

# EXPLORE!

## Self-Guided Cycling Pisa to Florence

8 days

Italy - Trip code CSTY



## Self-Guided Cycling Pisa to Florence

Discover the quintessential Tuscan landscapes of vineyards and olive groves on this self-guided cycle journey from Pisa to Florence. From the world-renowned Leaning Tower of Pisa you follow the Serchio River to the charming town of Lucca, where you can ride up on the impressive city walls. Continue on country lanes to Vinci, Leonardo's birthplace, before arriving in renaissance capital Florence.

### Trip highlights

- ★ **Magnificent Florence** - Explore this renaissance city par excellence
- ★ **Cycle** - Peaceful roads, cypress tree-lined country lanes and lovely bike paths
- ★ **Italian culture** - Visit Pisa, Lucca and Vinci, each with a major role in the history of Italy
- ★ **Local delicacies** - Sample the delicious Tuscan food with a glass of Chianti

#### 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

Suitable for anyone who enjoys easy and relatively short rides on flat or gently undulating terrain. Ideal if you simply want to explore a region by bike at a relaxed pace.

## Itinerary

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

### DAY 1 - Holiday starts in Pisa

After checking in to your hotel in Pisa, we recommend spending time exploring the narrow streets, pastel houses and churches of charming Pisa, maybe stopping en route to enjoy a glass of locally-produced Chianti. Your bike will be delivered either today or tomorrow morning and you will be required to sign an agreement of care upon receipt of the bike. Details of how to reach the start point of your holiday can be found on our website in the tour specific 'dates and prices' section by clicking on 'Joining Info' and then the 'show More' button.



**Accommodation: Hotel Alessandro Della Spina** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

### DAY 2 - Return cycle Pisa to Calci Monastery; afternoon in Pisa

Today ride out from Pisa through the inspiring countryside of Monte Serrato to the grandiose Certosa of Calci Monastery. Founded in 1366, it houses a magnificent Natural History Museum. We return the same route that leads us back to Piazza Garibaldi in central Pisa, from where it is a short ride onto the Leaning Tower and Miracle Square. This afternoon you can explore Pisa's many beautiful and historic buildings, palaces, churches, towers and town squares by bike or on foot. Your total cycling distance today is approximately 33 kilometres (total ascent 90 metres, total descent 90 metres).



**Accommodation: Hotel Alessandro Della Spina** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

### DAY 3 - Pedal along the Serchio River to Lucca

Today's scenic ride is almost completely flat. Your route follows the Serchio River to the charming town of Lucca. Here, you will have ample time to explore the town's splendid architecture and gardens, including its majestic bell tower and impressive Piazza Anfiteatro. We also recommend a ride around the tree-lined city walls before heading to your hotel base for the next two nights in Lucca. Your total cycling distance today is approximately 33 kilometres (total ascent 330 metres, total descent 320 metres).



**Accommodation: Hotel San Marco, Lucca** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 4 - Enjoy a circular route through the Luccan countryside

Today, you have the choice between two routes of varying difficulty as you cycle through the outskirts of Lucca and out into the surrounding countryside. The shorter route is reasonably flat interspersed with a few hills, whereas the longer route is more hilly and demanding, but offers enviable views. Both routes pass by some of Lucca's characteristic Renaissance villas and we recommend taking time to stroll through their luxurious gardens. Your total cycling distance today is approximately 33 or 40 kilometres (total ascent 170 or 450 metres, total descent 170 or 450 metres), depending on the route you choose.



**Accommodation: Hotel San Marco, Lucca** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 5 - Pass the Fucecchio Nature Reserve on your ride to Vinci

This morning you have the option of either getting the train to Altopascio, or cycling there along flat terrain. From here, the scenery steps up a notch as you ride past the Fucecchio Nature Reserve. This is the largest inland wetland in Europe and a transitory stop on migratory routes for over 200 species of birds. You may choose to spend some time here before continuing on your route along secondary roads that wind through low hills covered in olive groves and vineyards. The small village of Vinci is the birthplace of Leonardo da Vinci and home to two fascinating museums honouring the Renaissance polymath. Your hotel is a farmhouse situated about two kilometres from Vinci. Your total cycling distance today is approximately 54 kilometres (total ascent 270 metres, total descent 270 metres). If you choose to take the train to Altopascio, your cycling distance is approximately 29 kilometres (total ascent 250 metres, total descent 250 metres).



**Accommodation: Agriturismo il Piastrino** (or similar)



Standard Agriturismo



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 6 - Explore Vinci; train to Florence

We suggest you spend the morning exploring the museums and streets of Vinci on two wheels along with a ride just out of town to the actual birthplace of Leonardo. There is the option from the birthplace to either return to Vinci or continue up and out further into the countryside to gain fine views over Vinci and the surrounding area. The medieval hamlet of Vinci is famous for the two museums that are dedicated to the genius-inventor Leonardo Da Vinci. In the museums you can see many reconstructions of his incredible inventions and several of the original designs. Once finished you will leave your bike at the hotel before collecting your luggage and taking your included vehicle transfer to Empoli train station. Here, you will catch the local train to Florence (you will need to buy this train ticket locally as this cannot be pre-booked). From the Firenze Santa Maria Novella train station in Florence you can either walk the short distance to the hotel or you may prefer to catch a taxi. Widely regarded as the cradle of the Renaissance, Florence is a city which impresses at every turn. From the Duomo Cathedral to the Ponte Vecchio Bridge and Michelangelo's spell-binding statue of David, there is so much to discover. A visit to the Uffizi Gallery is a must, with its abundance of canvases by Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci and a host of other greats. We also suggest a visit to Piazza del Mercato Centrale, which has a big food market on the ground floor and restaurants on the upper floor. Your total cycling distance today is approximately 8 or 15 kilometres (total ascent 175 or 450 metres, total descent 175 or 450 metres), depending on the route you choose.



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



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 7 - A full day to enjoy Florence

Today is all yours to continue exploring the magnificent city of Florence on foot, with its many monuments, churches, museums and squares. If visiting the Duomo or other churches you need to wear clothes which cover your shoulders and knees.



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



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 8 - Holiday ends in Florence

After breakfast, the organised part of your holiday comes to an end.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## Cycling information

## DAILY DISTANCE



### General cycling information

On this journey you cycle 161 km over five days (an average of 32 km per day) with further optional rides available. The rides mostly follow well-asphalted country lanes and quiet secondary roads (busier near the major towns) and there are some sections with cycle paths and gravel roads (splits as roughly 70% asphalted roads and 30% cycle paths and tracks). The terrain is flat with some hillier sections on days 4 and 6. We have graded the route as easy.

### Bike included

21 gear Hybrid Bike. Electric bikes (e-bikes) are available for an additional cost for the duration of the holiday (£65). You will be required to pay a refundable deposit upon collection of the e-bike in country. Please contact us for more details or to request your e-bike.

### Bike information

Your included bike is a 21 gear hybrid bike and will be the correct frame size for your height. Various models are possible, each of a similar standard. Each bike is fitted with one rear lateral pannier bag (20 litre capacity each) as well as a handlebar bag that doubles as a map note holder. The bike also has a water bottle holder as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A lock, pump, spare inner tube and puncture repair kit with tyre levers is included. All you need to bring is your own helmet. You will be required to sign an agreement of care upon receipt of the bike. Electric bikes (e-bikes) are available for an additional cost of £65 for the duration of the holiday. This must be booked in advance of travel. You will be required to pay a refundable deposit upon collection of the bike in country. Please contact us for more details or to request your e-bike.

### Cycling grade

Easy



## 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 pump, lock, spare inner tube and tyre levers. All you need bring is your own helmet.

# What's included?



## Included meals

Breakfast: 7



## Transport

Bicycle  
Car  
Train



## Accommodation

1 nights standard agriturismo  
6 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

Day 2 - This afternoon visit Miracle Square and the Leaning Tower, followed perhaps by the Duomo, the Arno promenade or the just explore the quiet streets and shops. Day 6 - This morning in Vinci we suggest visiting the Leonardiano museum and to see his birthplace. Day 7 - Florence has lots to see and do, including the Duomo, Uffizi Gallery, Centro Storico, Palazzo Vecchio, plus numerous museums, Basilicas and Piazzas.

### Clothing

Bring cycling gear such as quick drying cycle tops, padded cycle shorts and cycle gloves. If travelling in Spring or Autumn months it can be cool, especially at night, so bring a warmer jacket/fleece. A waterproof cycle jacket is recommended in case of rain. A light windproof jacket is always useful.

## 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: On tour

Bring one main piece of baggage as per your airline luggage allowance, maximum 20 kg per person. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage if using public transport so don't overload yourself. Luggage transfers between hotels are normally arranged by the hoteliers. Mark your bags clearly and leave them at the place and time arranged with them. When travelling on public transport you should always take your luggage with you.

## Luggage transfer

Included between each hotel and on day 6 the accommodation owner will take you and your luggage from Vinci to Empoli train station for your train journey to Florence.

## 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. Maps - Along with the destination manual and route notes you will be sent a set of maps that have been created specifically for this trip to help you navigate. The route is marked on each map together with a series of numbered waypoints which correspond with instructions in the route notes. Should you wish to purchase a more detailed commercially produced map we recommend the following:- General maps Toscana 1:200.000 TCI Touring Club Italiano, ISBN: 8836548288

## Tipping

### Local fees

The train from Vinci to Florence on Day 6 cannot be pre-booked and so is payable locally. Tickets cost 4.40 Euros. You will need to validate your ticket by stamping it in one of the machines on the platform before boarding the train. Local city tax is required to be paid in cash upon check in to the accommodation. The amount varies from 1 to 3 Euros per person per night, with the higher amount relating to higher category hotels. It is only applicable to a number of towns and cities in Italy but it is being rolled out to cover more places in time so please allow accordingly in your budget.

## 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

Bicycle, Car, Train

### 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 (pool may have seasonal opening). 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, E.U nationals, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. All visa information is subject to change. 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.