

# WALKING, LANGUAGE AND LIBRETTO

There is no language more beautiful than Italian. And we have yet to find a teacher more delightful or inspirational than Giancarla Bindi, who has been leading our language and Palio trips for many years. Her belief is that the enjoyment in learning a language lies in being able to immediately use what has been learned – providing insights into Italian culture and way of life: Immersion! Divided into groups according to knowledge of Italian, whether ‘none’, ‘a few words’ or ‘conversational’ – you will soon be speaking Italian! (Walking: Easy to moderate)

**Day 1** Transfer from Pisa or Florence airport (1.5/1 hour) to Pieve a Castello. A tour of the 8th century buildings is followed by a presentation of Giancarla’s approach to the week.

**Day 2** Morning Italian lessons. After lunch at Pieve a Castello, an optional afternoon walk explores the surrounding countryside (2 hours), before returning for afternoon tea.

**Day 3** Morning Italian lessons. After lunch we visit the nearby iconic, hilltop village of Monteriggioni, with an optional walk (3.5 hours) back to Pieve a Castello.

**Day 4** Morning visit to Siena, visiting the astonishing 15th century frescoes in the Santa Maria della Scala hospital, followed by a guided tour (in Italian!) of the Duomo (cathedral) crypt. After lunch, enjoy a free afternoon in Siena, or an optional walk, following the route of the early medieval Via Francigena (3 hours), back to Pieve a Castello.

**Day 5** Morning Italian lessons. Afternoon walk and visit to San Gimignano, the ‘medieval Manhattan’, with its famous towers. We later enjoy a concert in the Pieve a Castello church before dinner.

**Day 6** Morning Italian lessons, with visit to Colle Val d’Elsa, and exploration of the ancient town’s fascinating, medieval tunnel streets, returning for lunch. Afternoon free before dinner at a traditional local restaurant.

**Day 7** Morning Italian lessons. Afternoon visit to a well-known Chianti wine estate for a tasting of its interesting range of wines, with the option to walk part of the return journey (1 hour). Evening: gala dinner.

**Day 8** Morning transfer to Pisa or Florence airport.



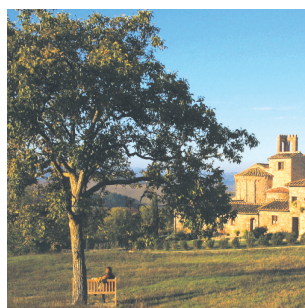
We visit iconic, hilltop Monteriggioni, and walk along its ancient walls; with the option to return on foot via archetypal Tuscan countryside.



San Gimignano – ‘Castello di Bosco’ in the 8th century, when it, and Pieve a Castello (then ‘Santa Maria a Castello’), were successive overnight stops on the main Via Francigena.



Siena’s Santa Maria della Scala, Europe’s first hospital (est. 10C) cared for pilgrims, the poor and orphans. It is now a museum hosting centuries of astonishing art.



Excursions? To supplement the language lessons we enjoy visits to local attractions and local walks – all optional. Or you can stay at Pieve a Castello and simply enjoy...



To supplement the various local wines we enjoy at dinner, we visit a nearby winery and enjoy a tasting while enjoying views over classic Tuscan landscapes.



Medieval Colle di Val d’Elsa, with its network of ancient, picturesque tunnel streets and impressive walls – which we follow via a path restored by the ATG Trust.