



Tours

New Culinary Experiences in Italy

by [Michelle Krol](#) | May 1, 2017 12:24pm



Italy is known around the world for its popular cultural, historical and culinary hubs like **Venice, Rome** and **Florence**. Recently, several travel groups and tour companies have announced new itineraries and experiences throughout Italy, which may interest both first-time culinary visitors and seasoned travelers alike.

Culinary travelers who may have already participated in the more popular food and wine itineraries may be interested in the newest food-focused experiences from **Avanti Destinations**, which take place in the Italian regions of **Sicily** and **Puglia**. Both are escorted tours for small groups of two to 18 people, with departures guaranteed even for a group of two.

The new “**Sicily Food & Wine**” experience is an eight-day/seven-night trip through **Palermo, Menfi, Noto** and **Mt. Etna**. Travelers will have access to a food and wine expert tour guide, driver and minicoach, seven dinners with wine, street food tasting, one cooking class, cheese tasting, chocolate tasting, one buffet with cocktails, two wine tastings with lunch, one wine tasting with local product tastings and entrance fees to four major sights. The itinerary starts at \$3,695 per person, double occupancy with 2017 departures on October 6 and November 3.

Avanti has also introduced its new six-day/five-night “**Puglia Food & Wine**” tour through **Bari, Ostuni, Alberobello, Matera, Lecce, Marruggio, Masseria** and **Fasano**. The experience includes a minicoach and driver, a food and wine expert guide, five dinners with wine, five lunches with wine, five wine tastings, two olive oil tastings, one cooking lesson, one pizza-making class, one cheese tasting and entrance fees at four major sights. Prices start at \$3,269 per person. 2017 departures are May 21, September 24 and October 3.

Tami Cortez, Southern Europe product manager at Avanti, spoke with [Travel Agent](#) about the new offerings. “When we created these special culinary vacations, we wanted travelers to be able to slow down and immerse themselves in the local food and wine culture,” she said, adding that they are designed to let people spend their days tasting the best local specialties in each area directly from the people who produce the ingredients. “These itineraries are perfect for clients looking for meaningful vacations. They’ll feel like they’re taking a little bit of Italy home with them...not only in their bellies, but also in their hearts.”

Also rolling out a new food-focused program is **Tuscookany**, which specializes in cooking vacations through **Tuscany**. Founded 19 years ago by _____ and _____, the company creates pre-designed itineraries allowing for sightseeing throughout the region, along with afternoon cooking classes and excursions to local producers of cheese, wine and olive oil. Tuscookany has multiple properties, with luxury villas located in **Casa Ombuto, Val d'Orcia** and one situated near **Arezzo**.

For those traveling through or near the city of **Florence** who may be on a tight schedule, Tuscookany recently introduced its new **One Day Italian Cooking Lessons** at Casa Ombuto.

“We found that many people staying in or around Florence, who were on broader trips to Italy, were looking for a way to take a lesson with us but did not have a lot of time,” says _____, owner of Tuscookany. “We designed this new itinerary for those who may only have a day to try one of our classes.”

Guests will participate in a three hour lesson with **Chef Paola Baccetti** and later sit down to a four-course lunch of their own creation. As an added convenience, the company can arrange to pick up travelers from the center of Florence for a drive through the Tuscan countryside to the Casa Ombuto location. After a welcome from the chef and a cup of coffee, participants will learn to make authentic Italian pasta by hand rolling it out the traditional way.

Priced at approximately \$300 per person for at least two guests, the new package includes transfers to and from Florence train station, the three hour lesson, lunch, all beverages and an apron.

Culinary travelers with more time to spend in the region can also book Tuscookany's **One Week Italian Program**, which offers a full-day culinary excursion to a cheese farm, an olive oil farm for a tasting, shopping in either **Anghiari, Arezzo** or **Montalcino** and a wine tasting, along with multiple four course Italian dinner classes. There is also the **One Week Mediterranean Cooking** holiday program which teaches participants the basics of Italian, Spanish, French and Moroccan cuisine through hands-on classes, as well as **Three Day Italian Cooking Course** which includes two cooking lessons, a full day culinary excursion and accommodation in the villa Torre del Tartufo, Casa Ombuto or Bellorcia with private bedrooms and ensuite bathrooms.

Environmentally conscious travelers should also note that Tuscookany's properties have organic vegetable gardens and use in-season produce from its own plots for classes, as well as from local farmers. There are also solar panels for heating the villas and pools and the company composts all garden, kitchen and wood debris, along with practicing several other sustainable practices.

Also introducing several new food-focused programs next month is **Eating Europe Tours**. The company was launched in 2011 by American native **Kenny Dunn**, who enjoyed introducing friends to his favorite restaurants and shops around **Rome**. Now, Eating Europe Tours offers a variety of culinary experiences throughout Italy, **London, Prague** and **Amsterdam**.

We spoke with **Wibke Carter**, public relations manager for Eating Europe Tours, about who may be interested in the new offerings. “I can tell you that the people who are inclined to book a tour with us are a broad mix between first and multiple time visitors, in a mid to high socio-economic bracket, foodies or history buffs and are not generally independent travelers (prefer to take a tour instead of discovering on their own),” she tells us. “The needs and desires of the traveler have changed, generally people are returning to cities for the second, third or tenth time and looking for unique experiences that are off the beaten track, or in a sense, experiences that bring them into contact with locals and provide an insight into their lives.”

In keeping with this philosophy, Eating Europe Tours' new experiences include the “**Historic Rome Sunday Tour**” trip, which takes place in the **Jewish Ghetto**, a 10 minute walk from sights such **Piazza Novona** and **Piazza**