

FAZIO COOKING TOURS

Why learn how to cook in Melbourne when you can do it in Tuscany.

Kerryn and I had such a wonderful time cooking and touring in Tuscany that we decided to go back.

We want you to come with us.

When: September, 7th to 14th, 2013.

Where: Villa Casale Celli, in Chianti,

Stay in a magnificently restored Tuscan Villa right in the heart of Chianti region

Attend cooking classes conducted by Sam and local cooks

Tour of the oldest working winery in the world and have lunch

Hunt for truffles

Cycle around the Tuscan country side on an organised tour

Not to mention the amazing shopping in nearby Florence

And of course sample the local wine and food

For further information and an itinerary, either ask one of the staff or email Sam Fazio at

samfazio@ozemail.com.au



Itinerary.

Saturday (Day 1)

Arrival to Villa Podere, orientation, meet fellow cooks.

Drinks on the terrace followed by welcome dinner.

Meet the Chefs and your hosts.

The group will arrive at the villa from five o'clock and settle into your accommodation. In your rooms you will find an autographed Fazio's cookbook, and your own embroidered apron, you will have time to explore the villas grounds, relax and freshen up for the welcome drinks and dinner which will take place on the terrace overlooking the Tuscan countryside featuring vineyards and olive groves, the sunset is sure to impress and cap off a typical Tuscan dinner with local wines. As the kitchen will be the heart of the cooking classes a quick tour to familiarise yourself where everything is located.

Sunday (Day 2)

A bit of a lie in, followed by breakfast.

Barberino Val d'Elsa the local town is only a five minute drive away, this is a good opportunity to explore the town, perhaps attend church service or just sit and watch the locals stroll by while having a coffee or two.

Then it's back to the villa for a Tuscan lunch featuring homemade local sausages, Salumi and Panzanella Salad.

For the afternoon, do what most Italians do on a warm Sunday afternoon, take a stroll in the country or better still take a nap with the windows open and enjoy the warm Tuscan breeze. For the more active this is a good opportunity to enjoy the beautiful pool and adjoining cabana, take a book and catch up on the reading you've been promising yourself.

Sunday evening is our first cooking class featuring Gnocchi with local Porcini and Gorgonzola Sauce, we'll also be making Pizza from scratch using the amazing wood fired oven at the Villa.

All served on the terrace with local wines.

Monday (Day3)

Up early for breakfast and get ready to be picked up by our driver to take us to the truffle area of Tuscany for truffle hunting, tasting and lunch of course featuring truffles.

You'll enjoy walking through the woods with our expert guide and his special and inseparable dog, hunting for truffles.

After lunch its back to the villa where we'll be preparing our whole baby pig for the wood fired oven, after some very slow cooking it will be served up with rosemary potatoes and a salad of fennel and local greens.

While dinner is cooking under the watchful eye of Sam, the rest of you can chill out by the pool where refreshments will be served.

Tuesday (Day 4)

Tour to Castello di Brolio and Ricasoli Winery.

An absolute must thing to do when visiting Tuscany is to do a tour of the Ricasoli Winery and Castello di Brolio, right in the heart of the Chianti region. If you only visit one winery, Castello di Brolio should be the one since this is not only one of the oldest wineries the world, but also where Chianti wine was born. Although the production of wine in Tuscany dates back to Etruscan times, the Ricasoli family owners of the Castello di Brolio since 1167, are responsible for the special blending of grapes we now consider "Chianti Classico." This is an estate with a strong historical legacy; Barone Ricasoli was largely responsible for creating the Chianti Classico demarcation in the 19th century, as well as serving as Prime Minister of Italy.

The winery and Castello tour also includes lunch in their highly rated restaurant, what a great way to spend the day.

Tuesday afternoon is also our second cooking class, featuring Risotto with Prawns and Stuffed Calamari on the menu.

Wednesday (Day 5)

A free morning, you can relax and enjoy the comforts of the Villa or take an old fashioned drive through the hidden country roads of the glorious Chianti region of Tuscany.

The beautiful towns of San Gimignano, Radda, Greve, Cortona and Montalcino where the famous and my favourite wine Brunello comes from, are all within a short easy drive. Pick a few towns and immerse yourself in their culture, architecture, history and of course food.

For those choosing to stay at the villa a light lunch will be served. Light because that evening we're dining out at Il Paese dei Campanelli, a gorgeous winery that happens to be within walking distance of the Villa and also happens to have an amazing restaurant where you practically sit amongst the vines, a major high light on our trip last year. The pigeon dish was an absolute triumph and the best I've ever had.

Thursday (Day 6)

With all the sitting around and dining yesterday, it's time for a little activity.

What better way to really see Tuscany and perhaps burn off a few pounds we've all probably been collecting than an organised bike ride.

These rides are easy and traverse back roads known to our guides thus avoiding traffic.

You'll ride to sites that only a local biker knows, as you won't find them in any tourist guide.

Our goal is to give you the opportunity to experience some really different and off-the-beaten track itineraries, cycling at your own pace on quiet country roads, past vineyards, olive groves and through quaint villages.

Yes there are hills (this is Tuscany after all!) but rest stops are frequent and you'll have plenty of time to enjoy the view from a hilltop and take photos.

What a great way to see the country side and build an appetite for the classic Tuscan dinner of Bisteca Fiorentina served with char grilled vegetable salad and lots of Chianti of course.

Friday (Day 7)

A completely free day, some reading perhaps or catch-up on some correspondence, pack, or enjoy the pool one last day.

Lunch will be served for those staying at the Villa, the ones taking a last opportunity to see some of the surrounding attractions make sure you're back in time for drinks on the terrace and a farewell seafood dinner.

Saturday

Final packing and breakfast before heading to other parts of Italy or Europe or home.