



DISCOVER FLORENCE AND SIENA

For The Arts Society, Beds & Herts Area

15-19 MARCH 2021

Join our tailor-made tour for members of societies within the Beds & Herts Area to one of Italy's most ravishing cities. Our exclusive itinerary includes a number of “off the beaten track” visits, as well as many well-loved favourites. Travelling out of season will also ensure that we avoid the crowds and we will stay in a delightful hotel (seen in the photo below) in the centre of Florence within easy and rapid access of all the main sights.

The tour is being organised by Arts Society lecturer Siân Walters who runs a fully ATOL-bonded cultural tour company, *Art History in Focus*. Siân organised Moor Park Arts Society's overseas tours in 2017 and 2019 and will also be our tour lecturer and manager on this holiday.

Booking should open in late April 2020 when flight schedules are confirmed. We are planning to fly from either Luton or Heathrow airport, probably the former. At this stage you may wish to send an expression of interest in the tour by writing to Mrs Anne Harris (Chairman, The Arts Society Moor Park) who will be accompanying the trip:

Mrs Anne Harris, 57 Leas Drive, Iver, Bucks SL09RB Email: kateah62@virginmedia.com





INTRODUCTORY STUDY DAY

For those who are able to come, there will be an introductory tour at the National Gallery on the morning of **Wednesday 3rd March** giving us an opportunity to meet other members of the group and explore works by Tuscan artists in the National Gallery collection, particularly those with connections to paintings which we will see in Florence. We will study altarpieces by Lorenzo Monaco and Fra Angelico, mythological panels by Botticelli and Uccello's famous *Battle of San Romano* (there are versions in both London and the Uffizi). After complimentary tea/coffee and

homemade biscuits in the gallery café, Siân will lead a guided tour lasting about 1.5 hours.

15th March

We travel in the morning and transfer by private coach to Florence. The 4-star boutique Hotel Berchielli is elegant and well-appointed with excellent facilities, overlooking the River Arno. Continental buffet breakfast is included. There will be a gentle introductory walking tour in the afternoon for those who would like to join the group, taking in some of the famous sights of the city including the Piazza della Signoria; Ghiberti's famous Baptistery Doors and the Cathedral. We also stop to admire the OrsanMichele covered in marble tabernacles supporting statues of the patron saints of the guilds of Florence. Dinner with wine is included this evening at a delightful local trattoria.



16th March

Today we explore some of the hidden gems of the city: rarely-visited masterpieces which are a joy to discover. We will see Andrea del Castagno's *Last Supper* in the Cenacolo di Sant'Apollonia and the *Ognissanti Crucifix* by Giotto in the Ognissanti church, recently unveiled as a lost masterpiece by the famous Tuscan painter of the 14th century after a restoration programme. Ghirlandaio's beautiful frescoes in the Sassetti Chapel of Santa Trinità and the Tornabuoni Chapel in Santa Maria Novella are also included, as well as the lesser-known but ravishing frescoes by Andrea da Firenze in the Spanish Chapel. We end the day at the Brancacci Chapel where we will have a chance to examine the recently restored paintings by Masaccio and Masolino (a specially arranged ticket will allow you to spend twice the allocated period normally allowed inside).

Dinner with wine is included this evening at one of our favourite local restaurants.

17th March

Today we travel to nearby Siena, a stunning medieval city situated on the ridge of three hills in the heart of Tuscany. We begin in the Piazza del Campo, one of the most attractive squares in Italy and location of the famous annual Palio horse race. Here we will visit the Palazzo Pubblico or town hall where we see the famous equestrian portrait of Guidoriccio da Fogliano attributed to Simone Martini, as well as frescoes painted by Ambrogio Lorenzetti on the subject of Good and Bad Government.



Siena is famous for its magnificent Cathedral which we will visit, admiring Pisano's pulpit panels, the Piccolomini Library and some little known sculptures by Michelangelo. We also visit Duccio's great masterpiece, the *Maesta*, which was once the main altarpiece of the cathedral and is now located in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. Dinner with wine is included this evening at one of our favourite local restaurants.



18th March

This morning we will visit some of the buildings associated with the powerful Medici family. We begin at the convent of San Marco, famous for its frescoes by Fra Angelico and then walk to the Palazzo Medici Riccardi where we spend time in the beautiful Medici chapel, decorated by Fra Angelico's pupil Benozzo Gozzoli.

After lunch (optional) in the San Lorenzo district we will spend the afternoon at leisure in the Galleria degli Uffizi, whose extraordinary collection includes masterpieces such as Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* and *Primavera*, Titian's *Venus of Urbino*, Leonardo da Vinci's *Annunciation* and Caravaggio's *Bacchus*. Dinner with wine is included this evening in a charming nearby restaurant

19th March

This morning we stop at the beautiful hilltop town of Fiesole, calling at the church of San Domenico to see a rarely-visited altarpiece by Fra Angelico. The artist, born Guido di Pietro in Tuscany in 1395, took the name "Fra Giovanni da Fiesole" when he joined the Dominican convent here in 1418 before moving to the more famous convent of San Marco in around 1436. He produced a large number of works for San Domenico which are now distributed amongst some of the most prestigious museums around the world, but the high altarpiece still remains in the church. We will learn more about its fascinating history and then take some time to enjoy the beautiful views over the city. We return to London after lunch



Tour Programme © Art History in Focus



FURTHER DETAILS

Itinerary: A final itinerary with details including confirmed costs and flight information will be available in late April 2020 when booking opens.

Accommodation and Meals: 4 nights' half board accommodation at the Hotel Berchielli (4-star), well-located in the centre of the town on the River Arno, near the Uffizi Gallery and Ponte Vecchio. It serves a varied breakfast buffet and there are plenty of excellent places to eat nearby in the evening. Rooms are decorated in a classic style with antique furniture – we have an allocation of double, twin and single rooms. Dinner is included each evening and lunches are arranged for those who would like to join the group.

Price: The price will be approximately £1300 per person for those sharing a twin or double room with a single room supplement of around £100 (or £180 for an upgraded double-for-single use room). There are 3 deluxe double/twin rooms overlooking the River Arno which will be available at an extra £60 per room per night

An exact price will be confirmed when flight prices and other details have been confirmed in April. Single rooms will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis when booking opens.

The price will include:

- Scheduled flights and taxes from London to Pisa (from either Luton or Heathrow, to be confirmed)
- 4-star accommodation for 4 nights, with breakfast and 4 dinners (including wine)
- All transfers and excursions in Italy by private coach
- Fully guided tours each day with Siân and her local colleagues
- Microphone and mini-headsets for guiding where required
- Pre-tour study day with Siân at the National Gallery, with refreshments
- Historical notes and suggested reading list provided by Siân for each guest to accompany the tour
- Reservations and all entrance fees in the itinerary
- Gratuities

It does not include lunches (although these are usually pre-arranged at a reasonable price for those who would like to join the group), personal spending, city tax (usually a few Euros) and insurance. Comprehensive travel insurance is essential to cover you in case of cancellation or other unforeseen circumstances.

How Strenuous? Please note that there is a fair amount of walking and standing involved in the trip, although at a gentle pace. There will be regular coffee stops and breaks during each day, and the use of headsets for guiding allows you to sit down when listening to

your lecturer's commentaries, wherever seats are available. You can always opt in or out of excursions if you prefer to rest or explore independently.

Participation and Booking: Booking will open in late April after which we will require a booking form and deposit to be sent to Anne Harris. We will then confirm your booking and send you a receipt and ATOL certificate. For all queries regarding the tour at this stage, and to register interest, please contact Anne Harris who will be accompanying the trip. You can cut off the slip below and send it to Anne, alternatively send her an email.

The tour is being organised for us by Art History in Focus Tours - please refer to their Terms and Conditions for booking this trip. Art History in Focus is run by art historian and Arts Society lecturer Siân Walters who will be accompanying us. Siân is also a lecturer at the National Gallery and Wallace Collection and her specialist areas include 15th and 16th century Italian Art and Spanish Art and Architecture.

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EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

I am interested in the trip to Florence in March 2021. Please contact me with further details when booking opens.

Your name

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Your email address

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Your telephone number

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Which Arts Society do you belong to?

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Which category of room are you interested in (eg single, twin, double-for-single use)?

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Please return to Mrs Anne Harris, 57 Leas Drive, Iver, Bucks SL0 9RB
Email: kateah62@virginmedia.com