

Full day tour programme

- 8.30 Departure from QQML bus stop Piazzale Montelungo
- 8.40 Stop in the QQML bus stop Piazza Libertà
- 10.30 Arrival in San Galgano and entrance to the Abbey (see description below)
- 12.00 Departure to Siena
- 13.00 Arrival to Siena Fortezza for lunch with a wonderful view at Pizzeria Ristorante Nonno Mede
- 15.00-17.00 Guided tour in Siena
- 17.30 Departure to Firenze (arrival at 19:30).

The Abbey of Saint Galgano and the Hermitage of Monte Siepi

The Cistercian abbey is situated in beautiful Val di Merse, the valley of the river Merse, 35 km. from the city of Siena in Tuscany.

The Abbey is the first church in Tuscany to be built in the Italian gothic style. The construction of the abbey started around 1218 by the Cistercian monks who usually built their monasteries close to rivers, and the church was finished around 1288.

The monastic community of S. Galgano formed, but the community was badly hit by the famine in 1329 and the plague in 1348, and at the end of 15th century the monks moved to Siena.

In 1786, the bell tower fell, damaging the roof of the church, and in 1789, the great Abbey was definitively abandoned. The enormous quarry of stones and columns were used to constructed buildings in the area.

Some restorations have been carried out, but today we still find the enormous church roofless, but the long tall nave with its windows and an apse rose window still stand. The Abbey's chapter house and part of the scriptorium also remain.

At the location, we also find the Hermitage of Monte Siepi where legend tells us that Saint Galgano retired around 1170 to live as a hermit.

Saint Galgano Guidotti (1148-1181) was a Catholic saint born in Chiusdino in the modern province of Siena. In his early years, it is said he led a ruthless life, but after he had two visions of the archangel Michael, Galgano was converted.

In the first vision, the archangel Michael tells Galgano that he was going to be protected by the archangel himself. In the second vision, Galgano follows the archangel to the hills of Monto Siepi where they meet the twelve apostles. It is said that after the second vision, Galgano's horse refused to obey his orders and led him to the top of Monte Siepi. Galgano was convinced that it was a sign and he embedded his sword in a stone to realize a cross. From then on he lived a life dedicated to God and prayers. After his death, the Pope made Galgano a Saint in 1185.

The sword in the stone can be interpreted as a symbol of peace, and can still be seen today in the Hermitage of Monte Siepi. The chapel was built from 1181-1185 in Romanesque style and has a round base where the sword in the stone can be found in the middle. In the 14th century a rectangular chapel was added, and the later frescos by the Sienese painter Ambrogio Lorenzetti, which are still visible today.



Other Carlotta's photos: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/6SvuppTR84CtCpT58>

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About the Abbey of Saint Galgano:

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=video+san+galgano+english&view=detail&mid=6466B50D65E42F4F72AA6466B50D65E42F4F72AA&FORM=VIRE>

About the legend of the sword:

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=san+galgano+sword+english&view=detail&mid=12B52F65329333BD25AB12B52F65329333BD25AB&FORM=VDRVRV>

Siena

Built on three hills and surrounded by a magnificent territory, Siena has managed to conserve its essence and its mediaeval appearance. From the beginning, Siena has been a distinctively original city, to the point that, as a whole, it can be considered to be the largest surviving medieval complex in Europe.

Originally an Etruscan settlement and then a Roman colony, it was not until the mediaeval period that the city began its most significant phase of development. This was mainly due to the growing importance of the Via Francigena, the main artery that connected Rome with northern Europe. This growth eventually led to the transformation of Siena into one of the richest and most populated cities in the world and capital of a large and highly organised state.

During this period the city also developed the features and monuments which still distinguish it today: the Palazzo Pubblico, the Piazza del Campo, the cathedral and the imposing city walls.

Among the masterpieces of Il Sodoma are the frescoes, completed in 1526, in the chapel of St. Catherine of Siena painted for the church of San Domenico, depicting the saint in ecstasy, fainting as she receives the Eucharist from an angel. (Description from: www.travelingintuscany.com)

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<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=video+on+siena&view=detail&mid=2D6011348B8BF50C23C42D6011348B8BF50C23C4&FORM=VIRE>

Photos by Carlotta:



