

## Unknown Tuscany

### *Land of the Etruscans*

We walk through an unspoilt and timeless landscape – past Etruscan temples, dwellings, tombs, and down a 3000-year-old network of lanes, carved 100ft deep into the volcanic rock. There are the crag-top cities of Pitigliano and Sorano, medieval castles, outstanding churches, gushing thermal springs at Saturnia, the wide blue waters of Lake Bolsena, and at the end Orvieto with its magnificent frescoed cathedral.

**FITNESS RATING:** 30+

**TRIP LENGTH:** 10 days

**DAYS OF WALKING:** 5, plus 1 optional

**SHORTEST/LONGEST DAY'S WALK:** 3/7 hrs

#### **DATES**

12 May-21 May	26 May-04 Jun
15 Sep-24 Sep	29 Sep-08 Oct



Photo: Christopher Whinney



*'the wide blue waters of Lake Bolsena'*

### THE TRIP

At the time Christopher Whinney (founder of ATG Oxford) researched and established the Unknown Tuscany route in 1992-3, nobody else regarded the area as being one ideal for walking - across countryside rarely seen by outsiders, staying in medieval towns and villages. Indeed, the idea of walking anywhere in Italy, apart from the mountain areas, was still regarded as eccentric. In 1993 there were no walking routes of any kind in the area, let alone marked maps or paths. Today there is growing local interest in this area as it is recognised for its unique Etruscan remains.

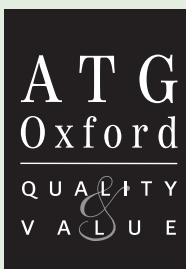
Our walk begins inland, in the hills of the Maremma. This is a region that stretches from the coast (a broad coastal plain, edged by sandy beach and many dunes that are preserved as bird and nature reserves) inland for some 40km into the hills. Inland, the landscape is at first a pastoral one, with olive groves and woods, and rich arable farmland.

Gradually it changes, becoming a territory of vineyarded plateaux, riven by deep ravines, with towns built on high outcrops of tufa, many of which have still-visible Etruscan foundations. The volcanic scenery continues, and the wooded hills we are climbing up and down are the slopes of ancient craters as the walk approaches Lake Bolsena, itself in the vast crater of an extinct volcano. At this point Tuscany ends and Lazio begins.

The route then lies through the fertile volcanic farmland and the green rolling countryside of the area around Orvieto, where Umbria begins.

#### ITINERARY

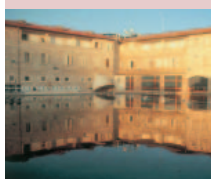
**Day 1** After arrival at Rome airport we travel to the ancient thermal springs of Saturnia (2 hrs).



Call Outdoor Travel for reservations 1800 331 582

## ACCOMMODATION

The hotels we stay in are characteristic of the area and the towns we visit. You will appreciate that the accommodation is inevitably varied. International country code for Italy: 39



### Saturnia Le Terme

★★★★

58050 Saturnia (GR)  
Tel: 0564 600870  
Fax: 0564 601266

Smart spa hotel with several pools, set in park (night 1)

Please note that because of the spa water in this hotel, silver goes black with tarnish when worn in the baths: we advise you to remove jewellery before washing.

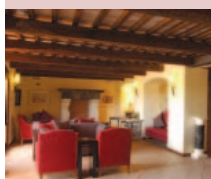


### Pitigliano Guastini

★★

Piazza Petruccioli, 4,  
58017 Pitigliano (GR)  
Tel: 0564 616065  
Fax: 0564 616652

Simple family-run hotel in historic town centre (night 2)

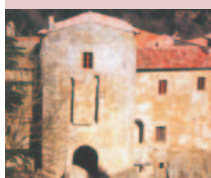


### Sovana Sovana Hotel & Resort

★★★★

Via Duomo 66, Sovana  
(Grosseto)  
Tel: 0564 617030

Newly converted palazzo in town centre (nights 3&4)



### Sorano La Fortezza

★★★

Piazza Cairolì, 58010  
Sorano (GR)  
Tel: 0564 632 010,  
Fax: 0564 633 209

Hotel set within medieval fortress (night 5)

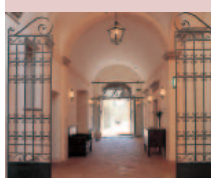


### Bolsena Royal

★★★★

Piazzale Dante Alighieri,  
8-10, 01023 Bolsena (VT)  
Tel: 0761 797048  
Fax: 0761 796000

Comfortable modern hotel close to lake, with pool in summer (nights 6&7)



### Orvieto Palazzo Piccolomini

★★★★

Piazza Ranieri, 36, 05018  
Orvieto (TR)  
Tel: 0763 341 743  
Fax: 0763 391 046

Elegantly restored 16C palazzo (nights 8&9)

**Day 2** Farm tracks and gravel roads lead across open country to the river Fiora, then to a vine-clad plateau, before a memorable approach to Pitigliano, suspended on its tufa crag (12 miles).

**Day 3** Free morning to explore Pitigliano, with its medieval fortress and synagogue. We follow an Etruscan road over a plateau with pastures and vines to the charming village of Sovana (4.8 miles).

**Day 4** Free day in Sovana with opportunities to visit its fine Romanesque churches. Walk to see the many outstanding Etruscan ruins for which the area is renowned, including the Tomba della Sirena restored by the ATG Trust (3.6 miles).

**Day 5** From Sovana we cross vineyards and pastures to Sorano, dramatically set on a buttress of rock. We then walk through the deep, wooded Lente valley to the deserted troglodyte village of Vitozza, returning to Sorano by road (9.8 miles).

**Day 6** Starting in San Quirico, cart tracks lead across farmland to an escarpment, which we descend. We climb through

chestnut woods to the rim of a volcanic crater and descend to Lake Bolsena, for (weather permitting) a private boat ride to Bolsena (9.7 miles).

**Day 7** Free day to explore Bolsena, including the church and catacombs of Santa Cristina, site of the miracle of Corpus Christi. Boat excursion on Lake Bolsena.

**Day 8** An old Roman road leads up through woodland and across farmland before descending again. Our first view of Orvieto, situated high on its extinct volcano, is unforgettable (10.8 miles).

**Day 9** Free day discovering the delights of Orvieto, including the renowned Cathedral with chapel frescoed by Signorelli and Fra Angelico.

**Day 10** Return to Rome by road via Tarquinia, where we visit the Etruscan museum and remarkable painted tombs (1.5 hr + 1hr).

Why not extend your holiday in Rome? For more information please contact us or see our website.

## WALKING

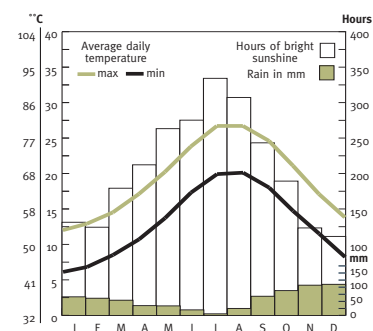
This is a 10 day trip of which 5 days are spent walking with 1 optional walk. The length of each day varies from 3 to a maximum of 7 hrs walking. Hours of walking, which may vary from group to group, means hours of actual walking and does not include stops for lunch, sightseeing, rests or siestas. The pace is quite relaxed: fairly moderate walking with the occasional steep/long section.

The terrain is a mixture of hilly countryside, plateaux and gorges. We walk mostly along tracks and *strada bianca* (white gravel roads), but also use remarkable sunken Etruscan roads, which can be steep and occasionally slippery (mossy). The landscape is incredibly varied. We walk through unspoilt agricultural land, wooded narrow valleys and through an ancient volcanic area with Italy's largest volcanic lake, Lake Bolsena. There are no vertiginous walks.

On certain days our walk takes us into the hills where the paths cross a more rugged terrain - please make sure that your footwear provides sufficient ankle support. Some of our walks are very weather sensitive. If it is not possible to do a walk due to inclement weather, an alternative will be organised. Any such decision is at the discretion of the Tour Leader.

## CLIMATE

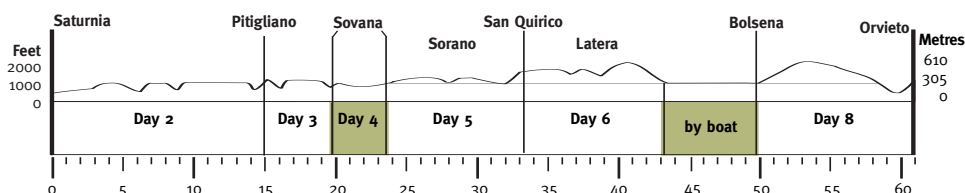
Early in the spring it can still be quite cool and



fresh with bright days and dewy mornings, and it can rain. Later in the spring and in early September it can get quite warm, with possibilities of swimming in the lake. In the autumn, it can be cool, crisp and fresh, with bright days. Again, there is a possibility of rain. In winter it is cold but crisp and high pressure bright days. Some possibility of rain.

## SPECIAL FEATURES

This is a trip where you feel you are walking through a secret world. Around every corner there is something to be discovered: there are caves and tombs, whole troglodyte villages, villages built on rocky outcrops, ancient sites and sunken lanes. We come across Etruscan tombs and Etruscan 'roads' (the Via Cave) which are deeply cut into the rock. Craggy hilltop villages dominate the skyline.



## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### HISTORY

There is evidence of Prehistoric settlement in the area, eg at Orvieto and Saturnia. Later this region was the centre of Etruscan civilisation, with Orvieto an important city of the Etruscan Federation (known as Volsinii) until it was invaded by the Romans. Its inhabitants then settled at Bolsena. Other important Etruscan cities were at Saturnia (Aurinia) and Tarquinia (Tarxuna), probable head of the Etruscan Federation. All the towns en route are, in fact, of Etruscan origin. Roman invasions and colonisations from 2C BC led subsequently to the diminished importance of these towns, until the Middle Ages, when they became strongholds in Guelph-Ghibelline wars and other disputes, or came to be of religious importance. Orvieto and Bolsena were both great centres of pilgrimage in the Middle Ages following the miracle (1263) commemorated by the feast day of Corpus Domini, and Sovana was celebrated as the birthplace of Pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand). The Jewish community at Pitigliano led to its name 'Little Jerusalem'.

### PLACES ON ROUTE

**Saturnia:** Today an exclusive spa hotel in the heart of Tuscany. The waters here have been enjoyed through the ages by the Etruscans, Romans and medieval lords.

**Pitigliano:** Set on an outcrop of tufa, this most unspoilt small town is of Etruscan origin, and its Etruscan caves are still used by inhabitants for storing the local wine. Medieval buildings include the palace of the Counts of Orsini, whilst the aqueduct and Duomo are of the 16C.

**Sovana:** Notable for its Etruscan associations, Sovana is a small picturesque village of brown stone houses built on ancient (possibly Neolithic) foundations. It has a fine Duomo and pretty parish church. Its former medieval town hall now contains a small museum.

**San Quirico:** A plain, working village, remarkable only for its nearby deserted troglodyte settlement of Vitozza, where dwellings carved from the tufa can still be seen.

**Bolsena:** A little larger and more worldly than the places we have visited so far, this is an attractive lakeside town of medieval alleyways and narrow cobbled streets that has been popular as a resort since Roman times! It houses a well-preserved 14C castle, with a museum.

**Orvieto:** Set high on a rocky plateau, Orvieto is famous for its 15C Duomo with mosaiced facade. It was an important Etruscan city, and regained its importance in the Middle Ages as a religious centre. Around the Duomo are narrow streets of medieval and Renaissance palazzi.

**Tarquinia:** Etruscan 'capital' with a huge necropolis with painted interiors of 6C-2C BC and a fascinating Etruscan museum.



Photo: Lucy Dodsworth

### Suggestions for free days

#### Montemerano

The Church of S. Giorgio: Reconstructed in 1450, but is of older origins. Works include masterpieces by Sano di Pietro (1458), (although this may well still be in restoration), a fine five travertine panelled altarpiece, a statue of St. Peter by 'il Vecchietta' (1450). Note the curious *Madonna della Gattailo* painted by a local artist on one of the old church doors.

#### Sovana

This tiny village (city) gained fame and wealth as the birthplace of Pope Gregory VII (Hildebrand). The selection of monuments resulting from this wealth accumulated during this period include; a keep which is found at the entrance of the village, built on Etruscan foundations; some fine Palazzi, a large Romanesque Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul (11C) which is found at the far end of the village and the church of Santa Maria.

Nearby there is a large Etruscan Necropolis which you may visit on an optional walk from Sovana. The small archaeological museum in the main square is interesting although at present it is displayed in Italian; we are told it will soon be translated into English. If you have already purchased a ticket for the Tomb of Hildebrand presenting it here should bring you a 50% discount.

#### Bolsena

*Archeological museum of Etruscan/Roman history:* in 14C castle. Remains of ancient city of Volsinii.

*Church of Santa Christina and the Miracle:* with catacombs (please ask your Tour Leader for information about this).

#### Orvieto

*15C Gothic Duomo:* Frescoes by Fra Angelico, Benozzo Gozzoli and the recently restored Cappella della Madonna di San Brizio with the incredible cycle of frescos Luca Signorelli's *Last Judgement*.

*Museum Faino:* Artefacts from Etruscan tombs

housed in a recently restored palace.

*Museum of Etruscan Archaeology:* Open 9.00-13.30, 14.30-19.00; morning only on Sundays and holidays. Between the Duomo and the Papal Palace with no sign outside, this newly opened museum houses a good collection of artefacts from the Etruscan tombs and 3 tombs with frescoes transplanted from their original site.

*Museo 'Emilio Greco' Piazza Duomo:* Emilio Greco designed the bronze doors for the Cathedral (1964 70) and donated various of his bronzes and drawings to the city - they are shown here, some very exciting modern sculpture, particularly figure art.

*St Patrick's Well:* Open: 1 April to 30 September 10.00-19.00. Commissioned by Pope Clement, designed by Antonio Sangallo. At 62m deep and 13m wide it has two spiral staircases one up and one down and is wide enough for a donkey. Known as 'one of the second Seven Wonders of the World'.

### RESTAURANTS

We visit a variety of wonderful eating places, from simple *trattorias* to elegant restaurants. The most highly regarded are Da Picchietto in Bolsena (great fish pastas) and La Taverna Etrusca in Orvieto.

At dinner the Tour Manager will tell you about each evening's menu and if there is anything else that you would prefer, you only have to ask. There are some smart restaurants on this trip where dressing up slightly would be appropriate, but a jacket is not really necessary.

### SHOPPING

We recommend that you purchase local wines and spirits towards the end of your trip, thereby minimising the risk of breakage. The Tour Staff will be able to advise you of the best places to buy what you are looking for. If you would like to buy a local wine from somewhere en route it is best to ask the Tour Leader or Manager if it can be found outside the local area.

## CUISINE

A temperate climate produces an abundance of excellent fruit and vegetables which are used with rustic simplicity to create sophisticated dishes. Tuscan food is basically simple, using good local ingredients. Although the Tuscans are called 'bean eaters' (*mangiafagioli*) the main staple of their diet, apart from pasta, is bread which is traditionally unsalted to complement the salted prosciutto, salami and strong sheep's' cheeses. Whilst it is a traditional cuisine, it is not a poor one and meat and game feature strongly, preferably cooked on an open fire. This is country food and even the most elegant restaurants serve rustic terracotta bowls of rich vegetable and bean soups. In Bolsena (Lazio) we eat fish from the Lake, whilst Umbria is famous for producing some of the tastiest salamis in Italy. Perhaps more surprising to the unsuspecting traveller is the addition of fresh fish to the menu, caught in the nearby mountain streams.

## WINES

We pass through two main areas with distinctive wines – Pitigliano, whose white wine was given its DOC status in 1966, and aged in Etruscan caves, and Orvieto Classico, a golden-coloured wine which dates back to the Etruscans. In addition, we drink Tuscany's newest DOC wine - the Morellino of Scansano and try the anecdotally renowned white Est! Est!! Est!!! from Montefiascone.

We aim to match the wines to the style of the restaurant and the cuisine provided and to sample local wines whenever possible.



Amongst a wide diversity of shops Orvieto has one of the best selection of quality ceramic shops in Italy. Pitigliano has a good leather shop

Credit cards are widely accepted in Italy (look for your credit card logo on shop doors). In the smaller or less 'touristy' places, credit cards are not so common, so you should be prepared to pay for your goods in cash.

## FACILITIES EN ROUTE

**Banks:** There are banks in Pitigliano, Bolsena & Orvieto.

**Hospitals:** There is a hospital in Orvieto and Pitigliano.

**Chemists:** There are chemists everywhere except San Quirico.

## EQUIPMENT/EXTRA ITEMS

Torches for the caves, sticks for some of the steeper descents, swimming things in the

warmer periods for the lake

## MOBILE PHONES

Following complaints from clients we would ask you not to use your mobile phones during the walk or any other group activity.

## SECURITY WARNING

Please be especially vigilant in all tourist centres as we have received reports of increased problems with petty theft and pick-pocketing. Take care of your valuables at all times. When out sightseeing, leave spare cash and items of value in your hotel safe along with your passport (but carry a photocopy of it for identification purposes). Beware of bag-snatchers and pickpockets, especially in crowded tourist centres. Don't leave luggage unattended, especially at railway stations. If you are robbed you should report it to the local police.

## TRAVEL INFORMATION

### TRAVEL TO ITALY

The recommended destination airport for this trip is Rome Fiumicino.

The recommended check-in time is 2 hours. For those who have requested a vegetarian meal on the plane, we recommend that you reconfirm this at the check-in. It is a good idea to check the destination on the luggage tag that is stuck onto your ticket/your luggage at the check-in desk - this helps lessen the possibility of luggage going astray.

Please collect your luggage before proceeding through Customs. In the unlikely event of finding on arrival that your luggage has gone astray en route, please inform the Tour Manager and Tour Leader as soon as possible.

### MEETING AT THE AIRPORT

The meeting point is at the arrivals area of Rome Fiumicino airport. Our Tour Leader and Tour Manager will be waiting to meet you for the minibus transfer to the first hotel. The Tour Leader and Manager will be wearing polo shirts of the same colour and embroidered with the same design as the luggage labels. Please do not entrust your luggage to anyone not wearing an ATG 'uniform'. There are notoriously helpful luggage thieves at busy airports!

### ATG minibus transfer to the first hotel

We will use two 8 seater minibuses for the transfer to the first hotel, which will depart no later than 3.30pm, in order to ensure that the group arrives at the first hotel before dinner.

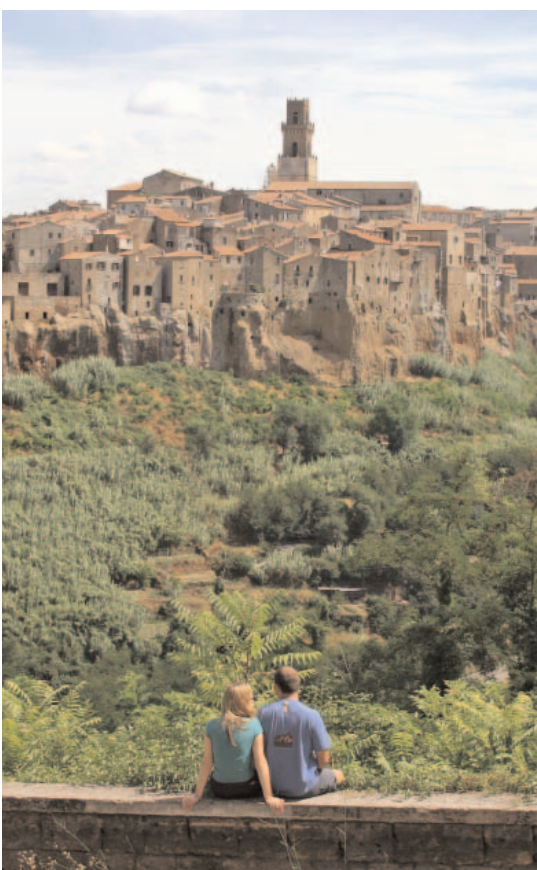


Photo: Guy Hussey

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Please note that ATG cannot advise you on your particular train/bus journey or make bookings for you. The following may be of use in helping you plan your journey:

Timetable information: [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)

Rail Europe: +44 (0) 8705 848848  
[www.raileurope.co.uk](http://www.raileurope.co.uk)

International Rail: +44 (0) 1962 773646  
[www.internationalrail.com](http://www.internationalrail.com)

The Tour Manager and Tour Leader will be at the airport to meet you from 12.30pm.

If you would like a transfer to the first hotel, please ensure that you inform us of this and advise us of your arrival time and flight number as soon as possible. Please also ensure that your flight arrives at the destination airport by 2.30pm to give you sufficient time to pass through customs and collect your luggage.

One month prior to departure we confirm the transfer time to the first hotel which will be between 12.30pm and 3.30pm taking into

account the arrival times of the group.

If you have arranged to take the minibus transfer to the first hotel but you arrive late and find that the group has left (there is no sign of them in the arrivals hall or our minibuses with the ATG logo outside the terminal building), please check for a message at the information desk and make your own way to the first hotel, letting the ATG office know you're on your way. The ATG office number is +44 1865 315 678 or outside office hours please call the emergency number which is +44 1865 315 600.

## MEETING AT THE FIRST HOTEL

Terme Di Saturnia  
58050 Saturnia (gr)  
Tel: 0564 600870  
Fax: 0564 601266

If you are meeting the group at the first hotel, our Tour Consultants will contact you upon their arrival.

## TRAVEL TO THE FIRST FOTEL

*By public transport*

Saturnia is 150km from Rome Fiumicino airport; the hotel can supply a transfer on

request. Alternatively, you can go by train on the Rome-Genoa line from Rome Termini to Grosseto (60km from the hotel) or to Orvieto on the Rome-Milan line (85km from the hotel) and then take a taxi (see below). However, these journeys are long and expensive and we do not particularly recommend them.

*By taxi*

We can book you a taxi from Rome Fiumicino airport to the first hotel. The taxi holds three passengers and costs approximately €180. From Grosseto it costs approx €74. From Orvieto it costs approx €109. (These details may alter at Bank Holidays or late at night.) At Fiumicino, the driver will wait for you in Arrivals with a sign showing your name or ATG; he will have your flight details and will wait if you are delayed. Please place your booking with the ATG office at least two weeks before departure: we will take your flight details and pass them on to the taxi firm when we make the booking.

## AT THE END OF YOUR TRIP

We can transport you from the last hotel to arrive at Rome Fiumicino airport for 3.00pm. If your flight is significantly earlier or later, you will need to make your own arrangements.

## BOOK LIST

### Guides

Our trip also touches upon two other regions - Umbria and lesser-known Lazio

**Blue Guide Tuscany:** (A&C Black 2002) also Umbria (A&C Black 2003)

Covers in-depth facts on art, history and architecture, and sights and places of interest.

**Insight Guide Tuscany** (Insight Guides 2002) also **Umbria:** (Insight Guides 2000)

Interesting essays on a wide range of topics, and excellent photographs. A lively guide in spite of some inaccuracies.

**Bolsena and the Towns around the Lake:** Antonietta Puri (Bonechi 2004)

Illustrated practical guide covering Bolsena, Isola Bisentina and surrounding towns.

**Bolsena: Everything You Need to Know:** Fleur Kinson (Norzia Press, 2004)

Practical as well as cultural and historical information.

**The Etruscans: Art, Architecture & History:** Federica Borelli & Maria Cristina Targia (British Museum Press 2004)

Guide to this ancient civilisations and the evidence of their culture found in Italy today.

**The Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria:** George Dennis (Princeton Uni Press 1992) OUT OF PRINT

The author's fascinating account (abridged) of his travels and discoveries in central Italy in the 1840s. Among the first to find and record many of the Etruscan remains in the region, his writings stimulated a vigorous English interest in this 'lost civilisation'.

**Orvieto - New illustrated Guide:** Alberto Satolli (Part of Refined Traveller Tourist Guides series) Excellent book with all you want to know about Orvieto. Available in the book shop in Orvieto opposite Duomo.

### Literature & Fiction

**Within Tuscany:** Matthew Spender (Penguin 1993)

A delightful assortment of Tuscan ephemera including a charming evocation of the Etruscan community of Pitigliano.

**D H Lawrence and Italy:** D H Lawrence (Penguin 1997)

Lawrence's documentary account of his pilgrimage to Etruria in April 1927.

**Child of the Ghetto:** Edda Servi Machlin (Private Press)

Autobiography charting the destruction of Pitigliano's Jewish community during WWII and the author's remarkable survival. Not easy to find in the UK (available in the USA), but the bookshop of Florence Synagogue has copies of this and her works on Italian Jewish cooking.

**Tuscany: The Spirit of Place:** Russel Ash (Pavillon 1989) OUT OF PRINT

Charming souvenir, traveller's impressions of Italy juxtaposed with complementary pictures and photographs.

**Songbirds, Truffles, and Wolves:** Gary Paul Nabhan (Penguin 1994) OUT OF PRINT

Subtitled 'An American Naturalist in Italy' this is a fascinating romp through the Tuscan countryside, scholarly, observant, full of personal comment and wit.

Whilst we aim to keep our booklists up to date, books do sometimes go out of print. If you find that any of the books listed are out of print, please do let us know. For any books that are out of print, we recommend that you visit the following website which offers publishers' left-over stock of out-of-print books, and often has second hand copies of books for sale: [www.abebooks.co.uk](http://www.abebooks.co.uk)

## MAPS

If you are interested in purchasing maps prior to your trip you can contact the following companies, all of whom offer a mail-order service:

### The Map Shop

15 The High Street  
Upton-Upon-Severn  
Worcestershire WR8 0HJ  
Tel: 01684 593146  
Fax: 01684 594559  
e-mail: [Themapshop@btinternet.com](mailto:Themapshop@btinternet.com)  
Web site: [www.themapshop.co.uk](http://www.themapshop.co.uk)

### Stanfords

12-14 Long Acre,  
London WC2E 9LP  
Tel: 0207 836 1321  
Fax: 0207 836 0189.  
Web site: [www.stanfords.co.uk](http://www.stanfords.co.uk)

### Blackwells Mail Order

50 Broad Street  
Oxford OX1 3BQ  
Tel: 01865 793 550  
Fax: 01865 794 143  
Email: [mail.ox@blackwell.co.uk](mailto:mail.ox@blackwell.co.uk)  
Web: [www.blackwell.co.uk](http://www.blackwell.co.uk)