

THREE DAYS IN SIENA



COMUNE
DI SIENA

In three days it is possible to see a lot of Siena. However, to appreciate all it has to offer, to discover hidden corners and unusual perspectives, its different atmospheres and colours which change with the seasons, a lot more time is necessary. We suggest an itinerary where the first day is dedicated to the “essential” sights and suggestions are given on the second and third days to allow you to visit a large part of the city. Of course you may decide to spend more time in a particular area or in a museum, to follow the itinerary in a different order, to enter in the beautiful churches that you pass along the route...

You may prefer to lose yourselves in the narrow streets and alleyways, to stop at a viewpoint or in one of the Orti to take in the calls and flights of the swallows over the rooftops during the long summer evenings, to admire how the buildings which frame Piazza del Campo change colour during the day – from pale pink to deep red at sunset...

If you miss something, come back... maybe together with friends who don't know Siena but have been enthralled by your descriptions.

Come back soon...



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.

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.

Start with a visit to the **Civic Museum** in the **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.

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 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 to abandon the project. 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 Museum, 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 **Baptistry**. 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.

From the Croce del Travaglio follow the street of Banchi di Sopra. 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 who was killed by her husband, Nello Pannocchieschi. Gianna Nannini, the famous singer from Siena dedicated a rock opera to Pia.

Carry on along Banchi di Sopra, which the Siense 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 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.

From piazza Salimbeni, 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, including

the fresco of Andrea Vanni, 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 Galluzzza 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 Siennese artists dating from the origins of painting up until the 17th Century.

As you exit the gallery, carry on along via San Pietro until you arrive at Porta all'Arco.

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. 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. 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 and a breathtaking view. Here you can rest, study, read, have a snack...

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 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.

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.

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 di Santa Maria 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 col Bambino (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 Sienese.

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 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 of Antonio Federighi, built for the family of Enea Silvio Piccolomini, a great humanist, who was Papa Pioll, represent two splendid examples of Renaissance architecture. Today, the **State Archive** is housed in the building which is 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 Sienese artists.

From the Logge del Papa, make your way back to Piazza del Campo to end the second day of your visit.

3RD DAY

From piazza Tolomei, take via Cecco Angiolieri and almost at the end of the road, to the left, in front of via delle Donzelle, enter into **Castellare degli Ugurgieri**.

In the past, there were many Castellari but today Castellare degli Ugurgieri is the only one that remains, bearing witness to the original shape of urbanization by the Sienese landowners who abandoned the countryside for the city and transformed themselves from warriors to merchants and bankers, forming strong family consortia.

Leave the Castellare from the path that leads to the church of San Vigilio.

Turn left into via Sallustio Bandini and heading down the first road to the right, you will come to **Piazza Provenzano Salvani** (Siena hero of the Battle of Montaperti) and to the **Basilica di Santa Maria in**

Provenzano, with its elegant forms in the Mannerist style, whose construction has an interesting story.

In the 16th Century a terracotta Virgin was displayed in a tabernacle in the area which a Spanish soldier tried to hit with his hook gun. His firearm imploded and killed him. From that moment the Madonna became an object of great devotion. A year later, construction on the Basilica began and from the mid 15th Century it was decided that she was to be celebrated every 2nd July with the Palio horse race.

After visiting this church, we suggest you head down the steps to the right (as you look at the facade) and to loose yourselves in the alleyways, squares and view points of one of the quieter and lesser visited districts of the city of Siena.

As you climb the other side you will come to via dei Rossi which leads to **Piazza San Francesco** and the Basilica of the same name. The Franciscan convent, founded at the beginning of the 13th Century, is now home to the University Faculty of Economics. Look into its beautiful cloisters which can be accessed to the right of the facade. The Gothic Basilica is rich with artworks such as the frescoes painted by Ambrogio Lorenzetti and the *Crocefissione (Crucifix)*, masterpiece of his brother, Pietro. The Chapel of the Sacre Particole conserves the hosts stolen in 1730, found after 3 days and miraculously remained unspoiled to this present day.

From piazza San Francesco, head out onto via dei Rossi and before heading straight on to Banchi di Sopra, turn right into vicolo degli Orbachi. A narrow dead end street which will amaze you for its unusual layout and the view of the vegetable gardens below.

On Banchi di Sopra, after piazza Salimbeni, following via Montanini you are once again treading the urban section of the Via Francigena, heading towards **Porta Camollia**. These are elegant streets on which noble buildings rich with history overlook. Look at the facades, the mullioned windows, the columns, the decorations, the different styles, the family crests with

the half-moons which bear witness to the participation in one or more Crusades, the “butts” of the original towers still recognisable by the type of stone and by the lack of windows, even if they have been incorporated in the later architectural designs.

After via Montanini, continue along via Camollia until you reach the door of the same name. Pass through the door to admire it and then turn back along via Camollia, just as if you were ancient pilgrims, merchants or travellers.

Along this road the Templars owned a “maison” (hospice) at the **Chiesa di San Pietro**, known colloquially as “magione”. When their order was suppressed in 1311, the hospice passed to the Knights of Jerusalem and then to the Knights of Malta.

At the end of via Camollia, turn right to enter into the Lizza gardens, pass through them until you come to the **Fortezza Medicea**.

Known also as the Fort of Santa Barbara, it was built on the orders of Cosimo dei Medici in 1560, on the grounds of a Spanish fortress which was destroyed by the Sienese in 1552. The Fortress hosts Siena Jazz, the first Jazz University in Italy, where musicians from all over the world specialise.

You can enjoy a beautiful 360 degree view of the city and surrounding hills as you walk around the perimeter of the Fortress which has been laid out as a garden. Walking along the “Artemio Franchi” stadium you will come to Basilica di San Domenico.

Don't leave Siena without sampling traditional dishes in a restaurant or “Osteria”: these food and wine “episodes” will increase your desire to return.

Don't forget to visit 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



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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

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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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