

## Siena

According to legend Siena was founded by Senio, the son of Remus one of the two founders of Rome. The origin for the name of Siena, undoubtedly one of the most beautiful cities in Italy and in the world, is still a matter of research. Some attribute it to the Etruscan family of the Saina, some to the Roman family of the Saenii. It is certain that its development only took off in the Middle Ages, when it expanded towards three nucleuses which later became known as the "tertiary ": the original city center, San Martino and Camollia.

A Ghibelline city, Siena often crossed swords with the Florentine Guelfs in epic and cruel battles that forged the history of medieval Italy. One of the most famous battles was Montaperti on 4 September 1260, when the Sienese routed the Florentines. The city reached its peak of splendor in the 1300's, when most of the civic monuments were built and the construction of the monumental new Duomo, or church, was attempted. In 1348, however, Siena was laid low by the Black Death, which like an earthquake exterminated three fifths of the population. After a period of obscurity and alternating domination by other powers, in 1559 Siena became part of the grand duchy of Tuscany, effectively losing its own independence.

With its brilliant Tuscan Gothic buildings, Siena is a jewel of world-wide fame. However, its surroundings also merit consideration. The natural beauty of the Tuscan countryside carries equal weight to the fascination of its perfectly-conserved medieval cities, for example San Gimignano



