

*Benvenuto*



*Welcome to Tuscany and La  
Dolce Vita*

*Survival Guide*

*First and foremost, we are very excited you will be joining us in Tuscany this fall. Fall in Tuscany is a rare and precious gift to the world, one which can restore magic to your life and rekindle your passion for living.*

This packet will give you a sense of what we will do, what you will need and miscellaneous bits about your adventure to Italy. The time for our magical retreat is fast approach and the Women's Quest staff will be in Italy by late September so now is the time to start thinking, asking and getting ready for your adventure.

### *What's Included*

- \*Daily guided and supported rides, hikes, runs and or swims.
  - \*A visit to Fonte di Foiano, rated one of the best olive-oil presses in the Italy.
  - \*A visit to a local Tuscan farmhouse for a cooking demonstration and feast.
  - \*A visit to Ciclo Sport, the local bike shop with even more local color than the sunsets over the Tyrhenian Sea.
  - \*A day with world renowned artist Rolando Stefanacci
  - \*Wine Tasting in the heart of Brunello country
  - \* Hiking the famed Cinque Terra trail connecting 5 villages carved into the Ligurian coast.
  - \*Yoga, art, swimming, shopping... fun!
  - \*Sag wagon all day with treats
  - \*7-nights lodging in shared room (single-room upgrades are available for an additional charge).
  - \*5 dinners, 4 lunches and daily breakfasts. We will be out for a couple of lunches which will be on your own.
  - \*Pick up and drop off at the Pisa airport at the provided hours.
  - \* lots of treats from our sponsors
- Subaru t-shirt  
Smartwool socks and long sleeved shirt

Specialized water bottle and gloves  
WQ journal and booklet

### *The Riding*

In a word, unbelievable. Quiet roads knitted together connecting ancient hilltop villages. Endless vineyards, olive trees and of course the rolling hills of Tuscany. If you are bringing your bike, have it tuned up before coming over, including new tires. Although we will have plenty of mechanical skills along on the rides, your bike should also have a small seat bag with a spare tube. We will be riding some great hills so you will want a 39 – 26 as your smallest gear and no one ever complained about having a triple chain ring.

To make the most of your adventure, you should start riding before you come over. You don't need to be ready for the Giro d'Italia (the Italian Tour de France) but whatever you can fit in will make your time here more enjoyable. Try to work up to three days a week if you can with one of the rides being 2 hours. If you want help getting ready, just send me an email and I'll help you out: [colleen@womensquest.com](mailto:colleen@womensquest.com)

All of our rides will be supported with plenty of snacks and water. We also ride European style, which usually means stopping along the way for a cappuccino or gelato at a roadside café. We will divide into groups based on ability and you can switch groups at anytime so everyone will get the riding they want.

### *The Zi'Martino*

We will be staying at the Zi'Martino. You can find out more about the Zi in Cliffnotes on Tuscany or via the web at [www.zimartino.com](http://www.zimartino.com). The Zi is family owned with the eldest son Fausto currently in charge, but the original brothers are still hard at work there everyday; Carlo making cappuccinos in the morning and Mauro hand making the parppardelle and tortelli pasta daily.

The hotel is located at the base of the hill-top town of Castagneto Carducci, named for the Nobel poet Carducci. We are 5 km inland from the Mediterranean and about 75 km south of Pisa in the midst of olive groves and vineyards.

The Zi has phones in the room, so you can receive calls but making calls is much more of a challenge as you cannot use your calling card from the room and direct calls are very costly. The hotel numbers are:

Telephone - 011 39 0565 766 000

Fax - 011 39 0565 763 444

(when dialing within Italy omit the 011 and 39)

The hotel does have an Internet accessible computer which they occasionally let the guests use for a short time in the afternoon. We need to respect their space and limit our time on their computer. Once or twice during your stay to check mail is fine but please do not expect to run your business from their computer. You will also have access to an Internet café in Vernazza on the Cinque Terra and one in Siena. But remember, you are here for you and should try for this short time to disconnect from your world and reconnect with yourself.

The rooms have drying racks on the balconies and the sinks are ideal for rinsing out bike clothes. Plan on rinsing your bike clothes in the room as the hotel does not have laundry facilities.

### *The Food*

This is Italy so we will eat very well. The Zi Martino was a restaurant first and the hotel was added later so the food is great. Breakfast is fruit, yogurt, cheese, bread, cereal and plenty of cappuccino. They can also make cappuccino decaffeinato (decaffeinated) so no one has to miss out. We will typically come back from our rides to our waiting lunch. Italians are known for their lunches which will usually be three courses (pasta or soup, an entrée and dessert). Dinners will also typically be at the Zi and follow a similar three course plan. Very nice local wine is included in lunch and dinner. More notable Italian wines are available at the Zi as well which can be charged to your room. We will be eating lunches out on our own two days, Cinque Terra and Massa Maritina. Dinners will be at the Zi with the exception of the evenings of the olive press and our Tuscan cooking adventure. This may change a little as we finalize the schedule.

Last but certainly not least, there will always be time for gelato. Italians are famous for their creamy and strikingly real tasting ice creams. There will always be time on rides and tours for a caffè or a gelato.

Wherever we go, rest assured we will be treated to some of the best of Italian cuisine.

### *What to Pack*

The hotel is casual, which in Italy means no short shorts or tank tops. As you can imagine, Italians typically like to look sharp, so while you don't need to bring anything formal or dressy, coordinated tops and pants or shorts are always in good form.

#### **For riding you'll need:**

Two pair of shorts (one to dry after rinsing and one to wear)  
Two cycling jerseys  
Cycling base layer (a t-shirt worn under your jersey – optional)  
Riding vest – optional  
Rain jacket – mandatory  
Socks  
Sports bras  
Cycling shoes  
Helmet  
Leg warmers or tights  
Arm warmers or a long sleeve layer  
Sunglasses  
Water bottles or Camelback type of water system

#### **For hiking / running you'll need:**

Hiking shorts  
Running shorts (if you want to run)  
Light top  
Sports bra  
Hiking socks  
Hiking or running shoes  
Day pack or Camelback

#### **For swimming you'll need:**

Bathing suit

Goggles  
Swim cap – optional  
Small towel (we cannot use hotel towels)  
Sunscreen

**For leisure activities you'll need:**

Walking shoes (can certainly be running shoes)  
Shorts and long pants, loose enough to walk and tour in  
Comfortable tops  
Sweater or something for cool nights  
A jacket which can bear a little rain  
Clogs or nicer sandals

**Prescriptions, toiletries, etc.**

Bring all of your prescriptions and other medications you think you'll need. (This includes Advil type of stuff as they are not readily available in Italy.) Also bring all of the toiletries you think you'll need as some of the products you are used to may not be available in Italy and substitutes may have stuff in them you are not used to. Finally, bring a small amount of laundry soap to rinse out your bike clothes.

The hotel has hair dryers available in the rooms and if you bring any electrical stuff, make sure you have the proper adapter for European outlets. Also, Italy is 220v so you need to make sure whatever appliances you bring either has an onboard converter or a switch to go from US 110v to Italy 220v.

*Make This Trip Monumental*

This is an adventure of your senses so bring everything that works for you to record, ponder, remember and make the most of this experience. This can include:

Camera  
Sketchpad  
Journal  
Diary  
Your imagination  
An open mind  
A sense of adventure

Reckless abandon

What not to bring:

Expectations

Your work

Your stress

Too much competitive spirit (a little is o.k.)

Limitations

### *Euro*

As part of the European Union, Italy uses the Euro. If you haven't seen them, Euro is very cool money. Don't worry about exchanging money until you arrive (unless you arrive very late in which case having enough for a cab ride to your hotel may be a good idea.) Italy has ATM machines just about everywhere (called Bancomats), including the Pisa airport, and the exchange rate is usually good and they don't charge an exchange fee. Italy uses the Euro which was originally equal to the dollar, (the Euro is about 133 right now) The dollar is not doing so well.. You can keep track of the exchange rate at [www.x-rates.com](http://www.x-rates.com).

### *Travel Info*

The best way to minimize jet lag is to get on the plane healthy and stay hydrated. This means bringing your own liter of water on board, eating light and avoiding alcohol on the plane. Also, get whatever sleep you can get on the plane. You will likely be arriving in the morning, so if you can, take a short nap when you get settled and stay up until your normal bedtime your first night. And by a short nap I mean no more than one hour. Getting up from that nap may just be one of the toughest things you will ever do but make sure you get up, take a shower and perhaps a short walk before dinner. Napping too long can throw off your ability to sleep the first night and you could be playing catch-up for several nights to follow.

A good idea is to make sure you have everything in your carryon that you might need if your bag is a day late in getting to you. This means toiletries, a change of underwear, a new top and maybe even some running clothes and shoes (if you run) and of course your passport, purse/wallet, money, credit cards, etc.

### *Where Else to Go*

If you have the time and have not been, Italy is a treasure chest of beauty, culture, history and rich experience. Pisa is actually a pretty good base for adventures before or after the camp due to its proximity to the big Tuscan cities. Pisa itself is good first day city with plenty of narrow cobbled streets, decent shopping and of course the Tower and Duomo. Florence is big, crowded and more expensive, but if you haven't been, it's a must. Train service from Pisa is simple and direct (even from the Pisa airport) and about an hour. From Pisa, you can catch a train to Siena, although we will be visiting this marvelous city for the day during our tour. One of the little secrets of the Pisa region is Lucca, a short and direct bus ride from Pisa. Lucca is less crowded but just as charming as the big Tuscan cities. And of course there is Rome. Big, beautiful and epic in just about every category, including crowds. But well, well worth it. You can take the train from Rome to Pisa and vice versa in about 4 hours, with some trains stopping in Florence. To check train scheduled online go to: [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)

*All the Italian You'll Need to Know*

The area we are visiting is somewhat rural and while most people speak English, or enough to communicate with you, you may want to stash a few words in your mind before coming over. If you have time and the inclination to listen to CDs, the Pimsleur or Berlitz lessons are good, even if you just get through a handful of lessons. For books, Italian for Dummies is not bad as is the Idiot's Guide to Learning Italian. And of course there are phrase books which can be very helpful. All of the major language companies have phrase books which are good and will hopefully keep you away from inadvertently ordering some organ you don't want for dinner.

If you have no time, here are 20 survival words and phases which may help:

| <b>Italian</b> | <b>Translation</b>  | <b>Pronunciation (r's are rolled)</b> |
|----------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Parla inglese? | Do you speak English?   | Parla eeg-lay-zeh                     |
| Ciao           | Hello and good bye  | Chow                                  |
| Prego          | Technically "you're welcome", but also used for "can I help you," "what would you like," "go ahead," and various other common phrases | Preh-go                               |
| Per favore     | Please  | Pehr fa-vor-eh                        |
| Si             | Yes   | See                                   |

|                    |                                |                              |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Grazie             | Thank you                      | Gra-tzee-eh                  |
| Buon giorno        | Good morning                   | Bwon jorno                   |
| Buona sera         | Good afternoon and evening     | Bwona say-ra                 |
| Arrivederci        | Good-bye                       | Arh-ree-veh-dare-chee        |
| A domani           | See you tomorrow               | Ah doh-mahn-ee               |
| A presto           | See you soon                   | Ah press-toe                 |
| Non parlo italiano | I don't speak Italian          | Nonh pahr-loh ee-tal-ee-ahno |
| (Non) capito       | (I don't) understand           | (Nonh) ca-pee-toe            |
| Mi chiamo -----    | My name is -----               | Mee key-ah-moe               |
| Manga              | Eat                            | Mahn-jah                     |
| Andiamo            | Let's go                       | Ahn-dee-ah-moe               |
| Piacere            | Pleased to meet you            | Pee-ah-chair-eh              |
| Va bene            | Okay, it's alright             | Vah ben-eh                   |
| Allora             | Then (also used to fill space) | Ah-lohr-ah                   |

*And Most of All*

This is your adventure. Use it to help you discover or rediscover the wonder and the awesome force you are. We will play hard and hopefully leave inspired and with a new passion for life.