

ITALY – TUSCANY INCLUDES SARTEANO, MONTALCINO & PIENZA

8-day / 7-night one-hotel GUIDED walking & sightseeing tour based in San Quirico



Tuscany is a wonderful destination for walkers, particularly those interested in art or historical cities, in food, wine and breath-taking scenery. This guided walking holiday offers spectacular walking in the gentle rolling countryside and the beautiful hill-towns of Tuscany. The historic fortified village of **San Quirico** lies in the heart of the Val d'Orcia, in a wonderful landscape of green and golden hills for which Tuscany is famous. San Quirico is probably of Etruscan origin. Located in the middle of the main Via Francigena pilgrimage route, the town has long been a staging post for wayfarers, pilgrims and merchants on the way to Rome.

Enjoy gentle countryside walks through classic Tuscan countryside crowned with historic towns. Enjoy a full day to tour the Renaissance city of Siena, with a chance to climb the Torre del Mangia bell tower for bird's-eye views of the city. And we visit the charming hill-top villages of Montepulciano, Montalcino and Pienza. There is time each day to relax and have a coffee or a glass of local *vino* in a café, soaking up the atmosphere of Tuscany.

Cost from: **\$3955** per person (twin share) Single room supplement \$395 (limited availability)

Departs: 20 & 27 April, 4 & 11 May, 7, 14, 21 & 28 September 2024

Tour includes: 7 nights in a comfortable 3-star hotel room with ensuite bathrooms, 7 breakfasts, 7 evening meals, experienced walks leader offering a choice of guided walks on 5 days, local transport to/from the walks.

Not Included: Meals and drinks not mentioned in the itinerary, personal expenses, transport / excursions on the free day. Airport transfers from Pisa Airport can be pre-booked at extra cost, we recommend you take these.

Accommodation: Set in a peaceful location in the countryside near the village of San Quirico, Hotel Albergo Palazzuolo is a family-owned 3-star hotel with excellent views to the rolling hills of Montalcino. The hotel has an outdoor swimming pool, a terrace, lounge, bar and gardens.



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Trip Grading: Easy to moderate walking with some steep ascents. Easier walks of 7-11km on good tracks and paths, with short but steep ascents up to 270m in a day. Harder walks of 10-16km on good tracks and paths, with up to 540m ascent in a day.

A typical European centre-based walking holiday offers a choice of up to two guided walks each day. You choose the walk that best suits your ability and fitness. Walks leaders make the final decision on which routes are offered; each evening they will brief you about the walks for the next day and answer questions you may have.

Suggested itinerary (Routes are determined by the walk leaders each day and are subject to change):

Day 1: Arrival day

Plan to be at the hotel in San Quirico by mid-afternoon. A transfer from Pisa airport at a set time is possible at extra cost – ask when you make your reservation.

Day 2: Bagno Vignoni

Our walks leave from the hotel today and begin with an exploration of San Quirico, with spectacular views from the town walls. We head south through beautiful countryside to the hot springs at Bagno Vignoni, which have been known since Etruscan times. Santa Caterina of Siena and Lorenzo the Magnificent were amongst those to have taken advantage of the therapeutic values of the waters. The Medici family built the splendid, arcaded pool which sits in the middle of the village where you would expect to find the main square.

Day 3: Montalcino

Our walks today lead through forests, vineyards and across farmland to Montalcino and the Abbey of San Antimo. We will have the opportunity to look around this most picturesque of abbeys and (if the timing is right) hear the monks singing mass. Finally, we will head to Castelnuovo dell'Abbate where we can take refreshments and/or walk up into the medieval heart of the village.

Day 4: Piertaporciana Nature Reserve and Sarteano

One walk starts at Le Foce, an impressive country house with beautiful gardens while the other begins from Chianciano Terme, a famous Spa town. Both take in the Piertaporciana Nature reserve, located on a ridge that separates the Val d'Orcia and Valdichiana and known for its rare flora. We finish in the pretty hilltop town of Sarteano with its castle looming over.

Day 5: Free Day: No walks are organised, allowing you to explore San Quirico, to relax at the hotel, or to arrange a sightseeing excursion, perhaps to San Gimignano, famous for its skyline of towers.

Day 6: Pienza and Montepulciano

Our coach takes us to the beautiful city of Pienza, once a small village called Corsignano, where Pope Pius II was born. We take some time to look around this well-preserved Renaissance city, then either continue by coach or walk to the charming hilltop town of Monticchiello. We walk across rolling countryside past the pilgrimage church of San Biaggio and end with a steady ascent to Montepulciano, the highest of the Tuscan hilltop towns, perched on a limestone ridge at approx 605m above sea level. There will be time for sightseeing and sampling the local wines (or other refreshments) before returning to San Quirico by coach.

Day 7: A View from the Rocca

We take transport south to the castle keep of Tentennano, known locally as Rocca d'Orcia. Both walks are circular starting and finishing at the Rocca. At the conclusion of the walk there will be the opportunity to climb to the top of the keep and see one of the most spectacular views in Tuscany or visit the nearby village.

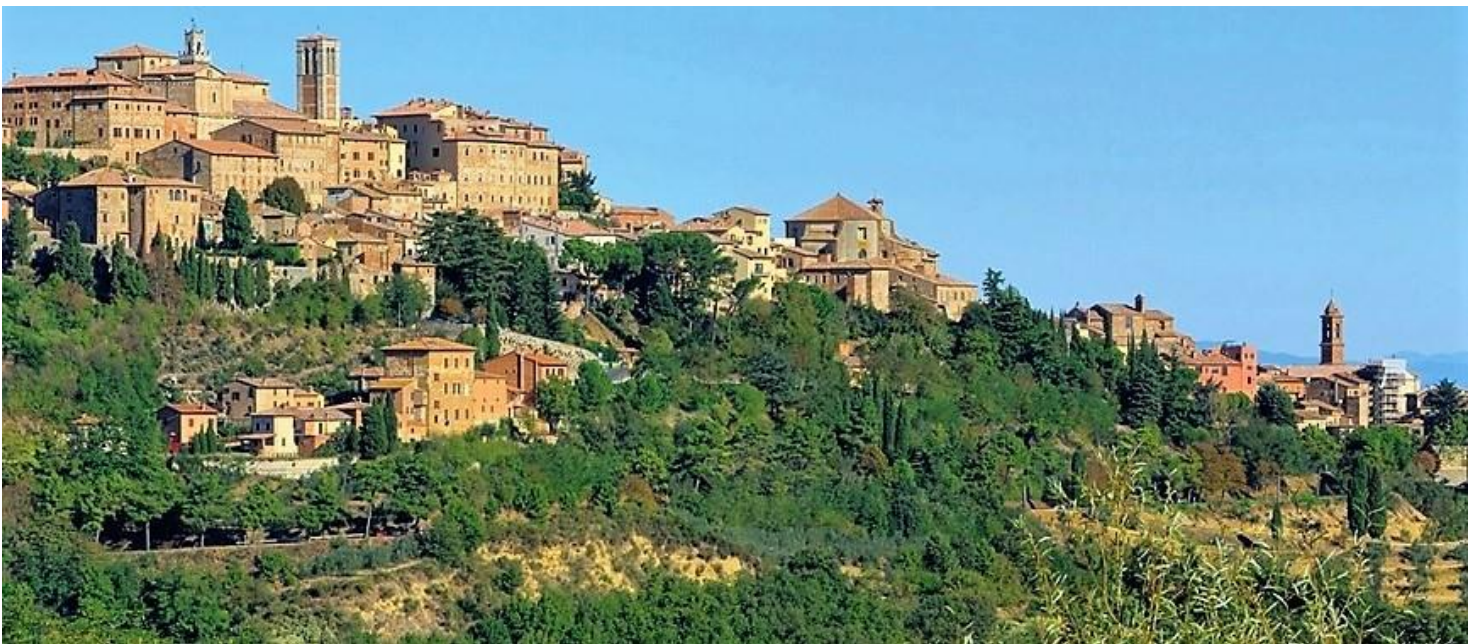
Day 8: Tour ends after breakfast – departure transfer to Pisa Airport available at extra cost.

Outdoor Travel offers guided or self-guided walking holidays in many other areas of Italy including the **Cinque Terre**, in **Umbria**, **Puglia**, on the island of **Sicily**, in the **Brenta Dolomites** or **Piedmont**.

Similar walks are also offered in most countries of Europe in areas such as **Provence** or **Catalonian Coast** in France, in **Portugal** and in the United Kingdom including the **Coast-to-Coast** walk and the **West Highland Way** in Scotland, in Ireland on the west coast of **Kerry** and also on the pilgrim's route, the **Way of St James** or Camino de Santiago in France and Spain or **Via Francigena**, the pilgrims' *Road to Rome*, in Italy.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:

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