

Florence Family Weekend Activity Descriptions

Thursday-Welcome!

1) Check-in and Open House

- a) Students will have the opportunity to show their families where they have been studying for the past few months, as well as meet other families during a reception with snacks and drinks.

2) Group Dinner

- a) A group dinner will be held to inaugurate the weekend at the gorgeous neoclassical Palazzo Borghese.

Friday-Day in Florence

On the first full day of GIF Parent and Family Weekend, we hope to give you a better understanding of this city known as “The Cradle of the Renaissance”. You will have three options in the morning and a further three options in the afternoon of different activities all of which are designed to show off the wonders of Florence and its artisans.

1) Morning Option 1: E-bike tour/Urban Walking Tour [weather dependent]; Lunch

- a) Florence is a wonderful city to bike in, and going around by bike is one of the best ways to see parts of the city that most visitors do not get to see!
- b) CAPACITY: 15 PARTICIPANTS

2) Morning Option 2: Tour of Bargello Museum with Prof. Mercedes Carrara

- a) Professor Mercedes Carrara will give a private tour of the Bargello Museum where visitors will see famous works by Donatello, Michelangelo, della Robbia, and other important Renaissance artists.

3) Morning Option 3: Walking Tour of Florence

- a) The Renaissance City that is Florence has many beautiful sites that are viewed best by foot. This walking tour will cover the main attractions of Florence, providing history and insight into Florence.

Lunch Time: Cooking Class at a Local Cooking School: For those of you who did not partake in the e-bike/urban walking tour (these participants have a separate lunch arranged), this is a great chance to learn to make local cuisine for your lunch and to impress your friends and family upon your return home.

1) Afternoon Option 1: Inferno Tour at Palazzo Vecchio

- a) Dan Brown’s award winning novel *Inferno* takes place in Florence, with pivotal scenes happening in Palazzo Vecchio. This novel is the basis of touring Florence’s city hall, with its many public (and secret) rooms and passageways.

2) Afternoon Option 2: Artisanal Jewelry Workshop and Visit to Leather School

- a) We will take a group to two famous Florentine workshops, one owned by a Florentine gentlemen who makes hand-crafted jewelry and other items from precious metals including gold, silver, bronze and even Euro coins! We will then visit the Leather School, which has been open since the 1930s. Here we will learn about one of Florence’s most famous crafts, the working of leather.

3) Afternoon Option 3: Tour of the Opera del Duomo

- a) With an expert guide, you will tour the museum that tells the story about one of Florence’s most famous monuments: the Duomo. From learning about how Brunelleschi realized the dome to viewing some of the original art from the cathedral, this rather new museum

(opened in 2013) offers fantastic insight into the dome of the Florence skyline. Should you desire, your ticket to the museum will allow you to climb the steps to the top of the dome.

Saturday- A Day in the Tuscan Countryside

1) Tuscan Wine and Food Culture Tour with Prof. Guido Gualandi

- a) This tour is designed to show you the culture that surrounds food and wine in the Tuscan region. By visiting these places, we hope to give you a better idea as to how various foods and wines are produced and introduce you to the people that make them.
 - i) Corsini Winery Visit
 - (1) We will visit the 400-year-old Corsini Winery (Villa Le Corti) in the town of San Casciano in the Chianti. This winery makes their wine and olive oil on site, using sustainable methods for both processes. We will have a tour of the wine and olive oil making facilities, as well as seeing the beautiful grounds of the Corsini family, which they have held since the 14th century.
 - ii) Ancient Grain Mill
 - (1) Professor Guido Gualandi will take us to the local mill in the town of Montespertoli where they mill grains in the old way, with a turning stone. This mill is also one of very few in Italy where they continue to mill ancient grains.
 - iii) Wine Museum
 - (1) After the mill, Prof. Gualandi will take you to the Wine Museum, also in Montespertoli, explaining the ancient and modern methods for grape growing and winemaking. This interactive museum allows visitors to fully grasp the process and history of winemaking.
 - iv) Lunch
 - (1) We will have a delicious lunch at a local Tuscan restaurant, trying typical dishes from the area.
 - v) *Passeggiata*
 - (1) As Italians tend to do after a large meal, we will take a stroll through the town with Professor Gualandi who will show us some important local sites.

2) Cities of Tuscany Tour: San Gimignano and Siena

- a) This tour is designed to highlight two of the most beautiful cities (besides Florence) in Tuscany. Both have played an important role in history, and showcase what life was like in Tuscan Renaissance times.
 - i) Visit to Siena
 - (1) We will visit one of the Contrada, the name for districts in Siena, and there we will learn about the Palio. The Palio is an important horse race event that takes place every summer and is unique to Siena. Here we will discuss the rivalry between the different areas of Siena, and how this ancient horse race continues on in modern times.
 - (2) We will then have a guided tour of the city, learning about its importance to Italian history and about the life of St. Catherine.
 - (3) Visit to the Cathedral of Siena with its stunning interior where you will be able to climb to the top to see views of Siena from above
 - (4) After these tours, we will enjoy a wonderful meal of traditional Sienese and Tuscan cuisine alongside a wine and cheese tasting.
 - ii) Visit to San Gimignano
 - (1) San Gimignano is a hill top walled town with a city center listed as a UNESCO world heritage site. Here, we will have a walk around the town so to showcase how this

city was an important in merchant trade in Medieval times, particularly in saffron. A beautiful city with a fascinating history, what more could one want!

Sunday-Spiritual R&R

1) Mass in Florence (Morning)

- a) We will be celebrating Mass at a church in the historic center of Florence. We hope you will join us!

In the afternoon, you will have free time to discover other locales in Florence at your leisure.

Some places you may want to visit include:

- Galileo Museum- Learn about the life of the great scientist who was born in nearby Pisa and died near Florence. This museum is home to many of his incredible inventions and works.
- Visit to Fiesole- Fiesole is a city on the hills of Florence, offering marvelous panoramic views of the city. Easily accessible by public bus, taxi, or by foot (a little more than 3 miles from GIF's campus).
- Piazzale Michelangelo-Offers other gorgeous views of the city a bit closer than Fiesole.
- Uffizi Museum- A museum that houses many of the works commissioned by the famous Medici family who rules Florence for many centuries and were known for their patronage of the arts.
- Accademia Museum- Home to Michelangelo's David, this museum holds many works from the late 13th century through the 17th century from primarily Florentine artists.