

# EXPLORE!

## Cycle Tuscany - Pisa to Florence

8 days

Italy - Trip code CTY



## Cycle Tuscany - Pisa to Florence

We discover the varied and beautiful scenery of Tuscany with a rewarding ride between two incredible cities. From the Leaning Tower of Pisa we follow the Serchio River to the charming walled town of Lucca, riding on country lanes to the birthplace of Leonardo in Vinci before arriving into the Renaissance city of Florence.

### Trip highlights

- ★ **Cycle Tuscany** - Along peaceful roads, cypress tree-lined country lanes and lovely bike paths
- ★ **Florence** - Explore this renaissance city par excellence
- ★ **Pisa** - The magnificent Piazza dei Miracoli in Pisa with the leaning tower and Cathedral
- ★ **Lucca** - Cycle on the city's Renaissance walls and discover magnificent villas
- ★ **Vinci** - The charming medieval town where Leonardo da Vinci was born
- ★ **Local delicacies** - Tuscan wine-tastings and olive oil tasting

#### ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

##### Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

**CYCLING GRADE:****Easy To Moderate**

This grade is ideal if you want to enjoy both easy and moderate rides on the same tour. You'll be cycling through flat or gently undulating terrain, with the occasional more energetic ascent.

**GROUP SIZE:****10 - 16**

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

# Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

## DAY 1 - Trip starts in Pisa; time to explore

We start our trip in Pisa and for those who arrive early today there is time this afternoon to explore the narrow streets, pastel coloured houses and churches of this historic town. There may also be time to ascend the leaning tower to enjoy the views. We will meet at our hotel for a welcome briefing and bike allocation, before heading out for our first evening meal together (not included).



**Accommodation: Hotel Minerva** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

## DAY 2 - Pisan Aqueduct and Colline Pisane countryside cycle

After breakfast we start our first ride, heading out from Pisa to explore the countryside of the Colline Pisane region on a picturesque circular cycle route. We follow the old Pisan Aqueduct out of the city before heading into the hills for a scenic ride towards Calci. On arrival we have the chance to see the National Museum of Certosa and the Romanesque church of San Emolao provided they are open. With rested legs we continue towards the villages of Buti and Vicopisano, before starting our return journey back towards Pisa, following a cycle path along the banks of the river Arno. The rest of the day is free for you to enjoy a glass of Chianti, relax or explore Pisa. No support vehicle today. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 35 kilometres (total 240 metres ascent).



**Accommodation: Hotel Minerva** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 3 - Cycle from Pisa to Lucca; city tour

Leaving Pisa this morning, we first cycle along quiet level roads to Pontasserchio and then from here we cross the River Serchio, and skirt the base of the hills across to Massaciucolle Lake. Here we have free time for lunch and an optional short walk in Lipu wildlife reserve on the edge of the lake. Back on the bikes, we ride through low forested hills to Balbano and Nozzano Castello where we will meet up with our cycle route that is in part a gravel track, this follows the River Serchio. Travelling along this path we pass through the fluvial park of the Serchio and arrive into the great Tuscan walled city of Lucca. Arriving at the Pont San Quirico we will then turn towards the city and ride into the centre of Lucca and head up onto the famous walls which encompass the old town of Lucca. We complete a full circuit by bike (nearly 4km in length) then we will have a short cycle tour through the city, passing the Amphitheatre Piazza and main historical sites before arriving at our accommodation for the night. After settling into our hotel there is some free time before we meet up for an included pre-dinner wine tasting in the amazing cellars of Vanni Enoteca. Today's ride is accompanied by a support vehicle. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 40 kilometres (total 110 metres ascent).



**Accommodation: Hotel Rex** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 4 - Explore the surrounding hills and villas of Lucca

Today we will explore the scenic area that surrounds Lucca and visit one of the grand villas to be found here. We start cycling directly from the hotel, re-joining the Serchio bike path to ride as far as Ponte a Moriano. After crossing the Serchio River here we cycle along lanes following the Bio Giro bike route through the Luccan hills and past historic grand villas, such as Villa Napoleon. Continuing through the small town of Marlia we pedal along lovely backroads, passing olive groves that make the oil for which Lucca is famed, as well as vineyards producing Colline Lucchese wine. Our route takes us through many small villages and towns such as Segrominio in Monte before arriving at Colle Bordocheo, where we have included a wine and olive oil tasting to try local produce. We then ride on to Villa Torrigiani, where we stop for an optional visit of this magnificent 16th century villa and its ornate gardens. From here it is an easy ride back into Lucca along the Via Delle Ville, taking a nice quiet route back into the city. No support vehicle today. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 37 kilometres (total 280 metres ascent).



**Accommodation: Hotel Rex** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 5 - Ride from Lucca to Vinci via Fucecchio wetlands

Our ride from Lucca today is slightly more hilly with some gradual ascents and relaxing descents. We initially follow the Nottolini Aqueduct from Lucca towards Pieve di Compito, famed for its Camellias and annual flower festival, then along country roads through pretty villages, stopping for a morning coffee en route. Later we ride alongside the Fucecchio Nature Reserve, one of the largest inland wetland reserves in Europe with lakes and marshes covering around 1,800 hectares. The wetlands are home to hundreds of bird species and protected plant life and play an important role in the annual migration of birds through the continent. Picturesque Tuscan country roads then take us the rest of the way into Vinci, arriving in time to explore the hilltop village and its museum dedicated to Leonardo da Vinci (optional). Today's ride is accompanied by a support vehicle. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 48 kilometres (total 305 metres ascent).



### Accommodation: Agriturismo Piastrino (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 6 - Cycle Vinci to Florence; cycle River Arno path

Leaving Vinci this morning on our bikes, we pass through more classic Tuscan countryside seeing vineyards, peaceful olive groves and small terracotta villages. Then our route follows the River Arno valley course, with the final section of this ride travelling along the River Arno cycle path to then pass through the Parco Le Cascine and into the heart of Florence, cycling through the historic centre to our hotel. Florence is the spiritual home of the Renaissance and is considered to be one of the most beautiful cities in Italy. It is a city of superlatives: from the Ponte Vecchio, the oldest and most famous bridge in Florence and the only one that was not demolished during the German retreat of 1944, to the religious centre of the city and the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore with its giant dome or 'duomo'. Close by are other artistic wonders, including the Baptistry, the East door (called the Gate of Paradise by Michelangelo) and Giotto's famous bell tower, as well as the Piazza della Signoria. We will have time in the afternoon to explore Florence and visit some of the world famous landmarks such as the Duomo and the Ponte Vecchio. Today's ride is accompanied by a support vehicle. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 42 kilometres (total 365 metres ascent).



### Accommodation: Classic Hotel Florence (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 7 - Free day in Florence; optional Chianti cycle ride or Siena visit

Today is free to spend time exploring the wonderful city of Florence. Perhaps take time to visit the Uffizi Gallery or peruse the interesting streets on foot. There is the option for a self-guided moderate grade cycle ride into the famous wine growing area of Chianti Classico, journeying to Impruneta and Greve in Chianti. The route from Florence to Impruneta does climb quite steadily but allows one to enjoy far reaching views back across the city of Florence. An easier section of road takes you to Strada in Chianti. From Strada, the road again climbs with a steep section over a pass followed by a long descent into the heart of Chianti and its main town - Greve in Chianti. You can return by the same route to Florence. Alternatively there are easier self-guided rides in and around Florence that the Tour Leader can explain. An alternative option is a day trip to Siena by train. No support vehicle today for the optional ride. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 52 kilometres (total 605 metres ascent) (optional).



### Accommodation: Classic Hotel Florence (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

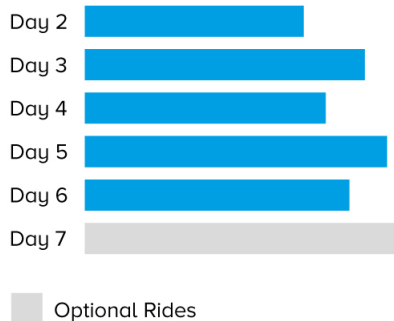
## DAY 8 - Trip ends in Florence

The trip ends this morning after breakfast in Florence. If you are flying from Pisa Airport today, Explore will organise for your transfer direct to the airport by public shuttle bus with a journey time of around 70 minutes.

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

## Cycling information

### DAILY DISTANCES



### General cycling information

On this tour we cycle 202 km over five days (an average of 40 km per day). The terrain is mostly rolling Tuscan hills and plains. The first two rides follow river paths and are fairly level with gentle undulations. As we leave Lucca the rides have more ascents passing through small villages and hamlets as we get closer to Vinci and Florence. We cycle on tarmac roads (90%) and gravel paths (10%). A support vehicle accompanies the rides on days 3, 5 and 6. We have graded the route as easy to moderate.

### Bike included

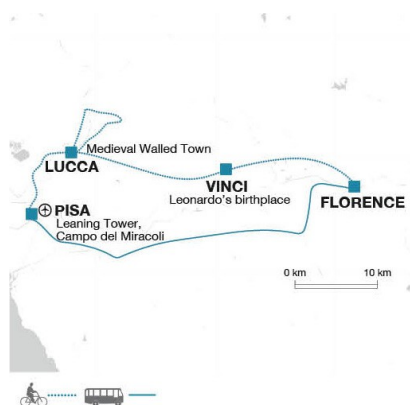
27 gear Focus Black Hills mountain bikes with hybrid tyres and lockable front suspension

### Bike information

Your included bike is an 27 gear Focus Black Hills mountain bike with hybrid tyres and lockable front suspension and will be the correct frame size for your height. A water bottle holder and small (2l) handlebar bag is included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour except on the optional rides. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet.

### Cycling grade

EasyToModerate



## Why book this trip

Unlike many other operators, we include the hire of your bike in the overall cost of the holiday: you don't need to bring your own or pay extra to hire one locally. We also provide a support vehicle, spare parts and take care of day to day bike maintenance. All you need bring is your own helmet.

# What's included?



## Included meals

Breakfast: 7



## Transport

Bus  
Bicycle



## Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader / Cycle  
guide  
Driver(s)



## Accommodation

7 nights standard hotel

# Trip information

## Country information

### Italy Holidays & Tours

#### Climate

April/May and October/November are pleasantly warm. June/September are the hottest months. Showers are common in Autumn.

#### Time difference to GMT

+1

#### Plugs

2 Pin Round

#### Religion

Roman Catholic

#### Language

Italian

## Budgeting and packing

### Optional activities

Florence - Uffizi and Academia GBP 10 per person. Please note that these tickets should be bought in advance to be sure of entry (GBP 3 fee). This can be done online at [www.uffizi.com](http://www.uffizi.com). The earliest entry time you should book is 11:30 and anticipate leaving Florence at about 17:00 for your return to Siena. Your tour leader can help you book via telephone whilst on tour - although this method is slightly cheaper please note that the tickets may be sold out. Leaning tower of Pisa - 18 Euros. Cathedral Florence - Torre Guinigi Lucca - 4 Euros. Villa Torrigiani : 12 Euros.

### Clothing

During the day you can expect to wear T-shirts and shorts. Bring long trousers, long-sleeved shirts and a fleece for cooler days and early, late season. Lightweight rain-wear for occasional rain.

### Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD cycle shoes are not well suited to tours that combine sightseeing with cycling. Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

## Luggage

20kg

### Luggage: On tour

We recommend you bring a daypack and one main piece of luggage (total allowance: 44lb/20kg) which will be transported between hotels while you cycle. Check the bike details section to see if a pannier or handlebar bag is provided on the bike. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

## Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn. Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

## Tipping

### Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

### Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

## Country Information

### Italy Holidays & Tours

#### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

##### Dinner price

£10.00 - 14.00

##### Beer price

£2.00 - 4.00

##### Water price

£1.00 - 2.00

#### Foreign Exchange

##### Local currency

Euro.

##### Recommended Currency For Exchange

GBP.

##### Where To Exchange

We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

##### ATM Availability

Major towns.

##### Credit Card Acceptance

Larger hotels and restaurants.

### Travellers Cheques

Only in major towns. Please note, the exchange rate for cash and Travellers Cheques is poor.

## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

Bus, Bicycle

### Accommodation notes

#### Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Standard - Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

## Essential information

### FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

#### Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

### Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

### Visa Information

Italy: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

### Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

### Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

#### Booking a land only package with Explore



Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

### **Joining Tour Abroad**

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

## **Insurance**

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

## **Flight information**

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

### **Flight Information**

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### **Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore**

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

## **Italy Holidays & Tours**

### **Vaccinations**

Nothing required. Tetanus recommended. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

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