

# EXPLORE!



**Self-Guided Tuscan Trails - Florence to Siena**

8 days

Italy - Trip code WSTC

## Self-Guided Tuscan Trails - Florence to Siena

Discover magnificent cities, picturesque villages and a landscape of rolling hills and vineyards on a self-guided walking holiday through Chianti country from Renaissance Florence to Medieval Siena. Hike along cypress-lined country roads and 'strade bianche' white gravel tracks, traversing forests of oak, beech and chestnut. Reward your efforts sampling the delicious Tuscan cuisine and fine wines to be found along the way.

### Trip highlights

- ★ **Iconic cities** - Explore Florence, cradle of the Renaissance, and Medieval Siena with its imposing Piazza del Campo
- ★ **Fiesole** - Charming town with an ancient Roman amphitheatre
- ★ **Food and wine** - Taste the great wines and cuisine of Tuscany
- ★ **Medieval walls** - Discover the fabulous fortified towns of San Gimignano and Monterisssioni
- ★ **Chianti country** - walk through a landscape of rolling hills and vineyards

#### 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.

#### WALKING GRADE:

##### Easy To Moderate

This grade is ideal if you want to enjoy both easy and moderate level walks on the same tour. You'll be walking mainly on good paths and at low altitude, with occasional more demanding ascents or descents.

## Itinerary

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

### DAY 1 - Trip starts in Florence

Your accommodation for the first two nights of your holiday is conveniently located in the heart of Florence. If you have time after checking-in, we recommend taking a walk around the city's magnificent squares and along the illustrious Arno River. This walk starts and ends in the Piazza della Signoria and takes about three and a half hours.

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.



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



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

### DAY 2 - Walk from Settignano to Fiesole

After a twenty-five minute public bus ride to Settignano, your walk commences from this picturesque hillside village. Along your route, you will pass magnificent cypress trees, olive groves and Renaissance villas, with a view of Florence below you.

Upon your arrival in the charming town of Fiesole, we recommend spending time exploring its Etruscan ruins, Roman amphitheatre and Franciscan monastery. You can either choose to return to Florence by public transport from here, or extend the walk by strolling back to Settignano via another route.

Depending on whether you choose the one-way or circular walk, you can expect today's eight and 16 kilometre walks to take approximately three and six hours, respectively.



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



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 3 - Transfer to Montespertoli; enjoy a circular walk

After breakfast, you take a private transfer by car to Montespertoli - a rustic market village set in the rolling green hills not far from Florence. Here, you will find your hospitable agriturismo accommodation that will be your base for the next two nights. Once you have settled in, head out for a stroll through the open countryside to the north of the town, with views of vineyards, olive groves and isolated farms perched on hilltops. Later, return to your hotel for a refreshing dip in the pool.

You can expect today's 14 kilometre walk to take approximately four hours.



**Accommodation: Hotel Il Molino del Ponte** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 4 - Stroll through the Chianti Fiorentino area

Today's circular walk affords another opportunity to enjoy the picture-perfect landscape around Montespertoli. This time you walk south, through the Chianti Fiorentino area, passing by old parish churches and elegant country villas.

You can expect today's 14 kilometre walk to take approximately four hours.



**Accommodation: Hotel Il Molino del Ponte** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 5 - Walk along the Via Francigena to San Gimignano

After breakfast, a short car transfer takes you to the village of Gambassi. From here, you will start your walk along the Via Francigena - a 700 year-old pilgrim route to Rome, which is thought to have originally started in Canterbury, England. The track affords spectacular views of the surrounding countryside and takes you into the centre of the walled Medieval town of San Gimignano - your base for the next two nights.

You can expect today's 17 kilometre walk to take approximately five hours, although the route can be shortened to nine kilometres and three and a half hours, should you wish.



**Accommodation: Hotel La Cisterna** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 6 - A choice of circular walks around San Gimignano

Today, you have the choice between two relatively gentle circular routes around San Gimignano. Both take you along cypress-lined country lanes and past vineyards and fields, taking in the picturesque hamlets of Monteauto and Santa Lucia.

Depending on which route you choose, you can expect today's 10 and 14.5 kilometre walks to take approximately three and four and a half hours, respectively.



**Accommodation: Hotel La Cisterna** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 7 - Walk from Monteriggioni to Siena; explore the city

After breakfast, take a private transfer to the fortified village of Monteriggioni. From here, your walk takes you to the marvelous city of Siena, famous for its biannual "Palio" horse race, held in the beautiful shell-shaped Piazza del Campo.

The narrow streets of this fantastically-preserved Italian jewel are bursting with imposing Medieval palaces, interesting museums and awe-inspiring churches that are well-worth exploring. During your time here, we particularly recommend a visit to the Duomo, as well as climbing to the top of the bell tower.

You can expect today's 19 kilometre walk to take approximately five hours.



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



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 8 - Trip ends in Siena

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

**IOY** Meals Provided: Breakfast

## Walking and Trekking information

### DAILY DISTANCE



Optional Walks

### Walking grade

Easy to moderate

### Trek details

On this journey you walk 77 km over 6 days (an average of 13 km per day with the opportunity to extend or enjoy longer alternative walks on 3 of the days). You will mostly be walking on 'strade bianche', compacted gravel roads typical of Tuscany, as well as mule tracks on undulating hilly terrain.

### Max walking altitude (m)

400



# What's included?



## Included meals

Breakfast: 7



## Accommodation

7 nights standard hotel

# Trip information

## Country information

### Italy

#### 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

### Clothing

Take light and comfortable clothing that can be layered according to the temperature. July and August are the hottest months whilst early and late in the season go prepared with clothing to suit drops in temperature and possible showers. Light rainwear may be needed at any time of year, and a warm fleece/jacket is recommended for cooler evenings and nights.

### Footwear

Walking boots or shoes and comfortable trainers and/or sandals for sightseeing and relaxing.

### Luggage: On tour

You will need one main piece of baggage and a daypack sufficiently large to take everything needed for your walking day, such as your water bottle, snacks, spare clothing and camera. Your main luggage will be transferred to your next accommodation in the same vehicle used to transfer you to your next walking destination on days 3, 5 and 7. Please clearly mark all your belongings with your name and the name of the next accommodation.

## Luggage transfer

Included between each hotel

## Equipment

Insect repellent, sunglasses, walking poles, sunscreen and a water bottle are all recommended.

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

### Topographic maps

1:50000 - Kompass

-Firenze-Chianti, ISBN: 3870514140

-Siena-Chianti-Colline Senesi, ISBN: 3870514205

1:25000 - Edizioni Multigraphic

-Monti del Chianti, ISBN: 8874651007

-Chianti Classico-Val di Pesa-Val d' Elsa, ISBN: 11220545

-Chianti Fiorentino e Senese, ISBN: 8874651007

## Tipping

### Local fees

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.

## Country Information

### Italy

#### 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.

#### Lunch price

£5.00 - 10.00

#### Dinner price

£15.00 - 20.00

#### 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

### Recommended airport

Florence or Pisa

### Flying to your destination

We recommend outbound flights into either Florence or Pisa airports which are served by both budget (including Easyjet, Ryanair) and non-budget airlines (including British Airways) from multiple airports in the UK.

### Arrival and departure information

For this trip you can fly into Florence or Pisa airports.

From Florence airport you can take the direct local shuttle bus to the Firenze S.M. Novella central station in the city centre (cost €6, duration 20 minutes frequency every 20 minutes). See <http://www.aeroporto.firenze.it/en/passengers/from-to-the-airport/bus.html>

From Pisa airport, you can take either a direct train or bus to Florence.

Bus to Pisa Centrale train station (€1.30, duration 5 minutes, very frequent)

Regional train Pisa-Firenze (€8, duration 60 minutes) <http://www.trenitalia.com/trenitalia21.html>

To return from Siena to Florence there are direct SITA-TRAIN buses departing nearly every 30 minutes. See [www.trainspa.it](http://www.trainspa.it) or [www.sitabus.it/ita-toscana/Firenze%20-%20Siena.pdf](http://www.sitabus.it/ita-toscana/Firenze%20-%20Siena.pdf) for departure times and prices. The buses leave from Via Tozzi/Piazza Gramsci close to San Domenico church.

There are also trains from Siena to both Pisa and Florence. See <http://www.trenitalia.com/trenitalia21.html> for timetable and prices.

Comprehensive arrival and departure information is provided in the Destination Manual that you will be sent approximately one month before departure.

## 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.

### Price Guarantee

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 and Passport Information

Italy: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, US, New Zealand, US or 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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

## 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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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.

## Maximum altitude (m)

400

## Italy

### Vaccinations

Nothing required. Tetanus recommended. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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 [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

