



Florence & Tuscany

POP 3.74 MILLION

Includes ➔

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|--------------|-----|
| Florence | 478 |
| Siena | 516 |
| Chianti | 525 |
| Volterra | 537 |
| Livorno | 550 |
| Isola d'Elba | 556 |
| Pisa | 560 |

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ La Leggenda dei Frati (p509)
- ➔ Essenziale (p507)
- ➔ Il Leccio (p542)
- ➔ Osteria del Castello (p533)
- ➔ L'Osteria di Casa Chianti (p528)

Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Ad Astra (p503)
- ➔ Hotel Orto de' Medici (p502)
- ➔ La Bandita (p541)
- ➔ Podere Brizio (p541)
- ➔ Conti di San Bonifacio (p546)

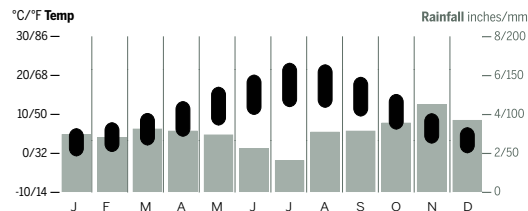
Why Go?

Florence (Firenze in Italian) and Tuscany (Toscana) are the perfect introduction to Italy's famed *dolce vita*. Life is sweet around leading lady Florence, a fashionable urbanite known for her truly extraordinary treasure trove of world-class art and architecture, and a seasonally driven cuisine emulated the world over. Away from the city the pace slows as magnificent landscapes and the gentle heartbeat of the seasons cast their seductive spell.

This part of Italy has been working on its remarkable heritage since Etruscan times, meaning there's mountains to see and do. Explore a World Heritage Site in the morning, visit a vineyard in the afternoon and bunk down in a palatial villa or overwhelmingly rural *agriturismo* (farm stay accommodation) with indigenous black pigs at night. Renaissance paintings and Gothic cathedrals? Check. Spectacular trekking and sensational Slow Food? Yep. Hills laden with vines and ancient olive groves? More than you can possibly imagine.

When to Go

Florence



May & Jun Wild-flower-adorned landscapes beg outdoor action, be it walking, cycling or horse riding.

Jul Not as mad-busy as August (avoid) and with music festivals aplenty.

Sep–Nov Grapes and olives are harvested; forests yield white truffles and porcini mushrooms.

Florence & Tuscany Highlights

1 Uffizi (p485)
Swooning over Florence's treasures: the world's finest collection of Renaissance paintings at the Uffizi and the dome of Brunelleschi's Duomo.

2 Lucca (p565)
Pedalling and picnicking atop stone city walls.

3 Leaning Tower (p560) Getting lost in medieval Pisa and scaling its iconic tower at sunset.

4 Elba (p557)
Setting sail for the Mediterranean island and sleeping on an olive estate scented with orange blossoms and olive groves.

5 Chianti (p525)
Vineyard-hopping and lunching at an Antinori family estate.

6 Siena (p516)
Gorging on Gothic architecture and almond biscuits.

7 Abbazia di Sant'Antimo (p541) Being spellbound by Gregorian chants in the compelling abbey near Montalcino.

8 Città del Tufo (p547) Exploring Etruscan heritage.

9 Arezzo (p571)
Marvelling at frescoes in Cappella Bacci and the beautiful Tuscan square Piazza Grande.

