

Essential Tuscany

Trip style: Guided Walking Holidays

Destination: 📍 Italy

Trip code: SQR07-LCL09

Grades: 1 & 2

Carbon Footprint: 🌳 544kg CO2



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Arguably one of Italy's most evocative landscapes, Tuscany tempts with rolling hills, ancient vineyards, cypress trees, and photogenic medieval towns filled with interesting art and architecture. Highlights include relaxing in the natural hot springs at Bagno Vignoni, walking through rural landscapes, and spending time in historic towns and villages such as Pienza, Montepulciano, and Montalcino. There's also plenty of gentle countryside walks as well as the chance to sample the food and wine this region is so famous for.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Discovering this breathtaking landscape on foot
- Visiting the towns of Montepulciano and Montalcino
- Taking a ridge walk for beautiful views of Rocca
- Enjoying the natural hot springs at Bagno Vignoni
- Spending time in the tiny village of Pienza
- Sampling regional food and wine

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from London Heathrow, including baggage and transfers (flights available from other airports - price may vary)
- A choice of 2 guided walks per day with local leaders (on walking days)
- HF Holidays Tour Manager
- 7 nights' accommodation in San Quirico
- 7 breakfasts & 7 dinners
- All in-destination transport

TRIP SUITABILITY

This is a level 1 and level 2 graded Activity, Easier walks: 4 to 7 miles (6½ to 11km) on good tracks and paths, with short but steep ascents. Up to 900 feet (270m) of ascent in a day. Harder walks: 6 to 10 miles (9½ to 16km) on good tracks and paths, with short but steep ascents. Up to 1,800 feet (540m) of ascent in a day.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival day

Welcome to Hotel Albergo Palazzuolo. Unpack and settle in.

Day 2: Bagno Vignoni

The hot springs at Bagno Vignoni 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 to Abbey of Sant'Antimo

Montalcino is a Tuscan hill town with a full circuit of walls. It was permanently settled in 1,000AD by fugitives from the Saracens and their family groups, the Borghetto, Pianello, Ruga and Travaglio. To this day you will see rival flags outside the houses and they compete against each other in an archery competition. The final destination of both walks is the Abbey of Sant'Antimo with time to explore before enjoying refreshments in the village of Castelnuovo dell'Abate.

Day 4: Montepulciano to Pienza

Pienza was once a small village named Corsignano, where Pope Pius II was born. When he became Pope in 1459, he commissioned the most famous architect of his day, Bernardo Rossellini, to create a city fit for a Pope on the site of his birthplace. Pius died within three years of the completion of the city, which was largely ignored by future Popes, leaving us with a beautifully preserved renaissance city not much bigger than a village.

Day 5: Free day

Each week there is a free day when no guided walks are offered. This is an ideal opportunity to relax around the hotel, walk independently or visit local places of interest. If there is sufficient demand, leaders can organise a visit to San Gimignano. San Gimignano: This is a fascinating hilltop town with a breathtaking skyline of towers. You can enter the town through the Porta San Giovanni and then head to the Piazza del Duomo. The Duomo has an exotic interior containing fresco cycles of the Old and New Testament stories. It is worthwhile visiting the Rocca and ramparts which offer extensive views across the countryside. The church of St. Augustine is well away from the crowds and has frescoes on the life of Saint Francis. On the return to San Quirico you could stop at the heavily fortified small town of Monteriggioni, once the border of the Florence and Siena republics. Villa La Foce: Visit this villa and its gardens, made famous by Iris Origo's book *War in the Val d'Orcia – An Italian Diary 1943-44*.

Day 6: Pietraporciana Nature Reserve to Sarteano

Located on a ridge that separates the Val d'Orcia and Valdichiana is the Pietraporciana Nature reserve known for its rare flora, we finish in the pretty hilltop town of Sarteano with its castle looming over.

Day 7: A view from the Rocca

Today we travel south to the castle keep of Tentennano, known locally as Rocca d'Orcia. The harder walk is circular, starting and finishing at the Rocca and taking in three castles. The easier walk takes in a beautiful stretch of the Via Francigena heading for the little village of Gallina which sits on the 43rd Parallel. Both groups walk through undulating farmland and woodland where wild game, such as deer and boar have been seen. At the end of both walks there will be the opportunity to climb the tower of the castle keep and/or take refreshments at the café nearby before we return to the hotel.

Day 8: Departure day

We hope to see you again soon.

Hotel Albergo Palazzuolo - Tuscany

The 3-star Hotel Albergo Palazzuolo is set in a peaceful location in the countryside surrounding the village of San Quirico, and is very convenient for the local amenities. This family-owned hotel was originally an attractive farmhouse, extended on both sides to incorporate the bedrooms. The property has excellent views to the rolling hills of Montalcino and offers good standards of service and comfort with a relaxing atmosphere after your days out walking.

Hotel Albergo Palazzuolo facilities consists of:

- Lounge
- Bar
- Terrace
- Attractive gardens
- Outdoor swimming pool (swimming hat is required)

Vaccinations & health information - SHARED WITH ALL EU NEW 2026

Before booking, you should check with your doctor to see whether any health precautions are needed for your trip. Health advice and requirements can change, so we recommend doing this in good time before travel. As a general rule, travellers should ensure they are up to date with routine UK vaccinations and boosters, including, for example, MMR and diphtheria, tetanus and polio. Some countries may require you to have specific vaccinations such as Malaria, Rabies and Yellow Fever. Please check with your GP if you are unsure. Please note that the use or possession of some common prescription or over-the-counter medicines is restricted or banned in certain countries. If you will be carrying medication, you should check with the relevant embassy or consulate before travelling. As an extra precaution, we recommend keeping medication in its original packaging, carrying a copy of your prescription, and, where possible, asking your pharmacist to provide the medication name in the language of the country you are visiting. For further country-specific health advice, visit www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk or www.traveldoctor.co.uk. If you are travelling from outside the UK, please consult your own doctor and check local entry requirements.

Passport & Visa information - SHARED FOR ALL EU NEW 2026

This information is for those travelling with a full 'British Citizen' passport; for all other nationalities or passport holders, please check with your local consulate for advice. **Passport Requirements** This information applies to travellers holding a full British Citizen passport. Entry requirements vary by destination and can change at short notice. For most EU and worldwide destinations, passports must be valid for the entire duration of your stay. Some countries also require a minimum period of validity remaining on your passport (often up to 6 months beyond your return date), even if you are not staying that long. We strongly recommend ensuring your passport has at least six months' validity remaining at the time of travel to avoid any issues. If you hold a different type of British passport or a passport issued by another country, you must check the requirements with the relevant embassy, consulate, or official government website. **Visa Requirements** Visa rules depend on your nationality, destination, length of stay, and purpose of travel, and they can change frequently. It is your responsibility to check whether you require a visa before travelling. British passport holders should check the latest entry, passport validity and visa requirements for their destination on the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) website: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

Packing list - Overseas Guided Walking

It's best to be prepared for all weather conditions. To make it easier, here is a list of items you should consider packing. Essentials Walking boots Waterproof jacket Waterproof trousers Insulated jacket/top Walking clothing Walking socks (plus spares) Sunhat Gloves/mitts and warm hat Water bottle (minimum 2 litre capacity) Headtorch High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30) Sunglasses with a dark lens Rucksack (15-30 litres) Mobile phone Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.) Passport Visa (if applicable) Copy of your travel insurance policy UK Global Health Insurance Card (formerly known as EHIC) Recommended Collapsible walking poles Swimwear and travel towel Snacks Dry bags Rubbish bags Insect repellent Optional extras Camera Sit mat Flask for hot drinks Durable lunch box Gaiters GPS device (excluding Bhutan, Georgia and India)
