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Are you thinking about taking a dream vacation in Florence or Tuscany? Can you imagine yourself now, walking towards the famous Ponte Vecchio (below) in the early evening as the lights are starting to reflect off the river Arno. Or sipping a glass of fine Chianti while relaxing on a balmy evening and watching the sun set over the beautiful city of Florence?

If you are like me, you probably love this pre-trip stage - planning all the sights that you want to see while in Florence and Tuscany, looking at hotels or apartments to stay in while you are there, booking your flights, looking at photos.... the list goes on and on!

One of my best trips to Tuscany was staying in the heart of Florence for 5 days of sightseeing with lovely Italian food and wine, followed by a week in a villa in the heart of the Tuscan countryside.

Alternate days were spent relaxing by the swimming pool and visiting towns and villages in Tuscany, including Siena, Pisa, San Gimignano, Volterra, Lucca and some of the remotest spots of the Tuscan countryside.

If you are planning your own trip to Florence or Tuscany, or if you'd just like to learn a little more before you decide to go, read on and let me be your virtual tour guide to Florence and Tuscany!

Our trip started at the beginning of September - a great time to go to Italy as you beat the summer crowds and the weather is still good but not too hot. We flew into Pisa, which has a bigger airport than Florence, but is still very handy for getting to Florence, as its just a 1hr journey by train

In Florence we spent a wonderful few days relaxing, walking and sightseeing. If you like art...

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