

ITALIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN TUSCANY

OUR LOCATION

We're in San Giovanni Valdarno, a delightfully small, medieval town in the heart of Tuscany, unstressed by tourist traffic and where it's still possible to savour the taste of Italian daily life. *Il Sillabo* is only minutes away from Firenze, Arezzo, Siena, and Chianti district day trips are a simple, fascinating reality.

OUR PROFESSIONALITY

Il Sillabo proudly offers a highly specialized, professional service which embraces all the individual needs and objectives of its students.

OUR OBJECTIVES

Through its various Italian courses encompassing language, art and gastronomy *il Sillabo* seeks to spread Italian culture with both passion and enthusiasm.

OUR TEACHING

Our multimedia courses, specifically designed to be flexible, involving and non academic, gently guide students towards their objective in a pleasant, skilful way.

OUR COURSES

Il Sillabo's comprehensive range of courses can be either taken singularly or in any combination to suit students, even up to the day of their arrival.

OUR FAMILY

Il Sillabo is a small Italian language school managed and run by a typical extended Italian family: we genuinely want to make students feel part of our home and not an anonymous tourist. We honestly trust in our ability to offer a personalized service in classes, in our extra activities, in the local information. Always.



▲ *Il Sillabo* is situated in an historic and characteristic building in the small medieval town of San Giovanni Valdarno, in the heart of Tuscany.



▲ San Giovanni Valdarno is close to most of the other beautiful Tuscan towns and is an excellent starting-point for excursions to small Chianti villages, old churches, castles, farms and sights in the surrounding countryside.

LANGUAGE COURSES

- Classes comprise a maximum of 10 students, although the yearly average is less.
- Lessons are held from Monday to Friday, usually from 9am to 1:15pm (with a break from 11 to 11:15am), and occasionally in the afternoon.
- A one hour class is deemed to be a full 60 minutes.
- Textbooks and/or teaching materials, such as photocopies, are included in the prices.
- We offer five levels: beginners, elementary, intermediate I, intermediate II, and advanced.
- On the first day, students are asked to take a placement test, after which there is an introduction and welcome meeting. In the evening there is an introductory tour to the town, as well as a dinner.
- On request, students receive an attendance and achievement certificate upon completion of their course.
- Afternoon schedules can vary according to staff and/or student needs.
- The minimum age for enrolment is 14 years. There is no maximum age.

OUR TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

The *il Sillabo* family is supported by other "family" members, a young, friendly team of dedicated professionals whose goal is to make learning Italian a thoroughly enjoyable, memorable experience with motivation, enthusiasm... and a touch of irony.

All *il Sillabo's* teachers have had specialist training. Not only do they use a teaching method based on communication and on students' participation, but they also plan their lessons starting from their students' skills and needs. Lessons include use of video tapes, cassettes, reading, grammar exercises and explanations; textbooks and/or photocopies are included in prices.

LEARN ITALIAN WITH US, BE PART OF OUR FAMILY!



INTENSIVE COURSES

Four-hour group lessons a day, from Monday to Friday for 2/3/4 or more weeks (20 hours a week).

This type of course is suited to students who wish to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Italian language and culture through lessons, regional visits and following individual interests.

SUPER - INTENSIVE COURSES

Six-hour group lessons a day, from Monday to Friday, for 2/3/4 or more weeks (30 hours a week).

This type of course is suitable for those who intend to benefit from a more complete language course. During the two extra hours, there is a minimum of two and a maximum five participants per class. If the minimum number of participants is not reached, this course will be converted into a Combined Course.

COMBINED COURSES

Four-hour group lessons and one hour individual lesson a day, for 2/3/4 weeks (20 group hours plus five individual hours a week).

Combined courses are recommended for students who want to deepen their knowledge of the Italian language and culture. Subjects of special interest or a specific linguistic field can be included in the instruction. Individual instruction times are related to the group lesson timetable and, when possible, can be arranged according to the school programme and the students' needs.

INDIVIDUAL LESSONS AND COURSES

These are recommended for people with particular linguistic, cultural and practical needs, as well as for those who want to examine specific topics. *Il Sillabo* arranges lessons according to individual students' needs. For specific purposes, such as lessons on translation, architectural Italian and medical Italian, charges are generally higher. However, prior notice is required so that the best specialized teachers can be engaged. In both cases lessons are planned during the first meeting or earlier.

ADDITIONAL COURSES

History of Art (Four 2-hour lessons)

An urban and historic introduction to Florence from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance and to the most renowned Tuscan artists such as Giotto, Masaccio, Piero Della Francesca, Michelangelo and many others. The teacher presents and discusses visual material such as old maps, historical documentation and slides.

Italian Literature (Four 2-hour lessons)

An analysis of texts, their style and contents as a starting-point for studying literature. Subjects are selected by the teacher according to the needs and wishes of students. One example: *Il Dolce Stil Novo*, Dante Alighieri, *Divina Commedia* and Love Poems.

Antique furniture (Four 2-hour lessons)

This subject deals with Florentine furniture and its history from the fifteenth century to today.

Archaeology (Two 2-hour lessons)

Two sessions which introduce Greek and Etruscan archaeology and give a short account of restoration techniques.

Drawing – Painting (8/24 hrs.)

The Valdarno region is in a strategic position for Tuscan artistic itineraries: in the past it attracted the attention of Leonardo da Vinci, who became directly acquainted with the area, studied its morphology and described and reproduced it in dated and signed designs.

At *il Sillabo* you can practise your drawing and painting in such an environment! Drawing course: students learn the *chiaroscuro* technique by drawing still life objects.

Painting course: students, who should already be able to draw, learn oil and water colour techniques.

Where we are

San Giovanni Valdarno is on the main Roma to Firenze rail route, making it a convenient launching point to all major Italian cities and regions. It is also just off the A1 *autostrada*, Italy's most important super highway, which links the northern and southern regions of the country. That is why it's easy to reach any where in Tuscany and Italy.



TRANSFERS FROM/TO SAN GIOVANNI VALDARNO

Train

Firenze/San Giovanni
30/40 minutes - direction Foligno, Roma, Arezzo, Montevarchi
San Giovanni /Firenze
30/40 minutes
San Giovanni/Arezzo - Arezzo/San Giovanni
35 minutes
San Giovanni/Pisa - Pisa/San Giovanni
about 1hr.30min.
San Giovanni/Roma - Roma/San Giovanni
3hrs. - trains called *inter-regionale* stopping in San Giovanni

Car

San Giovanni/Firenze - Firenze/San Giovanni
25 minutes - Autostrada A1 (motorway) - Exit: Valdarno
San Giovanni/Siena - Siena/San Giovanni 45 minutes
< It is possible and easy to reach Perugia, Orvieto, Lucca, Cortona by train or San Gimignano, Volterra by car.
In summer there is convenient public transport to the seaside >



CENTRO CULTURALE PER STRANIERI

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Wine lessons (Two 3-hour lessons)

The aim of our wine lessons is to acquaint participants with the wide variety of Tuscan wines, to better appreciate their properties and to relate them with local foods. Apart from lessons, our students will be invited to join our excursions to the enchanting landscapes and locations of the Chianti region.



Cooking Lessons (Three or four hour lessons, twice a week, usually held at the school)

Discover the art of eating and cooking with our culinary programme. These lessons are a pleasant, appetizing opportunity to learn the secrets of Italian cuisine under the patient guidance of Alessio and other teachers.

At the end of our hands-on lessons of Italian and Tuscan cuisine, students can taste the dishes they have prepared such as home-made pasta, pizza, pasta with different sauces, meat and vegetables and easy to make desserts.



Simple food from local, seasonal ingredients: this makes cooking in Tuscany a unique experience.

EXTRA ACTIVITIES

Our monthly programme includes most of the following activities:

- First day welcome meeting: on official starting dates, we introduce our school to students and offer a small buffet (free). Later in the afternoon, an introduction tour to San Giovanni Valdarno (free) plus dinner in local pizzeria or restaurant (paid).
- Guided visits to Firenze and surrounding areas (costs: return train ticket and museum entrance free).
- Weekend day visits to the most interesting towns in Tuscany, such as Pisa, Siena, Arezzo, Lucca, Volterra, San Gimignano, and, less frequently, Umbria: Perugia, Orvieto (costs: meals and transfers by car or train).
- Excursions to the countryside near San Giovanni Valdarno (free).
- Visits and guided tastings of wine and extra virgin olive oil on farms in Chianti and other attractive areas close to San Giovanni Valdarno (costs: transfers and tasting).
- Afternoon shopping tours to Prada, Dolce e Gabbana, Bottega Veneta, Gucci, Armani outlets (costs: transfers).
- Showings of Italian films (VHS) with a critical introduction (according to students' wishes) (free).



▲ During our welcome meeting, we inform our students of the programme of activities. For each excursion students pay their own expenses for transportation (often by public means) and monuments apart from small prices for tasting, dinners etc.

ACCOMMODATION

Il Sillabo can help students find standard accommodation according to a set price list. For specific needs, students are requested to apply, in which case further expenses are possible.

AVAILABLE OPTIONS ARE:

- In a host family, single or double room, with breakfast or half board.
- In an apartment shared with other students, single or double room.
- In a studio apartment for one or two persons (1 bedroom, kitchen, 1 bathroom).
- In a hotel or *agriturismo*.

All apartments and host families are within walking distance of the school. Accommodation starts on the Sunday prior to courses and ends on Saturdays following their conclusion. Students are kindly requested to leave apartments neat and tidy. For further details on accommodation, please read the general conditions included in our enrolment form.

IL VALDARNO, OR THE VALLEY OF THE RIVER ARNO, IS RICH IN INTERESTING THINGS TO SEE AND DO.

San Giovanni Valdarno: the town hall



Below is only one example amongst the infinite, attractive possibilities which exist in our region.

"CYCLING ON THE HILLS"

This 10 kilometre route, in part road and in part on bush tracks, leads to an extremely beautiful 17th Century farm. The villa has an interesting Baroque chapel attached to it and a wonderful view of the golden (although this depends on the sun!) geological formations called *Le Balze*, which inspired the natural visions of Leonardo di Vinci.

Le Balze



Chianti landscape



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