

TWO DAYS IN SIENA



COMUNE
DI SIENA



Two days are sufficient to see a “fair amount” of Siena, even if the city has such a vast patrimony to offer which would require much more time. We propose a two day itinerary, the first day dedicated to the “essential” sights with suggestions given for the second day to make your visit as complete as possible.

1ST DAY

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. 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 bought 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. Start with a visit to 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. Whiten the most beautiful rooms: 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. 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. 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. 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** with its many unmissable works of art.

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 abandon the project. The “facciatone” (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. Today, Santa Maria is a museum complex which houses the Library and Photo Gallery of Giuliano Briganti, the Childrens' Art Musuem, in addition to both temporary and permanent exhibitions. The basement rooms are home to the Museum of Archeology.

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** and 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 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 by Vecchietta, who created "San Paolo" and "San Pietro" and by 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, who 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 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 Sieneese 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**.

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.

Just below the Basilica, 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.

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.

2ND DAY

Start with a visit to the **National Picture Gallery** in via San Pietro. The museum is home to masterpieces by the Siennese artists: Duccio di Buoninsegna, Simone Martini, the Lorenzetti brothers, Domenico Beccafumi and many others, from the beginnings of Siennese painting until the 17th Century.

As you exit the gallery, carry on along via San Pietro until you arrive at Porta all'Arco, one of the doors of the third ring of walls which can easily be identified while strolling through Siena. Pass through the Arco, in the direction of Porta Tufi and you will find yourselves in piazza Sant'Agostino with the church of the same name. On the left and opposite there is the entrance to the Science Academy's Natural History Museum (Accademia dei Fisiocritici).

The museum houses many geological, zoological, botanical and anatomical collections as well as many "curious" artefacts. Of particular interest is a fin whale skeleton located in the entrance courtyard and an Etruscan tomb and cistern which depicts the solar system which can be found in the basement.

Next to the museum, occupying part of the valley between Port Tufi and Porta San Marco, one can find the **Botanic Garden**: a great place for a break from your "immersion" in history and art, amongst the indigenous plants from every continent.

Carry on along via Mattioli towards Porta Tufi, keeping to the left of the street. Almost in front of the University Faculty of Law, you will notice a small passageway in the walls. Enter inside, it is certainly worth it. You will find yourselves in the **Orti dei Tolomei**, an area of countryside in the middle of the city, with olive and fruit trees, overlooking part of Siena towards Valdorcia and Monte Amiata. Here you can rest, study, read, have a snack...

Underneath the hill of the Orti there is the **Valle di Porta Giustizia** and in front, the imposing but graceful **Basilica di Santa Maria dei Servi**, your next points of call. Cross the Orti and exit into via Sant'Agata, one of the steepest streets in Siena: luckily you will head in a downhill direction. Pass the archway (a door of the old city walls) and continue on down hill following via Dupré which leads to Piazza del Campo. Take the first downhill street to your right

which will take you to **Piazza del Mercato**. This market square, characterised by a central 19th Century loggia called "Tartarugone", is dominated on one side by the Palazzo Pubblico which from this angle appears different but not less beautiful than in Piazza del Campo. On the opposite side, the square is like a balcony over the countryside, which the Republic of Siena dominated for years, as far as Radicofani and Monte Amiata. Underneath one finds the Valle di Porta Giustizia, accessed by a small unpaved street and the door of the same name.

In Medieval times, prisoners sentenced to death exited the cells from under the Palazzo Pubblico, crossed the Piazza del Mercato (where at number 34 the executioner lived) and walked along the via dei Malcontenti, leaving Siena through the Porta Giustizia. Today this previously sad route leads to a beautiful and happy place: the **Orto de' Pecci**.

The whole valley has been cultivated as vegetable gardens since the 16th century and today it is open to the public for various activities managed by an association: a great place for resting, walking or letting children play. The Orto offers a wonderful view over Palazzo Pubblico and the Torre del Mangia as well as being a great space for picnics and various cultural activities. There are also the medieval gardens with plants used in medicine, food preparation and dyeing procedures.

After resting in the Orto de' Pecci, you will have the strength to carry on with your visit. Instead of heading back up towards Porta Giustizia, take the street on the other side which arrives almost at **Porta Romana**, passing by the different buildings which made up the Psychiatric Hospital and now houses various cultural activities, university offices and public health administrations. Pilgrims on their way to Rome and to the south left Siena through the Porta Romana, as did merchants and other travellers who were following the Via Francigena along which many important cities developed.

Leave Porta Romana behind you and after a few metres along via Roma take the street to your left and head up via Valdimontone which will lead you to the **Basilica dei Servi**.

From the porch of the church you can enjoy one of the most stunning views of the city which illustrates all the characteristics of its ancient medieval structure.

Inside, the Basilica is home to many artworks such as the Madonna and child of "Bordone", painted in 1261 by Coppo di Marcovaldo. It is one of the most beautiful artworks from the first half of the 13th Century and also has an interesting story behind it. Coppo di Marcovaldo, a Florentine, was taken prisoner and brought to Siena during the battle of Montaperti, won by the Sieneese. He did not have the funds to pay his ransom, so earned his freedom by painting this masterpiece that we can admire today.

From via dei Servi, arriving at San Girolamo and heading up towards "Ponte di Romana", where via Roma becomes via Pantaneto after the Arch of San Maurizio, (one of the old doors from the XII Century), you will find the **Fonte di San Maurizio** on your left, built at the beginning of the 14th Century and modified over the following centuries.

Keep to the left on via Pantaneto and take one of the narrow streets which lead into via San Martino and from there head towards the parallel street that lies below, via di Salicotto. The alleys and squares in the centre are part of what was the ancient ghetto where the Jewish community, present in Siena since the XIII Century, were segregated from 1571 to 1796. The **Synagogue** can be found in in vicolo delle Scotte at n. 14.

Heading up towards via San Martino, which becomes via del Porrione, you come to **Logge del Papa** and to **Palazzo Piccolomini**.

The palazzo, designed by Rossellino, and the Loggia by Antonio Federighi, built for the family of Enea Silvio Piccolomini, a great humanist, who was Papa Pio II, represent two splendid examples of Renaissance architecture. Today, the **State Archive** is housed in the building where the Biccherne are kept. These are the covers of the City Council's administrative books of (XIII-XVIII Century), real masterpieces painted by the most important Sieneese artists.

From the Logge del Papa, make your way back 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 ricciarellino 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, northward and Porta Camollia
- Squares, alley ways, view points and unexpected perspectives that only those with time to wander the streets of Siena will find
- A stroll or a run among the peaceful bastions of the Medici Fortess with a breathtaking view of the city
- The Basilica of Provenzano, the Basilica of San Francesco 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
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Siena Parking +39 0577 228711

CITY MUSEUMS

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INFORMATION

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

enjoysiena



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Centro Storico di Siena
Insieme nella Lista del Patrimonio Mondiale dal 1985

