

ONE DAY IN SIENA



COMUNE
DI SIENA



Just one day is not long enough to discover the city. Siena deserves more time, but without a doubt a first “taste” will leave you with the desire to return. We suggest a brief itinerary which will allow you to see the “essential” sights.

The departure point is **Piazza del Campo**, the heart of the city. It is here that every 2nd July and 16th August that the Palio takes place: a horse race preceded by a splendid historic procession. At the end of the 13th Century, the Nove Signori who governed the city ordered the building of the Palazzo Pubblico which according to records was inaugurated in 1310. All the buildings that looked out onto the square had to follow a set of rules (1297) which forbid the construction of balconies and called for mullioned windows which were divided vertically in two or three parts. These regulations made up one of the world's first city planning documents. The nine segments of the square reflect the nine governors and give it a particular shell shape.

Stop in front of the **Fonte Gaia** which brought water to the centre of the city in 1346, after almost ten years of digging in order to create a “bottino”, a long underground barrel vaulted aqueduct. At the beginning of the 15th Century, the 14th Century fountain was replaced with that of Jacopo della Quercia, the original marble of which can be found in the Santa Maria della Scala Museum Complex. The current day Fonte Gaia is a copy made by Tito Sarrocchi (1869).

If despite the short amount of time available you want to visit a museum, we would suggest the **Civic Museum** in **Palazzo Pubblico**, the imposing palace with its elegant tower, Torre del Mangia.

The Palace, a symbol of the independence and wealth of Siena, is one of the most important examples of civil gothic architecture in the world and a treasure chest of works of art. A number of the most beautiful rooms belong to the Civic Museum and are open to the public: the Sala del Mappamondo (Room of the world map) with the *Conquista del castello di Giuncarico* (Conquest of the Giuncarico Castle), the last work of Duccio di Buoninsegna (1315-1320), the *Maestà* (1315-1321) and the *Guidoriccio* (1328-1329) by Simone Martini. There is the internal chapel, the Sala del Concistoro (Room of the Consistory) and the Sala della Pace (Room of Peace) with its depictions of *Buono e Cattivo Governo* (Good and Bad Government) frescoed by Ambrogio Lorenzetti (1338-1339) where it is possible to see the medieval city with its workshops and artisans. In the centre, there is the *Allegoria del Buon Governo* (Allegory of Good Government), a woman dressed in white stretched out on a suit of armour, which is the universal emblem for peace chosen by Unesco.

If you have the energy you may like to visit the **Torre del Mangia** (1325-1349): a climb of over 400 steps - the tower is 87 metres high - rewards you with a breathtaking view of the city and surrounding countryside.

Leave Piazza del Campo from the Costarella dei Barbieri exit which leads into via di Città, one of the most important streets of the city centre, lined with beautiful buildings, shops and workshops.

If you have time, look into the courtyard of the **Palazzo Chigi Saracini**, rich with history and home to the Accademia Musicale Chigiana, one of the most prestigious music schools in the world where musicians such as Abbado, Baremboim, Zubin Metha, Accardo studied and then taught. The picturesque courtyard is a great place to escape the summer heat, especially when there are lessons going on to grant you with a wonderful musical background. The building itself also deserves a visit.

At the end of via di Città, turn right into via del Capitano and carry on until you reach **Piazza del Duomo**.

A whole week isn't enough time to visit everything concentrated in this space but we will limit ourselves to a "whistle-stop tour".

Giovanni Pisano began work on the facade of the Duomo at the end of the 13th Century and this was recently restored to its splendour. To the right, in the piazza Jacopo della Quercia there are the remains of the Duomo Nuovo which the inhabitants of Siena tried to build before the 1348 plague but the soil gave way and they were forced to abandon the project. The "facciataone" (large facade) of the Duomo Nuovo is accessible through the Opera Metropolitana museum climbing the 130 steps and offers a beautiful view of the city.

The floor of the **Duomo** (entirely uncovered and visible from mid August until mid October) is a "picture Bible" with 56 inlaid marble squares produced between 1369 and 1547, based upon designs by great artists such as Matteo di Giovanni and Domenico Beccafumi. Inside the Duomo there are numerous masterpieces: the Piccolomini Library completely frescoed by Pinturicchio, the pulpit of Nicola and Giovanni Pisano and works by some of the greatest artists of the time such as Donatello, Michelangelo, Bernini.

In front of the Duomo we find the ancient **Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala**, one of the oldest hospitals in Europe which sprung up along the Via Francigena to give assistance to pilgrims making their way to Rome. The canons of the Duomo were responsible for its creation even if legend tells the story of a shoemaker called Sorore who died in 898 A.D. The series of paintings in the Sala del Pellegrinaio (Room of the Pilgrimage) tells the story of the hospital which gave medical care, welcomed pilgrims and took in and educated abandoned children known as "gettatelli" (throw aways). Today, Santa Maria is a museum complex which houses the Library and Photo Gallery of Giuliano Briganti, the Childrens' Art Museum, in addition to both temporary and permanent exhibitions. The basement rooms are home to the Museum of Archeology in a "labyrinth" of rooms and tunnels dug out of the volcanic stone.

To return to Piazza del Campo, pass under the archway and head down the steps which lead to

piazza San Giovanni and the Baptistery. You will pass by the **Crypt**, which was only recently discovered and opened to the public and in front of the Baptistery you can take in the sheer majesty of the cathedral complex. From via dei Pellegrini you will find yourselves once again at the Costarella dei Barbieri.

Carry on along the via di Città where on your right you will find the imposing and elegant **Loggia della Mercanzia**, located by the Croce del Travaglio, where the three streets that gave origins to the city of Siena meet: Banchi di Sopra, Banchi di Sotto (branches of the ancient Via Francigena which pass through the city) and via di Città. It is a Gothic-Renaissance structure which was designed by Sano di Matteo and Pietro del Minella (1417-1428). In the tabernacles which lay against the pillars there are 15th Century statues, works of Vecchietta, who created "San Paolo" and "San Pietro" and of Antonio Federighi who created "San Savino", "Sant'Ansano" and "San Vittore".

From the Croce del Travaglio follow the street of Banchi di Sopra which still today is lined with shops, banks and noble buildings. Stop in piazza Tolomei which owes its name to the building which looks out to the left of the street: **Palazzo Tolomei**.

The Tolomei family were bankers and merchants, rivals of the powerful Salimbeni family whose palazzo can be found a little further up the street. The unlucky Pia will have looked out from the beautiful Gothic mullioned windows. Pia is mentioned by Dante in the V canto of Purgatory with the famous words "Siena mi fè, disfecemi Maremma" (Siena made me; Maremma unmade me), which refer to the tragic story of this noble woman from Siena. Legend has it that Pia was given in marriage to Nello Pannocchieschi (a gentleman from Castel di Pietra in the Maremma region of Tuscany), who after having confined her to his Castle, killed her. Gianna Nannini, the famous singer from Siena, dedicated a rock opera to Pia.

Carry on along Banchi di Sopra, which the Sieneese people call "il corso" until you come to piazza Salimbeni and the building which was home to rich merchants and bankers, enemies and competitors of the Tolomei family.

The building, which from the square appears to be gentrified by the architectural context, is a real citadel whose dimensions and fortress style characteristics

can be appreciated better from the nearby piazza dell'Abbadia.

In the 15th Century, the **Rocca dei Salimbeni** was confiscated by the Siena City Council and used for financial activities before being incorporated by Monte dei Paschi di Siena, the bank founded in 1472 which is still housed in the Rocca today. The picture gallery inside can be visited upon appointment together with the historical archives and ancient Church of San Donato.

The square was renovated at the end of the XIX Century by the Sienese architect Giuseppe Partini.

Take the street to your left, Costa dell'Incrociata followed by via della Sapienza, or head towards piazza Matteotti and follow via del Paradiso to arrive at the **Basilica di San Domenico**.

Construction of this imposing brick church began in 1226 but the Gothic forms which can be admired today were added in the 14th Century. The Basilica hosts an array of artworks within. The fresco of Andrea Vanni in the Cappella delle Volte (Chapel of Faces) is the only portrait of Saint Catherine painted when she was alive. The relics of the head of Saint Catherine are exposed in the church's side chapel which displays frescoes by Sodoma (1526) depicting the main events of Catherine's life.

Just below the Basilica, the poggio di Camporegio offers a splendid view over part of the city, dominated by the great Duomo. Take the Costa del Serpe, a partially hidden street which goes below the rock level, and you will arrive at the **Fonti di Fontebranda**.

Of the many beautiful fountains in Siena, Fontebranda is certainly the most important and the most famous, quoted by both Dante and Boccaccio. Construction began in 1193 with just one arch, to which two more were subsequently added. The water in the fountain was drawn up using a system of basins and was used as a drinking trough for animals as well as a place for washing clothes. The waste water was used to power mills and in the activities of tanneries and dye workshops.

Head up via Santa Caterina again and you will come to the **Casa Santuario** (Sanctuary) of the Saint. The rooms of the house where Catherine was born in 1347 have been turned into an Oratory.

Follow via della Galluzza to return to Piazza del Campo.

Don't leave Siena without having tried some cured meats or pecorino cheese, drunk a glass of wine, tasted a slice of panforte or a ricciarello biscuit: this food and wine indulgence will heighten your desire to return.

HERE ARE A FEW, JUST A FEW THINGS THAT YOU MISSED IN SUCH A SHORT VISIT

- The city section of the Via Francigena, from Porta Camollia to Porta Romana
- The Orto de' Pecci
- The Synagogue and the old ghetto of Siena;
- Squares, alley ways, view points and unexpected perspectives that only those with time to wander the streets of Siena will find
- The National Picture Gallery
- A stroll or a run among the peaceful bastions of the Medici Fortress with a breathtaking view of the city
- The Botanic Gardens and the Science Academy's Natural History Museum
- The vegetable gardens of the Tolomei family
- The great Basilicas (Provenzano, San Francesco, Santa Maria dei Servi) and all the other wonderful churches
- A guided tour through the city or a cookery lesson
- Time to stop in a restaurant or trattoria to enjoy local specialities
- A visit to an artisan's workshop to admire objects produced using ancient traditional methods, giving you the opportunity to take a "piece" of authentic Siena away with you

We are confident that what you have and haven't seen will encourage you to come back, maybe with friends, maybe for a little while longer so you can discover even more of Siena.

Come back soon...



USEFUL INFORMATION

Medical Emergencies 118
Carabinieri (local police) 112
Polizia di Stato (State Police) 113
Fire Brigade 115
Police Headquarters +39 0577 201111
Taxi +39 0577 49222
Siena Parking +39 0577 228711

CITY MUSEUMS

Torre del Mangia +39 0577 292343
Museo Civico +39 0577 292232
Santa Maria della Scala
+39 0577 534571

INFORMATION

Tourist Information Office
Santa Maria della Scala
Piazza Duomo, 1
Tel. +39 0577 280551
siena@terresiena.it

You can download other routes from
the website www.enjoysiena.it

enjoysiena



City Administration
Tourist Board
Piazza del Campo, 1
Tel. +39 0577 292128/178
turismo@comune.siena.it
www.comune.siena.it

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