

# Olive Harvest Tour

October 30 – November 7, 2010



Explore the fascinating world of olive oil with Carol Firenze, *author of The Passionate Olive*

## Itinerary

### Day 0 - October 29

#### Fly from the US to Florence

Overnight travel to Italy (flights from the United States) arrive in Italy the following day. As you make your travel arrangements, you may wish to travel before or after the tour to explore another area of Italy on your own.

### Day 1 - October 30

#### Welcome to Umbria

Your trip begins in Florence where a driver will greet and escort you to **Villa Gioianna**. Located near **Lake Trasimeno** on the western edge of **Umbria** and close to the famed Tuscan hill towns of **Cortona** and **Montepulciano**, this historic Villa overlooks medieval villages, vineyards and olive groves.

Upon arrival, relax and unpack your bags for your seven-night stay and perhaps stroll through the gardens and olive grove. Then, join Carol Firenze in the **salone** (living room) and toast the beginning of our week

with a glass of **prosecco**. Meet Anna, the **padrona** of the Villa and Rosanna, our cooking instructor and chef for the week. Enjoy an exquisitely prepared meal that showcases the purity and superiority of natural, local ingredients of the area. **(D)**

### Day 2 - October 31

#### Olive Harvest, Cortona and Party!

Awake at your leisure and stroll outside. Grab some gloves and pick or “stroke” the olive branches so the fruit cascades onto the nets carefully laid out under the trees. Then help gather the nets to collect the olives into crates for transport to the mill. After a few hours, there is, of course, a lunch break. Relax in the afternoon and then get ready to party! Our group is invited to an Olive Harvest Festival (**sagra**). But first, we’ll visit **Cortona** and feel the energy **Under the Tuscan Sun**, joining the **Cortonese** in the traditional afternoon **passeggiata**, strolling through the narrow streets and piazzas of this lovely medieval town and admiring its Etruscan and Renaissance treasures. Stop, if you wish, at a café and partake in another tradition: a late

## Journey Details:

- **Departure date:**  
October 29, 2010
- **Price:** \$2,950 per person
- **\$350** single room supplement
- **Deposit:** \$500 is required to hold space
- **Reservation deadline:** August 15
- **Final Payment:**  
September 30, 2010



## Included:

- All transportation in private van
- All hotel accommodations and meals\* per the itinerary
- \*Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Hands-on cooking lesson
- 1/2 day of olive harvesting
- 500 ml bottle of EVOO (from the olives you harvested)
- Olive oil tasting seminar
- Olive Harvest Festival
- Wine Tasting
- Spa Day at Fonteverde Resort
- All entrances to museums and attractions per the itinerary

International airfare **not** included.

Group size will not exceed 14 travelers. Additional tours and private custom group tours available.

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for reservations and information

afternoon *espresso* or *aperitivo*. Then off to the *sagra*, to meet olive growers and taste the *olio nuovo* as it is poured over toasted bread for the ritual olive harvest *bruschetta*. Snack on roasted chestnuts, while sampling the new sangiovese wine and enjoying local banter, as each boasts to have produced the “best” olive oil. Dinner on your own in **Cortona**, if you’re still hungry! **(B, L)**

### Day 3 - November 1

#### Cooking Lesson, pressing the Olives and Panicale

November 1 is a National Holiday in Italy (All Saint’s Day), when many honor their ancestors by visiting their graves, followed, naturally by a large family meal. This is a great day to delve into Italian culture. First, with Rosanna, learn to cook a traditional **Umbrian** meal using local, seasonal ingredients, and of course, olive oil. Then take a break for a tutorial with Carol on tasting and analyzing olive oils. The cooking lesson culminates in an authentic *pranzo* (lunch) complete with local wine. Relax in the afternoon (or pick olives) until we leave for a local communal olive press (*frantoio*) where we will learn first-hand how the olives are pressed into EVOO. Then, off to the charming walled-town of **Panicale**; explore the village and admire the views of the lake captured centuries ago by the famous painter, **Il Perugino**, before enjoying dinner in a quaint *osteria*. **(B, L, D)**

### Day 4 - November 2

#### Wine tasting and Montepulciano

Today, we will make our way to **Montepulciano**. On the way, we’re stopping for wine tasting and a tour of the ancient cellars at a stunning winery with a fabulous view (straight out of central casting!) of the Tuscan hills covered with vines and picture-perfect farmhouses, and in the distance - a line of cypresses. The winery was once a ruined monastery. It has been lovingly restored, and now produces excellent red wines and the special dessert wine, *vin santo*.

Our next stop is the famous medieval hill town **Montepulciano**. Our lunch

will be in the wildly romantic cellars of a sixteenth-century *palazzo*. Vaulted ceilings, walls painted in warm, fresco-like colors and unusual furnishings all contribute to its cozy and inviting atmosphere. Warm hospitality and delicious food add up to a memorable dining experience. After lunch, we will spend the rest of the day, visiting the village’s historical sites, exploring the caves and cellars of a winery carved deep into the hill’s *tufa*, or shopping. We head back to the Villa to end the day with a home-cooked dinner. **(B, L, D)**

### Day 5 - November 3

#### Olive Oil & Wine Museums and shopping for Ceramics

Today, we travel to **Torgiano**. Originally an Etruscan enclave and later a Roman fort, the town sits on a hilltop above two river valleys and is considered an Umbrian treasure trove for wine (and olive oil!) visitors. Carol will guide you through the *Museo Dell’Olivo e Dell’Olio* (Olive Tree and Olive Oil Museum). There is also time to visit the *Museo del Vino* (Museum of Wine) before our lunch at a world-famous restaurant. Our next stop is **Deruta**, the Umbrian town most associated with exquisite ceramics. Here we will visit ateliers and shops and see *majolica* artists at work. Dinner at the Villa. **(B, L, D)**

### Day 6 - November 4

#### Siena

After breakfast, we head out to **Siena**, a city that just oozes history, beauty, art and architecture. Noted for its *Duomo* and the main square (*Piazza del Campo*), where the famous *Palio* is held every year, Siena is a center of art and Tuscan culture. Free day to enjoy the city and lunch on your own. Dinner at a small, charming family-owned *osteria* near the Villa will top off this busy day. **(B, D)**

### Day 7 - November 5

#### Spa Day!

The last day of our tour is a trip to the **Fonteverde Spa** for an intensive experience for beauty and well-being. Fonteverde has rich thermal spring

waters full of therapeutic gifts for the body discovered by the ancient Etruscans. Bathe in warm, restorative pools and feel the massage of water jets that generate both tone and energy. Pamper yourself for an entire day at the Spa, where you can also select from a variety of treatments, including an olive oil massage. Treatments and lunch are on your own at the Spa. Nearby, the town of **San Casciano dei Bagni** offers sweeping views and an intriguing maze of streets to explore before we leave for the Villa, where Rosanna will demonstrate one of her top-secret desserts for our farewell dinner. **(B, D)**

### Day 8 - November 6

#### Florence

Following breakfast, we bid goodbye to **Villa Gioianna** for a train ride to Florence where we book into a hotel overlooking the *Duomo* and spend our last day in one of the most important cities of Italy....and the birthplace of the Renaissance. Wander at your leisure to shop or visit the museums and landmarks (*Duomo, Ponte Vecchio, Uffizi* or visit *David* at the *Accademia*). Lunch on your own. In the evening, we meet at a unique and trendy “mozzarella bar” in the fashion district for farewell drinks and *antipasti*. Dinner, if needed, is on your own. **(B, Drinks/Antipasti)**

### Day 9 - November 7

#### Transportation to the airport

Awake early this morning for the drive to the Florence airport to catch your flight home or spend more time in this magnificent city!

Please note that the itinerary is a general guideline. Changes may be necessary due to rain (can’t pick olives) or other unforeseen circumstances. Ground transportation is included in this itinerary. However, you may wish to rent a car for all or part of the trip, in case you want to explore on your own. An information packet with local restaurants and sightseeing is available.

