

SIENA IN THREE HOURS



COMUNE
DI SIENA



Three hours, a morning or an evening are 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 forbade 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, whose original marble 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, Barenboim, 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 "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. 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 Musuem, 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 back in Costarella dei Barbieri again.

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 boost your desire to return.

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

- Sanctuary of Santa Caterina
- 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 around 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 beauty of Siena's public water fountains from the most important and famous Fontebranda, to the more hidden and surprising ones
- The great Basilicas (Provenzano, San Francesco, Santa Maria dei Servi, San Domenico) and all the other wonderful churches
- Siena's Loggias, true masterpieces of different periods
- 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

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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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the income from the "imposta di
soggiorno" (daily tourist tax)



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Centro Storico di Siena
scelta nella Lista del Patrimonio Mondiale nel 1985

