

WELCOME TO SIENA

FACTFILE

Population: 56,672

Country: Italy

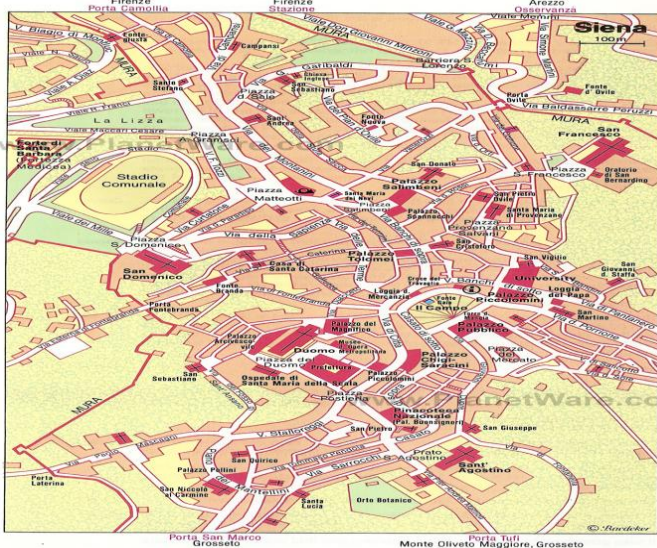
Region: Tuscany

Languages: Standard Italian, no dialects

Religion: Roman Catholic

INTRODUCTION

Few geographical areas in the world can boast the variety of environment that surrounds Siena. To the north, we have the richness of the Chianti landscape. South of Siena the Arbia valley leads to the hill-top of Montalcino, home to the famous Brunello Wine. Near Siena there are also the wonderful cities of San Gimignano and Monteriggioni.



HISTORY OF SIENA

The legend says that Siena was founded by Senius and Ascanius, sons of Remus, of the famous twins ,Romulus and Remus ,who founded Rome. Statues of the wolf feeding the twins can be seen in Siena. In 30 A.D. the Romans established a military outpost called Siena, which developed into a busy little trading post in the following years.

The Lombards arrived in the 6th century A.D. , and the Franks also governed the city. Great works were carried out, the most important was the famous Via Francigena, the road which linked Rome to France , used by pilgrims and travellers; this greatly increased Siena's importance. The Church was actively involved in governing the city, especially between the 9th and 11th centuries, but later the Sienese people claimed their right to govern and administer the city.

Siena's economic and military power grew enormously and inevitably friction grew between Siena and Florence, as both cities tried to enlarge their territory. There were many battles between the two cities between the 13th and 15th centuries. Eventually Siena was incorporated into the Florentine territory and administration.

Despite both external disputes with neighbours and internal disputes over government, in the years from 1150 to 1300, the city was adorned with beautiful monuments such as the **Cathedral, Palazzo Pubblico** and **Torre del Mangia**.

From the 14th century to the 19th century Siena had rulers like Emperor Charles V and Cosimo I de' Medici. Siena grew in economic power, with the famous bank **Monte dei Paschi di Siena** ,which gave employment and security to its citizens.

In 1860 Siena was absorbed into the Kingdom of Italy.



THE WALLS

The great growth of the city between the 13th and 14th centuries brought about the enlargement of the existing city walls.

Some of the gates in the city walls, especially the older ones, open with the vault in the walls, such as **Camollia Gate**, the northernmost gate on the road to Florence, which was rebuilt by Alessandro Casolani at the beginning of the 17th century.

Other gates that open directly in the walls include **Laterina Gate**, **San Marco Gate**, and **Tufi Gate**.

Other 14th- century gates are **Gate of Oville**, **Pispini Gate** and **Roman Gate**, which was built in 1327 and attributed to Agnolo di Ventura and consists of a tower with two floors. There is a fresco by Taddeo di Bartolo dating back to the 15th century on the external arch.



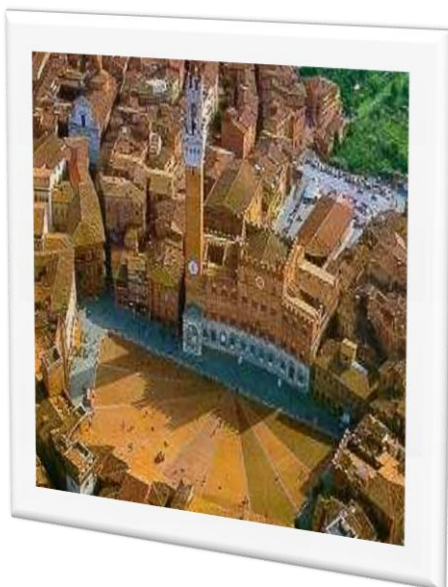
PIAZZA DEL CAMPO

Piazza del Campo is the main public space of Siena and is one of Europe's greatest Medieval squares. **Palazzo Pubblico**, **Torre del Mangia** and various palaces are arranged around the square.

This open site was a marketplace established before the 13th century on a sloping site near the meeting point of the three hillside communities: "Castellare", "San Martino" and "Camollia".

In 1349 the square was paved in fishbone-patterned red bricks with ten lines of travertine, which divide it into nine sections, radiating from the mouth of "Gavinone" (the central water drain) in front of Palazzo Pubblico.

The number of divisions are symbolic of the Rule of The Nine Lords , who governed Siena between 1292 and 1355. It was and remains the focal point of public life in the city. From the square, eleven narrow shaded streets radiate into the city.



PALAZZO PUBBLICO

In Piazza del Campo we can admire Palazzo Comunale, or **Palazzo Pubblico**, which is considered one of the finest examples of Gothic architecture. In the past it was the residence of the city's Podestà.

Palazzo Pubblico is the most imposing of all the buildings located in Piazza del Campo and stands as the natural centre of architectural perspective of the square.

It was built in the 13th century. The large **Salone del Gran Consiglio** was completed in the first half of the 14th century.



The lower stone section of the building opens up with a loggia of typically Sienese arches, surmounted by an oval window. Above, the building is in brick, with trifore windows.

The large copper disc bearing the monogram of Christ was placed here in 1425 in memory of the fact that San Bernardino da Siena preached in this square.

Now Palazzo Pubblico houses the offices of the Town Hall.

The first floor houses the Civic Museum, which is open to the public and contains a number of unique art treasures.

THE CIVIC MUSEUM

The access to the Civic Museum, the city museum of Siena, is from the Gothic courtyard of Palazzo Pubblico. It was founded in the 1930s and contains some of the finest paintings, sculptures and frescoes of the famous Sienese School.

Two flights of stairs lead up to **Sala Monumentali** . Immediately to the right there is **Sala del Mappamondo**, formerly used as the meeting room for the General Council of the Republic of Siena. The room takes its name after a rotating map, now lost, painted by Ambrogio Lorenzetti, which showed the lands governed by the city.



On the wall of the room there is **Maestà** ,a fresco by Simone Martini, painted between 1312 and 1315. This is regarded as being the first real masterpiece by Simone Martini.

The magnificent **Sala dei Nove** was used as a meeting room for the city's Rule of The Nine Lords. In 1337 Ambrogio Lorenzetti was commissioned to decorate the room with a cycle of frescoes known as **the Allegory of Good and Bad Government**.



This masterpiece is the largest secular painting cycle of the Middle Ages, and it is a political manifesto in which the painter depicted two opposing methods of government along with their consequences.

TORRE DEL MANGIA

Near Palazzo Pubblico there is **Torre del Mangia** ,which is a tower built between 1325 and 1348. It was a symbol of the power residing in the palace and of the city itself. It is located in Piazza del Campo.

The name derives from its first guardian, Giovanni di Balduccio, nicknamed “Mangiaguadagni” (earning- gobbler) , for his tendency to spend all his money for food.

The upper part was created by Agostino di Giovanni on a design made by a painter, Master Lippo .The marble “loggia”, known as Cappella di Piazza, was added in 1352. The pilasters were remade in the current form in 1378 and the sculptures decorating them were made by Mariano d’Angelo Romanelli and Bartolomeo di Tommè.

The present master bell weighs 6,764 kg and dates back to 1666. The tower is 87 metres tall and it is entirely in brick. The tower is visible from all parts of Siena .



THE CATHEDRAL OF SIENA

The Cathedral of Siena, dedicated to Santa Maria Assunta, is a Medieval church.

The cathedral was originally designed and completed in the 13th century. It has the form of a Latin cross with a slightly projecting transept. The dome rises from an octagonal base with supporting columns. Black and white are the symbolic colours of Siena.

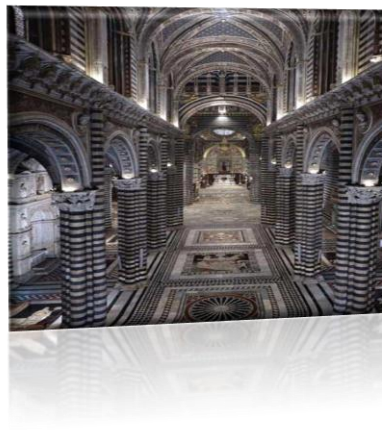
The façade of this cathedral was built in two stages. The lower part in polychrome marble was built in Tuscan Gothic style by Giovanni Pisano around 1284. Later the rose window, a large circular stained-glass window, was installed in the choir, based on designs by Duccio di Buoninsegna. The columns are decorated with acanthus scrolls, allegorical figures and biblical scenes. The scenes on the bronze central door represent the Glorification of the Virgin.

There are three large mosaics on the gables of the façade. The large central mosaic, the Coronation of the Virgin, was made by Luigi Mussini. The smaller mosaics on each side, the Nativity of Jesus and the Presentation of Mary in the Temple, were made by Alessandro Franchi. Next to the façade there is a column with the she-wolf breast feeding Romulus and Remus, symbol of Siena. In the interior the effect of the black and white marble stripes on the walls and columns strikes the eye.

Black and white are the colours of the Civic Coat of Arms of Siena. The capitals of the columns in the west bays of the nave are sculpted with allegorical busts and animals. The vaulted roof is decorated in blue with golden stars.

The colonnade is adorned with images and statues of forty-two patriarchs and prophets, painted by Guidoccio Cozzarelli and Benvenuto di Giovanni in 1481.

Next to the first two pillars there are two fountains, carved by Antonio Federighi in the 15th century. At the sides of the altar there are some angels by Francesco di Giorgio Martini.



PINACOTECA NAZIONALE (The National Picture Gallery)

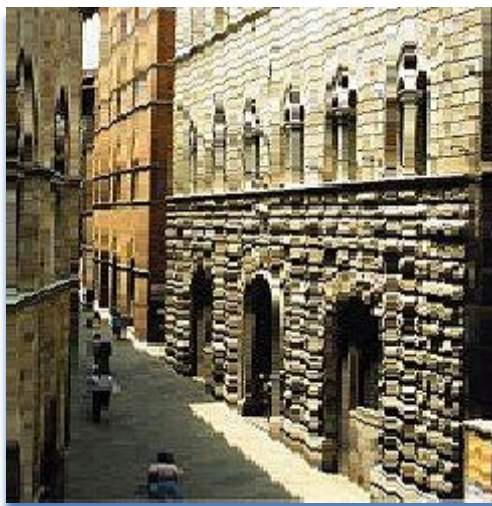
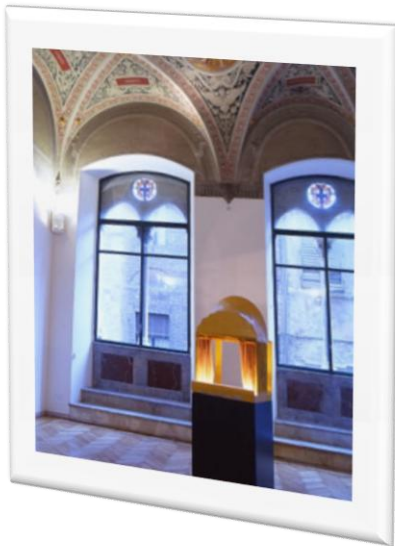
Between Piazza Postierla and the beginning of Via di San Pietro there are two buildings, which used to belong to the Brigidi and Buonsignori families. They have now become the Pinacoteca Nazionale (National Picture Gallery), one of the greatest art galleries in Italy.

The Sieneese painting tradition from Duccio di Buoninsegna to the Lorenzetti, from Simone Martini to Sassetta, Francesco di Giorgio or Giovanni di Paolo is presented in a chronological order, offering a beautiful series of masterpieces and minor works of art.



PALAZZO DELLE PAPPESSE

Just beyond Palazzo Chigi Saracini, on the right, we can admire the imposing Palazzo Piccolomini, called Palazzo delle Papesse, one of the most perfect examples of Florentine Renaissance architecture, probably built by Rossellino (1460-95) and currently the headquarters of an important Centre for Modern and Contemporary Art. Now it is the head office of Banca d' Italia.



IL PALIO DI SIENA

The Palio di Siena, is a horse race held in Siena twice year on July 2 and August 16 , in which ten horses and riders represent ten of the seventeen “Contrade” or city wards. The seventeen “contrade” are: Aquila (Eagle), Bruco (Caterpillar), Chiocciola (Snail), Civetta (Little Owl), Drago (Dragon), Giraffa (Giraffe), Istrice (Crested porcupine), Liocorno (Unicorn), Lupa (Female Wolf), Nicchio (Seashell), Oca (goose), Onda (Wave), Pantera (Black Panther), Selva (Forest), Tartaruga (Tortoise), Torre (Tower) and Valdimontone (literally, “ Valley of the Ram”).

The race involves circling Piazza del Campo. It is not uncommon for a few of the jockeys to be thrown off their horses while making the treacherous turns in the square and indeed it is not unusual to see horses finishing the race without their jockeys.

A magnificent “Corteo Storico” precedes the race, which attracts visitors and spectators from all over the world.

The first modern “Palio” took place around 1650. At first, one race was held each year, on July 2; a second race which takes place on 16 August, was added later.

The winner is awarded a banner of painted silk, or “palio”, which is newly created by a different artist for each race.

The enthusiasm after the victory, however, is so extreme that the ceremony of attribution of the “Palio” is quite instantaneous, being the first moment of a month-long celebration for the winning ward.



TRADITIONAL FOOD

Panforte: This is the favourite and most famous pastry made in Siena that has also given us *cavalucci*, *ricciarelli* and *copate*.



Recipe: Shell the almonds and crush the bitter almonds and half the others together. Mix the rest of the sweet almonds with the pine nuts. Heat the honey in a saucepan over a very low flame until it is transparent. Remove the pan from the stove and add the rest of the ingredients, stirring gently until completely blended. Pour the mixture into a floured pie plate and bake at 160° C\320°F for 30 minutes. Panforte should be dark, firm and not more than one finger thick. Cool and dust with confectioner's sugar before serving.

Ricciarelli:

Recipe: Powder the almonds with a meat hammer or a food grinder. Add most of the powdered sugar and mix well, then whip the egg white until stiff, and delicately fold it into the almond paste, one tablespoon at a time. When the paste becomes too stiff to be mixed with a spoon, work it with your hands on the kitchen pastry board dusted with a little powdered sugar. Knead until the paste is smooth, then roll out with the rolling pin to a thickness of about 1- 1.5 cm, and cut into discs the size of the confectionery wafers on an oven tray and then place an almond paste disc on each wafer. Cover with a tea-cloth and let rest for one hour in a cool place. Bake in a preheated oven at 160° C for about 30 minutes, without letting the biscuits brown. Remove from the oven, allow to cool and serve with a sprinkling of powdered sugar

