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OLIVE MILLING WEEK

The extraordinary experience of nature and tradition



Tuscany is a perfect balance of nature and art, beauty of the land and climate. This land gave birth to an excellent extra virgin olive oil, as the result of centuries of tradition. The varieties of olive trees and the technique of cultivation, harvesting olives at the right ripeness and their careful processing, combine to create a product incomparable flavour recognizable, which brings with it all the nuances of this land. Each area of Tuscany has indeed traits that differentiate it and make it unique, just like the oil that comes from there. Extra virgin olive oil uses all varieties of olives formed by plants: mainly LECCINO – MORAIOLO – FRANTOIANE.

The making of olive oil originated centuries ago. The oil is produced according to strict standards of quality throughout the different areas of the region. The olive oil vintage usually starts between end of October and end of November and it lasts a fortnight. Hand picking is still the most used system. The farmers using particular combs, ladders and nets prepare the separation of the fruit from the tree. The frangitura i.e. the grinding of the olives, creates a homogeneous paste and it was traditionally made with big granite millstones (now steel) that rotating go to exert a continuous pressure on the olives, pressing them and thus creating the dough from which oil is obtained. The process goes on extracting the oil from the paste. This process made in a mill called frantoio, ends with the juice (oil) collected in underlying boxes. The oil is then preserved in special recipients once made of shard nominated "orcio" but today made of steel in which the temperatures cannot go over the 14/15°. The certification of the oil in Tuscany is recognizable by the acronym IGP, or "Protected Geographical Indication", defined by the European Union. The mills can be visited meanwhile through these places you can not only taste the oil production in Tuscany, but also admire hamlets, villages, churches, breathtaking landscapes, monuments, attend fairs and festivals. Between October and November in fact take place throughout Tuscany festivals of New Oil to savour the taste so fresh and spicy. In the mills you may also experience the actual making of the olive oil and bring back home the oil you made. We will visit daily the most important areas of production as per the itinerary below.

D01: ARRIVAL IN TUSCANY

D02: BOLGHERI

Bolgheri, land of the famous *Sassicaia* wine and of the Italian national poet Carducci, is near to the sea side and this affects the taste of its oil. Rich of vineyards and olive trees, this little village is characterized by the castle of red bricks from which we can access to the medieval village with its paved alleys and palaces made of stones adorned with geraniums. Delicate golden sunset and storms of swallows frame the scene. The soil around Bolgheri is clayey: 58% made of sand, 27% clay and 15% silt. Cultivation is made of various quality of olives: 60% of Frantoio, 20% Moraiolo, 10% Leccino, 10% Pendolino. The collection of the olives in Bolgheri is made by the end of October until November. Olives are hand picked in few days.

D03: MONTALCINO - VAL D'ORCIA

Montalcino is a little village 40km south of Siena on top of a hill of 600m. The territory is bordered by the rivers Ombrone, Asso and Orcia. Most of it is covered by woods whereas the cultivated part are mostly used for vineyards, olive groves and cereals. Montalcino (land of Brunello wine) has a rich historical past, and the most savoury gastronomical traditions of Tuscany. Olive oil is an integral part of the diet, like a good wine and the traditional *senese* pasta named *pici*. In the olive groves surrounding this area there are varieties of excellent type of olives: the Frantoio (70%) Leccino (30%) Moraiolo and some minor others. Already at the beginning of November each year, the olives are picked by hand and, on the same day, worked in the system in a continuous loop in the near crusher to extract the valuable oil. Its typical bitterness is much appreciated by Tuscans.

D04: SIENA - CHIANTI SENESE

The *Chianti Senese* is to say Castellina in Chianti, Castelnuovo Berardenga, the southerner village of Chianti, Gaiole in Chianti, known for the excellent quality production of the Chianti Classico and Radda in Chianti, with Etruscan heritage. The extra virgin olive oil "Terre di Siena" is produced in the province of Siena, where the olive activity is important in terms of economic and cultural landscape. The specification defines the area of production in 33 municipalities, all characterized by hills and valleys that come up on the slopes of Mount Amiata. The geological and climatic characteristics of this region give rise to an oil fruity smell and taste characterized by bitter and spicy notes. Here around you will not be able to avoid the glamour of the *salami*.

D05: CHIANTI FIORENTINO FROM SIENA TO FLORENCE BY CASTLES

The *Chianti* land is a territory that has been produced the wine *Chianti Classico* from centuries. It is a part of Tuscany that confine with Florence in the north, with the *Monti del Chianti* in the east, in the south with Siena and in the west with the valley of Pesa and Elsa rivers. It's a land of ancient traditions, civilized in the antiquity before the Etruscan and then from the Romans. The first official document that states the production of the Chianti in this area is dated 1398. In the 1600, wine exportation to England was not anymore occasional. Here it is produced since 1300 a good olive oil that in 2000 was endorsed by the European Community the Protected Designation of Origin - PDO. The specification requires the olive harvest carried out by the plant by mechanical or manual stripping, then the *molinatura* (milling) done either with the traditional cold pressing with millstones so-called "loop". Machines work at temperatures not exceeding 28°C. For storage, however, is provided of stainless-steel materials.

D06: MONTALBANO LEONARDO DA VINCI LAND AND MEDICEAN VILLAS

The area of Montalbano, which covers 16,000 hectares in the area between the provinces of Florence, Pistoia and Prato, is the ideal place from which to visit all of Tuscany, being centrally located and close to the major art cities: Florence, Pisa, Lucca, Siena, near the sea and the mountains. The dominant landscape is hilly, with the vine cultivated in the plains or in some terracing, olive spread on the higher slopes and chestnut woods, on top. For this area, in view of the decisive intervention of man on the environment, the appropriately definition of country-garden is in use, to emphasize the great importance it has had in the Montalbano human action-farmer, which made beautiful and productive this area through terraces, vineyards and olive groves arranged on hilly terrain. Extra virgin olive oil "BLEND" using all varieties of olives

in our centenary *ulivete* formed by plants: LECCIO - LECCINO - MORAIOLO - PENDOLINO - LARCIANESE, the latter being typical local. This extra virgin olive oil contains all the perfumes of our beloved land. The organoleptic characteristic is thus summarized: Cultivar Blend presents with harmonious taste and fruity, rich in vegetal notes and scents of artichoke and almond. In recent years the trend of more refined taste has meant that we have decided to make extra virgin olive oils also MONOCULTIVAR getting unique flavors for structure and body.

D07: MONTALBANO AND TRUFFLE HUNTING EXPERIENCE IN SAN MINIATO

The truffle is a root planted in the soil. In the area of San Miniato it lives in symbiosis with oaks, poplar and limes in a very humid and shady terrain. The “Tartufaio”, the Truffle hunter, is a figure similar to the hunter but much more complex in its nature. The truffle hunting experience starts with the *tartufaio* and its faithful “truffle dog”. It is a dog trained to recognize the truffle. From an early age the dogs are accustomed to the smell of truffles, trained to recognize them and report them to the *tartufaio*. The dog will do most of the work: first it will search the ground inch by inch, then it will finally stop, go on his feet and wag the tail. The *tartufaio* will know that a truffle has been found. There are two types of truffles: the original one and the white truffle. The day will consist of a hunting day with an experienced *tartufaio* with annexed a lunch or dinner based on truffle.

D08: SAN GIMIGNANO AND VOLTERRA

San Gimignano, a UNESCO World Heritage Site as many we encounter in our olive week, has the recognition of the towers that compose it. There were once 72 towers but now only thirteen have survived and give the elegant allure to the town in the province of Siena. Volterra is a mysterious and magical city. It is possible to witness and trace any historical architectural period which has contributed to make the city unique, Etruscan period there are the remaining of the walls, roman and medieval.

D09: DEPARTURE

TECHNICAL NOTES:

Olive Oil denomination. Italian law classifies extra virgin olive oils into 4 categories:

- A- Oils obtained through solely mechanical procedures in order not to alter the oil, such as washing, decantation, centrifugation and filtration**
 - **Olio Extravergine di Oliva:** maximum acidity level 0,8%
 - **Olio di Oliva Vergine :** maximum acidity level 2%

- B- Oils obtained through mechanical and chemical procedures**
 - **The Olio di Oliva** comes from different mixtures of *oli vergini* with refined oils (*oli raffinati*): maximum acidity level 1%
 - **The Olio di Sansa e di Oliva** obtained from refined *sansa* oil (produced from the solid paste that remains after the pressing and/or crushing of olives) and *oli vergini*: maximum acidity level 1%

The differences between the various type of oils depends mostly by the acidity and by the organoleptic features. From the nutritional point of view, oils are all equal and have the same number of calories but the *extravergine* has the best flavor.

The individual participation fee includes:

- All the transfers by private bus + driver
- Hotels 3-4 stars or typical Tuscan agriturismo (Double Occupancy B&B)
- Half Board (dinner in typical restaurants or hotel)
- English speaking professional guide, other languages as requested
- Medical/baggage insurance

It does not include:

- Entrance charges for museums, churches or other places.
- Single Room supplement 40€ per night.
- Tips, beverages, or any extras
- Supplement Full Board 140€

All dietary requirements will be catered for

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