

A TAVOLA!



Discovering Food and Wine in Tuscany

Now in its sixth year, we are excited to offer *A TAVOLA!* again this spring.

Dates: May 12 – 19, 2025

Program Description

In Italian, “*a tavola!*” literally means “at the table” or a command: “To the table!” This concept is fundamental in the Italian culture because the table is where everyone meets to break bread, share laughter and stories, and deepen connections—it is as much about feeding your body as it is about feeding your soul. The *Discovering Food and Wine in Tuscany* program combines a balanced itinerary of cooking classes and field trips to local artisanal productions, small organic farms, a visit to Siena and Tuscan villages, and dining at excellent intimate restaurants. There will be plenty of relaxation on the grounds of your home site at Castello di Spannocchia, an organic agricultural estate nestled in the hills of Tuscany. You will indulge your senses with the tastes of Tuscany by sampling locally-produced cheeses, salumi, wines, olive oil, and honey. Experience first-hand how to prepare regional recipes with tips and techniques from our local cook. Learn about gardening methods that preserve the ancient landscape and provide the kitchen with a fresh, flavorful harvest. Find out about traditional cured pork products and the importance of raising organic, free-range breeds. By the time you depart Spannocchia, you will be well-versed in Tuscan flora and fauna, wine, food, and the delicacies that all play a part in the magic of Italy and the lure of Spannocchia. *Mangia bene e bevi meglio!*

Included in this Program:

Garden tour: Tour Spannocchia's impressive organic vegetable gardens and learn about the different aspects of organic and regenerative farming including no-till, crop rotating, synergetic beds, cover crops, composting, and greenhouse gardening. Participants are guided through each area of the garden and learn about the local herbs and seasonal crops typically grown in Tuscany. The class also includes details about crop storage and transformation into secondary products like limoncello, tomato sauce, and pesto.

Cooking Classes (2): The first cooking class begins with a tour through the vegetable garden at Spannocchia. You will learn about the cycle of various crops through the year and our methods for providing the kitchen with fresh, flavorful products. Then to the kitchen, where we will prepare a three-course Tuscan meal utilizing food products from the property. Each lesson concludes with lunch, tasting all the dishes created during the morning class, accompanied by Spannocchia wine and spring water.

The first course might be handmade pasta such as tagliatelle, ravioli, gnocchi, or pici, or perhaps the typical *ribollita* Tuscan soup. For our second course we may choose between our own farm-raised pork or beef, or perhaps even wild game, and this will be accompanied by fresh vegetables direct from the garden. We'll finish with a traditional dessert such as *cantucci* cookies with homemade vin santo, pinenut cake, tiramisu, or our renowned "chocolate salame." A vegetarian menu is also available, and we will try to fill requests for specific recipes as long as they fall within the traditions of the region and the season.

Cinta Senese Tour and Tasting: Learn everything about our Cinta Senese pigs. A close-up look at our Noah's Ark rare breed animals, our organic artisan meat production, and the typical *salumi* (salt-cured meats) that we create. The tour includes a walk to see the pigs in their habitat, a glimpse into our seasoning/curing room, and a guided tasting of our salumi products such as *salame*, *prosciutto*, *capocollo*, and *lardo*.

Olive Oil Tour and Tasting: We will learn about the history of olives and olive oil, and how it is produced—from harvest to bottling. We'll take a walk in the olive orchard and learn about some typical Tuscan olive varieties. The class concludes with a guided tasting of several olive oils, including our own award-winning Extra Virgin Olive Oil.

Wine Tour and Tasting: Explore how wine is made, including the different kinds of grapes, vines, and wines made in Tuscany. We'll visit the cantina, and finish with a tasting experience to learn to evaluate the wine characteristics.

Visits to local farm and producers: According to availability, we will visit some local farms of friends to learn more about local cheese, wine, and bakeries.

Field Trips: One visit to Siena, with guided tour and lunch out. Two visits to one of the typical hilltop towns (to be confirmed), with lunch out. A third visit to another local hilltop town (to be confirmed), with dinner out.

A Typical Day:

(Please keep in mind that every day will be different, and defining a typical day for certain is a little tricky!)

BREAKFAST: Daily between 8am-10am. Includes coffee, teas, granola, cereal, juices, hard-boiled eggs, homemade jams, honey, yogurt, fresh fruit, and breakfast cake.

MORNING ACTIVITY: This could be one of the cooking classes, or a field trip.

LUNCH: Daily at 1pm, buffet-style, if not part of the cooking class or out on a field trip.

AFTERNOON ACTIVITY: A guided tour at Spannocchia such as the Cinta Senese tour and tasting, wine tasting, etc. OR a field trip.

WINE ON THE TERRACE: Nightly at 7pm. The Spannocchia community and guests gather on the Villa Garden terrace or in the Living Room for a glass of wine before dinner. It's a perfect way to enjoy the sunset and a chance to meet the other guests, interns, and residents.

DINNER: Nightly at 7:30pm. Spannocchia dinners are family-style, and the concept is very much farm-to-table. Staff, guests, and farm interns eat together in our dining area every evening, with just one seating since it's a community meal. Dinner includes wine, water, bread, primo, secondo, contorno, insalata, and dolce. The food is very good, and the atmosphere is a lot of fun, but please note that it's definitely not fine dining! While we are sensitive to the special dietary needs of our guests, we do not run a restaurant-type operation. We have two cooks, Pietrina and Grazyna, who are responsible for creating meals for all of our guests, staff, and interns. For this reason, we cannot cater to very specific food preferences. Vegetarians, for the most part, will have plenty of food to enjoy, simply by opting out of our meat main course. *Please discuss any dietary restrictions or allergies with us in advance.*

What to Bring:

- One pair of comfortable shoes for walking (and that are suitable for a farm; i.e., you don't mind if they get a little dirty). We don't plan on walking in the mud, but during this time of year it is not unlikely that rain could make some of the places we visit a little muddy!
- Please be sure to bring lots of layers! The Castello is a very old stone building and although there is a heating system, it doesn't keep the heat as well as newer buildings do.
- Rain jacket
- Don't pack more than you can comfortably travel with and carry yourself. Make sure to leave a little space in your bag to bring home some goodies you pick up along the way!

Program Price: *All accommodations in the Spannocchia Villa or Fattoria, with private bathroom.*

- Single room: €2285/person, plus a \$60 individual membership to Friends of Spannocchia
- Double room: €1995/person, plus a \$60 individual membership (or \$100 family membership) to Friends of Spannocchia

Program fee Includes: All cooking classes, transport upon arrival, field trips, entrance fees, guides, room and board for 7 nights.

Program costs not included: Airfare (individuals will be responsible for purchasing their own flights). NOTE: Please check with the group coordinator prior to booking a flight to ensure proper arrival time.

Program Terms & Conditions:

PAYMENT, CANCELLATION, AND REFUND POLICY (Travel insurance is highly recommended):

In order to secure your reservation, fill out our online registration form and pay a \$500 deposit.

- By March 15, 2025: Program balance is due.
- Cancellation before March 15, 2025: \$500 deposit is nonrefundable.
- Cancellation after March 15, 2025: No refund is available. Therefore, travel insurance is highly recommended for emergencies or other unexpected changes to your travel plans.

We reserve the right to cancel this program for any reason, in which case we will refund 100% of program fees already paid or apply them to a future *A TAVOLA!* program (your choice).

FITNESS & PHYSICAL ABILITY:

This program includes a fair amount of walking, as well as standing and sitting for periods of time. Participants should be in good physical shape and understand that on excursions we may be several hours away from any medical facility.

The accommodations at Spannocchia are located on the second floor and require climbing a steep staircase (there is no elevator). By registering for this program, you acknowledge this. It is also important to note that you are responsible for moving your own luggage throughout your travels, so we highly suggest you bring no more than you are comfortable carrying.

MEDICAL INSURANCE:

We require that you have medical/health insurance coverage to participate in this program. The insurance you have may cover injuries/accidents and damage/loss of personal property while traveling; it is also possible to purchase short-term travel insurance through a travel agency. You are expected to determine your own coverage and any additional insurance needs. *To participate in this program, you also need to consent to the waiver for release of liability (next page).*

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Waiver and Release of Liability for A TAVOLA! Program:

1. I wish to participate in the *A TAVOLA!* Program. I understand that my execution of this Waiver and Release is a prerequisite for participation in the Program. I further understand that there are risks and dangers inherent in participating in this Program.
2. I understand that in order to be allowed to participate in the Program, I agree to assume all risks and to release and hold harmless the Friends of Spannocchia and the hosting Associazione Castello di Spannocchia, and their officers, agents, employees, assigns, successors in interest, contractors, vendors (and their agents), agencies, sponsors, officials and volunteers, including host families, camp facilitators, participating communities and clubs and all governmental and public entities including, but not limited to, the State, County and local municipalities where the program takes place (collectively the “Released Parties”).
3. I intend by this Waiver and Release to release, in advance, and to waive my rights and to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the Released Parties with respect to any cost, expense, liability or damage, including reasonable attorneys’ fees and expenses related to the investigation or defense of any claims (collectively, “Damages”) incurred if and to the extent that such Damages result from claims resulting from the activities or on account of any actions, negligent or otherwise, of the Released Parties. I understand and agree that this Waiver and Release is binding on my heirs, assigns, and legal representatives.
4. I understand that I am solely responsible to verify and show proof that I have adequate personal property and liability insurance to cover any and all contingencies during the entire duration of the Program, including all travel time. I may also be required to subscribe, at my own expense, to medical, life, personal property, liability, or other type of insurance, as deemed appropriate by the host Associazione Castello di Spannocchia, to cover the duration of the Program, regardless of whether said participant is already insured under a policy issued in the participant’s home country.
5. I understand that I am solely responsible for my health and safety, and I acknowledge that I am physically capable of participating in and completing this Program.
6. I agree to allow the nonprofit Friends of Spannocchia and the hosting Associazione Castello di Spannocchia, and their contractors, agencies and sponsors, the use of my name and likeness in connection with the *A TAVOLA!* Program, for any purpose related to advertising or promotion of the event worldwide in perpetuity in all forms of media now and forever known.

7. Should any portion of this Waiver and Release be judicially determined invalid, voidable, or unenforceable for any reason, such portion of this Waiver and Release shall be severable from the remaining portions herein and the invalidity, voidability, or unenforceability thereof shall not affect the validity, effect, enforceability, or interpretation of the remaining provisions of this Waiver and Release.

8. I agree that any legal action to be commenced against any party released or indemnified by this agreement shall be commenced in the appropriate court in Italy and I waive any right to bring a legal action in the courts of any other country.

This document is governed by the laws of Italy.

9. I have carefully read this Waiver and Release and fully understand its contents. I am aware that this is a RELEASE OF LIABILITY and a contract between me and the persons and entities mentioned above and I sign of my own free will.

I have read and understood the foregoing assumption of risk, and release of liability and I understand that by signing it I am obligated to indemnify the parties named for any liability for injury or death of any person and damage to property caused by my negligent or intentional act or omission.

I understand that by signing this form I am waiving valuable legal rights.

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

**Upon completing the online registration form, your digital signature is on file and a paper copy of this form does not need to be returned.*

If the participant is under the age of 18, this Waiver and Release will need to be signed by a parent/guardian and returned to us via mail or email.

Participant Name: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

Print Name of Parent/Guardian: _____