

Our Glorious AFS Itinerary

Sept 28 – Depart USA to Florence

Detail Trip Tips on group air and options to come

Sept 29 – Arrive Florence

Benvenuti a Firenze! Welcome to Florence!

Not only is this mesmerizing city the capital of Italy's Tuscany region, it is the birthplace of the Renaissance! Our tour officially starts at the Florence airport at 11am where we will meet our guide and be taken to the Calzaiuoli Hotel right in the heart of Florence! (Early arrivals can simply meet us at the hotel.)

Drop our luggage and then dive immediately into stunning city that is Florence as we begin a two-hour walking tour. It's easy! We are right in the middle of it all! This tour helps us get oriented to the history and sites of Firenze, taking us through the Palazzo Vecchio as well as the Ponte Vecchio, along the Arno River, by the Uffizi Gallery, and the famed Duomo - the Cattedrale di Santa Maria del Fiore. Our walk ends with a scrumptious 3 course welcome dinner in at local restaurant, including 1 glass of local wine.

Overnight: Calzaiuoli Hotel D

Sept 30 – Florence Walking Tour and Tasting

After breakfast, we set out again to explore Florence by foot. This half day adventure includes a visit to the Scuola del Cuio - the famous Florence leather school and shop. Located in a Franciscan monastery where the leather traditions date back to 1294, it is home to true artisans. The selection of skins used if their craftsmanship range from fine calf leather to exotics like ostriches or crocodile. We'll not only see how they craft their shoes, bags, clothing, belts and everything else imaginable, but we'll also be able to shop. The school is housed in what was the living quarters for monks who maintained the astonishing Basilica of Santa Croce – right next door. To walk inside this church is to walk among some of the world's most sunning pieces of Renaissance art - Donatello, Giotto, Gaddi, Brunelleschi, Vasari... This is also where Michelangelo is buried, as well as Rossini and Machiavelli.

By midday, we conveniently find ourselves at the Mercato Centrale, a place where the locals come to shop. Stall after stall of fresh pasta, cheeses, meats and vegetables will beckon you in a bombardment of smells and sites. You'll find a host of venders selling everything from grilled fish to pizzas to fresh gnocchi to gelato.

You may want to grab some things for a picnic later in one of Florence's many piazzas. Your afternoon is free to explore all that Florence offers. We'll point you to the most fabulous street market filled with treasures to shop till you drop.

Overnight: Calzaiuoli Hotel B

Oct 1 – A Free Day in Florence

Following breakfast, we have a full day to enjoy Florence at your leisure. There are numerous opportunities!!! You may visit the Accademia Art museum where Michelangelo's the David can be found or perhaps visit the Boboli Gardens.

We are also offering an optional pampering tour to Grotto Guisti in nearby Monsummano, considered one of the top spas in the world. This relaxing thermal hot spring grotto is considered by some to be the 8th wonder of the world. Stretching deep within the earth, it contains a labyrinth of chambers with stalactites and stalagmites, all warmed by the healing geothermal hot springs that bubble beneath the grotto. Spend your day lounging in their thermal baths and enjoying spa treatments. (Details later)

Overnight: Calzaiuoli Hotel B

Oct 2 – Eataly World, Bologna - Modena

Link to <https://www.eatalyworld.it/en/>

After breakfast, we travel two and half hours to spend the day at probably the most spectacular food destination you have ever experienced – Eataly World. The name says it all – featuring 20 acres representing the 20 gastro regions of Italy, Eataly is the largest agri-food park in the world. You'll be able to sample just about any and every type of Italian cuisine you can imagine. See how olive oil is pressed, how Parmesan cheese is made, taste cured hams and so much more. It's not just shops and restaurants, its actual experiences. Meet the cows which produce the milk for the cheeses! Hear from the farmers! There are numerous workshops you can sign up for to learn everything from pasta making to wine tastings.

After we have gorged ourselves, we continue on to the quant UNESCO World Heritage city of Modena, known for its vinegars, its food and its cars! Ferrari, Maserati, Pagani and Stanguellini all are based in this storied city. Our home for the next two evening is Canalgrande Hotel. Located in the heart of historic old town, this stunning hotel combines old world charm with modern conveniences. There's so much to do in Modena Your evening is free to explore.

Overnight: Canalgrande Hotel, Modena, Italy B

Oct 3 – Modena Food tour B/L

Pace yourself at breakfast because today is a full day of Foodie Tours in and around Modena. Modena is known for its traditional balsamic vinegars and like tasting fine wines, tasting vinegar at the world renown Acetaia Villa San Donnino is truly an experience like no other. We will see how the vinegar is produced and learn about its different ages, aromas and styles in a beautiful and historic setting.

Our afternoon is spent at the family-owned Cleto Chiarli Winery for a tour, tasting and snack. The Modena region is the cradle for Lambrusco grape production and Cleto Chiarli is celebrated across the globe for its fine Lambrusco wines. We'll be treated to a tour of the vineyards and the winery itself, as well as the chance to sample them.

We return to Modena for a free evening.

Overnight: Canalgrand Hotel, Modena, Italy B

Oct 4 – Tuscan Villa!

Following breakfast, we travel to Bologna, known for its arcaded streets and medieval palaces. The capital of the Emilia-Romagna region, this, too is another foodie destination. Spaghetti Bolognese, anyone?

We end the day at the spectacular Villa Palagina in Chianti region. This exclusive villa overlooks rolling hills of the Tuscan countryside, covered in vineyards and olive groves. Ranked one of the best properties in Tuscany, this will be home for two days so make the most of the gorgeous terraced grounds which has gardens and two swimming pools and a restaurant that caters to your every taste. The Villa is known for its gastronomy and tonight you will enjoy it. For dinner, we will be treated to a Farmers Dinner and a glass of wine.

Overnight: Villa Palagina, Tuscany Region B/D

Oct 5 – Explore Volterra, Monteriggioni and San Gimignano, Tuscan Villa

The enchanting walled Tuscan hill towns of Volterra, Monteriggioni and San Gimignano are simply magical and today we visit them all. First, we explore Volterra, one of the highest in elevation with expansive views to die for. Its fortress setting begs to be explored, and as you wander, be sure to check out their alabaster artisan workshops.

Next up, Monteriggioni - a tiny medieval walled town that seems virtually untouched since it was built in 1213. Some of the best-preserved buildings in all of Italy can be found here. Our last stop is the UNESCO World Heritage site, San Gimignano, known for its numerous towers and winding streets lined with artist galleries and food shops selling wild meat sausages, truffles and pasta. Here, we will visit the town's famous wineries for a tasting of 4 wines, and to sample of local snacks

Overnight: Villa Palagina, Tuscany Region B/L

Oct 6 – Arrivederci Italy

Following breakfast, we will arrange a group transfer to the Florence airport for your flight back to the United States. Arrivederci!

Holy poop on pasta, this will sell out before you can swallow a meatball! Limited to only 32 participants. Don't delay, book now.

Land Price: \$ 2149

Deposit: \$500

Based upon 32 participants

Included: All stated above

Not included: Gratuities

For more about the amazing Eataly:

https://www.eataly.com/us_en/magazine/eataly-stories/fico-eataly-world/

FICO Eataly World: From Field to Fork



Rejoice, fellow food-curious amici!

The much-anticipated [FICO Eataly World](https://www.eataly.com/us_en/magazine/eataly-stories/fico-eataly-world/) opened on November 15 in Bologna, a northern city often called the capital of Italian gastronomy. More farm than theme park, FICO Eataly World is dedicated to sharing the biodiversity of Italian cuisine with the world through its fields, workshops, markets, restaurants, and classrooms, all open to the public and ready for you to explore.

From field to fork, FICO Eataly World invites visitors to learn about — and experience! — the behind-the-scenes creation of Italian food and drink. We want you to think about everything you eat, which affects the producers, environment, and beyond. At Eataly, each forkful of pasta has a story: farmers cultivated grains, millers ground flour, *pastai* (pasta makers) shaped dough, distributors delivered it to Eataly, and our chefs cooked the pasta to perfection and paired it with seasonal sauce before we drop it at your table. (Don't even get us started on the story of the sauce.)

Every chapter of the story follows longstanding regional traditions so that you can enjoy the best plate of pasta you can imagine. Now, not only can you discover the entire process in one place, but you can become a part of it.



Covering 20 acres, FICO Eataly World opens in partnership with more than 2,000 companies that will present Italian food and drink in all of its **regional biodiversity**. In Italy, each of the 20 regions boasts a unique cuisine that draws on the local terrain, traditions, and culture. Just as Americans appreciate peaches from Georgia and oranges from California, Italians seek saffron from Umbria and pasta made in Campania. The most authentic products can often only be found in certain areas.

Experience regional Italian food through every traditional step at FICO Eataly World:

1. FICO Eataly World houses four acres of pastures, fields, and farms dedicated to growing **essential regional crops** (olives, grape varietals, truffles, etc.) and raising **indigenous animal breeds** (Piemontese and Chianina beef, Sardinian sheep, Ciociara goat, etc.).
2. Using those prime ingredients produced nearby, 40 workshops create **Italy's most iconic artisanal products** (fresh and dry pasta, fresh mozzarella, aged cheeses, cured meats, gelato, candies, cakes, olive oil, craft beer, and much more).
3. Next, the shopping center of FICO comprises 2.5 acres of markets and bottegas selling **the best Italian food, drink, and beyond**. Visitors can hop from stall to stall on a **shopping tricycle by Bianchi**.
4. Using the same ingredients and products created nearby, **regional Italian recipes** are represented with 25 themed restaurants, all-star chefs, traditional osterie (local "taverns" serving simple food and wine), and street food carts.
5. Finally, visitors can discover more about the process with 30 daily activities; throughout the year, up to 500 events will be held over the 43,500 square feet dedicated to **culinary and agricultural education**.



Above all, FICO is a **place of learning** with 10 classrooms, two miles of educational paths, and six multimedia areas that describe the main products and findings in the agribusiness world. Among these is the Area of the Future, created by Carlo Ratti, director of MIT Senseable City Lab. There will also be the FICO Foundation for Education and Food Sustainability, chaired by Professor Andrea Segrè, who helped conceive of and create FICO. The foundation aims to develop and promote strategies and operational projects to improve sustainability and food education, especially when connected to Italian culture.

FICO Eataly World is an immense and joyous place where everyone can discover Italy's great heritage, down to the roots. It is a real agricultural, culinary, and educational park that aims to further connect Italian culture to food in the world — the new old-fashioned way of having fun.