

SECRET ITALY SLOW FOOD TRAIL

The term "off the beaten track" only hints at the deeply individual nature of our Slow Food Trail. Over the years we have established a wonderful network of local families, producers and farmers who open their doors to us. We immerse ourselves in Italy, the Italian way of life, the food, people and the quiet charm that is the Montefeltro region of Le Marche.

We stay at the Palazzo Rotati in the historical coastal town of Fano, just north of Ancona. This city palazzo has been painstakingly renovated to create half a dozen apartments, many with painted ceilings, wrought iron balconies, large bedrooms and bathrooms.

We have chosen Fano as our base as it is one of the most charming towns on the Adriatic coast. Surrounded by original Roman city walls, this elegant little town has a delightful centre packed with lovely cafés, wine bars, restaurants and shops. To the east lies a historical harbour and a long sandy beach with a flat coastal promenade for walking and cycling.



TRIP ITINERARY

Thursday

Mid morning arrival at Ancona airport (FR 124) where our driver will greet us and whisk us up the coastal road. Our first stop will be for a restorative coffee in elegant seaside Senigalia, a short hop up the coast.

From there we will meander our way north and inland to Porchetteria Patenta, where the husband and wife team still use traditional willow twine to tie up whole, herb stuffed pig before slow roasting in a wood fired brick oven over night. House wine served on simple tables covered in butchers's paper. Heaven for connoisseurs of pork scratchings!

From Patenta we drive to one of the region's top producers of wine, the Mancini estate, with breathtaking views over the glittering Adriatic and rows of vines of local grapes such as the intoxicating Aleatico and also, very unusually, Pinot Noir, a custom dating back to the Napoleonic rule of the area. It is a testament to the beauty of the Mancini estate that it was used by Rick Stein when he filmed his Italian TV program ([click here to view](#)). If the weather gods are on our side, we enjoy an al fresco food and wine tasting right above the turquoise sea, surrounded by lime green early season vines and the heady scent of coastal gorse.



The vineyards are next to the idyllic hill-top village of Fiorenzuola di Focara. The cobbled streets, domed church towers and jaw dropping views should mean hordes of tourists but as this is Le Marche, and not Tuscany, we are the only visitors.

We will leave Luigi Mancini's rolling vineyards and follow the glittering coastal road down to Fano where we check in to the lovely Palazzo Rotati. A couple of hours rest might be needed before we head out for dinner at Amo e Lievito - known for their fresh fish dishes and superb sour dough pizza. Adriatic fish is a revelation - quite different from the Med and the source of much pride locally.



Friday

We start by strolling down to the delightful Café Centrale for fantastic pastries and coffee. We will then have a wander around the cobbled streets of Fano to get our bearings. All roads in Fano lead to the central square and we will go for a "Café Morretta" - specific to Fano. We are then booked in at Pasta della Peppa for a demonstration of how to make artisan pasta. Lunch is light, at a tiny hole in the wall making the best Piadine we have ever had. This will be followed by a session of Gelato making with Antonio and Paola, proprietors of award winning artisan gelateria Makí around the corner from our Palazzo.

Late afternoon is free for exploring the many shops and cafés as they reopen at 4pm or to head to the sea or harbour

Supper is at Osteria della Peppa - the restaurant behind the same Peppa where we learnt how to make pasta earlier so by then you will know exactly which type to order.

Saturday

Breakfast as usual at Café Centrale before being picked up by our driver. Our first outing takes us right into the back of beyond for a visit to the smallest producer of the trip; organic winery and honey producer Giuseppe Paci. Giuseppe, his wife, 4 children (including latest arrival baby Giulia), his parents, an uncle and a set of grandparents all share a large house which has belonged to the Paci family for centuries. They produce small quantities of organic wine made completely by hand. Lunch in the courtyard includes home made salamis, honey and Signora Luisa's seasonal deep fried acacia and elder flowers served with the house rosé ([click here for short clip](#)).

We will leave the Pacis and head to multi-award winning Il Conventino, whose 300 acres of olive groves and vines produce artisanal oils and wines. For those interested in understanding just how complex and precise a process it is to make top quality olive oil loved by chefs, the owner, an engineer by training, talks us through his tailor-made, high-tech presses.



Saturdays are for communal team lunches at Il Conventino which means the full works from bruschette and pasta to ice cream served with the estate's top olive oil and sea salt - a revelation.

This is a slow tour, and lunch at Il Conventino can take anything from 90 minutes to 3 hours depending on the mood and the subjects discussed around the table. We don't clock-watch, we simply sit back and pour another glass of top quality wine, including the spectacular Passum dessert wine, made not from late, but early harvest grapes in order to control sugar and alcohol levels and resulting in a magnificent, deeply ruby "just sweet" wine.

For our final evening in Fano we will head to our favourite Enoteca down the road before dinner at Osteria Tiravino. this tends to be a rather wine infused evening....luckily we only have 200m to crawl back to Palazzo Rotati!

Sunday

We will be picked up around 7am for our return to Ancona airport and Ryanair flight home (FR125).

PRICES AND DATES

£850 per person

Thursday 4th - Sunday 7th May 2017

"if I had one day left to live, I would like to spend it just like this"

"What makes it so special? Being transported into the gentle beauty of the Italian countryside in May....meeting the first of many delightful Italians, so willing to talk about their food, their traditions..... Their friendliness and warmth makes us feel like old friends.....it is the people who make it special..."

TAKE A TOUR WITH US

Our culinary trips are all-inclusive with no need to spend any money at all while with us unless you would like to buy something to take home. However, flights are not included and our transfer service assumes Ryanair flights from Stansted to Ancona. Trips are all subject to a minimum number of bookings in order to run. We advise guests not to book their flights until final confirmation has been received 6 weeks prior to the start date. As stated in our terms and conditions, we cannot refund payments in respect of travel in the event of cancellation. Therefore, early booking of your flights is entirely at your own risk.

OTHER TOURS RUNNING IN 2017

Cooking in Italy

Culinary week at Villa il Boschetto, Le Marche
Sunday 10th - Saturday 16th September 2017

Stockholm Heritage Food Trip

Friday 29th September - Sunday 1st October

Italian Truffle Trip

Thursday 2nd - Sunday 5th November

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