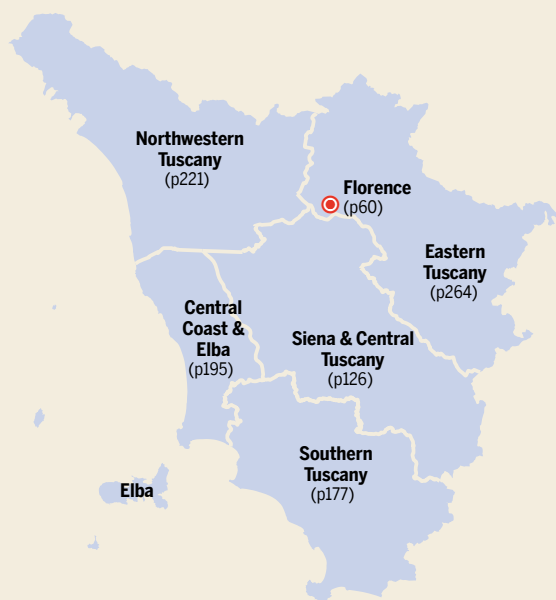




Florence & Tuscany



Nicola Williams, Virginia Maxwell

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TRATTORIA IN FLORENCE
P60

Itineraries



10
DAYS

Only the Best

This road trip takes in a classic Tuscan mix of world-class art, medieval architecture, gorgeous 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. On the third day, lose yourself in the Oltrarno's ancient web of squares and alleys laced with artists' workshops.

On 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. On 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 gorge on breathlessly beautiful piazzas, churches, museums and eateries.



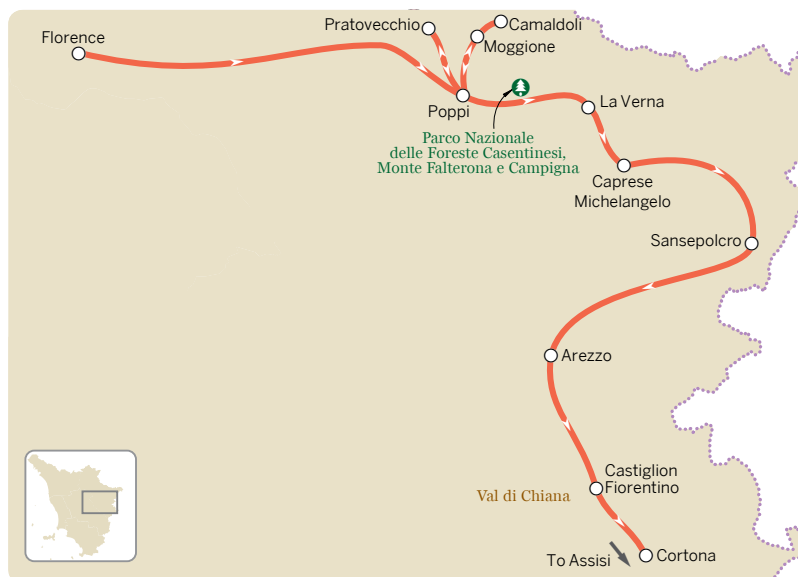
The Heart of Tuscany

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**, historical rival to Florence. A walking tour is the perfect prelude to the splendid Gothic symphony of this iconic Tuscan city. Gravitare towards the *duomo* and Museo Civico 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 traditional Siennese biscuits at nearby Il Magnifico. Continue your city exploration: Siena's delightfully intact *centro storico* (historic centre) is a Unesco World Heritage Site for good reason.

On day two (or three if Siena begs you to linger), motor southeast through the rounded hills and cypress alleys of Crete Senesi to Unesco-loved **Pienza**, a stroke of Renaissance architectural genius that, with a couple of lovely sleeping and eating options in and around town, is a brilliant base for exploring this tasty neck of the Tuscan woods. Or meander 15km east to blockbuster wine town **Montepulciano** in the gourmet Val di Chiana and use that as a base. 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**, savour the serene beauty of **Abbazia di Sant'Antimo**, wander through the ruined Cistercian abbey of **San Galgano**, and soak in hot cascades at **Bagni San Filippo**. In Montepulciano, sink your teeth into a feisty 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, a 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.

12
DAYS

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 little-known Casentino region, home to the idyllically isolated Parco Nazionale delle Foreste Casentinesi, Monte Falterona e Campigna. Base yourself around the fortified hill town of **Poppi** for three days and visit isolated, windswept medieval monasteries in **Camaldoli** and **La Verna**, hike trails in the national park, lunch on staunchly local, seasonal *cucina tipica casentinese* (typical Casentino cuisine) in family-run village restaurant Il Cedro in tiny **Moggione**, and dine exceedingly well after dark in **Prato Vecchio**.

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 di 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 marvellously sloping central square and laid-back cafe life. Get acquainted with the architect who designed Florence's world-famous Galleria degli Uffizi at the Museo di Casa Vasari, and spend a quiet moment in the town's beautiful churches – Cappella Bacci, Pieve di Santa Maria and the *duomo* are highlights. Join locals for lunch before enjoying a late-afternoon *passaggiata* (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 alla 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.

1
WEEK

Pisa & its Provinces

This part of Tuscany is not as well trodden as others. Tick off Pisa's blockbuster 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 as tourist-packed Piazza dei Miracoli. Scale the famous engineering project gone horribly wrong, aka the Leaning Tower. Come dusk, hit bijou art town **Pietrasanta** for an excellent dinner. On day two, pay homage to Italy's Vespa scooter at **Pontedera's** Museo Piaggio or see spaghetti being made in **Lari**. Lunch in the village, then motor to gourmet town **San Miniato**. Overnight at Barbiaccia Nuova near **Montaiione** 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. On your fourth day, move to the coast, where wine-lovers can meander south to taste Super Tuscan Sassicaia in **Bolgheri**. Drive north along the Etruscan Coast: dip your toes in the sea in the delightfully old-fashioned resort of **Castiglioncello** and end the day on a gourmet high with a seafood feast at Vetto alle Vaglie or La Barrocciaia in port city **Livorno**.

1
WEEK

The Maremma

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

Start in the little-visited but 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 stunning 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 amazing Etruscan necropolises at the Parco Archeologico 'Città del Tufo'; and spend a day taking an 8km walk along the enigmatic sunken roads known as *vie cave*.

Off the Beaten Track

AL BENEFIZIO

Fragrant fig trees, olive groves, vines and acacia woods frame the nail-bitingly narrow road to this isolated farm where beekeeper Francesca welcomes guests like old friends. Learn to cook with her or help with the olive and honey harvests. (p257)

STRADA DEL VINO E DELL'OLIO

From Lucca, hit the empty road along a network of rural, postcard-Tuscan driving itineraries through the romantic vineyard-stitched hills of Colline Lucchesi and olive groves around the chic hilltop village of Montecarlo. Tastings obligatory. (p242)

PONTEREDERA

It was in this small, little-known Tuscan town that Italy's iconic Vespa scooter was born in 1946. Discover the history, legends and romance surrounding the Hepburn-famous 'wasp' at the Museo Piaggio in Pontederera. (p246)

LARI

A pilgrimage to this medieval village between Pisa and Livorno is a must for curious foodies: it is home to the world's smallest pasta factory, aka an artisan workshop run by the Martelli family since 1926. (p233)

TERME DI SASSETTA

Take a break from tasting super-hot Super Tuscans along Tuscany's Central Coast with a flop in natural hot springs in a remote chestnut wood near Sassetta, central Tuscany. (p208)



IL CEDRO

Gourmet travel in Tuscany means tracking down far-flung dining legends, unchanged for decades and cooking up seasonal fruits of the land. Enter Il Cedro in the Parco Nazionale delle Foreste Casentinesi, Monte Falterona e Campigna. (p276)

CAPRESE MICHELANGELO

Dedicated Michelangelo fans won't do better than an off-track motor to the tiny medieval village in eastern Tuscany's Valle del Casentino where David's creator spent his childhood roaming the countryside and painting. (p280)

ABBAZIA DI MONTE OLIVETO MAGGIORE

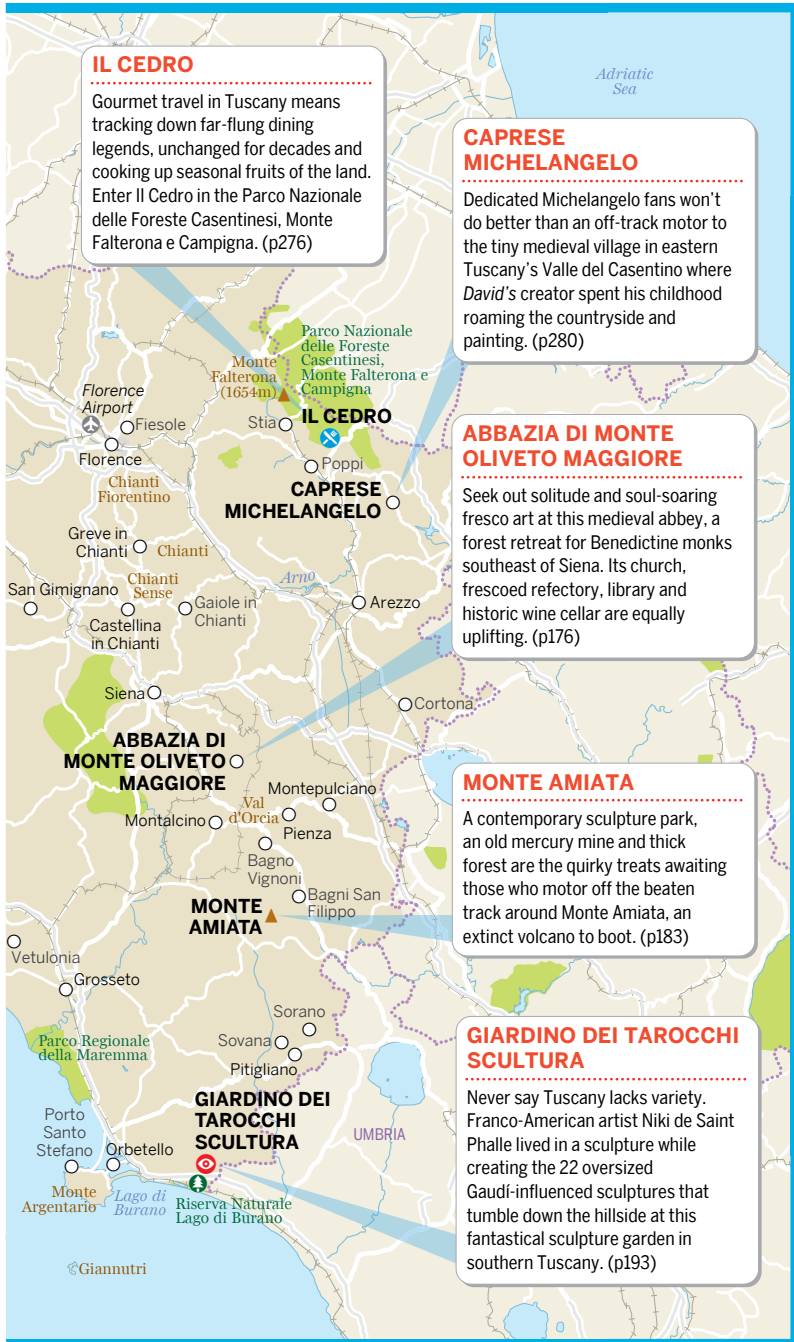
Seek out solitude and soul-soaring fresco art at this medieval abbey, a forest retreat for Benedictine monks southeast of Siena. Its church, frescoed refectory, library and historic wine cellar are equally uplifting. (p176)

MONTE AMIATA

A contemporary sculpture park, an old mercury mine and thick forest are the quirky treats awaiting those who motor off the beaten track around Monte Amiata, an extinct volcano to boot. (p183)

GIARDINO DEI TAROCCHI SCULTURA

Never say Tuscany lacks variety. Franco-American artist Niki de Saint Phalle lived in a sculpture while creating the 22 oversized Gaudi-influenced sculptures that tumble down the hillside at this fantastical sculpture garden in southern Tuscany. (p193)



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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
- Hut/Shelter

Eating

- Eating

Drinking & Nightlife

- Drinking & Nightlife
- Cafe

Entertainment

- Entertainment

Shopping

- Shopping

Information

- Bank
- Embassy/Consulate
- Hospital/Medical
- Internet
- Police
- Post Office
- Telephone
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- 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
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- Other Transport

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

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- International
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- Disputed
- Regional/Suburb
- Marine Park
- Cliff
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- 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, Dublin, 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'.

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Published by Lonely Planet Global Limited

CRN 554153

10th edition – January 2018

ISBN 978 1 78657 261 5

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in China

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