






ALONG THE VIA FRANCIGENA FROM LUCCA TO SIENA

 self-guided tour

 Hike

 106-106 km

 Medium

Duration: 8 days / 7 nights

DESCRIPTION

This is a moderately easy tour which is suitable for those who have some experience with walking and a good general physical condition. Through the extensive footpath network of the area, roughly following the traces of the Via Francigena, one of Europe's most important 'high ways' in medieval times, you walk from village to village, a full immersion in the world-famed Tuscan landscape. This tour is perfect as an introduction to the region, and for people who love museums, galleries and Gothic and Romanesque architecture, there is more than enough to see and do. You have plenty of time to visit attractions on most of the days. You will also have time to visit all the beautiful medieval villages and historic towns along the Via Francigena: starting from beautiful Lucca, you'll pass through Fucecchio, San Miniato, Gambassi Terme, the stunning San Gimignano with its medieval skyscrapers and Monteriggioni, admired by Dante in his Divine Comedy. You'll spend the nights in beautiful places, among which a night in one of the best agriturismo's in Tuscany, and the final night in the heart of Siena, in a characteristic hotel.

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DETAILED ROUTES

📍 Day 1 Lucca:

Arrival in Lucca, where you settle in at your hotel in the old town, known for its perfectly preserved city walls and the famous 'Amphitheatre' square. Depending on your arrival time, you can go for a short visit to the town centre.

📍 Day 2: Lucca - Altopascio

(approx. 19 km, approx. 4-5 hours, ascent & descent: +/- 20 m)

The first day walk takes you from the historical town of Lucca to the nice medieval town of Altopascio. This first stretch is a good warm-up hike, through a pretty flat landscape. The route brings you through the plain, densely populated, but also with a large number of interesting historical and religious buildings, such as the 'Pieve' (rural chapel) of Capannori and the Abbey of Pozzeveri. Of course you should take your time to visit the historical town of Lucca (and perhaps make a roundwalk over its town walls), and you could even consider to pay a more extensive visit and then take an afternoon train to Altopascio. Also the old city centre of Altopascio is beautiful and worth a visit.

📍 Day 3: Altopascio - San Miniato

(approx. 29 km, approx. 6-7 hours, ascent & descent: + 250 m./- 115 m)

After an early breakfast you begin your long walk to San Miniato. After another flat initial stretch you'll finally tackle the first Tuscan hills, the area of the Cerbaie Nature Reserve, wild and deserted. Then you walk over the ancient Medici bridge in Ponte a Cappiano. Follows another flat section, through the plain of the reclaimed Fucecchio swamp (parts of which are still wetlands - a very interesting area for birdwatching). By lunchtime you'll enter the beautiful historic town of Fucecchio. Shortly after you'll cross the River Arno, and follow it for a while, heading to the small medieval town of San Miniato, beautifully located on the hilltop.

📍 Day 4: San Miniato - Gambassi Terme

(approx. 24 km, approx. 6-7 hours, ascent & descent: + 400 m./- 220 m)

Today you leave San Miniato, heading for Gambassi Terme. After a stretch along a small asphalt road, you finally reach the typical Tuscan landscape of rolling hills, cypress lined lanes and isolated farmhouses. Here the Via Francigena enters the area of the Val d'Elsa. This area has been inhabited since pre-historic times, but became an important trading area in the Etruscan era. The medieval Via Francigena here basically followed the old Etruscan trading routes and the Roman '*Via Clodia*' between Siena and Lucca. You'll walk past a number of old '*pievi*' (countryside churches), like the Pieve of Coiano and the Pieve in Chianni. In the Early Middle Ages many travellers passed through here, and it is testified that the Archbishop Sigeric of Canterbury stayed overnight in Gambassi Terme, a charming little town with thermal baths. If you arrive on time here, perhaps you have the time for some 'wellness', otherwise you can visit the nice town centre with the beautiful Church of Santa Maria Assunta in Chianni, a fascinating and significant example of Romanesque architecture (with a bit of luck, you can even attend one of the frequent concerts here)

📍 Day 5: Gambassi Terme - San Gimignano

(approx. 20-25 km., approx. 5-7 hours, ascent & descent: + 125 m./- 100 m)

Today's route is one of the best-known parts of the Via Francigena, as it passes right through one of the most scenic medieval Tuscan towns, San Gimignano. From Gambassi Terme you first walk a stretch through the hills, up to the Sanctuary of Pancole. Soon after, walking past several old '*pievi*' and villas, with picturesque vineyards

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and olive and cypress groves on either side, you will already have the first views of the famous San Gimignano skyline. This wonderful medieval town – with its famous ‘skyscrapers’ – is an absolute must! You have some time to explore this little romantic town with its medieval towers, of which there were once 52 (there are now less than a dozen) – wealthy, prominent families would use the height of these towers to distinguish themselves, but the towers also had a practical use in alerting the inhabitants of this walled town of approaching friends and foes. Do make a nice stroll around its impressive town walls. Then you continue along the Via Francigena to your accommodation for the night: either in the beautiful small town of Colle Val d’Elsa, or in a stunningly beautiful agriturismo (*upgrade*). You’ll have two options to walk there: either along the convent of Monte Oliveto, located on a wide ridge, then down to a small stream, which you have to cross, before climbing up to your agriturismo, or along a beautiful route through the rolling vineyards. Make sure you get there on time to fully enjoy its fabulous setting and surroundings, and perhaps its library or swimming pool too. Dinner at the private restaurant is included tonight.

Day 6: San Gimignano - Monteriggioni

(approx. 17-25 km, approx. 5-7 hours, ascent & descent: +/- 100 m)

Today you head for Monteriggioni, described as a crown in the landscape by Dante. In case you stay at the agriturismo, the walk first brings you down into the river valley, and then, more or less following the Foci, you reach one of the most wonderful Romanesque churches in Tuscany, la Badia a Conèo. The next stop is the village of Quartaia, followed by the larger town of Gracciano, once one of the most important wheat towns in Tuscany. In case you stay in Colle Val d’Elsa, you have several options for a direct or longer walk. From Gracciano another short stretch brings you to the Badia ad Isola, once an important stop on the medieval Via Francigena, and a very intriguing building. The final destination for today is Monteriggioni, where you’ll have time for a drink in the square, before settling in at your centrally located hotel. In the evening you can take a nice stroll into town to have dinner in one of the nice restaurants.

Day 7: Monteriggioni - Siena

(approx. 20 km, approx. 5 hours, ascent & descent: + 300 m./- 250 m)

Today you leave Monteriggioni in southern direction, heading for Siena. After having crossed the Via Cassia you follow the so-called ‘strade bianche’ (gravel roads) through the hills and forests to the Northwest of Siena. There are several interesting sights along the way like the abandoned medieval village of Cerbaia, the castles of Chiocciola and the Convent of San Leonardo, just above the reclaimed plain of Pian del Lago. Then you’ll walk through the forest of Renai and will approach Siena from the West. You’ll enter the city through Porta Camollia, the traditional access to Siena from the North. Indeed you will notice several medieval ‘Hostels’ along the road towards the centre of town. You settle in at your centrally located hotel, just a few minutes away from the famous ‘Piazza del Campo’. In the evening you can take a nice stroll into town to have dinner in one of the many nice restaurants, or sip a drink in the ‘Piazza del Campo’.

Day 8: Siena

Individual departure.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Classification:** self-guided tour
- **Duration:** 8 days / 7 nights
- **Distance:** ca. 106-106 km
- **Starting point:** Lucca
- **Arrival:**

By train: Lucca train station.

By plane: Airports Florence and Pisa

- **Accommodation:**

characteristic family-run 3***hotels, 1 x overnight in agriturismo included the half-board.

Tourist tax – if requested – has to be paid on the spot.

- **Parking:**

INCLUDED SERVICES

- 6 nights accommodation with breakfast, 1 x overnight in agriturismo with halfboard
- Luggage transfer (*on request discount for carrying your own luggage*)
- Extensive route notes, with description of the route & tourist information
- GPS tracks for each walk
- Maps at 1 : 25.000 scale or better
- Pilgrim Passport
- 24/7 h assistance

NON INCLUDED SERVICES

- Departure taxes & Visas
- Travel Insurance
- Tourist tax
- Drinks and meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Optional additional tours or activities
- Tips
- Items of personal nature

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STARTING DATES

Available - arrival possible
Not Available
Available for groups from 6 persons and on request

March

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

April

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

May

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

June

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

July

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

August

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

September

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

October

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

PRICES

Standard

Package price in a double room from 15/03/2025 to 31/03/2025 750 €

Package price in a double room from 01/04/2025 to 31/10/2025 770 €

Package price high season from 01/07/2025 to 31/08/2025 810 €

Single room surcharge 260 €

Additional services

no bike 0 €