



Central Coast & Elba

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Best Places to Eat

- Surfer Joe's Diner (p168)
- Le Nuvole (p173)
- Ristorante Capo Nord (p184)
- Il Castagnaccio (p182)
- Enoteca Tognoni (p171)

Best Places to Stay

- Belvedere di Suvereto (p173)
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- La Cerreta (p172)
- Tenuta La Chiusa (p181)
- Agriturismo Due Palme (p181)

Why Go?

Despite an enviable setting, this part of Tuscany is not burdened with well-known destinations. Anonymous working cities prevail, including primary-school girl-bully Livorno who dares you to like her – if she doesn't punch your lights out first. But saunter inland, along a trail of vineyards and olive groves, and pride is restored in the form of eye-catching medieval villages and astonishing Etruscan ruins woven together by tiny roads and blind switchbacks. Yes, car, bicycle or foot are the only ways to explore.

Meandering south, several sandy strands are worth a sun-drenched flop and seaside lunch, especially around the bijou Golfo di Baratti. But the best alfresco frolics are a ferry ride away on Elba, a classic Mediterranean island with orange trees, palms and not a single high-rise fronting its many hidden beach-laced coves. Tramp its rugged interior, mountain bike, and don't you dare leave without paddling a sea kayak.

Road Distances

Livorno	79			
Piombino	24	86		
Bolgheri	39	50	38	
Portoferrario	24+1hr	86+1hr	1hr	38+1hr
	Suvereto	Livorno	Piombino	Bolgheri

Getting Around

Livorno is a major port with ferries aplenty to Sardinia, Corsica and – closer to home – the tiny island of Capraia in the national-park-protected Tuscan Archipelago; to sail to Elba drive 90km south along the A12 and subsequent SS1 and SP23 to Piombino. Livorno is on the Rome–La Spezia train line and is also connected to Florence and Pisa by train. Bus services are limited; to really explore you need a car, scooter or bicycle.

THREE PERFECT DAYS

Day 1: Stunning Seafood

Livorno does seafood like nowhere else in Tuscany. Examine raw specimens bright and early at the Mercato Centrale, then walk across black-and-white checks on the Terrazza Mascagni followed by a seafood lunch at a Livorno eatery.

Day 2: Along the Strada del Vino e dell'Olio

Start inland from Livorno and wend your way scenically south through a rolling hinterland strung with medieval villages and laced with vineyards. Particularly fine tasting-stops – for wine and food – include San Guido and Bolgheri (linked by a beautiful, 5km-long Cypress Alley), from where it is a very wiggly 20km further south to Sassetta (a great place to overnight is at La Cerreta). Next day focus on Val di Cornia DOC wines in Suvereto, then head 25km southwest to the Golfo di Baratti for a picnic among Etruscan ruins.

Day 3: The Elba Experience

The final leg of the Strada del Vino is across the water on this paradise island. Catch the ferry from Piombino to Portoferraio and spend the day exploring its waterfront, haggling with fishermen for the day's catch, lunching in the Old Town and visiting its forts. Elba's oldest wine estate, Tenuta La Chiusa is the place to stay – and taste/buy Elba's sweet red Aleatico dessert wine. Next day, explore western Elba, not missing a trip up Monte Capanne, an evening *passeggiata* (evening stroll) in Marciana Marina and dinner at Ristorante Capo Nord. If you're with kids, include Rio Marina in your itinerary.

Where to Stay

- Livorno is the obvious place, but it is a busy port town.
- If you're craving peace and tranquillity head to the pine-shaded beaches and vine-framed *agriturismi* (farm stay accommodation) along the unpretentious Etruscan Coast.
- For paradise island accommodation, Elba is the place.

DON'T MISS

The motoring, hiking and biking on Elba is magnificent. But to uncover the island's best beaches, set sail in a sea kayak, fish for your dinner and camp wild beneath the stars.

Best Wine Tasting

- Cantina Nardi (p168)
- Enoteca Tognoni (p171)
- Enoteca dei Difficili (p173)
- Tenuta La Chiusa (p181)
- Fandango (p186)

Best Family Adventures

- Acquario di Livorno (p166)
- Parco Archeominerario di San Silvestro (p172)
- Parco Archeologico di Baratti e Populonia (p173)
- Museo dei Minerali e dell'Arte Mineraria (p186)
- Cabinovia Monte Capanne (p184)

Resources

- **Costa degli Etruschi** (www.costadeglietruschi.it) The Tuscan coast.
- **Tuscan Archipelago Tourist Board** (www.aptelba.it)
- **Info Elba** (www.infoelba.com) Practical Elba guide.