

Self-Guided Tuscany Challenge Bike Tour

Duration: 6 Days/5 Nights

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hiking and cycling in italy

A Tuscan Challenge

“Tuscany Challenge” best describes this tour. This trip was designed for experienced cyclists who want longer rides with lots of hills. Tuscany is not mountainous, but it is quite hilly. It’s a beautiful region full of curvy scenic roads that wind up and down over gentle rolling hills. On this tour you climb over 3,000 feet (953 meters) per day through the most spectacular scenery that Tuscany has to offer. The tour starts in the hills of Chianti. You cycle the Chiantigiana road between Florence and Siena stopping frequently to visit medieval villages. The sun-drenched landscapes match your vision of Tuscany with lush vineyards, cypress lined lanes, and rustic stone farmhouses. Leaving Chianti you turn west towards the sea. You explore San Gimignano, famous for its perfectly preserved stone towers. You overnight in Volterra, a hill town with amazing Etruscan and Roman ruins. Day three brings you to the fertile valleys of the Tuscan coast. Off the beaten tourist trail, the Tuscan coast is dotted with charming hillside villages overlooking the calm azure waters of the Mediterranean. Near the Bolgheri castle vineyards slope gently down to the sea. Sassicaia, arguably the most famous wine in Italy, is produced here. Visit the Bolgheri winery and try their sublime oak-aged cabernets. Cycle the *Strada del Vino* (wine road) past sprawling wine estates. Savor incredible Tuscan cuisine including the freshest seafood. The tour ends at a resort outside of Cecina. Cecina has a large train station with frequent connections to major Italian cities.

Route Rating

Challenging: 40 to 55 miles (65-90 km) per day over hilly terrain.

Meet / Finish

Florence / Cecina

Highlights

- Tuscan hill towns and coastal villages
- Rolling hills of Chianti
- Peaceful country back roads
- Optional visit to Tuscan beach
- Winery tour with tasting
- 13th-century castle

Other Questions?

Toll free 1 888 491 2760

info@charnestours.com





Day 1 Siena

Faltignano to Siena

42 miles (76 kilometers)

We meet in the center of Florence and shuttle together to our bicycle storage in the countryside south of the city. You are fitted on your bike and begin the first ride. This morning you can choose to visit a winery and olive oil mill or depart immediately for Siena. It is up to you. Today's ride takes you through three of Chianti's most celebrated medieval villages; Greve, Panzano, and Castellina. Greve has a picturesque piazza ringed with family-run shops. Buy snacks and admire the local arts and crafts. Panzano features a world-famous butcher who proudly promotes the famous *bistecca alla Fiorentina* (Florentine Steak) from his small shop just off the main square. In Castellina you can explore Etruscan tombs, a 13 century castle, and an underground medieval walkway. Today's ride is hilly so you will want to stay fueled. Enjoy a sit down lunch in a restaurant or grab picnic supplies for a feast al-fresco. Your ride ends in Siena, one of Italy's most perfectly preserved medieval towns. Your hotel is in the historic center offering easy access to Siena's spectacular Piazza del Campo and Cathedral.

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 has a beautiful terrace with views of Siena.

www.hotelathena.com

The Ride

Day 1, 42 hilly miles (67 km), with 3,149 feet (960 mt) of vertical climbing. Visit famous Chianti towns including Greve, Panzano, and Castellina.

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Day 2 **Volterra**

Siena to Volterra

54 miles (87 kilometers)

After a buffet breakfast leave your bags in the lobby. Today you turn west towards the coast. After 14 miles (22 km) visit Monteriggioni, a 13th century Sienese castle. Florence and Siena battled for centuries and this fortress is a testament to those tumultuous times. Monteriggioni maintains its original walls and 13 watch towers. Within the castle walls the ancient stone buildings have been converted into restaurants, cafes and shops, while still preserving their original character. An even greater medieval treasure awaits you down the road. San Gimignano is known worldwide for its magnificent stone towers. Towers dominated medieval towns, but few survive today. San Gimignano is the exception. Seventeen of its original towers still stand offering a rare glimpse at this ancient architecture. For lunch try a local specialty like pici pasta with wild boar sauce. Pici is an oversized spaghetti. Sip a Chianti Classico, but don't overdo it because another big hill awaits. Volterra sits high on a ridge surrounded by endless rolling fields of wheat and grains. Etruscans and Romans alike left their mark on this strategic town. Admire an Etruscan gate from 400 BC or stroll through a Roman amphitheater from 100 BC. Untouched mass tourism, Volterra is one of Tuscany's hidden gems.



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 quiet modern rooms with air-conditioning.

www.hotel-lalocanda.com

The Ride

Day 2, 54 hilly miles (87 km) with 4,403 feet (1,342 mt) of vertical climbing. Explore Monteriggioni, a 13th century castle, and perfectly preserved San Gimignano.

Alabaster

In Volterra visit an alabaster shop where this translucent local stone is carved.



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Day 3 Massa Marittima

Volterra to Massa Marittima *40 miles (65 kilometers)*

A breathtaking descent through fields of grain leads to a winding climb up a wooded hill. The hills between Volterra and the sea are rich in geothermal energy. Hot steam escapes from the earth giving rise to the name, Valley of the Devil. Today you cycle through this high valley, past a geothermal plant and ancient medieval boroughs. Stop for a snack in Pomerance, a walled town nestled on a hillside. Explore the Medieval center of Castelnuovo, getting lost in a labyrinth of ancient cobbled streets. Descend 1,500 feet (450 meters) to an unspoiled coastal area known as Maremma. Ignored for centuries the area has been protected from the overexposure of other sun-kissed Italian shores leaving Maremma imbued with a unique authenticity and natural beauty.

Hotel

Fenice Park Hotel
Massa Marittima (1 night)
The Fenice Park Hotel has large modern rooms, marble bathrooms, a swimming pool, and air-conditioning.
www.lafeniceparkhotel.it

The Ride

Day 3, 40 hilly miles (65 km) with 3,947 feet (1,203 mt) of vertical climbing. Ride up through a high valley before a fast descent to Massa Marittima.





Day 4 Castagneto Carducci

Massa Marittima to Castagneto Carducci *49 miles (79 kilometres)*

A spectacular ride through gently rolling farmland leads you north along the coast. Explore the medieval village of Campiglia Marittima. From the ruins of the town's castle you can see all the way to Elba Island off the Tuscan coast. Stop for lunch in Suvereto, a fortified village known for its savory wild boar sausage. Roll through Sassetta, a town of 500 inhabitants perched high on a rocky outcropping in the midst of a chestnut forest. Your ride ends in Castagneto Carducci, a charming village high on a green hill overlooking the blue Mediterranean Sea. For extra miles roll downhill to Marina di Castagneto, a sleepy beach town with an inviting sandy beach.

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Hotel

Villa Le Luci

Castagneto Carducci
(1 night)

This historic villa has been completely renovated and offers large sunny rooms, a super breakfast, and wonderful hospitality. The villa has its own garden with beautiful views out to the sea.

www.villaleluci.it

The Ride

Day 4, 49 hilly miles (79 km) with 2,514 feet (766 mt) of vertical climbing. Pedal along the Tuscan coast visiting sleepy, sun drenched villages.

Day 5 Cecina

Castagneto Carducci to Cecina

49 miles (79 kilometres)

Italy has a number of roads aptly called Wine Roads (*Strade del Vino*) which lead through major wine production areas. Today you ride one of the most beautiful Wine Roads as you cycle north up the coast. An unending line of massive green cypress trees leads to a fairy tale castle called Bolgheri. Today Bolgheri is known for its sublime red wines, including Sassacaia and Tignanello. While in Bolgheri you tour a winery and learn how French varietals are lovingly transformed into elegant, well-balanced Tuscan reds. After lunch the wine road zigzags through four coastal villages before ending outside Cecina. Your last night is spent in an agriturismo, a family farm that has been converted into a hotel. The newly refurbished rooms surround a large swimming pool.

Day 6 Bike Tour End

After breakfast in the hotel you check out and continue your travels.

DEPARTURE ON LAST DAY OF TOUR

Your bicycle tour ends 5 miles (8 km) from the town of Cecina. The hotel can arrange a taxi to take you to the Cecina train station.

Frequent trains make for easy departures. Travel times are listed below:

Cecina to Rome: 3 hours (direct train, no changes)

Cecina to Florence: 2 hours (change in Pisa)

Cecina to Pisa: 1 hour

Hotel

Agrihotel Elisabetta

Cecina (1 night)

This hotel is a working farm. The hotel restaurant uses fresh produce from their garden. The property has a swimming pool and tennis courts.

www.agrihotel-elisabetta.it

The Ride

Day 5: 26 mi (42 km) with 1,626 feet (496 mt) of vertical climbing. The first half of the ride is through relatively flat wine country. The second half has a long gradual uphill passing through three coastal hill towns.

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.

