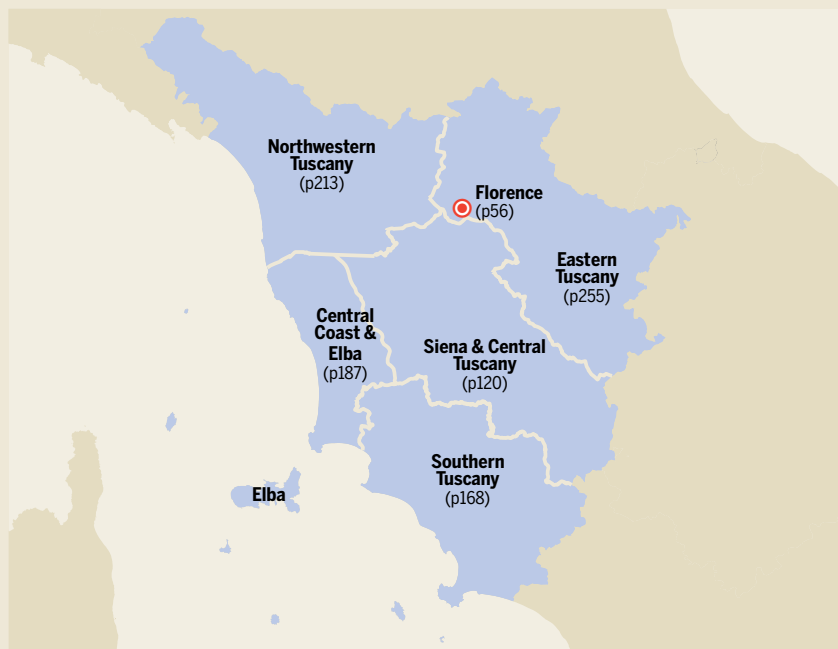




Florence & Tuscany



THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

Nicola Williams, Belinda Dixon

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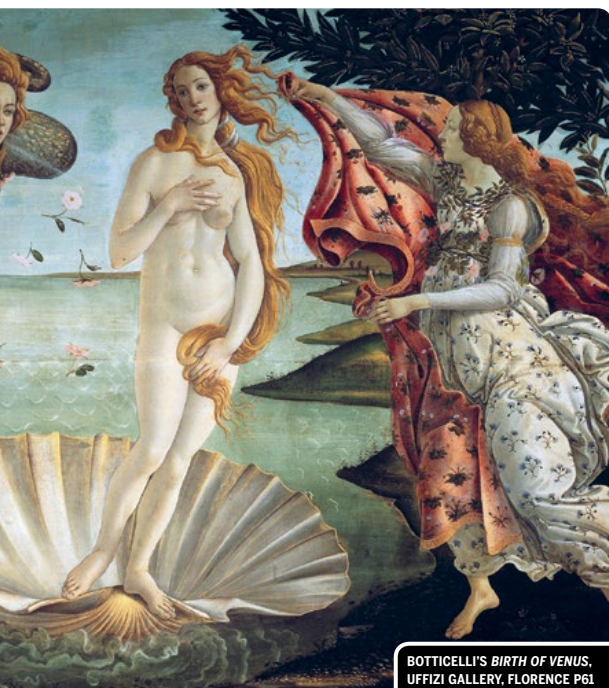
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BOTTICELLI'S *BIRTH OF VENUS*,
UFFIZI GALLERY, FLORENCE P61

Itineraries



10
DAYS

Tuscan Greatest Hits

This road trip takes in a classic Tuscan mix of world-class art, medieval architecture, gorgeous rolling countryside and outstanding food and wine.

Devote three days to exploring Renaissance **Florence**. Visit the Uffizi and meander the Arno riverbanks. Spend day two discovering opulent Medici chapels, extraordinary frescoes and Michelangelo's *David* in San Marco and San Lorenzo. Third day, lose yourself in the Oltrarno's ancient web of squares and alleys laced with artists' workshops.

Day four, shift down a gear to go slow in 16th-century walled **Lucca**. Rent a bicycle to leisurely explore enchanting cobbled streets and graceful, butter-coloured piazzas. Day five, head to **Pisa** early to climb the Leaning Tower then hit the east-bound road to Chianti with a break in foodie town **San Miniato** for lunch. Use a Tuscan farmhouse around **Greve in Chianti** as a base for three days to gorge on the magically preserved medieval town of **San Gimignano**, artistic enclave **Volterra** and Antinori wine cellars in **Bargino** and **Badia a Passignano**. End in Gothic **Siena** for a two-day dose of breathlessly beautiful piazzas, churches, museums and eateries.



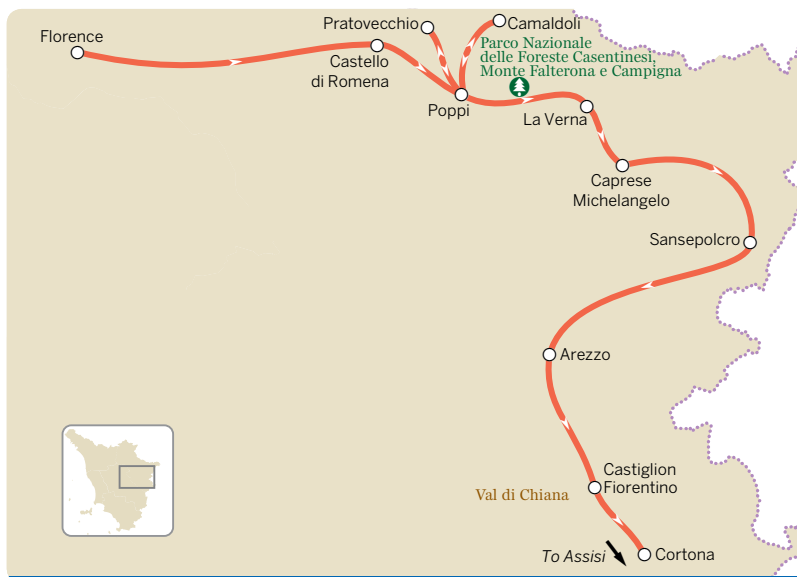
The Heart of Tuscany

For those in the region for a limited amount of time, this itinerary through central Tuscany more than lives up to the Tuscan dream of gently rolling hills, medieval towns, Renaissance splendour and some very fine wine indeed.

Start in **Siena**, historic rival to Florence, with a walking tour of the city, the perfect prelude to the Gothic symphony this iconic Tuscan city is. Gravitate towards the Museo Civico and Opera della Metropolitana di Siena to explore each in greater depth. Break with a *caffè* on a pavement terrace on famously sloping Piazza del Campo, or nip down the street for Sienese biscuits at nearby Panificio Il Magnifico. Continue your city exploration: Siena's intact *centro storico* (historic centre) is a Unesco World Heritage site for good reason.

Day two (or three if Siena begs you to linger), motor south through the rolling hills and cypress alleys of Crete Senesi to monastery **Abbazia di Monte Oliveto Maggiore**, a wonderful monastery with spectacular frescoes. Continue southeast to Unesco-loved **Pienza**, a stroke of Renaissance architectural genius which, with its many sleeping and eating options in and around town, is a brilliant base for exploring this neck of the Tuscan woods. Spend the next three days pandering to your culture-hungry soul and appetite for world-class wine and food. In the Val d'Orcia tour vineyards around **Montalcino**, listen to Gregorian chants at **Abbazia di Sant'Antimo**, wander through the ruined Cistercian abbey of **San Galgano**, and soak in hot cascades at **Bagni San Filippo**. In the gourmet Val di Chiana, anchored by wine town **Montepulciano**, sink your teeth into a slab of local Chianina beef, slicked in fragrant olive oil and accompanied by a glass of Brunello di Montalcino or Vino Nobile di Montepulciano (two of Italy's greatest wines).

End your sojourn in this idyllic area by looping back along scenic secondary roads to romantic **San Gimignano**, home to medieval tower houses, lavishly frescoed *duomo* (cathedral) and cutting-edge contemporary art. Dine on delicate pasta dishes scented with locally grown saffron, drink the town's golden-hued Vernaccia wine and, whatever you do, don't miss out on the superb saffron-and-Vernaccia sorbet by former gelato world champion Sergio Dondoli.



Into the East

The perfect trip for Tuscan connoisseurs, this itinerary varies the pace with an edgy mix of well-known destinations and intriguing off-the-beaten-track alternatives.

Spend three days admiring the Renaissance splendour of **Florence** before motoring east into the Casentino region, home to the isolated Parco Nazionale delle Foreste Casentinesi, Monte Falterona e Campigna. Base yourself around the fortified hill town of **Poppi** for three days (Borgo Corsignano in the hamlet of Corsignano is a grand choice) and visit medieval monasteries in **Camaldoli** and **La Verna**, wander evocative ruins at **Castello di Romena**, hike trails in the national park, and dine well after dark in **Pratovecchio**.

Next head southeast. Stop in the village of **Caprese Michelangelo** to see where *David's* creator grew up. Then continue to **Sansepolcro**, proud possessor of masterpieces by the Renaissance painter, Piero della Francesca.

Tear yourself away after two nights and continue to your final destination, the Val de Chiana, where you can spend a few days eating, drinking and sightseeing your way around the valley. Allow a full day for provincial capital **Arezzo**, with its sloping square and cafe life. Get acquainted with the architect who designed Florence's Uffizi gallery at the Museo di Casa Vasari, and spend a quiet moment in the town's churches – Cappella Bacci, Pieve di Santa Maria and the *duomo* are highlights. Join locals for lunch at Antica Osteria Agania, then walk it off with a late afternoon *passeggiata* (stroll) on shop-lined Corso Italia.

Foodies are obliged to make the medieval hilltop town of **Castiglion Fiorentino** a port of call. Tuscany's famed Chianina cow hails from this valley and the *bistecca fiorentina* (T-bone steak) served at Ristorante Da Muzzicone is the best there is.

Devote at least a half-day to **Cortona**. Walk up steep cobbled streets to its Fortezza Medicea, and admire the collections at the Museo dell'Accademia Etrusca and the Museo Diocesano. From Cortona, it is an easy day trip to Assisi, one of Italy's most famous pilgrimage centres in the neighbouring region of Umbria. Fans of Giotto's extraordinary frescoes will have a field day.



Pisa to Livorno

This part of Tuscany is not as well trodden as others. Tick off Pisa's icon before indulging in a crowd-free road south to the coast.

Start in **Pisa**, allowing time for the Museo Nazionale di San Matteo as well Piazza dei Miracoli. Scale the famous engineering project gone horribly wrong, aka the Leaning Tower. Come dusk, hit art town **Pietrasanta** for an excellent dinner and overnight stay. Day two, pay homage to Italy's Vespa scooter at **Pontedera's** Museo Piaggio or skip the scooters to see spaghetti being made in **Lari**. Lunch in the village then motor to gourmet town **San Miniato**. Overnight at Barbiaccia Nuova at **Montaione** and, if the season's right, hunt white truffles.

From here, head to spectacularly sited **Volterra** in the Val di Cecina to visit alabaster ateliers and Etruscan art. Fourth day, move to the coast where wine lovers can meander south to taste Super Tuscan Sassicaia in **Bolgheri**; overnight in the walled village or at La Cerreta in nearby Pian delle Vigne. Then drive north along the Etruscan Coast, lingering in the old-fashioned seaside resort of **Castiglioncello** should the hustle and bustle of port city **Livorno** not appeal straight away.



The Maremma

Outdoor lovers will have a field day in southern Tuscany, where dramatic landscapes etched out of volcanic porous rock, local cowboy culture and a heap of wild activities provide a welcome adrenalin boost.

Revel in the great outdoors in southern Tuscany. Start in the delightful medieval town of **Massa Marittima** and spend a couple of days visiting its museums and sampling Maremmese food and wine in its rustic eateries. On day three, check out an archaeological dig, Etruscan tombs and an impressive museum at the ancient hilltop settlement of **Vetulonia**; overnight in a local *agriturismo*. From here, head down the coast to the wild and wonderful **Parco Regionale della Maremma** to walk, canoe, cycle or horse ride alongside the famous cowboys known as the *butteri*. End your journey inland amid the surrounds of the Città del Tufo (City of the Tufo), where you should visit the towns of **Pitigliano**, **Sovana** and **Sorano**. Here you can sample the local Morellino di Scansano wine at **Società Agricola Terenzi**; explore the Etruscan necropolises at the **Parco Archeologico 'Città del Tufo'**; and spend a day taking an 8km walk along the sunken roads known as *vie cave*.

Map Legend

Sights

- Beach
- Bird Sanctuary
- Buddhist
- Castle/Palace
- Christian
- Confucian
- Hindu
- Islamic
- Jain
- Jewish
- Monument
- Museum/Gallery/Historic Building
- Ruin
- Shinto
- Sikh
- Taoist
- Winery/Vineyard
- Zoo/Wildlife Sanctuary
- Other Sight

Activities, Courses & Tours

- Bodysurfing
- Diving
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Course/Tour
- Sento Hot Baths/Onsen
- Skiing
- Snorkelling
- Surfing
- Swimming/Pool
- Walking
- Windsurfing
- Other Activity

Sleeping

- Sleeping
- Camping

Eating

- Eating

Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

Entertainment

- Entertainment

Shopping

- Shopping

Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
- Toilet
- Tourist Information
- Other Information

Geographic

- Beach
- Gate
- Hut/Shelter
- Lighthouse
- Lookout
- Mountain/Volcano
- Oasis
- Park
- Pass
- Picnic Area
- Waterfall

Population

- Capital (National)
- Capital (State/Province)
- City/Large Town
- Town/Village

Transport

- Airport
- Border crossing
- Bus
- Cable car/Funicular
- Cycling
- Ferry
- Metro station
- Monorail
- Parking
- Petrol station
- S-Bahn/Subway station
- Taxi
- T-bane/Tunnelbana station
- Train station/Railway
- Tram
- Tube station
- U-Bahn/Underground station
- Other Transport

Routes

- Tollway
- Freeway
- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary
- Lane
- Unsealed road
- Road under construction
- Plaza/Mall
- Steps
- Tunnel
- Pedestrian overpass
- Walking Tour
- Walking Tour detour
- Path/Walking Trail

Boundaries

- International
- State/Province
- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
- Wall

Hydrography

- River, Creek
- Intermittent River
- Canal
- Water
- Dry/Salt/Intermittent Lake
- Reef

Areas

- Airport/Runway
- Beach/Desert
- Cemetery (Christian)
- Cemetery (Other)
- Glacier
- Mudflat
- Park/Forest
- Sight (Building)
- Sportsground
- Swamp/Mangrove

Note: Not all symbols displayed above appear on the maps in this book



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Nicola Williams

Florence; Northwestern Tuscany; Eastern Tuscany British writer Nicola Williams lives on the southern shore of Lake Geneva. Thankfully for her Italianate soul, it is an easy hop through the Mont Blanc Tunnel to Italy where she has spent years eating her way around and revelling in its extraordinary art, architecture, cuisine and landscape. Hunting Tuscan white truffles is an annual October ritual. Nicola has worked on numerous titles for Lonely Planet, including *Italy*, *Milan*, *Turin & Genoa* and *Piedmont*. She shares her travels on Twitter at @Tripalong. Nicola also wrote most of the Plan Your Trip section and the Understand section.

Read more about Nicola at:

<http://auth.lonelyplanet.com/profiles/nicolawilliams>



Belinda Dixon

Siena & Central Tuscany; Central Coast & Elba; Southern Tuscany Having cut her teenage travel teeth on Italy's trains, rarely has a year passed when Belinda hasn't been back. Highlights of this title's research include perfecting off-road driving skills on Chianti's lanes, tasting silky green olive oil in Elba and getting thoroughly spooked in Pitigliano's night-time streets (think dark alleys, meowing cats and suddenly-extinguished lights). And everywhere, very, very diligently

researching Tuscan food and wine. Belinda also wrote the Outdoor Experiences chapter and the Survival Guide section.

Read more about Belinda at:

<http://auth.lonelyplanet.com/profiles/belindadixon>

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