

Social Trip and Social Dinner (Lucca and Montecarlo)

Time-table (approximately):

9:00 Departure from Pisa by bus. Meeting point in front of the Math Department.

9:30 Arrival to Lucca.

Walking tour of Lucca with the guide Ms. Laura Bocciardi.

12:30 Lunch in Lucca (some bars and restaurants will be suggested by the guide, but lunch is not included in the social trip. You are free to choose any place you like to stop and have some food. But please consider that there will be a rich social dinner just a few hours later!)

15:00 Departure from Lucca by bus.

15:30 Arrival to Montecarlo.

Walking tour of Montecarlo with the guide Ms. Laura Bocciardi, and visit to the Castle.

Visit to "Fattoria il Poggio", and social dinner there.

After dinner: Return to Pisa by bus.

Description of the social trip + social dinner

by the guide, Ms. Laura Bocciardi

We will start our tour of Lucca by taking a walk in the promenade, located on top of the imposing city walls, built in the 16th century. Then we will visit one of the most ancient churches in town, namely San Frediano, a beautiful building in romanesque style. Few steps away from this church (once the town cathedral), we will admire the ancient roman amphitheater, turned today into a fascinating elliptical square, an openair livingroom with bars, restaurants and many little shops.

From the amphitheater, we will enter via Fillungo, an old roman road, nowadays the main shopping street in town. Along via Fillungo, we will admire the Cafe di Simo (Giacomo Puccini's favourite bar in Lucca), the clock tower (Lucca's Big Ben) built in the 12th century, as well as other medioeval residencial towers. From via Fillungo we will also see the Guinigi Tower, one of the highest in town, crowned by lushy olm-oaks.

At the end of via Fillungo, on our left hand side we will see the Cathedral dedicated to Saint Martin, with its beautiful facade decorated by precious marble inlaid work. In the Cathedral one can find several treasures, the most famous of which is a wooden statue of Jesus called "The Holy Face" and venerated since the early middle age. From the Cathedral we will walk to the center. In front of the town theatre "Giglio", we will reach a large square dedicated to Napoleon, and we will end our walking tour in Saint Michael square, the old roman foro, or main square.

Saint Michael Square (Piazza San Michele) is located in the heart of Lucca. In this area, you will find many bars and restaurants, where you can have your lunch break, and taste the gastronomic specialties of the region: Spelt soup, tordelli al ragù, pizza, grilled meat and vegetables, vegetable cake, buccellato (sweet bread with raisin and anise seeds), and - of course - delicious icecream.

In the afternoon, the tour sets out for Montecarlo. Don't worry, we are not going to France, but only a few kilometers away from Lucca! Montecarlo is a small village, laying on the top of a hill and dominating the whole valley. For centuries, Montecarlo has been the main center for wine production in the Province of Lucca: its ancient name was in fact "Viavinaria" (= the wine street). In the 14th century, the village was dedicated to the German emperor Charles IV and changed its name into Montecarlo (= Mount Charles).

The village still owns a beautiful medioeval castle (that experienced many battles and wars through the centuries), a charming little church, and a theatre built in the 17th century. After visiting the castle, and after enjoying the fantastic view from the top of its tower, we will be ready to experience an unforgettable typical Tuscan dinner in a farm near Montecarlo, where wine and extra virgin olive oil are produced.

Comfortably sitting in the park of the farm, we will have our social dinner. (In the unlikely event of rain, dinner will be served indoor.) Here are the very special dishes that will be cooked for us:

Menu:

1. Tuscan Appetizers: olives, cheese, sliced prosciutto, salami, vegetables in olive oil.
2. "Primi piatti" (first dishes):
 - Pasta with meat sauce
 - Tuscan vegetable soup
3. "Secondi piatti" (main courses):
 - Oven roasted porker
 - Wildboar with olives
4. "Contorni" (side dishes): mixed salad, potatoes.
5. Tuscan wines.
6. Caffè, "cantuccini" biscuits with Vin Santo and or grappa.

Enjoy!