

TUSCANY: CYCLING BETWEEN PISA AND FLORENCE

8-days / 7-nights easy to moderate inn-to-inn self guided cycling tour



From the leaning tower of Pisa to Ponte Vecchio in Florence this is the region of Leonardo da Vinci, Puccini, Pinocchio and of many other artists, sculptors, composers, inventors and painters who were inspired by the beauty of the Tuscan landscape.

Tuscany and cycling have gone hand in hand for decades and with a healthy respect for cyclist you will be amazed how much fun this independent self-guided inn-to-inn cycling holiday can be. The highlights of this route are some of the most famous and historical cities in Europe and our itinerary runs mostly on a flat to undulating and hilly roads interesting for both the weekend cyclist and those who are more enthusiastic. In 6 well-defined stages you can cover the distance of between 250 - 280km (less if you if you decide not to cycle on the days where you stay two-nights in the beautiful cities of Lucca and Montecatini, more if you plan side trips or city tours along the routes each day). Most of the cycling is on sealed roads with light traffic (which can get heavier as you approach major towns), some sections are on unsealed tracks but they are not demanding.

All the cities are connected by trains (with can accommodate bicycles) so in case of bad weather or if you need a day of rest you can reach the next city without cycling. Those seeking longer rides can take some of the many cycling trails in and around your overnight accommodation and to nearby towns and villages.

The accommodation provided is in 2 – 3-star hotels – carefully selected – because of their proximity to a historical center. The hotels can always be easily reached by bike from the main square of the city. A breakfast buffet is provided each day. The rooms have ensuite bathroom facilities and almost always air-conditioning.

Cost: AU\$1025 per person twin share Single room supplement \$260

Departs: every Saturday from April 7th to October 13th, 2012 from Pisa

Included: 7 nights comfortable hotel accommodation with ensuite, daily breakfast buffet, luggage transport between hotels, briefing, route descriptions & maps, bike hire, 7-days emergency hotline.

Not included: Train transfers Monecatini–Pistoia (approx. 10 min. – 4 € per person) and Florence–Empoli (approx. 30 min. – 6 € per person) are not included in the price. Helmet hire is available (at additional cost), however we recommend you take and wear your own.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for Reservations



Suggested itinerary:

Day 1 Arrive Pisa

Plan to arrive at your hotel in the afternoon of the first day. Pisa is a city famous all over the world for its magical Piazza dei Miracoli (Square of Miracles) with the leaning tower and the Bell Tower of the city's cathedral which are all UNESCO World Heritage listed. Pisa is a lively university city full of your people, life and energy and a very friendly atmosphere. It is accessed by train or through its international airport.

Day 2 Pisa to Lucca (cycling distance 30 - 45km)

Cycling north along the River Serchio you arrive in Lucca. For those looking for a more challenging ride there is a longer route that runs in the Monti Pisani region to the east. You spend two nights in Lucca.

Day 3 Lucca to Lucca (40km)

Today you can explore the medieval city of Lucca with plenty with innumerable palaces, churches and towers throughout this enchanting Tuscan city. Tour inside the perimeter of the intact Renaissance period walls - considered to be the best-preserved in Europe - visit the second century Roman amphitheatre. Alternatively follow a 40-km circular route through the surrounding countryside.

Day 4 Lucca to Montecatini (45km)

Following a road with panoramic views you reach the village of Collodi and the town of Pescia. Collodi is where the author of Pinocchio spent his childhood and there is a centre for Pinocchio's and also the aristocratic Villa Garzoni. In Pescia there are ancient churches, palaces, Renaissance mansions and a typical street market specialising, as does this whole region, in flowers and plants. You stay in the wonderful Montecatini for 2-nights.

Day 5 Montecatini to Montecatini (60km)

Today's route offers you again two possibilities. You can relax in one of the most famous thermal cities in Europe with many parks, thermal baths health centres nearby. Perhaps take the historic cable-railway and enjoy a coffee in the square of the old town with views across the valley below. Alternatively a picturesque 60-km cycling itinerary will lead you past ancient villas of the Medici family, olive groves, vineyards and beautiful historical farms, passing Vinci, Leonardo da Vinci's birthplace and the museum to his memory.

Day 6 Montecatini to Florence (50 - 65km)

Again today you have a choice. Either cycle directly from Montecatini to Florence or shorten your cycling by taking a train to Pistoia, a small city rich in Romanesque and Renaissance monuments, churches and with one of the most picturesque squares in Italy: Piazza del Duomo (Cathedral Square). From Pistoria you cycle across the flat plains to the cradle of the Renaissance, the beautiful city of Florence where there is so much to see and do.

Day 7 Florence to Pisa (40km cycling if you take the train or 65km cycling)

Today journey can again be shortened by taking a trip by train to Empoli. From there you follow the River Arno across the flat river valley to Pisa for your last night.

Day 8 Pisa

Tour ends after breakfast.

For reservations or further information call OUTDOOR TRAVEL:

- Toll free on 1800 331 582 or (03) 57551743 or Fax (03) 57501020
- Email: info@outdoortravel.com.au
- Web: <http://www.outdoortravel.com.au>
- Mail: Outdoor Travel Pty Ltd, PO Box 286, Bright, VIC 3741
- Travel Agent Licence No 31102