

Join Professor Bart D. Ehrman
on an Educational Journey

Inside Tuscany:

Discovering Historical and
Artistic Treasures of Italy



OCTOBER 21-29, 2022

Dear Friends,

Everyone has a favorite place in the world. For my money, it's Tuscany. Florence: a center of art, architecture, literature, and science since the Middle Ages into the Renaissance: think Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Machiavelli; Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Galileo. Siena, one of the great medieval cities of Europe with a distinctive artistic tradition, intriguing history, and picturesque sites. The incredible countryside with its unforgettable walled towns and gorgeous rolling landscapes.

And then there's the Tuscan cuisine. Welcome to paradise; pasta, pizza, and gelato to die for. Need I mention the wines?

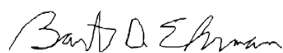
We begin our trip with three nights in Siena, where we immerse ourselves in the charm of a truly great medieval city, famous for its annual bareback horserace, the Palio, and for its beautiful piazzas. We use Siena as a base to explore the matchless beauty of the Val d'Orcia, whose rolling hills of vineyards, olive groves, and fields of grain are where we find the small villages of Montepulciano Sant'Antimo, and where we discover the 'perfect city' of Pienza. We also visit the Etruscan and Roman ruins of Volterra and spend an afternoon in San Gimignano, whose historic medieval center has earned it a designation, along with Pienza, as a World Heritage site.

Moving our base of operations to Florence, we enjoy a walking tour of the city's major piazzas, the Duomo, and Ponte Vecchio before an afternoon visit to the Uffizi Gallery to see one of Europe's great art collections, including works of Leonardo, Giotto, Botticelli, and Michelangelo. The following day we head off again to the countryside, to discover Lucca, home to marvelous Romanesque churches and birthplace of Puccini, and to visit the charming medieval town of Pistoia. Our final day together is back in Florence with visits to Brunelleschi's orphanage, the Istituto degli Innocenti, and to the Franciscan complex of Santa Croce.

Throughout our journey, we will be sampling Tuscan cuisine, sometimes in organized lunches or dinners, sometimes on our own. And we will of course take full advantage of one of the great wine-producing areas of Europe.

I hope you can join me on this special tour, as together we come to appreciate the cultural legacy that Tuscany has bequeathed, not just to Italy, but to the world at large.

Kind regards,



Prof. Bart D. Ehrman
James A. Gray Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies,
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

EXPERT GUEST LECTURER



Bart D. Ehrman is the James A. Gray Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he has taught since 1988. Professor Ehrman has published extensively in the fields of New Testament and Early Christianity, having written or edited thirty-one books, including six New York Times Bestsellers: *Misquoting Jesus*; *God's Problem: How the Bible Fails to Answer our Most Important Question – Why We Suffer*; *Jesus Interrupted*; *Forged: Why the Bible's Authors are Not Who We Think They Are*; *How Jesus Became God*; and *The Triumph of Christianity*.

His *Introduction to the New Testament* has been the most widely used textbook in colleges and universities for over twenty years. He has recorded eight lecture courses for The Great Courses (The Teaching Company). More than two million copies of his books and courses have been sold, and his books have been translated into twenty-seven languages. Professor Ehrman's work has been featured in the *New Yorker*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and other print media. He has appeared on NBC's *Dateline*, CNN, The History Channel, National Geographic, the Discovery Channel, the BBC, *Fresh Air*, other major NPR shows, *The Daily Show* with Jon Stewart, the *Colbert Report*, and other top media outlets. A widely sought after lecturer, and winner of numerous university awards and grants, Professor Ehrman is the recipient of the J. W. Pope "Spirit of Inquiry" Teaching Award, the UNC Undergraduate Student Teaching Award, the Phillip and Ruth Hettleman Prize for Artistic and Scholarly Achievement, and the Bowman and Gordon Gray Award for excellence in teaching.

Cover photo: Val d'Orcia

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Duomo of Florence

JOURNEY HIGHLIGHTS

Travel with and learn from Prof. Bart D. Ehrman, one of the world's foremost authorities on early Christianity.

Marvel at the architectural grandeur of buildings and the beauty of art objects, considered among the finest in Europe.

Feast on the food and wines for which Tuscany is justly famous.

Explore UNESCO World Heritage Sites including

- The medieval towers of San Gimignano
- Pienza, shaped by Pope Pius II to be the ideal Renaissance city
- The vineyards, olive orchards, and sunflowers of Val d'Orcia
- Siena, site of the world-famous Palio, and our home for three nights
- Central Florence, often referred to as an open-air museum



ITINERARY



Day 1: Friday, October 21 – US

US: Depart the US

Day 2: Saturday, October 22

Florence / Siena

Arrive in Florence, and transfer to the *NH Siena Hotel* in the city center of Siena. Enjoy a welcome drink and dinner with Professor Ehrman and fellow travelers.

(Meals: D)

DAY 3: Sunday, October 23

Siena

In the morning, view the medieval scenery of Siena on a walking tour through the hidden gardens, the Palazzo Pubblico, the colorful, marble clad cathedral and the entrance to the striking Piccolomini Library, featuring some of the most outstanding art works of Pinturicchio. Continue to the Piazza del Campo, one of Italy's most beautiful squares, which hosts the Palio bareback horse races. During the tour, savor a cappuccino and ricciarelli, a famous Siennese almond cookie, at a historical café. After lunch at a typical trattoria, explore a Siennese contrada, or district, and its hidden treasures and traditions: the stable, the archive, and the bursar. This is the place where the maintenance of the Palio costumes happens, where the drums are conserved, where the silk flags are sewn, where the seamstresses and the flag bearers spend a few afternoons of the week working as they did a century ago. Discover the slow pace of life that still characterizes Siena, before returning to the hotel for a dinner at leisure.

(Meals: B, L)





San Gimignano

DAY 4: Monday, October 24

Val d'Orcia

Depart for a day along the enchanting roads of the gorgeous countryside of Val d'Orcia to reach Pienza. On a walking tour, discover this "perfect city" – an architectural gem worthy of its UNESCO site designation. Step into the stunning Palazzo Piccolomini. Its loggia, like an open air theater, overlooks the Renaissance-style hanging garden and the breathtaking view of the Val d'Orcia. Continue on to Montepulciano, walk through its medieval center and enjoy a visit to a historic cellar, followed by a wine tasting lunch. Then, reach the Romanesque Abbey of Sant'Antimo, a beautiful and evocative Benedictine Monastery dating from the 8th century. Return to Siena for an evening at leisure

(B, L)



Sant'Antimo

DAY 5: Tuesday, October 25,

Volterra / San Gimignano / Florence

Depart Siena for Volterra, a gem dating back to the Etruscan times. Explore the Etruscan Acropolis and the Roman Amphitheater and Archaeological Area before strolling the old town to experience the authenticity of an ancient Tuscan village. Visit a bottega where artisans still work with alabaster, the typical rock of Volterra, like Etruscans used to do more than two thousand years ago. After an independent lunch, reach the walled hilltop of San Gimignano, a World Heritage site with 14 picturesque medieval towers, and visit its historical center. Then, continue to Florence and check into the hotel *NH Palazzo Gaddi*, in the heart of the Renaissance center with dinner at the hotel restaurant.

(B, D)



Volterra

ITINERARY

DAY 6: Wednesday, October 26

Florence

Set out on a walking tour of Florence's historic center. In the Piazza della Repubblica, discover the city's beginnings as a Roman settlement. Wander through the narrow streets, pass the fortified houses and towers that marked the medieval town, and emerge onto the open Piazza della Signoria, the political center of the city since the Middle Ages. Then, see the Duomo (Cathedral) and the iconic Ponte Vecchio. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant and then tour the Galleria degli Uffizi with the world's finest collection of Renaissance art. Commissioned in 1560 by Cosimo I de' Medici and designed by the great architect Giorgio Vasari, the Uffizi has drawn visitors for centuries to view the masterpieces by maestro artists of the Renaissance including Leonardo Da Vinci, Giotto, Botticelli, Tiziano and Michelangelo. The evening is at leisure.

(B, L)

DAY 7: Thursday, October 27

Lucca / Pistoia

Explore Lucca, a city of ancient origins surrounded by its boundary wall that dates back to the 16th century. Enjoy a guided walking tour along the medieval walls and alleys, admiring the urban landscape. After lunch at a local restaurant, continue to Pistoia for a walking tour of this Tuscan hidden gem including the stunning Cathedral of San Zeno, dating from the 10th century. Return to Florence for an evening at leisure.

(B, L)

DAY 8: Friday, October 28

Florence

Visit this morning Palazzo Medici Riccardi, one of the finest examples of a Renaissance aristocratic palace in the city, with the Chapel of the Magi and its splendid fresco cycle. Continue on to the Istituto degli Innocenti: founded in the 15th century to



Uffizi Gallery, Florence

alleviate the painful phenomenon of abandoned infants, it was conceived by Filippo Brunelleschi as a "place of beauty" dedicated to the most unfortunate children. After lunch at leisure, explore the stunning church complex of Santa Croce, a unique blend of Franciscan spirituality, history and art. Back in the hotel, get ready for a memorable farewell dinner in the top of a medieval tower.

(B, D)

DAY 9: Saturday, October 29

Florence / US

Group transfer to Florence Airport for your return flight.

(B)



Pienza



Arno River and the Ponte Vecchio Bridge, Florence

TRAVEL WITH A SMALL GROUP

When you travel with Thalassa Journeys, you will travel with a small group of like minded travelers. Each of our programs normally consists of 18-22 persons. Traveling with a small group fosters a genuine sense of camaraderie, intimacy and exclusivity. The small size also allows for privileged access to places, less crowding at the sites and restaurants, and more meaningful discussions and interaction with the accompanying expert guest lecturer and local guide.

ABOUT THALASSA JOURNEYS

Thalassa Journeys was established by the principals and managers of Travel Dynamics, the company that 50 years ago pioneered the concept of educational travel for America's educational and cultural institutions. The belief that travel is primarily a learning experience forms the core principle of Thalassa Journeys. We bring an unrivaled depth of experience to make your journey with us meaningful, unique and seamless. We will take you not only to marvelous places, but we will also bridge the past with the present, illuminate the ancient sites we explore – what they were, how they came to be, and why they matter to us – make them come alive, and enrich your mind and inspire your senses. We are steeped in the culture of our destinations and know the secret places often overlooked by the guidebooks. We welcome you to the ever fascinating world of Thalassa Journeys.



Pienza



Typical vineyards hills of Tuscany

RATE

\$5,490 per person, double occupancy.

Single room occupancy supplement: \$790

PROGRAM INCLUSIONS

- Program of lectures and discussions by Prof. Bart D. Ehrman.
- Three nights in Siena at the *NH Siena Hotel* and four nights in Florence at the *NH Palazzo Gaddi*.
- American breakfast each morning at the hotels.
- Four lunches and three dinners including wine and beer as indicated in the itinerary.
- Airport/hotel/airport transfers between Florence Airport and hotels with handling of luggage.
- Complete program of tours and excursions as described in the itinerary by private motor coach with professional English-speaking guide.
- The services of an experienced Trip Director accompanying the journey throughout.
- All entrance fees to the sites described in the itinerary. All local taxes and service charges.
- Gratuities to porters, drivers and guides.
- Comprehensive pre-departure information and materials.

NOT INCLUDED: Airfare, travel insurance, expenses of a personal nature; any meals and other items not mentioned in the itinerary and the Program Inclusions.



NH Siena Hotel



NH Palazzo Gaddi Hotel

GENERAL INFORMATION

PAYMENT SCHEDULE: A deposit of \$1,000 per person is required to reserve your space on the tour. Final payment is due 65 days prior to departure on August 17, 2022. Payment can be made by personal check or charged to a credit card.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS: All cancellations are subject to a \$300 per person administrative fee. Cancellations received on or after August 18, 2022 are subject to 100% cancellation penalties. Requests for cancellations must be made in writing. No refunds will be made for any part of this program in which you choose not to participate.

INSURANCE: We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance, which is available for coverage of expenses in conjunction with cancellation due to illness or accident. Baggage insurance is also recommended. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement.

ITINERARY: The itinerary, accommodations and arrangements are subject to change at the discretion of Thalassa Journeys.

RESPONSIBILITY: Please read carefully the following terms and conditions, which constitute the sole, legally enforceable agreements between the traveler and Thalassa Journeys. Thalassa Journeys acts solely as agents for the traveler with respect to all transportation, hotel and other tour arrangements. In that capacity, we exercise all reasonable care possible to ensure the traveler's safety and satisfaction, but, we neither assume nor bear any responsibility or liability for any injury, death, damage, loss, accident, delay or irregularity arising in connection with the services of any ship, airplane, train, automobile, motor coach, carriage or other conveyance, or the actions of any third-party, involved in carrying the traveler or in affecting these tours. We are not responsible for damages, additional expenses, or any other losses due to cancellation, delay or other changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, civil disturbances, acts or threats of terrorism, travel warnings or bans, termination or suspension of war risks or other carrier insurance, quarantine, acts of God or other causes beyond our control. All such losses must be borne by the traveler, and tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. In the event of cancellation, delay or rescheduling mandated by any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall have the option of accepting in lieu of the original tour such rescheduled tour or other substituted tour(s) as may be offered by us, or else, receiving a refund of as much of such advance tour expenditures as we are able to recover on the traveler's behalf from carriers, third-party tour vendors, etc., but, we shall not have any obligation or liability to the traveler beyond the foregoing. We reserve the right to make alterations to the tour's itinerary and to substitute hotels, transportation methods, or lecturers if this is required. We reserve the right to cancel, delay, or reschedule any tour prior to departure, and, so long as this is not due to any of the aforesaid causes beyond our control, the traveler shall be entitled to a full refund of all monies paid to that point if he/she so desires. No refund shall be made for any unused portion of any tour. By forwarding their deposit(s), the traveler certifies that he/she and/or their dependents, minors or others covered thereby do not have any mental, physical or other condition of disability that could create a hazard for them or other travelers. We reserve the right to decline to accept or to decline to retain any person as a member of any tour should such person's health, condition or actions adversely affect or threaten the welfare or safety of other travelers or impede the tour. Baggage or valuables brought on the tour shall be transported, handled or stored at the traveler's risk entirely, and, we shall bear no liability or responsibility for any damage or other loss thereto. Resolution of any disputes arising hereunder shall be affected exclusively in the state or federal courts presiding in Florida, pursuant to applicable Florida law.

RATES: Tour costs are based upon current airfares, tariffs, and currency values. While we do everything possible to maintain the listed prices, they are subject to change.

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