

INTRODUCING TUSCANY & UMBRIA

LADEN WITH GRAND-SLAM SIGHTS AND EXPERIENCES, THIS PART OF ITALY OFFERS THE PERFECT INTRODUCTION TO THE COUNTRY'S FAMED DOLCE VITA.

Despite incessant praise, the beauty and charm of Tuscany and Umbria continue to defy description. They truly do have it all: extraordinary art and architecture; colourful festivals; season-driven cuisines emulated the world over; and never-ending, picture-perfect landscapes of olive groves, vineyards and poplars. And let's not forget the locals – this may be the land of Dante and Michelangelo, but it's also the home of the Ferragamo and Gucci fashion houses, and celebrity chefs such as Fabio Picchi and Gianfranco Vissani. Here, food, fashion, art and nature intermingle effortlessly and to magnificent effect.

There's an overabundance of things to do and see because Tuscany and Umbria have been valued since Etruscan times. You can visit a World Heritage Site in the morning (there are seven), drive through a national park in the afternoon (there are four) and bunk down in stylish vineyard accommodation at night (we wouldn't dare hazard a guess at how many of these there are). Medieval fortresses, Renaissance masterpieces and Gothic cathedrals? Check. Spectacular hiking and sensational Slow Food? Yep. Hills laden with vines, ancient olive groves? You've got the picture.

TOP Mingling after dark in Piazza della Signoria (p50), Florence **BOTTOM LEFT** Autumnal landscape, Chianti (p101) **BOTTOM** Sunflowers brighten the wine route through Montefalco (p280)

PHOTO: CORNELL



FLORENCE



DANA MAYER

CHIANTI



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DANIEL MARELLI

NOISIA/NOI



NORCIA

TOP LEFT Piazza del Campo (p181), Siena's civic centre
TOP RIGHT Butcher's shop in Norcia (p320), a town famous for its meat products
BOTTOM LEFT Horse trekking through the Garfagnana (p138)
BOTTOM CENTRE Winery on the fertile hills of Le Crete (p202), south of Siena
BOTTOM RIGHT The upper church of Basilica di San Francesco (p270), Assisi

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RUSSELL MOUNTFORD



LE CRETE

ASSISI

GETTING STARTED

TUSCANY
& UMBRIA



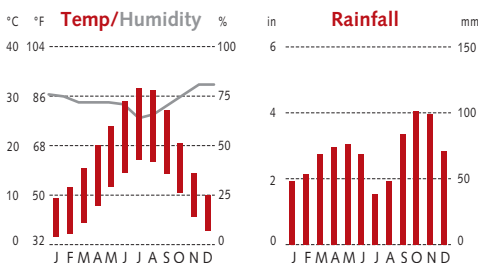
DANA MARFIELD

WHAT'S NEW?

- ★ Exciting exhibitions at Florence's Palazzo Strozzi (p62)
- ★ An opulent refurbishment of Brufa's best hotel restaurant (p268)
- ★ Sagrantino tastings at the Arnaldo Caprai vineyard, Montefalco (p281)
- ★ The meticulously restored Palazzo Blu in Pisa (p117)
- ★ A purpose-built outdoor theatre in Narni (p328)
- ★ The unique dining experience of Umbria Grill (p309)

CLIMATE: FLORENCE

Average
Max/Min



PRICE GUIDE

	BUDGET	MIDRANGE	TOP END
SLEEPING	<€80	€80-180	>€180
MEALS	<€25	€25-45	>€45
250ML WINE	€2	€3	€8

GIORGIO COSTANTINI



JULIE COOMBE

TOP Chianti wine display in Florence **BOTTOM LEFT** Piazza and Basilica di Santa Croce (p69), Florence **BOTTOM RIGHT** Fashionable Via de' Tornabuoni (p60), Florence **FAR RIGHT** Beachside bliss, Elba (p166)

ACCOMMODATION

Tuscany and Umbria are blessed with accommodation styles and options to suit every taste and budget, with comfortable midrange choices predominating. In cities and large towns there are plenty of family-run *pensioni* (guest houses) and B&Bs; in rural areas the *agriturismo* (farm-stay accommodation) reigns supreme. These rural retreats inject money into small local communities, provide much-needed employment and allow visitors to explore the countryside slowly and in great style. For more information on accommodation in the region, see p391.

MAIN POINTS OF ENTRY

PISA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (PSA; ☎ 050 84 93 00; www.pisa-airport.com) Known as Galileo Galilei, this is Tuscany's major hub for international arrivals.

FLORENCE AIRPORT (FLR; ☎ 055 306 13 00; www.aeroporto.firenze.it) Also known as Amerigo Vespucci; hosts flights from Rome, Sicily, Sardinia and some European destinations.

STAZIONE DI SANTA MARIA NOVELLA (Piazza della Stazione, Florence) Trains from European and Italian destinations arrive here, including Eurostar and Alta Velocità Eurostar Italia (fast train) services.

THINGS TO TAKE

- ★ Detailed driving map
- ★ Mosquito repellent (mossies can be a pest in summer)
- ★ Picnic-friendly pocket knife with corkscrew
- ★ Sunglasses, hat and something to cover shoulders when visiting churches
- ★ Sturdy walking shoes to combat cobbles and country paths



NOSAWINCE

WEBLINKS

ANGLOINFO TUSCANY (<http://tuscan.y.angloinfo.com>) Useful English-language website.

BELLA UMBRIA (www.bellaumbria.net) Comprehensive guide to Umbria.

THE GREEN HEART OF ITALY (www.umbria-turismo.it) Umbrian tourist-board website.

TURISMO IN TOSCANA (www.turismo.intoscana.it) Tuscany tourist-board website.

TUSCANY & WINE (www.tuscany-wine.com) Wine website with useful links.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

TUSCANY
& UMBRIA



DALUS/STRELLBY

FEBRUARY/MARCH

CARNEVALE

VIAREGGIO

Fireworks, floats, parades and parties galore from February to early March (p143).

MARCH/APRIL

SETTIMANA SANTA

ASSISI

Easter Week in this famous pilgrimage town is celebrated with processions and performances.

APRIL/MAY/JUNE

CORSA ALL'ANELLO

NARNI

Held over three weekends in April and May, the Corsa all'Anello (Race for the Ring) features medieval costumes, sombre processions and neighbourhood feasts.

MAGGIO MUSICALE FIORENTINO

FLORENCE

The oldest arts festival in Italy stages world-class performances of theatre, classical music, jazz and dance between late

April and June (www.maggiofiorentino.com, in Italian).

LA GIOSTRA DELLA QUINTANA

FOLIGNO

This medieval tournament sees neighbourhoods challenging each other in a friendly jousting competition at the start of June and in September (www.quintana.it).

GIOSTRA DELL'ARCHIDADO

CORTONA

Coinciding with Ascension Day (40 days after Easter), this week-long festival includes trumpeting, parades and a cross-bow competition.

LUMINARIA

PISA

Streets along the Arno are illuminated with 70,000 candles on the night of 16 June to honour the city's patron saint, St Ranieri.

FESTA DI SAN GIOVANNI

FLORENCE

Florence celebrates its patron saint on 24 June with a *calcio storico* (medieval football) match and fireworks.

TOP Confetti-strewn children at Viareggio's Carnevale (p143), northwestern Tuscany **RIGHT** The spectacular pageantry of Il Palio (p185), Siena

FESTIVAL DEI DUE MONDI

SPOLETO

This internationally renowned festival sees opera, theatre, ballet and art performances taking place around town during late June to early July (www.spoletofestival.it; p318).

JULY/AUGUST

UMBRIA JAZZ

PERUGIA

One of Italy's top music festivals and a major event on the international jazz circuit (www.umbriajazz.com, in Italian; p262).

PUCCINI FESTIVAL

TORRE DEL LAGO

Staged in a lakeside open-air theatre, this is a must for all opera fans (www.puccini.festival.it; p135).

IL PALIO

SIENA

The most spectacular event on the Tuscan calendar, held in July and August (p185).

SEPTEMBER

SAGRA MUSICALE UMBRA

PERUGIA

This renowned holy-music festival is held in the second half of the month (www.perugiamusicaclassica.com, in Italian; p263).

OCTOBER

FESTA DI SAN FRANCESCO

ASSISI

The life of Assisi's most famous son is celebrated on 3 and 4 October with religious services, folk dancing and song.



CULTURE

TUSCANY
& UMBRIA

TUSCAN FILM

A ROOM WITH A VIEW
(Merchant Ivory, 1986) A homage to EM Forster's novel and the visual beauty of Florence.

LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL
(Roberto Benigni, 1997) Part of this uplifting Holocaust film is set in Arezzo.

STEALING BEAUTY
(Bernardo Bertolucci, 1996) A young American girl grapples with her grief and burgeoning sexuality in the lush Tuscan countryside.

TEA WITH MUSSOLINI
(Franco Zeffirelli, 1999) The great director's semi-autobiographical film is set in Florence and San Gimignano.

THE ENGLISH PATIENT
(Anthony Minghella, 1996) Features stunning scenes shot in a monastery just outside Pienza.



ORISSTELLA MONTANON

RENAISSANCE ART

This region constitutes the world's biggest (and most important) showcase of Renaissance art. In the 14th and 15th centuries it was home to innovators and geniuses the likes of which the world had never seen before – and probably never will again. Artists such as Nicola Pisano and Cimabue set the stage for the Renaissance (Rebirth) of classical art and architecture, and practitioners such as Giotto and Brunelleschi supplied bravura performances with masterpieces such as the frescos in the Basilica di San Francesco at Assisi (p270) and the dome of Florence's Duomo (p44). Even the smallest towns have churches adorned with important works of art, and the major museums in Florence, Siena and Perugia are crammed with so many masterpieces that even three or four visits are inadequate – one can almost seem criminally negligent. For more on art and architecture, see p351.

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TOP CATHEDRALS

DUOMO (FLORENCE) A facade and dome beyond compare (p44).

DUOMO (PISA) One of the extraordinary structures on Piazza dei Miracoli (p113).

CATHEDRAL (ORVIETO) Known as the 'golden lily'; a stunning building that blends the Romanesque and Gothic styles (p302).

CATHEDRAL (SIENA) One of Italy's greatest Gothic structures (p185).

CHIESA DI SANTA MARIA DELLA CONSOLAZIONE (TODI) A 16th-century architectural masterpiece (p312).



DON'T MISS EXPERIENCES

- ★ *Aperitivo* – Kick back in the company of good wine, food and friends (p347).
- ★ Historic cafes – Sip cappuccino in the morning and espresso in the afternoon (p348).
- ★ Open-air concerts – Take to amphitheatres and piazzas on sultry summer evenings (p97, p83).
- ★ Medieval and religious festivals – Watch the locals play dress-ups (p10).
- ★ *Passeggiata* – Join the traditional evening promenade (p276).
- ★ Wine tasting – Sniff, sip and swill your way around Chianti (p101), Montepulciano (p211) and Torgiano (p266).

TUSCAN READS

- ★ **A TABERNACLE FOR THE SUN** (Linda Proud, 1997)
Book One of the Botticelli Trilogy.
- ★ **THE DECAMERON** (Giovanni Boccaccio, 1353) A bawdy masterpiece.
- ★ **THE DIVINE COMEDY** (Dante Alighieri, 1321) Italian literature's supreme achievement.
- ★ **UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN** (Frances Mayes, 1996) Best-selling memoir.
- ★ **WHERE ANGELS FEAR TO TREAD** (EM Forster, 1905)
Predates *A Room with a View*.

CULTURE

TUSCANY
& UMBRIA



UMBRIAN TALES

AFTER HANNIBAL (Barry Unsworth, 1996) Novel set in rural Umbria.

BROTHER SUN, SISTER MOON (Franco Zeffirelli, 1972) Feature film about the lives of St Francis and St Clare of Assisi.

LADY IN THE PALAZZO (Marlena de Blasi, 2006) Memoir set in Orvieto.

MY HOUSE IN UMBRIA (Richard Loncraine, 2003) Feature film based on the novel by Richard Trevor.

DOS & DON'TS

Observe local codes of behaviour and etiquette:

DRESSING Flip-flops and singlets are reserved for the beach.

GREETING Strangers and acquaintances shake hands; friends kiss two cheeks.

SIGHTSEEING Never intrude on a mass or service in a church.

SUNBATHING Topless sunbathing is considered unacceptable.

VISITING Take *dolcetti* (sweet biscuits or cakes) for your host.

WORSHIPPING Cover your shoulders, décolletage and thighs when entering a church.

AN ITALIAN ICON

At the end of WWII, manufacturer Enrico Piaggio gave his employee Corradino d'Ascanio the task of designing a simple motorcycle that was tough, economical and elegant. He specified that it should be easy to drive for both men and women, be able to carry a passenger, and not get its driver's clothes dirty. The result was one of Italy's great design icons: the Vespa MP6. On being presented with the prototype, Piaggio exclaimed 'It looks like a wasp!', so giving the famous scooter its nickname. Today, Vespas are produced by the Piaggio plant in Pontedera, southeast of Pisa, and are exported throughout the world. For more information on Italian design, see p350.

THE MEDICI

Few Italian dynasties were as illustrious as the Medici. From the 14th to 18th centuries, members of this mercantile and banking family dominated Florence and many nearby cities, controlling business and government, and functioning as influential patrons of the arts, sciences and humanities. Three popes came from the Medici ranks, as did two queens of France. Names such as Cosimo the Elder, Cosimo I and Lorenzo the Magnificent are synonymous with the city of Florence, and the list of architects, artists and scientists whom they nurtured and supported – Michelangelo, Masaccio, Galileo, Brunelleschi, Botticelli, Fra' Angelico and Donatello to name but a few – couldn't be more exalted. For more on the family's enduring influence, see p35 and p338.

TUSCAN & UMBRIAN MAESTROS

- ★ Giacomo Puccini (born Lucca, 1858; died Brussels, 1924) – The great opera composer (see p135).

- ★ Pietro Mascagni (born Livorno, 1863; died Rome, 1945) – Best known for his opera *Cavalleria Rusticana*.

- ★ Guido d'Arrezzo (born and died Arrezzo, 11th century) – Invented musical notation and the doh-ray-me scale.

- ★ Heinrich Isaac (15th century) – Prolific composer of masses, songs and instrumental music for the Medici.



FOOD & DRINK

TUSCANY
& UMBRIA

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FESTIVALS

MOSTRA MERCATO DEL TARTUFO NERO (Norcia; p321) Celebrates the black truffle in late February and early March.

SAGRA DEL FUNGO PORCINO (Cortona) This festival in mid-August honours the delectable *porcino* mushroom.

JAZZ & WINE FESTIVAL (Montalcino) Jazz-loving oenophiles savour this event in the second and third weeks of July.

MOSTRA MERCATO NAZIONALE DEL TARTUFO BIANCO DI SAN MINIATO (San Miniato; p130) This Tuscan hilltop town celebrates the white truffle on the last three weekends of November.

BANCO D'ASSAGGIO DEI VINI (Torgiano) A dedicated wine-tasting demonstration and major wine competition in November that's an important event on the international calendar.

REGIONAL CUISINE

'To cook like your mother is good; to cook like your grandmother is better', says the Tuscan proverb. Indeed, it's the age-old recipes passed between generations that form the backbone of contemporary Tuscan and Umbrian cuisine. This peasant fare based on beans, bread and other cheap, abundant essentials has led to Tuscans being dubbed *mangiafagioli* (bean eaters) – something they and their neighbours have no problem with. The age-old *cucina povera* (cooking of the poor) they enjoy is dictated by the season, uses local produce or leftovers, and is savoured around a shared table with locally produced wine and lots of conversation. To discover more about the Tuscan and Umbrian table, see p381.



TOP Mixing it up at a *porcino* festival, Tuscany **BOTTOM** Nerbone food stall in Florence's Mercato Centrale (p66) **RIGHT** Preparing *bistecca alla fiorentina* (p83) **FAR RIGHT** The acclaimed black truffle (p307)

TOP FOODIE WEBSITES

CHOWHOUND (<http://chowhound.chow.com/boards/58>) Well-regarded foodie website.

DELICIOUS ITALY (www.deliciousitaly.com) For the traveller who likes to eat well.

DIVINA CUCINA (www.divinacucina.com) Cooking teacher Judy Francini gives recipes and restaurant tips for Florence and Chianti, plus a link to her popular blog.

FAITH WILLINGER (www.faithwillinger.com) Florence is home to author, food critic and chef Faith Willinger.

LUCILLIAN DELIGHTS (<http://lucillian.blogspot.com>) Excellent blog with regional recipes.

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ALANBERSON

DON'T MISS EXPERIENCES

- ★ Almond *cantucci* and Vin Santo – Hard, sweet biscuits and Tuscan dessert wine is a marriage truly made in heaven.
- ★ Brunello di Montalcino – Drink this magnificent wine anywhere, any time (p196).
- ★ *Cinghiale* – Local wild boar served in a rich, peppery stew or in salami.
- ★ *Taglierini* with *porcini* mushrooms – Try this exquisite pasta dish when *porcini* are in season (late August to October).
- ★ Truffles – Freshly sourced and shaved over pasta. For white truffles head to San Miniato (p129); for black, Norcia (p320).
- ★ Vernaccia – Aromatic white wine preferably drunk before dinner on a San Gimignano terrace (p196).

LOOK OUT FOR

- CHIANINA BEEF** Tender, flavoursome meat from white oxen raised near Arezzo and Siena.
- FAGIOLO DI SORANA** Delicate white beans from the hills around Pescia.
- FARRO DELLA GARFAGNANA** Intensely flavoured, firm and slightly crunchy spelt from northwestern Tuscany.
- LENTICCHIA DI CASTELLUCCIO DI NORCIA** Small, thin-skinned lentils from southern Umbria.
- ZAFFERANO DI SAN GIMIGNANO** Strongly scented local saffron.

FOOD & DRINK

TUSCANY
& UMBRIA

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TOP SPOTS

NORCIA For butchers so famous they've entered the lexicon (p321).

SIENA Home to sweet delights including panforte (a rich cake of almonds, honey and candied fruit) and *ricciarelli* (small almond cakes; p180).

SPOLETO Famous for its black truffles (p315).

THE GARFAGNANA The place to feast on fruits of the forest (p138).

THE LUNIGIANA Authentic *cucina rustica* (rustic cuisine) for everyone to savour (p146).

LE STRADE DEL VINO

Wine routes are an enjoyable way to explore the region. See p375 for a full list.

STRADA DEI VINI CHIANTI RUFINA E POMINO (www.chiantirufina.com) East of Florence.

STRADA DEI VINI DEL CANTICO (www.stradadeivinidelcantico.it) Incorporates Assisi, Spello, Todi and Torgiano in Umbria.

STRADA DEL SAGRANTINO (www.stradadelsagrantino.it) Around Bevagna and Montefalco in Umbria.

STRADA DEL VINO NOBILE DI MONTEPULCIANO (www.stradavinonobile.it) Montepulciano and the Val d'Orcia in Tuscany.

STRADA DEL VINO TERRE DI AREZZO (www.stradadelvino.aretzo.it) Around Arezzo and Cortona in Tuscany.

DOCG WINES

The prestigious appellation DOCG (Denominazione d'Origine Controllata e Garantita) is awarded to Italian wines that meet strict requirements regarding quality, production area, grape varieties, and viticultural and bottling techniques. There are currently 44 DOCGs in Italy, including eight from Tuscany and two from Umbria. The Tuscan denominations are Brunello di Montalcino; Carmignano; Chianti; Chianti Classico; Morellino di Scansano; Vernaccia di San Gimignano; Vino Nobile di Montepulciano; and Elba Aleatico Passito. The Umbrian denominations are Montefalco Sagrantino and Torgiano Rosso Riserva. For more on the region's wonderful tipples, see p375.

TOP *Lardo di colonnata* (p146) is cut after seasoning **RIGHT** A delicious display of panforte

THE ARK OF TASTE

A project born and headquartered in Florence, the Ark of Taste is an international catalogue of endangered food products drawn up by the Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity in partnership with the region of Tuscany. It aims to protect indigenous edibles threatened with extinction by industrialisation, globalisation, hygiene laws and environmental dangers, and actively encourages their cultivation for consumption. Foods included in the list must be culturally or historically linked to a specific region, locality, ethnicity or traditional production practice, and must also be rare. There are 31 Tuscan and three Umbrian foods listed. For more details on the Ark, go to www.fondazione Slow Food.com/eng/arca/lista.lasso; for more on Slow Food, see p385.

WHY NOT TRY...

- ★ *Bioldo* – Local version of haggis; best sampled in Castelnuovo di Garfagnana (p141)

- ★ *Lardo di colonnata* – Wafer-thin pig fat marinated in olive oil and herbs (p146)

- ★ *Lumache* – Snails; scoff the slimy stuff in Bevagna (p280)

- ★ *Mallegato* – San Miniato's Slow Food-accredited blood sausage (p129)

- ★ *Maltagliati* – Random leftover bits after other pasta has been cut; literally 'bad pasta' and somewhat rudely called *lasagna bastarde* in the Lunigiana (p148)

- ★ Tripe sandwich – Florence's favourite fast food (p84)



OUTDOORS

TUSCANY
& UMBRIA

HIKING SPOTS

APUANE ALPS Spectacular marble mountains located between the Apennines and the Versilian coast (p144).

LAGO TRASIMENO Wildlife, olive groves, sunflowers and glorious water views in a tranquil lake area (p290).

MONTI SIBILLINI Mountainous national park with red deer and plains of wildflowers (p322).

PARCO REGIONALE DELLA MAREMMA Sandy beaches, reclaimed marshland, wide plains where the famous Maremma cattle graze, and the wildlife-rich Monti dell'Uccellina (p225).

THE CASENTINO REGION Monasteries, botanical gardens and waterfalls in the heavily treed Parco Nazionale delle Foreste Casentinesi (p247).

THE GARFAGNANA Chestnuts and *porcini* mushrooms in the forests and hills (p138).



DANNA MARFIELD

NATIONAL PARKS

The region's national parks cover large areas and protect a diverse collection of land, river, lake and marine ecosystems. There are three national parks in Tuscany: the Parco Nazionale dell'Arcipelago Toscana (p165), Europe's largest marine park; the Parco Nazionale delle Foreste Casentinesi, Monte Falterona e Campigna (p247), Italy's most extensive and best-preserved forest; and the Parco Nazionale de'Appennino Tosco-Emiliano, covering the fragile mountain environment of the Apennines. In Umbria, there is only one – the Parco Nazionale dei Monti Sibillini (p322), which takes its name from the principal mountain range in the area. The combined offerings of these parks provide many opportunities for hikes, day walks, bike riding, hang-gliding, horse riding and wildlife- and bird-watching. For more information, go to www.parks.it and see p369 of this book.



JAMES BRADUNG

TOP Picnic on the Piano Grande, Monti Sibillini (p322) **BOTTOM** Still waters at Lago Trasimeno (p290)
RIGHT Cattle herding in the Maremma (p225) **FAR RIGHT** Cycling through Chianti (p101)

TOP OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

- ★ Bird-watch in the Parco San Rossore and Riserva Naturale Lago di Burano (p118, p228).

- ★ Canoe along the coastline in the Parco Regionale della Maremma (p225).

- ★ Fish for eel, trout, perch, tench and carp in Lago Trasimeno (p291).

- ★ Hang-glide or paraglide the skies over Monti Sibillini (p323).

- ★ Take a bicycle tour of the Etruscan Coast (p164).

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DON'T MISS EXPERIENCES

- ★ Discover the source of the Arno – Hike through the Parco Nazionale delle Foreste Casentinesi, Monte Falterona e Campigna (p247).

- ★ Emulate Venus – Swim the protected waters of the Parco Nazionale dell'Arcipelago Toscana (p165), where the goddess rose from the waves.

- ★ Explore the enigmatic Vie Cave – These Etruscan sunken roads are found in the valleys below Pitigliano (p232).

- ★ Follow in St Francis' footsteps – Take a walk outside Assisi (p273).

- ★ Ride a horse through fields of wildflowers – Visit the magnificent Piano Grande (p322).

- ★ Trace the foundations of a Roman aqueduct – Traverse Spoleto's Via del Ponte (p317).

BIKE RIDES

- CHIANTI** Pedal through vineyards and olive groves (p101).

- ETRUSCAN COAST** Take in coastal views and nature reserves (p164).

- LAGO TRASIMENO** Enjoy the flat terrain and fish dinners (p290).

- MAREMMA** (www.maremma-bike.it, in Italian) Tour gentle hills, thick woods and archaeological sites.

- TUSCAN ARCHIPELAGO** (www.aptelba.it) Explore Elba and six other islands on two wheels.

OUTDOORS

TUSCANY
& UMBRIA



REGIONAL PARKS

PARCO ALPI APUANE (www.parcapuane.it) In northwestern Tuscany.

PARCO DI MIGLIARINO, SAN ROSSORE, MASSACIUCCOLI (www.parcosanrossore.org, in Italian) Runs between Viareggio and Livorno (p118).

PARCO DEL LAGO TRASIMENO (www.parcotrasimeno.it) Around Lago Trasimeno.

PARCO NATURALE DELLA MAREMMA (www.parc-maremma.it) South of Grosseto (p225).

WALKING GUIDES

Useful books about walking in Tuscany and Umbria:

50 HIKES IN & AROUND TUSCANY (Jeff Taylor)

ITALY'S SIBILLINI NATIONAL PARK (Gillian Price) Walking and hiking guide.

THE ALPS OF TUSCANY (Francesco Greco) Selected hikes in the Apuane Alps.

TREADING GRAPES (Rosemary George) Walking through the vineyards of Tuscany.

WALKING & EATING IN TUSCANY & UMBRIA (James Lasdun and Pia Davis)

WALKING IN TUSCANY (Gillian Price)

GETTING AROUND ON TWO WHEELS

Although most historic town and city centres are closed to cars, cyclists are free to enter at will. There are plenty of places where you can rent a bike, buy colour-coordinated lycra and obtain advice on routes and itineraries – many of the latter are mentioned in this book. In May and early June the international cycling community descends upon Italy to see and compete in one of the world's great long-distance races, the Giro d'Italia. Its route, which changes each year, often traverses part of Tuscany (in 2009 Florence was an official stage). For more information on cycling in the region, see p369.

TOP Walking in the Apuane Alps (p144) **RIGHT** Wildflowers blanket the Piano Grande beneath Casteluccio (p322)

WHEN TO GO?

If you're keen to take to the outdoors while you're here, try to visit in spring or autumn (fall). Spring is the prettiest time, while the colours of autumn have their own mellow appeal and since summertime lingers into late October, you'll have plenty of daylight for your activities. If possible, avoid the busy Easter week. If you're planning to walk in the Apuane Alps or other mountain areas, the most pleasant time is in summer. Remember, though, that August is the month when most Italians take their holidays and the trails get very busy. Lower terrain, including cycling routes, is best left untrodden or un-cycled in high summer as both the crowds and the heat can be oppressive. For more information, see p369.

DRIVING TOURS

Tour through striking landscapes and discover the very best of regional wine and food:

- ★ Abbazia di San Galgano to Pretoio – Into the hills of Le Crete (p202)

- ★ Livorno to Piombino – Along the Tuscan coast (p160)

- ★ Monte Argentario to Manciano – Amidst Tuscany's Etruscan heritage (p229)

- ★ Sansepolcro to Arezzo – The Piero della Francesca trail (p246)

- ★ The Valnerina – Steep valleys and jagged mountains (p323)

- ★ The Via Francigena – A medieval pilgrimage route in the untamed Lunigiana (p148)

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FAMILY TRAVEL

TUSCANY
& UMBRIA



GOLDIE COULSON

TOP ACTIVITIES

FUNIVIA COLLE ELETTO

Take the kids for a steep ride on Gubbio's birdcage funicular (p284).

LEANING TOWER Clamber up the 294 steps of Pisa's world-famous tower (p113).

PALAZZO VECCHIO Let actors impersonating Medici family members show you around this important building in Florence (p53).

DON'T MISS EXPERIENCES

- ★ Bike riding in Lucca – Pedal around the city's monumental city walls (p131).

- ★ Farm-stay accommodation – Enjoy animals, swimming pools and lots of space in an *agriturismo* (p391).

- ★ Gelato – Kids of all sizes love the local ice cream (p89).

- ★ *Passeggiata* – Search out carousels, cafes and convivial company of every age on a traditional evening stroll (p276).

- ★ Sculpture parks – Frolic between site-specific sculptures in these outdoor art galleries (p361).

- ★ The original Narnia – Visit Narni, the original world within the wardrobe (p325).

TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN

Families with children are welcomed in this part of Italy. Restaurants and cafes are extremely family friendly, as are museums and galleries. Family passes are available for many high-profile attractions, and admission to many galleries and museums is free for under 10s or under 18s (particularly EU citizens). Cities and large towns often lack green spaces and playgrounds, though, so head to the hills or the coast for running room. In restaurants it's perfectly acceptable to order a *mezza porzione* (half serve), and on trains the *offerta famiglia* gives a 20% discount to family groups of three to five people. Many hotels and *pensione* (guest houses) have family rooms sleeping up to five.

TOP Choose your favourite flavour of gelato from the delectable selection at Grom, Florence (p89)

THE AUTHORS



VIRGINIA MAXWELL

Coordinating Author, Florence, Northwestern Tuscany

After working for many years as a publishing manager at Lonely Planet's Melbourne headquarters, Virginia decided that she'd be happier writing guidebooks than commissioning them. Since making this decision she's written or contributed to Lonely Planet books covering nine countries, eight of which are on the Mediterranean. Italy is a favourite destination – as well as working on this title, Virginia has covered Rome for *Italy* and the north of the country for *Western Europe*.



ALEX LEVITON

Northern Umbria, Southern Umbria

Alex updated her original Northern and Southern Umbria chapters for the fourth edition in a row. As a frequent visitor to Umbria since 1998, she considers the region to be a home. Alex lives mostly in San Francisco and sometimes in Durham, North Carolina, but has dreams of one day buying a farmhouse near Lago Trasimeno or Bevagna.

LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

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LEIF PETTERSEN

Central Coast & Elba, Central Tuscany, Southern Tuscany, Eastern Tuscany

In 2003 Leif was 'Kramered' by an unbalanced friend into abandoning an idiotproof career with the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis and embarking on an odyssey of travel writing. Good coffee, phenomenal food and cheap wine have fuelled him through more than 100 Italian cities and 300 restaurants since then. He writes an almost-award-winning, 'slightly caustic' blog at KillingBatteries.com.

ITINERARIES



ONLY THE BEST

10 DAYS // FLORENCE ROUND TRIP // 800KM

Florence (p34) anchors any 'best of tour. Squeeze in three days of highlights before moving on to **Lucca** (p130), light on heavyweight museums but loaded with important churches and top-notch restaurants. Next day, pop into **Pisa** (p112) to scale its Leaning Tower, leaving after lunch to arrive at a Tuscan farmhouse in **Chianti** (p101) before dusk. Check in for two nights and day trip the next morning to **San Gimignano** (p192). On day seven, your destination is **Siena** (p180), full of museums and charm. Then step into Umbria and follow the pilgrims to **Assisi** (p269). On day nine, visit **Spoleto** (p315) and **Todi** (p310) before taking the A1 back to Florence.



GOTHIC GEMS

EIGHT DAYS // LUCCA TO GUBBIO // 500KM

Start your Gothic gyration in lovely **Lucca** (p130), visiting its **Cattedrale di San Martino** (p131) and spending the night in a luxurious villa on its outskirts (p398). Proceed to **Pisa** (p112), spending at least two days admiring the marble pulpits in the **Baptistry** (p115) and **Duomo** (p115), the paintings and sculpture in the **Museo Nazionale di San Matteo** (p117) and the exquisite **Chiesa di Santa Maria della Spina** (p118). The next day, make your way to gloriously Gothic **Siena** (p180) and spend three days ogling its architecture and art. Onwards to Umbria, visiting the magnificent **Abbazia di San Galgano** (p202) en route. Spend the night in **Orvieto** (p302) and visit its **cathedral** (p302) before finishing in **Gubbio** (p283), an imposing hill-town packed with Gothic buildings.



WORLD HERITAGE SITES

SEVEN DAYS // FLORENCE TO ASSISI // 470KM

The region has more than its fair share of cultural gems. Start with a serious slug of Renaissance splendour by spending three days in **Florence** (p34). Decamp to **Pisa** (p112) to visit the Piazza dei Miracoli, sampling the city's delectable seafood-dominated cuisine while you're at it (p119). Next day, head towards the fairytale-like medieval towers of **San Gimignano** (p192). Stay as long as you can bear the crowds before hightailing it to the historic centre of **Siena** (p180), where extraordinary Gothic architecture and delectable dining at **Antica Osteria da Divo** (p190) await. Scale down the pace a little on day six, making a slow procession to jewel-like **Pienza** (p209), where you should overnight. On your final day, cross into Umbria to marvel at Giotto's frescos in **Assisi** (p269).



CONTEMPORARY CONTEMPLATIONS

SEVEN DAYS // FLORENCE TO SIENA // 530KM

Embrace the contemporary in this weeklong jaunt around Tuscany. Book in advance to visit **Fattoria di Celle** (p100), a huge estate filled with world-class site-specific installation art. Come here on a day trip from masterpiece-packed **Florence** (p34), where you should spend at least three days wandering; check out the **Palazzo Strozzi** (p62) and **Palazzo Medici-Riccardi** (p65) for temporary exhibitions. Then head south along the coastal highway to Niki de Saint Phalle's whimsical **Il Giardino dei Tarocchi** (p228), staying overnight in **Montemerano** (p407) or **Sorano** (p408). Next day, contemplate the cutting-edge at **Galleria Continua** (p196) in **San Gimignano** (p192), over-nighting both here and **Siena** (p180) before ending your tour at the nearby **Parco Sculture del Chianti** (p106).



HILLTOP HOP

FOUR DAYS // SAN MINIATO TO PERUGIA // 480KM

This region is full of pretty medieval hilltop fortresses. Start your tour at the gourmet destination of **San Miniato** (p129), where you can pick up provisions and enjoy a picnic before heading to spectacularly sited **Volterra** (p198) for the afternoon. Crowd favourite **San Gimignano** (p192) should be your overnight stop. In the morning, visit wine mecca **Montalcino** (p204) then lunch at Ristorante la Porta in pretty **Monticchiello** (p210) and overnight in **Montepulciano** (p211). Next day, work off the indulgences of the night before by climbing the wickedly steep streets of **Cortona** (p248) and then cross into Umbria, where ancient stone town walls and arches slumber in the sun at **Amelia** (p330) and **Narni** (p325). Your last day sees you paying a call to cosmopolitan hilltop city **Perugia** (p253).



DELICIOUS UMBRIA

FOUR DAYS // LAGO TRASIMENO TO NORCIA // 170KM

Kick off at Lago Trasimeno, lunching on local specialities at Castiglione del Lago's **La Cantina** (p295). In the afternoon, visit Umbria's most famous winemaking family in



Torgiano (p266), where the aromatic Rubesco Riserva is produced, and check in for two nights at **Relais Borgo Brufa** (p268), with its sybaritic spa and sensational restaurant. Swill, sniff and spit the next day away in **Montefalco** (p280), sampling the stock in its *enoteche* (wine bars) and at **Arnaldo Caprai** (p281) winery in search of the perfect Sagrantino. On day three, enjoy a leisurely lunch at **Il Bacco Felice** (p279) in Foligno and spend the remaining smidgen of afternoon savouring Italy's best olive oil in Slow City **Trevi** (p282). Have the final course in **Norcia** (p320), famous for its *cinghiale* (wild boar) and black truffles.

TUSCAN WINE TRAIL

FOUR DAYS // FLORENCE TO MONTALCINO // 200KM

Florence (p34) has a plethora of *enoteche* and *fiaschetterie* (small taverns serving wine and snacks), with places such as **Le Volpe e L'uva** (p88) pouring top tipples from around



the country. For tasting in and around the vineyards, follow the **Strada dei Vini Chianti Rufina** (p105) east of Florence, staying overnight at the stylish **Podere Castellare** (p396), then bear south to **Chianti Fiorentino** (p101) to taste the full complement of regional wines at **Le Cantine di Greve in Chianti** (p102). While in Chianti, stay two nights at **Fattoria di Rignana** (p396), tour the historic wine cellars at **Badia di Passignano** (p103), dine at the Antinori estate's **Osteria di Passignano** (p104) and visit the **Castello di Brolio** (p106) estate near Siena. Finish in **Montalcino** (p204), home of Tuscany's best wine, Brunello.

THE BEST OF TUSCANY & UMBRIA

Whether you're unravelling a thousand Tuscan tales in the devilishly steep streets of a hilltop town; revelling in Florence's city-sophisticate pageant of Renaissance masterpieces; or committing yourself truly, madly, deeply to Umbria's sacred and savage soul, you'll discover the regions of Tuscany and Umbria are disproportionately rich – in art, in food and in passion.



ABOVE Fertile fields near San Gimignano (p192), Tuscany

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1

THE BEST AGRITURISMI

1 AGRITURISMO LA CERRETA

Nature's the draw at this bucolic *agriturismo* (farm-stay accommodation; p401) in central coastal Tuscany. Don't be surprised if an antlered deer or a wild boar scampers by while you're at the restaurant or hiking the dozens of nearby trails. Kids will love the games and horse-riding lessons.

2 AGRITURISMO SAN LORENZO

If the 12th-century chapel isn't enough to entice you to this central Tuscan farm-stay (p404), perhaps the swimming pool fed by mountain spring water, cooking classes or organic home-grown olive oil will do the trick. Pick up ingredients at the local farmers market and cook in your own kitchen.

3

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3 FATTORIA DI RIGNANA

Who doesn't want to stay in a 17th-century noble villa in Tuscany (p396)? If you can tear yourself away from the ceiling frescos for long enough, you can enjoy the infinity pool with views of the countryside or dine at the on-site *cantinetta* (small cellar where wine is served; p103).

4 FATTORIA DI VIBIO

Far from the rat race, this is an upmarket romantic oasis in southern Umbria where one can luxuriate in spa services in the morning, hike the trails in the afternoon, and down truffles and Sagrantino in the restaurant each night. Don't miss the view from the indoor swimming pool (p414).

5 TORRE COLOMBAIA

The hand-built, fairy-tale-like main building of Torre Colombaia (p410) is surrounded by idyllic organic farmlands and a yoga studio. Seemingly isolated yet just 15 minutes from Perugia and the wine region, this rural swath of land invites relaxation and contemplation.

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THE BEST ART

1 THE UFFIZI

Arguably one of the best art museums on the planet, Florence's Uffizi Gallery (p53) has been stunning visitors for more than 400 years. Every major Italian artist and style of Italian art is represented here, from Giotto and Michelangelo to Botticelli and da Vinci.

2 PINACOTECA NAZIONALE

Witness the transformation of Tuscan art from the flat, gilded Gothic style to the dimensional and emotional style of the Renaissance. Dating back around 800 years, the works in the National Gallery of Siena (p188) are from both the Sienese and Florentine schools.



3 PALAZZO COMUNALE

The building itself (p181) is a Gothic architectural masterpiece anchoring Siena's Piazza del Campo, and the frescos and masterpieces inside are known for their secular themes of wisdom, justice and peace.

4 BASILICA DI SAN FRANCESCO

St Francis of Assisi is known for changing the world of religion, but his life (and death) also transformed the world of art. Gone were flat, iconic images and in their place arose natural backgrounds, animals and true emotion. Don't miss Giotto's fresco cycle in the upper church (p270).

5 PINACOTECA COMUNALE

The Alta Valle del Tevere in the far north of Umbria is known as Museum Valley for the richness of its historic treasures. This 15th-century palace (p287) in Città di Castello houses works from masters such as Signorelli, Raphael and Cristofano Gherardi, artists who lived here when Città was one of Umbria's most important artistic cities.

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THE BEST RESTAURANTS

1 OSTERIA DI PASSIGNANO

Everything is memorable at this upmarket *osteria* (casual eatery; p104) in Badia di Passignano: the delectable dishes, professional service, tempting wine list and idyllic setting in an 11th-century Benedictine monastery on the Antinori wine estate. The menu is refined; lunch here is truly an affair to remember.

2 RISTORANTE CIBRÈO

The flagship of Fabio Picchi's food empire, this elegant restaurant (p88) in Florence treats diners to the city's most confident and creative Tuscan cuisine. Once you've eaten here, you're sure to join the ranks of the many adoring regulars.



3 ANTICA OSTERIA DA DIVO

Fancy an Etruscan ruin with your guinea fowl and cherry millefeuille potatoes? Against a backdrop of a 2500-year-old subterranean grotto in Siena, you'll find fresh, seasonal cuisine, slow jazz and inventive fusion creations (p190).

4 HOTEL RISTORANTE LA BASTIGLIA

Although Umbrian food is known for its peasant roots, the cuisine can spruce up rather nicely. Set in the postcard-perfect village of Spello, La Bastiglia (p277) is known as much for its sommelier-crafted 800-bottle wine cellar as it is for its daring seasonal menu – fried egg yolk, blood gnocchi and the local Chianina beef.

5 RISTORANTE PIERMARINI

Whenever there's a gravy boat filled with truffle sauce, you know a restaurant is doing something right. Signore Piermarini serves dishes filled with truffles, freshly picked herbs, wild asparagus and other locally sourced ingredients in Ferentillo (p325).

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TOP Tour through the soft hues of the Valnerina landscape **RIGHT** Medieval architecture features along the Via Francigena in the Lunigiana region

THE BEST DRIVING TOURS

1 PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA TRAIL

This scenic route (p246) follows the art of the 15th-century Arezzo-based painter. While Piero della Francesca has famed paintings in Rome and Florence, many of his 'serene humanism' pieces can be found near his home town. Of particular note is his *Madonna del Parto* (Pregnant Madonna) fresco near Monterchi.

2 THE VALNERINA

Start your day with a Roman waterfall that has its own on/off switch. Next up, a village church where you can commune with mummified remains. For dinner, stop in at Ristorante Piermarini, where the truffles may have been freshly picked (p323).

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3 ABBAZIA DI SAN GALGANO TO PETROIO

With a striking Gothic abbey as its starting point, the journey moves from Cistercian ruins to a Romanesque church and a 14th-century abbey covered in Luca Signorelli frescos, and finally stops in a medieval town for a visit to a terracotta museum (p202).

4 THE VIA FRANCIGENA

A pilgrimage route since the 7th century, the Via Francigena has a sacred beauty perfect for those looking for a more spiritual peregrination. Traversing the ancient Lunigiana region of Tuscany, the drive takes in castles, a medieval hilltop fortress and a 9th-century hermitage (p148).

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