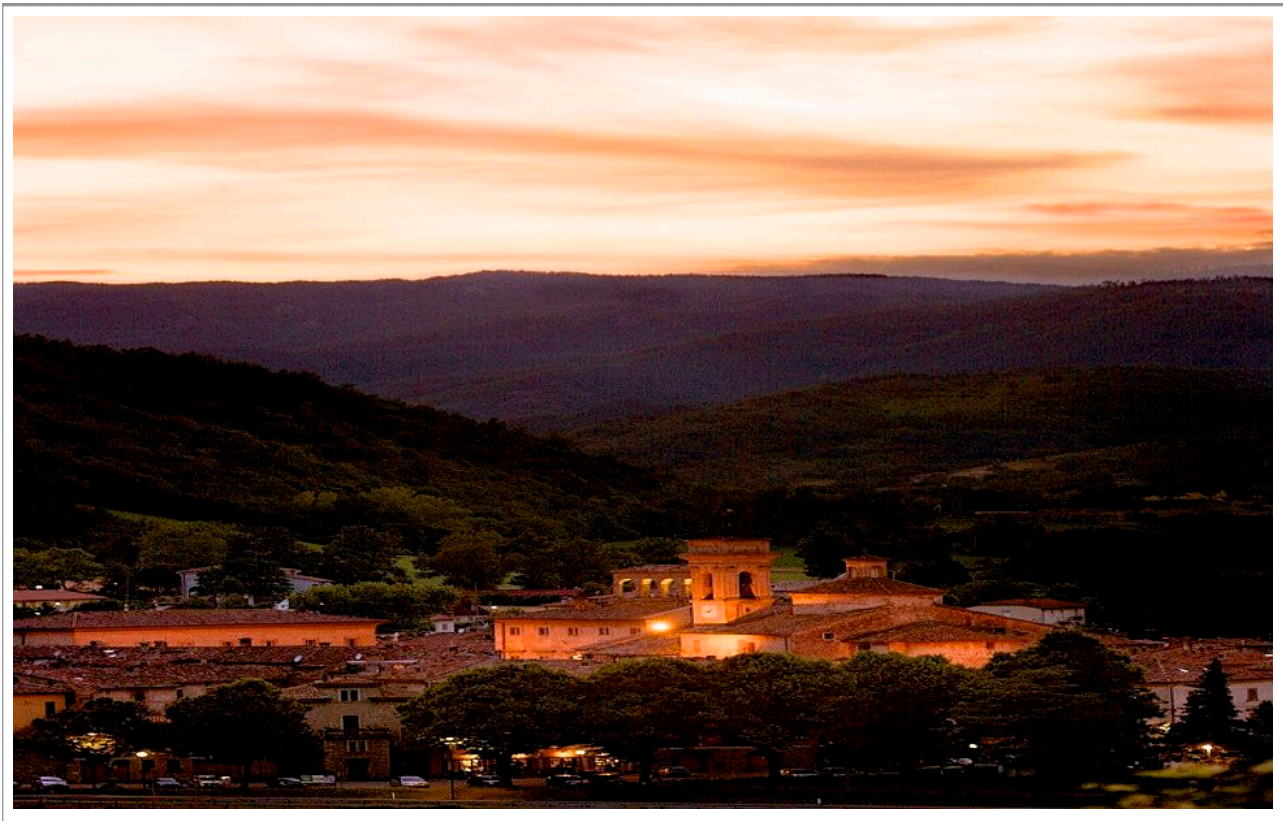


Authentic Italian
Holiday Experience in Le Marche
Artisans, Traditions, and Curiosities

8 pax €1800 per pax

Hidden in the enchanted Upper Valley of The River Metauro, an area waiting to be discovered, away from the classic tourist routes of neighboring Tuscany and Umbria.

Mercatello sul Metauro



Known for its well-preserved historical centre, Mercatello's beauty is enriched by the lush and unspoiled nature surrounding it. Already famous in Roman times for its timber, the town became an important center thanks to its market, hence the name Mercatello (little market).

Officially founded in 1235 with the construction of a walled hamlet, it originally included the people living in seven castles spread throughout the region.

Since the 12th century, Mercatello has been an important spiritual centre, thanks to its history of monasticism, the birth of its patron saint Veronica Giuliani (1660-1727) and of the Blessed Margherita della Metola (1287-1320). In the great era of the Italian Renaissance, the village was part of the Duchy of Urbino. The duke Federico of Montefeltro, celebrated patron of the arts and sciences, built his summer residence here.

1° Day: Transfer by train to Bologna or Florence and on to – Mercatello sul Metauro

Our private driver, Nicoletta ,will welcome us in Bologna and we will transfer by private van to Mercatello. On the way we'll stop at an Autogrill for a great panino and a cold drink. On arrival at Palazzo Donati we will settle into the beautiful surroundings. Around 6:30 we'll meet for a welcome drink, with dinner served around 7:00. Early turn-in tonight for an early rise on Wednesday morning. **Overnight at Palazzo Donati**

2° Day: Traditional fabric printing in Carpegna



Breakfast at Palazzo at 7:30; Departure at 8:20

This morning we will visit a lab where artisans produce stencils and color to make beautiful fabric prints in a very ancient manner. The business has been run by the same family for generations. We will join Emanuele who will teach us how to create this beautiful art and we will print our own personalized aprons (they will be useful for the upcoming cooking class!). The workshop will last about 2 hours and then you'll have time to look around or purchase some of the beautiful items.

After the workshop, a big surprise!!!! We have been officially invited for a late-morning coffee by a young friend Clara, Princess of Carpegna, and we will be able to tour her Palace. Afterwards we will continue our day trip to visit **La Rocca di San Leo**, an impregnable

fortress, with a nice village at the bottom. The Fortress tour gives you some breathtaking panoramic views. We will have lunch in San Leo and afterward we'll have a guided tour of San Leo and walk on one of the Balconies of Piero della Francesca. We'll be back in Mercatello around 6:30, just in time to rest a little before our featured dinner *served at Palazzo Donati by the Academia del Padlot - an association of 9 local men dedicated to food and wine tasting* (this dinner is a special event that will require 30 euros extra per person and the two gratuity!!) I can ensure you that is worth it!!!



3° Day: Mercatello sul Metauro - Urbino

8:00-9:00 Breakfast at Palazzo Donati

After breakfast we will go with Nicoletta for an official visit of the historical center of Mercatello, a town that is "little but full of art, tradition, and surprises." You will have free time to shop before lunch at *Uto's Locanda*. Following lunch and a short rest we will depart around 3pm for the beautiful town of Urbino, about 40 minutes away, where our local guide will escort us around the town and inside the magnificent Palazzo Ducale. On our way back to Mercatello we will dine on *pizza in a typical local pizzeria*. **Overnight at Palazzo Donati**

4° Day: Sant'Angelo in Vado and local artisans

Breakfast at Palazzo, 8:00-9:00

10:15 First thing this morning: cheese making workshop 101; from cow to table!

Visit to the archeological discovery of The Domus (Roman Villa) in Sant'Angelo in Vado, home of the prestigious white truffle. Following, we will stop at the local Enoteca and learn all about the wine of the Region Le Marche and its best labels. We will engage in a private tasting and light lunch. We'll return to Mercatello around 2:00 for a rest and free time. At 4:00 we'll meet one of the local artisans, a carpenter named Gambafina. He makes everything from violins to furniture.

Around 4:30 we will shop for our dinner with Luisa and Nicoletta. Needless to say the shopping will have to be done in Italian! Nicoletta and Luisa will teach you "Italian Express," a shopping language course that will enable you to interact in Italian with locals.

The lesson will start at the bar (where else?) where you can learn how to ask for your favorite coffee!!!

7:00pm Dinner will be at Castello della Pieve where Dante's exile was decided.

Overnight at Palazzo Donati

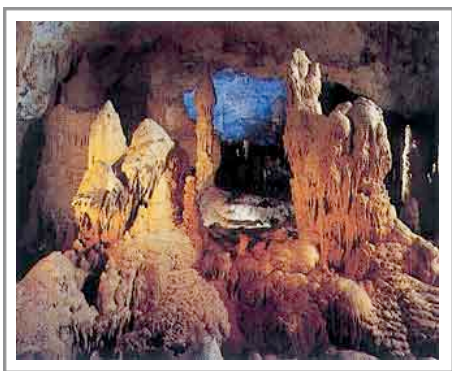
5° Day: Market Shopping in Italian and Cooking Lesson at Palazzo with Local Chef.

Breakfast at Palazzo, 8:00-9:00

From 9:00 till 10:30 we have free time to shop the weekly market in the main square.

At 10:30 we are invited to a local event in Palazzo Gasperini, just across from Palazzo Donati, and once the property of Luisa's grandmother. It is now a National Monument and we are invited to the "vernissage" (preview) of a modern and contemporary art exhibit.

Lunch will be in town and afterwards you have time to rest before we meet at 4pm in the kitchen of Palazzo Donati with a local chef ready to teach us how to prepare a traditional local family dinner. Get ready to put on your brand new aprons! Dinner will be at 7:30.



6° Day: Le Grotte di Frasassi and Fabriano – Learn the art of paper making

Breakfast at Palazzo--Early! 7:00am

Depart at 7:30: Today we will travel a little bit further into the Le Marche Region with a first stop at the **Grotte di Frasassi**, to visit these ancient caves, quite an interesting guided tour with spectacular underground views. Next on our journey we will discover the small town of **Fabriano** where we will stop for lunch at the local traditional **Osetria da Ivo**. It's a very pretty town, famous for the art of paper-making. We will visit the paper museum and participate in a workshop where we will learn how to make fine artisanal paper guided by the *Maestro Cartaio*.

Back to Mercatello. **Dinner at Da Uto. Overnight at Palazzo Donati.**

7° Day: Urbania – Cooking with Flowers

Breakfast at Palazzo, 8:00-9:00

We will stop in the pretty town of Urbania to see the famous Renaissance ceramics, the unusual Church of the Dead, the small museum featuring local traditions in the courtyard of the local Palazzo Ducale. After lunch at a local cafe` we will pay a visit to Anna at **Mulino della Ricavata** where we will once again experience traditional cooking but this time using local wild flowers. Dinner follows and a celebration of our time together in Mercatello.



8° Day, Tuesday, April 30: MORNING DEPARTURE for 12:18 train from Bologna to Florence Breakfast at Palazzo

Our driver will take us back to the Bologna train station where we will depart for Florence.
Our trip has come to an end and we hope you really enjoyed it!

- **7 nights in the Historic Residence, Palazzo Donati**
- All transfers in minibus for nine with driver
- Accommodation in double or twin bedrooms with bathroom
- Breakfast in the Palace
- All meals included
- Cooking Lessons
- All local tours
- All museum entrance fees
- All guided tours
- “Italian Express” language class
- Workshop such as the fabric printing class, paper making class
- Bilingual Guide
- Private Wine Tasting

PALAZZO DONATI

In the main square of Mercatello sul Metauro, Palazzo Donati is an ideal place to discover and experience a way of life that still preserves the characteristics of Renaissance Italy. Owned by our hostess, Luisa Donati's family, since 1800 it is part of their family heritage. It has not been transformed into a hotel; even though it has all the comforts you need, it is still very much a family home. It has maintained its grand spaces with very simple style. All the bathrooms have tubs and showers. **Visit the website:** www.palazzodonati.com