

Under The Tuscan Sun

It's hard to fully appreciate Chianti without recognizing Tuscany,

the breathtaking place where Chianti is produced. Tuscany is a place of rolling hillsides, cypress trees, warm stone villas, expansive vineyards, and rustic charm.

It's also the home of two powerfully historic cities, Florence and Siena. Chianti is the name of the entire zone within Tuscany producing Chianti wine. Any of the areas could call themselves Chianti, but additional specificity on the label shows that the producer met other requirements as well (e.g., amount of time spent aging in the bottle).

Visiting Tuscany brings you to a place that is timelessly drifting between the simple peasant life and the artistic and cultural energy of the Renaissance. If you can't visit Tuscany anytime soon, here are a few ways to bring the feeling of Tuscany to you.



FOUR WAYS TO BRING TUSCANY TO YOU

- 1 Host a Homemade Italian Dinner** Lucky for us culinary novices, simplicity is at the heart of Tuscan cuisine. Main ingredients include legumes, bread, cheese, mushrooms, olive oil, beef, and pork. In the winter, try making a pot of hearty ribollita, a traditional Tuscan soup with bread, vegetables, and beans. In warmer weather, put together a simple dish of capellini pasta tossed with extra virgin olive oil, fresh basil, and plum tomatoes.
- 2 Appreciate Art** It's been a little while since that Art History class you took in college. Refresh your artistic appreciation by visiting a local museum, taking a painting or sculpture class, or picking up a pretty coffee table book with pictures of famous Renaissance works of art.
- 3 Learn A Little Italian** If "ciao," "pizza," and "spaghetti" are the extent of your Italian fluency, it could be fun to pick up some new words and phrases. You could go all out with a class or find one of the many free online tutorials.
- 4 Drink Chianti** To really bring Italy to you, find some friends and uncork a bottle of Chianti. Chianti is a wine that has grown up in the Tuscan sunlight and is rooted deep in the Tuscan soil. If it's possible for a wine to taste like a country, Chianti tastes like Italy. It's bright and warm, a little rustic, and bursting with tart cherry and fresh red fruit.

Tuscany is in **Central Italy**, bordered by Liguria to the northwest, Emilia-Romagna to the northeast, Umbria to the east, and Lazio to the southeast.

QUICK FACTS ABOUT TUSCANY

Tuscany has an area of 8,900 square **miles** (about the same size as New Jersey).

Florence is the regional **capital** of Tuscany and is said to have the biggest collection of Renaissance art and architecture in the world.

3.8 million lucky people **live** in Tuscany.

Hillsides make up 2/3 of Tuscany, so if you plan on going bike riding there, make sure you're in shape!

Tuscany is home to the city of **Pisa**, famous, of course, for its leaning tower.