its amenities is a unique experience.

Nevertheless, Villa Grabau sits very close and is also worthy of a short visit. The magnificent limonaia in the park has been fabulously restored and you will have trouble keeping focus as your imagination wanders backwards many hundreds of years.

It's lunchtime yet again, and we are moving to a very special venue for an engaging experience. A quaint biodynamic vineyard will provide the backdrop for a never-before-seen cooking demonstration and wine tasting. I'd tell you more, but I decided to leave the rest as a surprise!

After relaxing a bit in the countryside by the pool, we are heading next to admire one of the architectural masterpieces of the area - the Maddalena's Bridge. Fairytales around this mystical place make it even more thrilling.

We are ending the day in a fabulous ristorante, owned by a family of devoted and talented restaurateurs. The venerable Antica Locanda di Sesto (est 1368) has replaced Michelin One-Star La Mora as the coveted dining destination north of Lucca and consistently delivers impeccable cuisine and service.

DAY 8

CAPRINO, DARIO CECCHINI, CHIANTI EXPERIENCE



YOGA HOUR:

Morning Meditation at Villa Calcinaia estate (vineyard in Chianti in the garden or overlooking the vines)

Evening Flow at the Monestary at our new villa, Marignolle

We are saying goodbye to Lucca today and heading farther East into the heart of Tuscany...into Chianti dreamland, but the ride is pleasant and filled with photo ops of rolling fields of vines.

After a short rest stop visit to a cheesemaker, his stables, laboratore, and of course a tasting, we will move on to our awaiting friend, Conte Sebastiano Capponi (yes, a real live Count). There we will visit his old world vineyard and cantina at Calcinaia. We will learn about things like black roosters, what makes some Chianti a Classico and how estate wines are made in the classic aging style.

Lunch today is a once-in-a-lifetime experience, I assure you. You'll be entertained and fed by the most famous butcher in the world, Dario Cecchini of Panzano. It starts before you even get in the door! Dining with Dario is not just eating, it's a true journey into the passion and vision of one man, and his enthusiasm is contagious!

Afterwards, we will find our way to a more pious experience, meeting the monks in the amazing Badia of Passignano. There we will enjoy an aperitivo facing vineyards and the beautiful countryside. We are near Florence, and our home for the next three nights is very close. Tonight we will enjoy a relaxing dinner at the property; allowing us to unwind and prepare for yet more adventures tomorrow.

DAY 9

CASTELLO DI MONSANTO & SIENA



YOGA HOUR:

Morning Vinyasa at the villa near the pool or garden
Evening Session at the villa or in Piazza del Campo
in Siena

Today we awake in new surroundings ... a remote valley filled with vivid spring colors and a pleasant view of the Tuscan countryside. We also have a special local guide to lead us through the day. Our new companion is Gino Rossi, part philosopher part wine expert - he's an exciting addition to our crew.

After breakfast, we will wind our way through the hills of Chianti to Castello di Monsanto. Gino will lead us into the world of wine, teaching us about the earth, the grapes and the process - introducing the life of the vineyard. No lesson is complete without a tasting, and no tasting is complete without a rich selection of locally aged cheeses and meats.

Next we head to the world renowned town of San Gimignano, a World Cultural and Natural Heritage of UNESCO city, famous for its beautiful medieval towers. A walk through the timeless streets, some shopping (and gelato) will prepare us for the last drive of the day.

Last but not least, we arrive in Siena at the perfect time of day to enjoy the last rays of sun hitting the deep orange-brown walls. Ever wonder where the Crayola crayon color "Burnt Siena" comes from? In Piazza del Campo, we will people watch and sip Aperol Spritz and revel in the day's experiences. There is something special about this time of day, here in the famous place where the horses run Paleo every July and August.

DAY 10

TIMELESS FIRENZE, FIESOLE & CLOSING LUNCH



YOGA HOUR:

Morning Flow at the villa, in Florence by the Ponte Vecchio, or at our lunch destination above Florence at Villa San Michele

Today is our last day together, but it will be one-of-a-kind. After a good breakfast, we are leaving our resort around 9:00 am with luggage packed. Saying goodbye to our friends at Marignolle and with our best attire on, we are heading deep into the gastronomical soul of Florence.

We will first stop at Mercato Centrale di San Lorenzo in the heart of the city, where we will get lost in the sounds and scents of one of Italy's most vibrant markets. Hundreds of vendors pedaling leather, jewelry and freshest food of every kind ... all light in our faces. Other surprises await us here, but why tell all, now that we are so close to the end of our journey together?

Next we will climb up and out of the city to nearly the top of the mountain, to the most famous hill of Florence, Fiesole, to our host venue for the morning. Welcome to Villa San Michele, once a monastery, dating back to the 14th century, and now a deluxe 5-Star hotel. It is rumored that Dante summered here.

Here we will dine on the terrace with the breathtaking skyline of one of world's most historical cities FAR below us. We will eat lunch, taste wines and relish in the delights of fine dining at its best. We will frolic in the memories of our times together, with Tuscany, and with one another. You'll likely want to wander the gardens and take pictures of everything around you. Don't worry, we will have a photographer ready to capture you in your pristine surroundings.