

Italy

Self-Guided Bike tour



Active Journeys



Northern Tuscany

Cycling in Tuscany is a constant delight. In the perfectly preserved towns and villages, you find people living much as their ancestors did in the past, complete with festivals and colorful pageants. The countryside too has a timelessness: ancient stone terraces of olive and vines, chestnut trees intermingled with walled medieval villages, castles, forests, and wonderful vineyards.

These itineraries highlight the remarkable walled medieval town of San Gimignano. Famous for its towers, frescoes, churches and palazzos it is a delight to explore! Then on to Colle Val d'Else with its perfectly preserved "tunnel" streets and Monteriggioni, a medieval village with 84 inhabitants and 13th retaining walls. Travel to Siena and discover the unique architecture and history, considered to be one of Europe's best-preserved cities. It's a true treasure of Tuscany with its piazzas, palaces, and museums.

Savor the pleasure of hiking or pedaling through the vineyards of Tuscany and Chianti. Taste the fine wine and sample the excellent Italian cuisine of this region. Uncover the beauty and charm of Tuscany!



Tour Details

Dates: Daily April to end October

Cost: \$1595 per person

Single Supplement: On request

Bike: \$175

Length: 5 days / 4 nights

Grade: Moderate

Starts: San Gimignano

Ends: Siena

Fast Facts

- Lovely accommodations, always with private facilities
- Breakfasts included
- Luggage transport, Route notes and maps
- Welcome briefing
- Discover a stunning part of Italy of the "beaten track"
- Tuscany is renowned for its cuisine and fine wines

ITINERARY

Day San Gimignano

Arrive in San Gimignano anytime during the day, and pick up your route notes and maps.

Spend the day exploring San Gimignano. This is an exceptional walled medieval town with world-famous towers. Explore the Romanesque Collegiata with fine frescoes by Bartolodi Fredi, Taddeo de Bartolo, Benozzo Gozzoli and others. There are so many other wonderful things to discover, including the Palazzo del Popolo and the church of Sant'Agostino. If you wish, take a circular bike ride through the region (10 or 16 km).

Day 2 To Colle Val d'Elsa 42 or 14 kms

Following lanes across low hills with vines, woods, olive groves, and views of an almost unchanged medieval landscape. Some optional off-road sections (14 km). Route 2: An exhilarating high-level ride with spectacular views across rolling hills and three provinces (42 km). Here you have a gradual climb along quiet country roads before descending through the woods and across a plateau to Colle Val d'Elsa. The highlight is the perfectly preserved "tunnel streets" to explore.

Day 3 To Monteriggioni 41.5 or 24.5 kms

Route 1: Cycle a varied and enjoyable route with a mixture of asphalt and farm roads through vineyards and olive groves, across the wide Elsa Valley, and via the Romanesque abbey of Abbadia Isola, to Monteriggioni, a tiny medieval village with 85 inhabitants, encircled by 13th century walls with 14 watchtowers (24.5 kms).

Route 2: Often used by local cyclists for training rides, this route leads up into the wooded hills of Monte Maggio, with excellent views to Siena (41.5 kms).

Day 4 To Siena 35 or 17.5 kms

Route 1: Follow the ancient Via Cassia along quiet lanes before an approach to Siena with fine views (17.5 kms).

Route 2: Through vineyards and forested slopes of the low hills of southern Chianti before approaching the walls of Siena, entering the city through the Porta Ovile (35 kms).

In town you explore *Piazza del Campo*, scene of the *Palio*, *Palazzo Pubblico* with pictures and frescoes including the *Lorenzetti Good and Bad Government*. There is also a cathedral built in 1196-1216 with the remarkable *Libreria Piccolomini*, decorated by Pinturicchio. See the *Medieval Duomo* of black and white marble, *Museo dell'Opera* with Duccio's *Maesta* and the list goes on and on.

Day 5

Tours ends after breakfast. Take advantage of the day and walk through Siena, or just sit back and enjoy the wonderful scenery before continuing on your journey.



What to Expect

What will the weather be like?

The daytime temperature will be around 22 to mid-30's degrees C (70's to 90's F), with very little rainfall. It is the hottest in July and August, and possibly the busiest as well.

How many hours of cycling a day?

Be prepared to ride between 3 to 5 hours daily. This is not a supported tour, so you must ride the route once you set out.

How fit do I need to be?

The fitter the better, so you will enjoy the rides each day. Tuscany is hilly, short rolling hills. The lower daily mileage reflects the terrain.

What is the food like?

We have included a breakfast for 3 days. Most of the hotels will offer some cheeses, fruits, meats and yogurts. For lunch, you can stop in a local restaurant for a full meal or mid-day snack. For dinner, our notes will offer some suggestions.

What are the hotels like?

They are chosen for their charm and location. Properties are charming hotels, well- located in the towns. All the rooms have private facilities.

ABOUT INDEPENDENT HOLIDAYS: You explore the Italy at liberty, cycling along quiet roads. These holidays offer all the pleasures of riding point to point. Arrive at a new destination each day, without the hassle of carrying any luggage. Our detailed route notes and up-to-date maps, combined with the official marker posts ensure that you enjoy your holiday without the worry of finding the routes.



Extra Services

Bike rentals are hybrid bicycles of 12 or more gears. All bikes come equipped with panniers, a handlebar-mounted bag with a transparent map/booklet pouch, a water bottle and holder, a pump and a lock. You are required to bring your own helmet.

Private transfers can be arranged in advance

Extra hotel nights in Rome, Venice and Florence, by the airport or downtown are priced starting from 150€ per night..

Getting There

The main airport closest to the starting point is Pisa International or Florence International Airports.

Take the train and look for the Siena line. Arrive at Certaldo. Then take a taxi to San Gimignano. – cost about \$40.

From Siena, there are frequent trains back to Florence or Pisa. The cost of the First Class ticket from Siena to Florence is about \$45 or \$35 in Second Class. The journey is 1 hour and 45 minutes.

ATTENTION: On Sundays and Bank Holidays there are fewer services than on working days. For further information on timetables and prices you can consult the following websites: www.trenitalia.it



How to book your holiday

- Contact our office to make sure there is space available. One of our travel planners will walk you through the entire process.
- Download the reservation form from our site and send in completed form by fax or email. Once this is done, your space is confirmed and a pre-departure packet will be sent.
- A deposit is required immediately, and final payment is due 60 days prior to the trip departure. Terms & conditions are outlined in our Reservation Form.
- Plan your air travel as soon as possible.
- We encourage you to purchase travel insurance, either through us or a travel insurance provider directly.
- Ensure you are in proper health for the trip chosen. Contact us, for more information on vaccinations, inoculations, and fitness requirements.