

New Impressions of Tuscany

March 31- April 15, 2018



Journey from the Amalfi Coast, twisting along the sapphire Mediterranean, to the pastoral landscapes of Tuscany—and discover the varied delights of Italy on this all-new travel adventure!

Seek out the art and architectural wonders of the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and ancient world. Explore unforgettable history on display from Pompeii to Florence...and enjoy a taste of authentic Italian life during a Home-Hosted meal in Sorrento. With stays on the Amalfi Coast and in two unique Tuscan towns, you'll have the most comprehensive Italian experience with a host of included tours and in-depth discoveries—including meeting a local cheesemaker in the beautiful Orcia Valley and visiting the medieval city of Siena. Bella Italia is eager to welcome you.

Best of all, you'll travel in style with your friends from Southern Exposure and Grand Circle Travel!

REMINDER: Space for this special journey is available on a first-come, first-serve basis and is truly limited. To reserve your place today, please call the Southern Exposure office at **(269) 962-1255**. If you haven't experienced a Southern Exposure travel adventure before, feel free to ask questions or meet with our staff.



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Travel Dates: *March 31 - April 15, 2018*

Day 1 – Depart U.S.

Day 2 – Rome, Italy

Day 3 – Rome / Mozzarella Cheese Factory / Sorrento

Day 4 – Sorrento / Italy & the Camorra Discussion /
Optional Sorrentine Farm Experience

Day 5 – Sorrento / Pompeii / Home-Hosted Dinner

Day 6 – Sorrento / Amalfi Coast

Day 7 – Sorrento / Optional Isle of Capri Tour

Day 8 – Sorrento / Montecassino Abbey / Chiancianoi

Day 9 – Chianciano / Pienza & the Orcia Valley /
Cheesemaker Visit

Day 10 – Chianciano / Cortona

Day 11 – Chianciano / Siena / Montecatini

Day 12 – Montecatini / Plant Nursery Visit

Day 13 – Montecatini / Florence

Day 14 – Montecatini / Optional Pisa tour / Italy's
Lucciole Discussion

Day 15 – Montecatini / Vinci

Day 16 – Montecatini / Return to U.S.





Photo: *The marina and breath-taking cliffs of Sorrento. You will visit this site on Day 8 of your adventure.*

Detailed Itinerary: New Impressions of Tuscany 2018

Day 1 – Depart U.S.

You depart the U.S. this evening for your journey to Rome, Italy.

Day 2 – Rome, Italy

You'll be greeted at the airport by a Grand Circle representative who will assist you to your hotel where you'll be joined by fellow travelers who took our optional pre-trip extension to Rome, Italy. Gather with your fellow travelers to meet your Program Director and enjoy a Welcome Party followed by dinner at the hotel.

Day 3 – Rome / Mozzarella Cheese Factory Visit / Sorrento

After breakfast, begin the ride to the cliff-side town of Sorrento. On the way, you'll stop for an exclusive Discovery Series visit to a local buffalo mozzarella cheese factory. Made from rarer and more flavorful buffalo milk as opposed to cow milk, true buffalo mozzarella cheese is crafted using a centuries-old technique perfected by local cheesemakers that gives the iconic soft cheese its distinctive shape and texture. You'll also savor a light lunch here—with the freshly-made mozzarella as the main attraction.

Arrive in Sorrento early this evening, with dinner at your hotel tonight. With its romantic location on the cliffs over the Bay of Naples, Sorrento has long been the subject of songs and legends. It was here that the mythical sirens, with the beauty of their sweet singing, lured sailors to shipwreck on the rocks.

Day 4 – Sorrento / Italy & the Camorra Discussion / Optional Sorrentine Farm Experience

This morning after breakfast get to know Sorrento during a walking tour, which takes you to see the cathedral, Piazza Sant'Antonino, the Public Gardens, the town's quaint little alleys, and its main square, Piazza Tasso. Amble along Corso

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Italia, the town's main pedestrian thoroughway, and along Via San Cesario, lined with picturesque shops offering food and handcrafts.

Afterwards, enjoy some free time to explore this charming city further. Lunch and dinner will be on your own—your Program Director can suggest some of the many authentic restaurants in the area.

Or join us this afternoon for an optional Sorrentine Farm Experience. Head to Sorren-

to's unique countryside, where the terraced farmlands cling to the steep cliffs overlooking the Mediterranean. Here, you will learn the ancient secrets of how agriculture was developed around this vertiginous landscape. You'll also see what goes into the production of local specialties, like olive oil and limoncello liqueur. Then, prepare and savor your own pizza, made in true Sorrentine fashion—topped with farm-fresh ingredients.

Later this afternoon, partake in an exclusive Discovery Series discussion with a local expert on Italy & the Camorra to learn about this crime syndicate and their impact on the Campania region.

Day 5 – Sorrento / Pompeii / Home-Hosted Dinner Foundation Visit

This morning, we'll depart Sorrento for a half-day excursion to Pompeii. Totally buried by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius in AD 79 and not rediscovered until the 17th century, Pompeii's antiquities offer you an unparalleled view of Roman life. Explore Pompeii's most significant sites with your expert guide and learn how its people lived, built homes, and conducted business. The World Monuments Fund, to which Grand Circle Foundation has contributed \$150,000 for preservation efforts across Europe, cites Pompeii as one of the world's 100 most-endangered sites.

Return to Sorrento in time for lunch on your own. The rest of the afternoon is yours to use as you wish. Perhaps you will choose to walk down to the port of Marina Grande—a picturesque, hidden harbor community which has retained much of its charms due to its secluded location.

Important Travel Notes:

- For your comfort and safety, we recommend this tour for individuals in good physical condition. If you have difficulty walking, this may be a difficult trip for you.
- We reserve the right to cancel this tour due to insufficient registration. Full refund will be given if tour is canceled due to insufficient registration.
- If traveling alone, we will match you up with a roommate (this tour is double occupancy only).
- Please read the "What to Expect" box on the next page carefully. If you have further questions, please contact the Southern Exposure staff at **(269) 962-1255** during business hours.

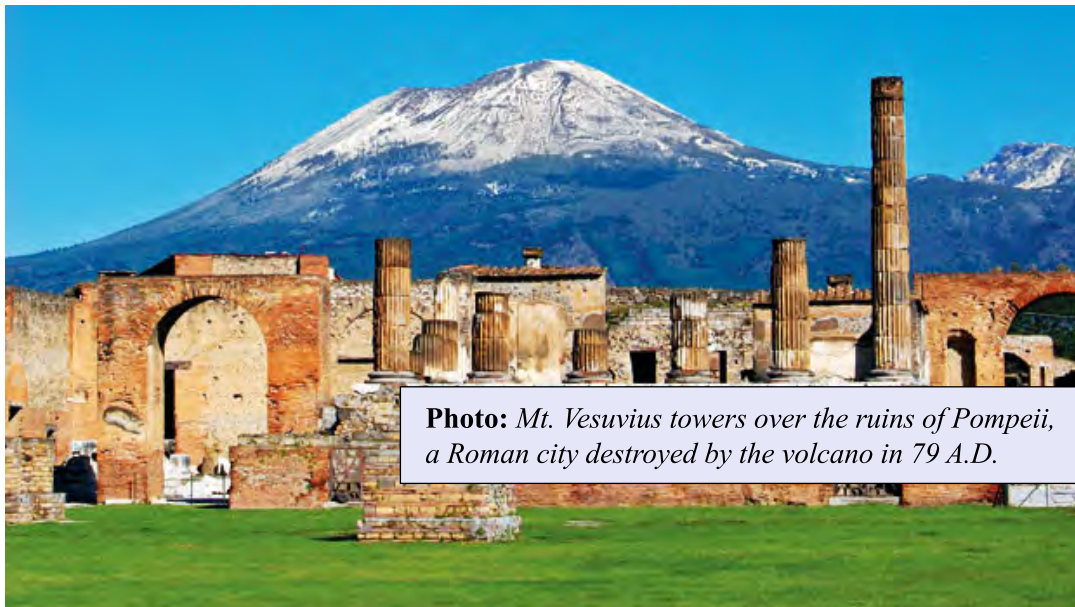


Photo: *Mt. Vesuvius towers over the ruins of Pompeii, a Roman city destroyed by the volcano in 79 A.D.*

Then this evening, you'll enjoy a special Home-Hosted Dinner with a local family. Throughout this exclusive Discovery Series event, you'll become acquainted with Italian social life as you break bread with a family in their home and enjoy the meal from their authentic Italian kitchen. Traditional cuisine here often incorporates the freshest ingredients from the markets. Typical fare includes locally raised poultry accompanied by such homegrown vegetables as eggplant, tomato, and sweet peppers, and, of course, homemade pasta.

Day 6 – Sorrento / Amalfi Coast

After breakfast, depart for a full-day tour of the beautiful Costiera Amalfitana (Amalfi Coast), sure to be a highlight of your stay in Sorrento.

On this leisurely tour, discover what is perhaps Italy's most beautiful coastline—a UNESCO World Heritage Site richly

imbued with centuries-old charm. Make a photo stop above remarkable Positano, whose buildings happily cling to the cliffs and seem to tumble toward the sea; and then continue to the town of Amalfi, romantically situated at the mouth of a deep gorge. You'll also enjoy a boat ride along its ruggedly stunning shoreline, decorated by colorful fishing boats and wondrous rock formations.

Enjoy some free time and an included lunch in nearby Scala, the oldest town in the Amalfi Coast with a history that stretches back 1,000 years. Perched roughly 1,200 feet above sea level, Scala overlooks the ocean and benefits from a year-round temperate climate.

This evening, dinner will be on your own. (Please note: Boat ride is weather permitting.)

Day 7 – Sorrento / Optional Isle of Capri Tour

Explore Sorrento on your own today. Or, join an optional full-day tour of the beautiful Isle of Capri. Located only seven miles from Sorrento, Capri rises abruptly from the azure waters of the Mediterranean.

Set like a gem in the Bay of Naples, just opposite Mount Vesuvius, this fabled four-by-two-mile island has been a popular international destination since the times of the ancient Roman Emperors Augustus and Tiberius. Capri's natural and man-made attractions are unforgettable. The island abounds in hills, cliffs, olive groves, vineyards, and garden terraces overlooking the Amalfi Coast.

On today's optional tour, you'll be introduced to the charms of this miniature paradise and experience its unique way of life. After a short crossing by jetfoil, you'll ascend by funicular to the narrowest part of the island, where you'll visit the small town of Capri. Stroll through the chic shops and the picturesque whitewashed houses and reach the Gardens of Augustus, which overlook the bathing port of Marina Piccola, adorned by the famous Faraglioni rocks. After pausing to enjoy the breathtaking views, you'll continue to the highest point of the island and tour the village of Anacapri, which has spectacular views of the Bay of Naples and Mount Vesuvius. Next you'll enjoy lunch, and then be at leisure to explore further on your own or to indulge in some shopping or in a refreshing gelato.

Return to the port of Marina Grande via the local funicular train in time for our return boat to Sorrento. This evening, dinner will be on your own.

Day 8 – Sorrento / Montecassino Abbey / Chianciano

On the way, you'll stop at Montecassino Abbey. The original hilltop sanctuary was almost completely destroyed during the Battle of Montecassino in 1944; the abbey that

What to Expect: New Impressions of Tuscany 2018

We will make every effort to accommodate your travel needs and make sure you have a pleasant, memorable experience. At the same time, it is important to note the following advisories:

■ **Physical Requirements:** This trip features a fair amount of walking, often uphill, over uneven, unpaved, or cobbled surfaces as you travel in Italy. You should be able to walk two to three miles unassisted over the course of each day. For your comfort and safety, we recommend this program only to individuals in good physical condition. If you have difficulty walking or are wheelchair-bound, please consult our Travel Counselors for guidance. GCT reserves the right for our Program Directors to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home if their limitations are impacting the group's experience.

■ **Climate:** Due to the varied geography of the regions we visit on this program you will experience a wide range of temperatures and weather conditions. We recommend that you bring a rain jacket and sun-block regardless of the time of year.

Passport & Visa Information

U.S. citizens do not need a visa for this trip. Your passport should meet these requirements for this itinerary. It should be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S. It should have the recommended number of blank pages (refer to the U.S. State Department handbook for details). The blank pages must be labeled "Visas" at the top. Pages labeled "Amendments and Endorsements" are not acceptable.

Vaccinations Information

Generally speaking, vaccinations are not needed for this trip. However, for the latest list of vaccinations that **may** be recommended for this trip, please visit the CDC's "Traveler's Health" website at www.cdc.gov/travel. In addition, we recommend these three additional health steps before you leave on your trip:

- Have a medical checkup with your doctor.
- Pick up any necessary medications, both prescription and over-the-counter.
- Have a dental and/or eye checkup, if possible.



stands there today was faithfully restored after the war. During your visit, a local guide will show you the oldest section of the abbey's monastery, virtually untouched by the tragic bombings that took place here during World War II. Afterwards, enjoy time for independent discovery as you explore the abbey's grounds.

Afterwards, continue your journey to the Tuscan town of Chianciano—famous since the age of the ancient Etruscans for its thermal mineral waters. En route, stop for lunch on your own. Upon arrival, you'll check into your hotel and enjoy an included dinner there tonight.

Day 9 – Chianciano / Pienza & the Orcia Valley / Cheesemaker Visit

After breakfast, visit Chianciano's Etruscan Museum. Here you'll learn about the Etruscan origins of Chianciano, and discover more about this mysterious civilization that preceded the Romans in this area.

Then, you'll explore the village of Pienza. A Renaissance jewel, Pienza is the first example of town planning executed after the fall of the ancient Roman Empire twelve centuries earlier. It is also the only example of a city actually made from a prototype—designed by Bernardo Rossellino, the early 15th-century sculptor, for Pope Pius II. The plan for Pienza was commissioned by the Pope to celebrate the ideas of the Renaissance. Take part in a walking tour, and admire the vistas from the town overlooking the valley and a mountain peak that was once a volcano. You'll also have some free time to explore on your own—and to discover the many food shops selling the excellent local export, pecorino cheese.

Pienza is a virtual standing museum: The focus of the town's design is its piazza, which is closed on one side by the cathedral and Palazzo Piccolomini on the other. Designed by Rossellino, the palazzo was the home to Pius's descendants until 1968 and is one of the places in the beautiful Orcia Valley, a UNESCO World Heritage site, where many scenes in the motion picture *The English Patient* were filmed. During the visit, you'll admire the vistas from the town overlooking the valley and a mountain peak that was once a volcano.

Next, visit a local cheesemaker for another exclusive Discovery Series event, sampling local fare during a light lunch as you taste the locally produced sheep-milk cheeses. Return to Chianciano for dinner on your own.



Day 10 – Chianciano / Cortona

This morning, explore Cortona, one of Tuscany’s loveliest hillside villages. Serenely situated at an elevation of 1,800 feet on the crest of Mont Sant’Egidio, Cortona offers unforgettable views of the Valdichiana Plain and expansive Lake Trasimeno—one of the widest and most harmonious vistas in all of Italy. One of the twelve Etruscan cities, Cortona’s central neighborhoods look just as they did when it was a medieval city-state. The fortress overlooking the town was built by the Medicis in 1549, and it was home to noted artists Signorelli and Severini. Ancient tradition holds that the legendary Ulysses was buried here. Closer to our own forms of storytelling, it was here in Cortona that author Frances Mayes bought the home she restored in *Under the Tuscan Sun*, and the motion picture was filmed here, too, as was Academy Award-winner *Life is Beautiful*.

Your Program Director will take you on a walking tour of the village this morning, including visits to Piazza della Repubblica, a beautiful main square at the heart of Cortona, and the Piazza Signorelli, a bustling plaza full of restaurants, cafes, and the grand theater, Teatro dell Signorelli. Afterwards, enjoy lunch on your own and some free time to discover Cortona at your own pace.

This evening, enjoy dinner at a local restaurant.



Day 11 – Chianciano / Siena / Montecatini

After breakfast, check out of your hotel head to the medieval walled city of Siena, built on three ridges and dominating the land between the valleys of Arbia and Elsa. Siena was a rich and powerful city during the Middle Ages, and from the twelfth century into the 16th century, its banking activities and trade in wool and textiles placed it in direct rivalry with Florence. Its influence decreased after that time, as it spent much of its energies in defense against foreign conquerors.

Today's Siena still retains the air of the Tuscan Middle Ages. The 334-foot slender Italianate tower of the Town Hall soars from the rim of the Piazza del Campo, an inclined, central square that is one of the most beautiful in all of Italy. Surrounding this square are numerous lovely palaces dating from the twelfth to 16th centuries. Here, and throughout the city, are some of the most splendid examples of Gothic architecture in Italy.

Automobiles are banned from the city center, and you'll enjoy a guided walk in town. You can view the beauty of the palaces, built in red brick with windows decorated by elegant Gothic frames in white marble. Your tour also takes you inside the cathedral, where you will also visit the Piccolomini Library, adorned with colorful frescoes by Perugino, the master of Raphael. You also have the opportunity to view the palace belonging to Monte di Paschi di Siena, a bank founded in 1472.

During our excursion, you'll have some free time to explore on your own before lunch at a local restaurant.

Afterwards, you'll depart for Montecatini and arrive in time for an orientation walk. Dinner will be on your own.

Day 12 – Montecatini / Plant Nursery Visit

This morning you'll explore the elegant and beautifully preserved Art Nouveau spa district, including a visit to Tettuccio Spa. Unlike spas that offer clients a soak in their curative waters, Tettuccio Spa is known for its drinkable mineral waters—claiming to cure a range of ailments. Please note: The interior of Tettuccio Spa is not available during the months of November and December.

Next, depart for Montecatini Alto, the original settlement of today's Montecatini. The wonderfully preserved medieval village is situated high above the "new" town, and offers spectacular views. After your guided walk, enjoy lunch on your own then descend back down into the main part of town via funicular. Please note: The funicular only operates between the months of April and October. For the remainder of the year, a motorcoach transfer is available instead.

Your next stop will be at one of the many plant nurseries Montecatini is famous for during an exclusive Discovery Series event. Montecatini's unique micro-climate and fertile soil create the ideal conditions for growing a variety of plants, from decorative evergreens to roses. During your visit, learn more about this important part of the local economy. Then enjoy dinner at a local restaurant.

Day 13 – Montecatini / Florence

Explore legendary Florence today, set on the banks of the Arno River. Florence came into its own as a com-



mercial and cultural center during the 13th century, when merchants and tradesmen organized guilds that commissioned works of art to adorn their churches and palaces. It was this revival of interest in art and architecture that gave birth to the Italian Renaissance, an amazing outburst between the 14th and 16th centuries that completely changed the face of this Tuscan town. The names of the great artists of Florence define the Renaissance—Dante, Boccaccio, Fra Angelico, Donatello, Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, and Michelangelo.

Begin your exploration of Florence with a walking tour of the city, stopping first to visit the Accademia Gallery, home to Michelangelo’s famous statue, David. Afterwards, continue your tour and marvel at the Duomo and its remarkable octagonal Brunelleschi dome, one of the most magnificent structures in Florence. While there, you’ll also view the Gates of Paradise, impressive bronze doors that intricately depict scenes from the Bible. Continue on to the Piazza Signoria, the political center of Renaissance Florence.

Enjoy lunch and the afternoon on your own to make your own discoveries. You may wish to visit one of the many fine Florentine leather showrooms. The art of Florentine leather tanning has been passed down through many generations to the tanners of today. Although machinery has changed with improvements in modern technology, many of the old dyeing techniques have remained virtually unchanged.

Tonight, return to Montecatini for dinner on your own.

Day 14 – Montecatini / Optional Pisa Tour / Italy’s Lucciole Discussion

Enjoy a day of leisure today, making independent discoveries in Montecatini or simply unwinding at your hotel.

Or, join us on an optional tour to the city of Pisa, famous for so much more than its iconic Leaning Tower. You’ll explore the Piazza dei Miracoli (the Square of Miracles)—decorated by the stunning marble architecture of its Cathedral, the Baptistery (with its marvelous echo), and, yes, the Leaning Tower. This famous tower brings to mind one of civilization’s most illustrious

What’s Included in the Package

- International round-trip airfare from Detroit Metro Airport to and from Italy.
- Accommodations for 14 nights in comfortable rooms with private baths.
- 25 meals—14 breakfasts, 4 lunches, and 7 dinners (including 1 home-hosted dinner).
- 17 included features: 11 guided tours and 6 exclusive Discovery Series events:
- Exclusive Discovery Series events, including: Mozzarella factory visit / Italy & the Camorra discussion / Home-Hosted Dinner / Local cheesemaker visit / Plant nursery visit / Italy’s Lucciole discussion
- Exclusive services of a local Grand Circle Program Director
- Personal headsets on all included and optional tours
- Private motorcoach travel on your main trip
- Baggage handling for 1 bag per person
- Gratuities on your main trip for local guides and motorcoach drivers

names—Galileo Galilei, the genius who helped to found modern science. At the square’s Cathedral, you can still view the lamp that inspired Galileo’s theory of the pendulum. He used the vantage point of the top of Pisa’s celebrated Leaning Tower to demonstrate principles of speed



and velocity. This tour also features an included lunch.

Early this evening, take part in a fascinating and controversial exclusive Discovery Series event. Discuss how Italy's lucciole (fireflies, an Italian term for prostitutes) and legalized prostitution has affected today's society.

Dinner tonight will be on your own.

Day 15 – Montecatini / Vinci

You may be familiar with Renaissance icon Leonardo da Vinci, but did you know his name comes from the town where he was born? Today, you'll discover Vinci, a quintessentially Tuscan village, and follow in the footsteps of

one of the world's greatest artists. As well as a walking tour, enjoy a visit to Museo Leonardiano, the museum of Leonardo da Vinci, and admire its collection of da Vinci's works, including drawings and models of his many inventions.

Return to Montecatini for lunch on your own and an afternoon of leisure. This evening, reconvene with your fellow travelers for a Farewell Dinner, where you can relive the experience you have had together.

Day 16 – Montecatini / Return to U.S.

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for the flight home.

Pricing Summary & Trip Dates

Trip Name: New Impressions of Tuscany 2018
Trip Dates: March 31 - April 15, 2018
Base Price: \$2,695
Rd. Trip Airfare: \$1,100 (DTW)
Trip Insurance: \$499 (highly recommended)
Cost Per Person: \$4,294 (with optional trip insurance)

Trip Cancellation Coverage – Trip cancellation insurance for “New Impressions of Tuscany 2018” is not required but is highly recommended. For details, please contact Southern Exposure at (269) 962-1255 during regular business hours.

Reservation Deposit: The deposit to reserve your space on this trip is \$500 per person, fully refundable until 65 days prior to departure.

Need Help? For personal assistance or more information about this trip in the meantime, please call the Southern Exposure office during normal business hours at (269) 962-1255, Monday - Friday.

TOUR RESERVATION POLICY:

Reservations can be made by calling Southern Exposure Farm at (269) 962-1255. A \$500 deposit is required to guarantee your place (check, cash or credit card accepted), fully refundable until 65 days prior to departure. Remaining balance due 90 days before departure.

Note: The information, dates and prices provided in this document are estimates only based on currently available information. Pricing and itinerary are subject to change.

Pricing Disclaimer: *Every effort will be made to provide accurate pricing information. Operator reserves the right to correct promotional or pricing errors at any time, or to increase the trip price in the event of cost increases due to changes in airfares, cruise fares, currency fluctuations, venue fee increases, taxes, or fuel surcharges, or other reasons, unless you pre-paid according to the terms of the Good Buy Plan prior to the cost increase going into effect. For more information, please contact Southern Exposure at (269) 962-1255.*