

Self-Guided Tuscany Fast Bike Tour

Duration: 5 Days/4 Nights

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hiking and cycling in italy



See More of Tuscany More Quickly

This self-guided tour takes you through Tuscany's most spectacular small towns including Radda, Siena, San Gimignano, and Volterra. This five-day trip features two wineries, a medieval castle, Etruscan ruins, and some of the most beautiful scenery in Italy. The landscape is classic Renaissance with stone farmhouses, cypress trees, vineyards and olive groves. With five days to explore you'll have time to visit the hand-made ceramics shop outside Radda, the art galleries in San Gimignano, and the Roman amphitheater in Volterra. You can compare gelato flavors and try wild boar sauce on your pasta. Try a local Chianti, or if white is more your style sample the Vernaccia di San Gimignano. We move your luggage from hotel to hotel and provide detailed turn by turn directions. The tour ends in Volterra, one of Tuscany's prettiest hill towns.

Route Rating

Moderate to Challenging: 19 to 33 miles (31-54 km) per day over hilly terrain.

Meet / Finish

Florence / Volterra

Highlights

- Tour a winery and olive oil mill (wine and oil tasting)
- Optional castle and winery visit with wine tasting
- Towns of Siena, Greve, San Gimignano, and Radda.
- Beautiful Tuscan scenery
- Peaceful country back roads

Other Questions?

Toll free 1 888 421 2418
info@charnestours.com

Day 1 Radda

Faltignano to Radda

28 miles (46 kilometers)

Extra miles available

We meet in the morning in the center of Florence and drive 20 minutes to our bicycle storage in the countryside. You are fitted on your bike and begin the first ride. Your first stop is a 16th century winery. The area between Florence and Siena is called Chianti and is known for its extraordinary namesake wine, the Chianti Classico. Chianti wines feature alluring bouquets and rich flavors. The winery also produces its own smooth and mild extra virgin olive oil. Lunch at the winery is included on day one. Over lunch your tour coordinator reviews your trip, answers questions, and provides the route notes. In the early afternoon you cycle through the medieval villages of Greve and Panzano. In Radda your four-star hotel is on the main pedestrian thoroughfare. The hotel is in a 500-year old building that has been impeccably renovated preserving its Renaissance charm. Radda was a Florentine fortress and capital of the Chianti League in 1415.

Hotel

Hotel San Niccolo

Radda (1 night)

This four-star hotel is located in a 15th century palace. The rooms feature wooden ceiling beams, terracotta floors, and marble bathrooms with Jacuzzi tubs or showers.

www.hotelsanniccolo.com

The Ride

Day 1, 28 miles (46 km), with a 4.5 mile (7 km) climb to Panzano and a 2 mile (3 km) climb to Panzano.

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Day 2 Siena

Radda to Siena

19 miles (31 kilometres)

Extra miles available

After a leisurely breakfast leave your bags in the lobby. They will be moved to your next hotel while you cycle. Today's ride takes you south following the Arbia river. The route takes you off the beaten path through quiet villages and peaceful woodlands. You pass a shop that creates colorful Italian ceramics. You cycle past an outdoor sculpture garden before a big downhill to Siena. Siena attracts great numbers of visitors year round, but it hasn't sold its soul to tourism. The town's thriving historic center, with red brick lanes cascading every which way, offers Italy's best Gothic city experience. In 1966 Siena became the first Italian town to close its center to traffic. The town's Piazza del Campo is considered by many to be Italy's most beautiful piazza. Twice a year this piazza is home to Europe's most daring horse race known as the Palio. Climb the Torre del Mangia for 360 degree views of the city. For something more macabre, visit the Church of San Domenico to see the perfectly preserved head of Saint Catherine (Italy's patron saint). Saint Catherine died in 1380 and the Sieneese have been jealously guarding her head ever since. An optional visit to the beautiful Brolio castle and winery is available today.



Hotel

Hotel Athena

Siena (1 night)

A modern four-star hotel with all of the comforts. The Athena is located in the historic center and offers a beautiful terrace with views of Siena.

www.hotelathena.com

The Ride

Day 2, 19 mi (31 km)

Ride through quiet stone-villages while admiring the towers of Siena in the distance. Short steep uphill followed by a long gradual downhill.

Ceramics

Visit a family-run shop where vibrantly colored ceramics are designed, painted, and fired.

www.rampiniceramics.com



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Day 3 San Gimignano

Siena to San Gimignano
33 miles (54 kilometres)
Additional miles available

Today's ride takes you through the medieval castle of Monteriggioni. Within the ancient stone walls lies a perfectly preserved medieval village. Stairs and a platform have been built along the ramparts allowing you to admire the views. Later you ride through Colle Val d'Elsa a town famous for its crystal production. Six miles past Colle, majestic San Gimignano rises from a hilltop. In this 13th century Manhattan, 14 of the original 72 towers are still standing. Towers were typical of medieval Tuscan villages. However, most were lowered or knocked down over the centuries. San Gimignano has the best medieval towers in Italy. Historians attribute the survival of these towers to an economic slump following the black plague of 1348. Your hotel is located in a 13th century palace in the center of town. San Gimignano offers great shopping and a multitude of restaurants.

Hotel

Hotel Leon Bianco

San Gimignano (1 night)
You stay in an 11th Century palace on San Gimignano's most beautiful piazza. The building has been carefully restored preserving it's special character.

www.leonbianco.com

The Ride

Day 3, 33 miles (54 km)
Gentle rolling countryside with a 2 mile (3 km) climb to San Gimignano.

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Day 4 Volterra

San Gimignano to Volterra *21 miles (33 kilometres)*

Get ready for some very beautiful riding today as you leave the Elsa river valley and climb to an elevation of 1,700 feet (518 meters). Finishing the climb you begin the long descent towards Volterra. After a morning in the shade of oak, pine, and cypress trees, you emerge from the woods to be greeted with a view of the vast Era valley. Rolling downhill you pass small stone farmhouses surrounded by clay slopes. At the bottom of the hill Volterra rises before you. It is a challenging 3 mile (5 km) climb up a winding road to the center of town. Volterra sits high above rich farmland. The town is a center for Etruscan and Roman art. In Volterra you can visit a Roman theater (100 BC) and an Etruscan gate (400 BC). Volterra is our favorite Tuscan hill town. Small and genuine it hasn't been transformed by mass tourism.

Day 5 Bike Tour End

After breakfast you check out of the hotel and continue your travels. You can take a bus from Volterra or book a taxi to the Cecina train station. We will be happy to assist you with your post tour travel plans.

DEPARTURE ON LAST DAY OF TOUR

There is no train station in Volterra. You will depart by bus or taxi. Bus travel times are listed below:

Volterra to Florence: 4 per day, 2 hours
Volterra to Siena: 4 per day, 2 hours
Volterra to Pisa: 9 per day, 2 hours

Taxis are available.

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Hotel

Hotel La Locanda

Volterra (1 night)

This four-star hotel is located in a converted nunnery in the historic center of Volterra. The hotel features air-conditioning, free WIFI, and a small garden.

www.hotel-lalocanda.com

The Ride

Day 4, 21 mi (33 km)

One of the prettiest rides in Tuscany takes you up through a forest and down a long hill to the open valleys around Volterra. The last 3 miles (5 km) to Volterra are challenging, but offer great views.

