

Self-Guided Tuscany Bike Tour

Duration: 8 Days/7 Nights (optional extra night)

charnes tours
hiking and cycling in italy

A Grand Tour of Tuscany

Our longest self-guided tour takes you through Tuscany's most spectacular small towns including Greve, Radda, Siena, Monteriggioni and San Gimignano. An optional night is available to explore Volterra, a captivating hill town near the Tuscan coast. This eight day trip features two winery tours, an abbey tour, two nights in Siena, a night in the tiny walled village of Monteriggioni, three and four star hotels, and some of the most beautiful scenery in Italy. The landscape is classic Renaissance with stone farmhouses, cypress trees, vineyards and olive groves. Eight days gives you time to settle in and explore. You'll have time to visit the hand-made ceramics shop outside Radda, the Brolio castle near Siena, and the art galleries in San Gimignano. You can compare gelato flavors and try wild boar. The tour ends in San Gimignano famous for its 14 stone towers. If you want to ride further consider spending an additional night in Volterra. Volterra sits on a magnificent rocky promontory. The town has maintained its medieval core and is still surrounded by its Etruscan walls. You can walk under an Etruscan gate from the fourth century BC or admire the stonework of an ancient Roman amphitheater. On this tour you can see a lot of Tuscany at your own pace.

Route Rating

Moderate: 13-19 miles
(21-31 km) per day cycling
over hilly terrain.

Meet / Finish

Florence / San Gimignano

Highlights

- Winery visit with guided wine and oil tasting
- Abbey visit with winery and Renaissance gardens
- Towns of Siena, San Gimignano, Greve, and Radda.
- Beautiful Tuscan scenery
- Peaceful country back roads

Other Questions?

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We tour the Corsini Winery

Day 1 Greve

Faltignano to Greve 16 miles (26 kilometres)

We meet in the morning in the center of Florence and shuttle 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 a peppery extra virgin olive oil. We have lunch at the winery where your guide reviews your tour and answers any questions. After lunch it's an easy ride to Greve where you'll find your hotel on the main piazza in the center of town. Greve has fabulous medieval buildings and great wine and cheese shops. Two kilometers away on a hillside above town is a small castle called Montefioralle. During your stay in Greve you can hike up to this whimsical fortress (20 minutes by foot). Another great stop is the Falorni Enoteca, Greve's best wine shop. Falorni has guided tours, 100 wines in automatic dispensers, and great snacks. If you like wine, you should visit Falorni.

Hotel

Albergo Del Chianti

Greve (1 night)

Located in an 11th Century building on the main piazza of Greve. This family run hotel features a pool and air conditioning. The owners serve wine and olive oil from their nearby farm.

www.albergoelchianti.it

The Ride

Day 1: 16 easy miles (26 km), with a short uphill followed by a long, breathtaking downhill into the town of Greve.

Day 2 Radda

Greve to Radda

13 miles (21 kilometres)

Extra miles available

After your buffet breakfast leave your bags in the lobby. While you are cycling your luggage will be moved to the next hotel. This morning you cycle through the village of Panzano. The town was originally a medieval castle and still preserves some of its old walls and towers. Panzano is home to Dario Cecchini, an illustrious butcher and restaurateur. For a memorable lunch time feast head to one of his two restaurants. Today's ride to Radda is just 13 miles. To add five extra miles (8 km), head up a big hill to the sleepy little hamlet of Volpaia. This village has a few twisty streets, a winery and two excellent restaurants. In Volpaia you will find no traffic, and better yet, no souvenir shops. 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. It is still a very active village for locals and visitors alike.

Hotel

Hotel San Niccolo

Radda (2 nights)

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.

www.hotelsanniccolo.com

The Ride

Day 2, 13 mi (21 km)

Climb to Panzano followed by a long downhill through the scenic Conca valley. Add extra miles with a detour to the little hamlet of Volpaia.

*The Butcher Dario Cecchini
at his Solociccia restaurant*



Day 3 Radda

Radda Loop Ride

16 miles (26 kilometres)

Longer and shorter cycling options available

Day 3 offers a beautiful 16-mile loop ride. In the morning you can visit a family run ceramics shop. For lunch we highly recommend the *Badia a Coltibuono* (Abbey of the Good Harvest). The abbey has an extraordinary restaurant featuring classic Tuscan dishes with a contemporary twist. After lunch you can visit the abbey's Renaissance gardens, their ancient wine cellar, and "wine library". On your way out stop at their curio shop where you can peruse all sorts of Tuscan arts and crafts from beeswax candles to olive oil soap.

The Badia a Coltibuono Winery



Site of Interest

Badia a Coltibuono

The Badia a Coltibuono or "Abbey of Good Harvest" is a 1,000 year old abbey transformed into a winery and restaurant. Have lunch at their outstanding restaurant and tour the winery and estate. www.coltibuono.com

Rampini Ceramics

Visit a family-run ceramics shop where the ceramics are designed, glazed, painted, and fired. www.rampiniceramics.com



The Ride

Day 3, 16 mi (26 km)

Roll downhill and visit the town of Gaiole in Chianti. Along the way stop in a family-run ceramics factory. Gradual uphill ride to the Badia a Coltibuono.

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Siena, Tuscany

Day 4 Siena

Radda to Siena

19 miles (31 kilometres)

Today's ride takes you due south following the Arbia river. The route takes you off the beaten path as you roll through an outdoor sculpture garden, quiet villages, and peaceful woodlands. 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. 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 Siennese have been jealously guarding her relic ever since.

Hotel

Hotel Athena

Siena (2 nights)

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 4, 19 mi (31 km)

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



Siena, Tuscany

Day 5 Siena

Rest Day in Siena

You will be happy to have a day with no cycling to explore sublime Siena. Get out your guide book and visit the Piazza Del Campo, the City Tower (*Torre di Mangia*), and the Cathedral. For something more macabre go to the Church of San Domenico where you can see the mummified head and finger of Saint Catherine, patron saint of Italy. If a glass of ruby red Chianti is more your speed head for the Enoteca Italiana. Located in a 16th century Medici fortress this wine bar features 1,200 labels.

Day 6 Monteriggioni

Siena to Monteriggioni *14 miles (22 kilometres)*

Today you ride to little Monteriggioni. This fortified village was once a Sienese outpost. Renaissance architects built a wall and 14 lofty defensive towers, all of which are still standing today. You can trace the steps of Sienese soldiers climbing the walls and gazing out into the infinite green countryside. The town has two restaurants, a hotel and a bed and breakfast making for a quiet overnight stay.

Hotel

Il Piccolo Castello Hotel
Monteriggioni (1 night)
Located in the center of Monteriggioni the rooms have been renovated and offer views over the surrounding countryside.
www.ilpiccolocastello.com

The Ride

Day 6, 14 mi (22 km)
Leave Siena on the scenic Chiantigiana road and pass through two small villages on this relatively easy ride. *Note: Today there are 3 km on a dirt road.*

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Day 7 San Gimignano

Monteriggioni to San Gimignano *19 miles (31 kilometres)*

Today's ride takes you past Colle Val d'Elsa famous for its crystal glass production. The route notes take you through the town's perfectly preserved Renaissance center. 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.

San Gimignano, Tuscany



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 its special character.
www.leonbianco.com

The Ride

Day 7, 19 mi (31 km)
Challenging uphill as you leave the Elsa valley. Visit the town of Colle famous for its crystal glass production.

**Want to see Volterra?
Add an additional night.**
Make your tour one day longer with an overnight in beautiful Volterra. Volterra has a medieval center still surrounded by the old Etruscan city walls. Pleasantly off the tourist trail, Volterra is perhaps Tuscany's prettiest hill town.
See website for information and prices.

Other Questions?

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Day 8 Bike Tour End

Departure Day

On Day 8 you check out of the hotel and continue your travels. Frequent bus service makes for easy travel from San Gimignano (75 minutes to Florence, 90 minutes to Siena).

DEPARTURE ON LAST DAY OF TOUR

There is no train station in San Gimignano, but there are frequent buses. A private taxi can also be arranged. Bus travel times are listed below:

San Gimignano to Florence: hourly, 75 minutes
San Gimignano to Siena: 5 per day, 90 minutes
San Gimignano to Volterra: 4 per day, 2 hours

Busses leave from just outside the town gate (within easy walking distance from your hotel). There are fewer busses out of San Gimignano on Sundays and holidays.

Optional Extra Night Want to see Volterra?

Continue your Tuscan adventure with another day of riding and a night in Volterra. See following page for details.

Why Self-Guided?

Explore Tuscany at your own pace. We provide detailed route notes, luggage transfers, great accommodations, restaurant suggestions, and sightseeing notes. You choose the dates. We take care of the details.

San Gimignano, Tuscany



Day 9 Optional Extra Night

Optional, San Gimignano to Volterra 34 kilometers (21 miles)

Get ready for some beautiful and challenging riding today as you leave the Elsa river valley and climb to an elevation of 1,700 feet (520 mt). Finishing the climb you begin the long descent towards Volterra. After a morning in the shade of oak, pine, and cypress trees, you soon emerge from the forest to be greeted with a view of the vast Era valley. Rolling downhill you pass small stone farmhouses surrounded by clay slopes. As your downhill ride finishes Volterra appears high on a ridge 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.



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 has air-conditioning, free WIFI, and a small garden.
www.hotel-lalocanda.com

The Ride

Day 2, 21 mi (34 km)

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

Florence, Italy Weather

Mon	High °F	Low °F
Jan	50	35
Feb	53	37
Mar	59	41
Apr	66	46
May	74	52
Jun	81	59
Jul	87	62
Aug	86	62
Sep	79	57
Oct	69	50
Nov	58	43
Dec	51	37

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