



Food & Gardens of Italy with the Garden Club Federation of Pennsylvania

12 days | 15 days with Lazio Region Agriturismo extension

Drawing in horticultural enthusiasts from across the globe, Italy's stunning gardens are a sight to behold. With lush villa gardens featuring thousands of species of plants, to pools, fountains, statues, and more—you'll be sure to go home inspired with new ideas for your own gardens. Admire the shimmering shores of Lake Como and Maggiore, soak up the sun on the Italian Riviera, and fall in love with Tuscany as you end your trip in Florence—making visits to some of the most iconic gardens in each locale.



Your tour package includes

- 10 nights in handpicked hotels
- Breakfast daily
- 3 lunches
- 3 dinners with beer or wine
- 2 wine tastings
- 1 food tasting
- 6 sightseeing tours
- Expert Tour Director & local guides
- Private deluxe motor coach

Included highlights

- Villa Taranto Gardens
- Orticario Flower Show
- Lake Como cruise & Bellagio
- Villa Balbianello
- Villa Carlotta
- Villa Durazzo Pallavicini
- Pesto Experience in Cinque Terre
- Villa Garzoni Gardens
- Villa Torrigiani
- Farmhouse tasting & lunch
- Villa Medici
- Pitti Palace & Boboli Gardens

Tour pace

On this guided tour, you'll walk for at least 2 hours daily across mostly flat terrain, including cobblestone streets and unpaved paths, with some hills and stairs.

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Overnight Flight → 1 night

Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to Milan today.

Lake Como Region → 5 nights

Day 2: Arrival in Italy

Included meals: welcome dinner

Welcome to Italy! Arrive in Milan Malpensa and transfer to the Lake Como region. Then, meet your Tour Director and fellow travelers at tonight's welcome dinner served with beer or wine.

Day 3: Lake Maggiore cruise & the Borromean Islands

Included meals: breakfast, lunch

Spend the day on the waters of Lake Maggiore, the country's second-largest lake and cruise to the Borromean Islands, a three-island archipelago on the western arm of Lake Maggiore.

- Cruise to Isola Bella, a tiny isle that boasts a 16th-century palace and stunning, terraced gardens.
- After exploring the estate, hop back on your boat and sail around Isola Madre, the largest island in the chain.
- End your excursion on Isola dei Pescatori (Fishermen's Island), the only continuously inhabited member of the group, with 50 year-round residents. The traditional fishing village continues to pride itself on its heritage—look out for fishermen untangling their nets on shore.
- You'll have the chance to sample the island's specialties during an included lunch at one of the local restaurants.
- Pay a visit to the Botanical Gardens of Villa Taranto, regarded as one of the world's most beautiful gardens that is home to thousands of species of flowers and trees from across the globe.

Return to your hotel and enjoy a free evening to explore the area on your own.

Day 4: Como Town, Lake Como cruise & Bellagio

Included meals: breakfast

Head out with your Tour Director this morning and be introduced to the waterfront city of Como.

- Take in Como's eclectic Rationalist architecture, along with its glittering lakefront and staggering mountain scenery.
- View Como Cathedral, one of the last Gothic cathedrals built in Italy.
- Embark on a scenic cruise on Lake Como and soak in some of Italy's most beautiful estates and gardens.
- Float past charming lakeside towns to Bellagio, a village whose scenery has inspired poets and young lovers for centuries.
- Disembark in Bellagio and head to Giardini Di Villa Melzi where a guide will take you on a tour of the gorgeous gardens, the family Chapel, and the newly opened Napoleonic Museum.
- Spend free time afterwards to grab dinner, do some shopping, or just strolling the charming streets of Bellagio.

Please note: Travelers should feel comfortable walking three hours across mostly level terrain using paved pathways with some slopes and stairs.

Day 5: Orticolario Flower Show

Included meals: breakfast

Set along the shores of Lake Como at the beautiful Villa Erba, the annual Orticolario Flower Show takes place. This premier gardening event features hundreds of exhibitors showcasing sustainable gardening, workshops, art installations, and more. Spend the day at the flower show where you'll have plenty of time to mix and mingle with nature lovers alike, immerse yourself in beautiful experiences, and get some inspiration to take home with you.

Please note: Day and hours of Orticolario Flower Show are subject to change based on final event dates and availability.

Day 6: Villa Balbianello & Villa Carlotta

Included meals: breakfast

Head out on a morning trip to explore the Lake Como area where you'll have a chance to admire the beautiful architecture, breathtaking views, and hillside gardens.

- Visit Villa Balbianello where you'll get a glimpse into the rich history of Lake Como's history as well as immersing yourself in the villa's stunning gardens.
- Transfer to the beautiful Villa Carlotta to soak in spectacular views from the elaborate villa gardens which drape the slopes and curves of the hills.
- Embark on a scenic cruise on Lake Como and soak in some of Italy's most beautiful estates and gardens.

Return to your hotel in the Lake Como region by bus and enjoy a free evening.

Please note: Travelers should feel comfortable walking four hours throughout the day across uneven terrain with some uphill walking and stairs.

Italian Riviera → 2 nights

Day 7: Italian Riviera via Genoa

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Stop in Genoa for some free time before heading to the iconic Italian Riviera.

Afterwards, travel to nearby Villa Durazzo which sits proudly over the Gulf of Tigullio and is home to one of the finest scenographic-esoteric parks. As you explore the romantic-English style where you'll come across fountains, statues, grottoes, and of course, an impressive collection of plants. *Please note: Travelers should be comfortable walking for one hour across gravel paths, bridges, steps, and some hills.*

Continue to your hotel on the Italian Riviera and sit down for an included dinner with your group, served with beer or wine.

Day 8: Cinque Terre pesto experience

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, wine tasting

Spend the day in the iconic Cinque Terre and discover the traditions behind the famous Ligurian Sauce that is pesto. You'll discover how the simple ingredients of olive oil, basil, pine nuts, wild garlic, and sea salt come together with parmesan or pecorino to create what is often referred to as *Green Gold*.

- Travel by train to the famous town of Manarola for a visit to a cliffside pesto garden which grows abundantly on the sun-kissed coastline.

- Learn all there is to know about the fresh ingredients and tips for making the perfect pesto.
- After picking fresh basil leaves, begin to craft your pesto in an old carrara marble mortar.
- Sit down for an included lunch featuring burrata, parma ham, and fresh bruschetta.
- End your visit with a wine tasting of local white wine as you hear from a Ligurian Sommelier.

Please note: the location of the pesto experience is subject to change based on weather conditions

After free time to explore on your own, return to your hotel where you'll have a free evening on the Italian Riviera.

Florence → 3 nights

Day 9: Florence via Lucca

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, tasting, wine tasting

This morning, head to the area near the medieval town of Lucca to visit two historic villas built for rich merchants who showcased their power and wealth not only in their homes, but the gardens surrounding them.

- Visit the stunning gardens of Villa Garzoni, built on the site of an ancient castle.
- Take a stroll through the gardens which artfully combine geometrics and Baroque characteristics and masterfully come together as one unit.
- Join a local guide to explore Villa Torrigiani and its gardens, which dates back to the 16th century.
- As you make your way through the sumptuous flowering gardens, take time to notice how the large pools are used to reflect the facade of the villa.

Later, make your way to the provincial town of Colle Verde, located in the Tuscan hills, for a culinary experience you won't forget.

- Visit an authentic agriturismo, or farm stay, to learn how olive oil is extracted and refined.
- Enjoy a tasting of wine and olive oil produced right on the farm.
- Sit down to savor more locally made products during a lunch in the farmhouse.

Please note: Travelers should be prepared to walk one hour in each garden. Villa Garzoni consists of four levels accessible only by stairs and ramps. At Villa Torrigiani you can expect gravel pathways, some of which can be steep, and some stairs.

Arrive in Florence and settle into your hotel. The evening is yours to just kick back and relax, or head out for an evening stroll.

Day 10: Sightseeing tour of Florence's Gardens

Included meals: breakfast

Discover the enchanting beauty of Florence's gardens during today's guided sightseeing tour. From the diverse flora of the Botanical Gardens to the historical charm of Villa La Pietra, this tour offers a perfect blend of nature, history, and relaxation. Enjoy free time in the picturesque town of Fiesole and conclude your journey at the elegant Villa Medici.

- Explore a diverse collection of plants of the Botanical Garden in a serene setting.
- Wander through beautiful terraced gardens of Villa La Pietra and soak in the historical charm.
- Enjoy free time to take in the stunning views and a peaceful atmosphere in the picturesque Tuscan hilltown of Fiesole.
- Admire the lush gardens and Renaissance architecture during a visit to Villa Medici, which once belonged to the famed Medici family.

Enjoy a free evening in the city or add an excursion.

Please note: Travelers should feel comfortable walking one and a half to two hours at each location visited during today's schedule.

+ Tuscan Cooking Class & Dinner

Day 11: Pitti Palace & Boboli Gardens

Included meals: breakfast, farewell dinner

Cross the Arno River for a guided tour of the Pitti Palace, the Medici family's 16th-century residence and world-class art museum and the marvelous Boboli Gardens, the first example of the Italian style garden.

- Tour the lavish Palatine Gallery, which displays artwork by notable figures such as Titian, Raphael and Rubens.
- View the the Modern Art Gallery, which holds 30 rooms of work that span from the 18th century to the early 20th century.
- Step outside to explore the hilltop Boboli Gardens, a grand space filled with grottos, large fountains, centuries-old oak trees, meadows, Camellias, and more.

Please note: Travelers should feel comfortable walking for 2 hours across gravel paths with some slopes in Boboli Gardens.

Tonight, celebrate your trip with your fellow travelers during a farewell dinner served with beer or wine.

Flight Home

Day 12: Departure

Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Transfer to the airport for your flight home or extend your stay to continue south and the Lazio region.

+ Lazio Region Agriturismo extension

Soak in the scenery and admire the highlights during guided tours and free time to do as you please in the countryside of the Lazio Region.

Lazio Region Agriturismo → 3 nights

Day 12: Lazio Region via Villa Farnese

Included meals: breakfast

As you make your way south, make a pit stop in Caprarola where a local guide will show you around Villa Farnese and its impressive gardens.

- Explore the various rooms that make up the lavish 16th-century mansion, admiring massive frescoes, spiraling staircases, and stunning architecture.
- Head outside to the gardens which features a water staircase, a variety of fountains, picturesque terraces, maze-like gardens, chestnut trees, and the rose garden.

Please note: Travelers should feel comfortable walking 2 miles across paved and gravel pathways with some steps.

Enjoy free time this evening to do as you please at your agriturismo, or farm stay.

Day 13: Tivoli Gardens, Villa D'Este & Gardens of Ninfa

Included meals: breakfast

Taking a guided tour of Tivoli Gardens and Villa d'Este in the morning offers a peaceful start to the day, with the early light casting a magical glow over the stunning fountains and lush greenery. With an expert guide, you'll delve into the rich history and intricate designs of these UNESCO World Heritage sites, making the experience both educational and enchanting. Spending the afternoon on a guided tour of the Gardens of Ninfa is like stepping into a serene, living painting, where every turn reveals a new burst of color and history. With a knowledgeable guide leading the way, you'll uncover the rich stories behind each bloom and ancient ruin, making the experience even more enchanting.

Please note: Travelers should feel comfortable walking for 3 hours along paved pathways with some steps and slopes.

Day 14: Castel Gandolfo and winetasting

Included meals: breakfast

Enjoy an afternoon in Lazio's wine country.

- Stop at Castel Gandolfo, a gorgeous village located on the shores of Lake Albano
- Stroll through the square that's home to the Papal Palace, the Pope's summer residence, which you can step inside and explore
- Travel to a vineyard for a wine tasting, where you'll sample a variety of wines as well as homemade olive oils and other specialties

Later, raise a glass and toast to your trip with a farewell drink this evening.

Flight Home

Day 15: Departure

Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Transfer to the Rome airport for your flight home.

Customize your experience

Customize your tour by adding excursion options. Excursions offered on the same day will occur at different times, so there's no need to choose. Save \$10 when you book your excursion up to three days before your tour departs.* Excursions requiring advance reservation only list this discounted price. Call or go online to customize your tour: <https://www.goaheadtours.com/Z7GG> | 1-800-597-0350

Day 10: Tuscan Cooking Class & Dinner

From \$115.00 . Visit the link above for pricing info. (2.5 hours, departs in the evening with dinner)

This evening, learn how to make a traditional Tuscan meal under the direction of expert local chefs. Craft authentic picci, a thick, hand-rolled pasta, two kinds of bruschetta, and tiramisu. Then, pair your creations with wine, and sit down to a delicious dinner with your group. Please note: Depending on the size of the group, the class may be divided into two shifts.

*Optional excursions may be purchased up to three days prior to departure or while on tour. Pre-purchased optional excursions cannot be canceled within three days prior to departure or while on tour. Select optional excursions require advance booking and cannot be purchased or canceled after the advanced reservation deadline. GAT accepts payment by cash, Visa or MasterCard for optional excursions purchased on tour. Additional fees may apply for optional excursions purchased on tour. Excursions require a minimum number of participants to operate. Details and prices are subject to change. Due to seasonal hours of operation and availability, some excursions may not operate. If this occurs, you will be refunded any payments made for that excursion post-tour. Learn more at [goaheadtours.com/terms](https://www.goaheadtours.com/terms)