

Self-Guided Montalcino Hiking

Duration: 6 Days/5 Nights

charnes tours
hiking and cycling in italy

Hot Springs, Hill Towns, and More!

Our self-guided Montalcino Hiking Tour takes you off the beaten path and into some of the prettiest scenery Tuscany has to offer. You climb the walls of an ancient castle, explore a medieval wine cellar, tour a 14th century abbey, and swim in a thermal pool. Southern Tuscany is a land of gentle rolling hills, distant hazy mountains, and ancient hilltop villages. Quiet footpaths lead to picture perfect hill towns. Montalcino is still surrounded by its medieval walls, Pienza is a perfectly preserved Renaissance town, and Montepulciano sits high on a limestone ridge. The rolling countryside reveals many key ingredients of the local cuisine: olive groves with their silvery sheen, fairytale forests of chestnut trees, hillsides blanketed in grape vines, sheep lolling among ruins, and fragrant rosemary and sage bushes in family gardens. Tuscan cooking is simple and seasonal without the heavy sauces found in other regions. Try the local *pecorino* cheese made from sheep's milk or homemade *pappardelle* pasta with wild boar sauce. Sip the ruby red Brunello di Montalcino, considered by many to be Italy's best red. The area is a visual and culinary delight. You will be glad you came.

Route Rating

Moderate to Challenging: 2-8 miles (3-13 km) per day of hiking with some steep ascents/descents.

Start / Finish

Montalcino / Montepulciano

Highlights

- Swimming in thermal baths
- Cheese farm visit (optional)
- Montepulciano wine cellars
- The Montalcino castle
- The town of Pienza
- The hill town of Montepulciano

Other Questions?

Toll free 1 888 421 2418
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Day 1 Montalcino

Montalcino loop hike

1.6 miles (2.6 kilometers)

Travel on your own to Montalcino (busses depart from Siena, four times per day, travel time 60 minutes). Check into your hotel and explore the town. Visit the town castle called the *Fortezza*. For a small fee you can climb steps to the top of the castle walls. The castle dates from 1361 and has breathtaking views of the surrounding countryside. After visiting the walls, stop at the castle's Enoteca (wine bar) where you can sample the superlative Brunello wine. Considered one of the world's best wines, Brunello is a five-star red made exclusively with Sangiovese grapes from the municipal area of Montalcino. Brunello has a remarkably long aging time, 5 years, which accounts for its excellent body and intense color. The wine bar also serves platters with local cheeses and cold cuts.

To stretch your legs do an optional 1.5 mile hike in the countryside below Montalcino.

Hotel

Hotel Dei Capitani

Montalcino (1 night)

Perched on the edge of Montalcino's ancient walls, the Capitani has a pool and incredible views over the Orcia valley.

www.deicapitani.it

The Hike, Day 1 Valley Loop Hike

1.6 miles (2.6 km)

An optional warm-up hike takes you through farmland into the countryside below

Day 2 Bagno Vignoni

Sant'Antimo to Bagno Vignoni 8.2 miles (13.2 kilometers)

A private car takes you to the start of the hike. After a 20-minute drive you are dropped off at the Sant'Antimo monastery. Sant'Antimo dates from the 12th century and is the best example of Romanesque architecture in Tuscany. Today's hike takes you through vineyards and olive groves. You stroll past renovated stone farmhouses surrounded by stately cypress trees. Passing a castle, you descend to the thermal baths in Bagno Vignoni. The hot waters of Bagno Vignoni have been soothing weary travelers since Roman times. Swim or just soak in the thermal pool at the Hotel Marcucci. The water emerges from the ground at a constant 152 F (52 C). You spend the night in Bagno Vignoni, along with the town's 40 other permanent residents.

Hotel

Hotel Posta Marcucci
Bagno Vignoni (1 night)
The hotel has its own thermal hot springs pool with breathtaking views of the countryside and the Rocca d'Orcia castle.
www.hotelpostamarcucci.it

The Hike, Day 2 Sant'Antimo to Bagno Vignoni

8.2 miles (13.2 km)
Visit an ancient Romanesque church and then hike to a Roman thermal spa.



Day 3 Pienza

Bagno Vignoni to Pienza *8.2 miles (13.2 kilometers)*

Emerging from Bagno Vignoni the landscape changes quickly. Grapes and olives give way to open fields. The wind creates waves in sun-drenched wheat fields. To the south you can see Mount Amiata, Tuscany's highest peak, and to the north Pienza, today's destination. The trail takes you down ancient farm roads. In places the path is still lined with the squared-off stones laid by Romans 2,000 years ago. Pienza was built in three years beginning in 1459 at the behest of Pope Pius II who decided to transform his birthplace into a utopian town. The town has been perfectly preserved and is considered the touchstone of Renaissance urbanism. Bring your appetite as Pienza has some of the best restaurants in Southern Tuscany.

Hotel

Hotel Corsignano

Pienza (1 night)
The Corsignano has breathtaking views of the Orcia Valley and offers a terrace with a hot tub. Rooms are spacious and modern.

www.hotelcorsignano.it

The Hike, Day 3

Bagno Vignoni to Pienza

8.2 miles (13.2 km)

A leisurely walk through rolling farmland, with great views of Pienza and Monte Amiata.





Day 4 Montepulciano

Pienza to Montepulciano *8 miles (12.9 kilometers)*

Leaving Pienza's southern gate you soon find yourself immersed in sprawling farmlands. Cypress lined driveways lead to majestic farmhouses. Wildflowers add a dash of color to the rolling landscape. Stop for lunch at a 1,000 year old fortress called Monticchiello. This little hamlet is still surrounded by medieval walls and boasts a charming restaurant and café. Today's destination, Montepulciano, rises sharply out of vine covered slopes and is the highest of Tuscany's hill towns. It retains an opulent Renaissance center and is best known for its noble wine, the *Vino Nobile di Montepulciano*. Just steps from your hotel is the Cantine Contucci winery with their cavernous ageing cellars. If you like steaks head to the Osteria Acquacheta, the place for thick cuts of oven-fired *bistecca fiorentina*. All the beef comes from the hormone-free Chianina cows that graze in the nearby Val di Chiana. The restaurant is very popular so be sure to reserve ahead.

Hotel

Mueble il Riccio

Montepulciano (2 nights)

This small inn is located on the oldest street in Montepulciano steps away from the town's main piazza. The hotel has a roof top terrace with majestic views.

www.ilriccio.net

The Hike, Day 4

Pienza to Montepulciano *8 miles (12.9 km)*

Walk through beautiful rolling hills with gentle climbs and valleys. Spectacular views of Mount Amiata. Have lunch in a 1,000 year old castle.

Day 5 Montefollonico

Montepulciano to Montefollonico 8.3 miles (13.4 kilometers)

Walking at a leisurely pace you cross a fertile valley and arrive in the perfectly preserved hamlet of Montefollonico. With its twisty cobblestone streets and ancient stone gates, Montefollonico still has its medieval air. After lunch retrace your steps back to Montepulciano.

Day 6 Hiking Tour Ends

Your walking tour ends in Montepulciano. After breakfast a private shuttle (included in the tour price) takes you to the Chiusi train station. Chiusi sits on a main north-south rail line with frequent trains for Florence and Rome. Train travel times from Chiusi are listed below:

Chiusi to Florence: 1 hr 30 min
Chiusi to Rome: 1 hr 50 min
Chiusi to Venice: 4 hr 30 min

The Hike, Day 5 Montefollonico Loop 8.3 miles (13.4 km)

A loop hike takes you through a peaceful valley past vast sprawling stone farmhouses. You have lunch in a quiet Medieval hamlet called Montefollonico before retracing your steps back to Montepulciano.

*Pecorino Cheese Farm Visit
(Optional)*

