

Hiking in Hidden Tuscany

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From: £1395
Difficult

Trekking in Tuscany through an ancient landscape of breathtaking mountain walking and exceptional hospitality. This is not the rolling vineyards and cypress avenues of Chianti, but an untamed land of chestnut and beech forest with ridges and jagged peaks which offers an array of sensational trails. We will be hiking the limestone summits of the Apuane Alps and the more benign features of the Apennine range around the hilltop town of Barga, north of Lucca. Both towns are worth a trip in their own right. Our week of walking in Tuscany is based at Col di Lavacchio, a small organic hill farm with chestnut woodland, olive groves and a small vineyard. The traditional farmhouse provides comfortable, elegant accommodation and the food and pool add touches of luxury.

- **Awe-inspiring, challenging but relaxed walking**
- **Traditional Tuscan farmhouse accommodation**
- **Fabulous cuisine prepared by professional chef**
- **Airport Transfers included**
- **Private pool and hot tub for relaxing at end of the day**
- **Complimentary wine with dinner**
- **Massage and Reflexology available**
- **Easy trip to extend for days in Florence or Pisa**
- **Italian ice cream 'gelato' after every walk!**
- **Gourmet Pizza night with optional Wine Tasting**

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[Departures Wild Tuscany, Italy](#)

Itinerary

We always aim to complete the itinerary as outlined below, however, the following itinerary will be followed only when conditions and weather make it appropriate, both in terms of safety and enjoyment. Your guide will make a decision on your destination based on those conditions.

Day 1 Arrival

Today you arrive at Lavacchio farm, near the tiny hilltop hamlet of Promiana. We invite you to join us in the main house for a complimentary aperitif when we can discuss the week ahead. A candlelit dinner is served in the cosy dining room amidst the antiques and oil paintings, or on warm evenings we will eat on the terrace with views of the Serchio Valley and the mountains beyond.

Day 2 Monte Croce

This first walk is an excellent introduction to the area, a gorgeous summit with a 'cross' at 1314m. We begin with a drive through the steep sided valley of Fabbriche di Vallico to the remote village of Palagnana, where we may enjoy a cappuccino before setting off through the beech forest. We reach the Foce delle Porchette, a pass which offers incredible views all the way to the Mediterranean and the marble quarries where

[Michelangelo](#) sourced his stone for 'David'. Then it's up an impressive limestone gorge, before clambering out onto the grassy mountainside, and the final pull to the summit. We descend by a circular route through the beech forest and the hamlets of Pioppo and enjoy a drink at the village bar in Palagnana. Ascent: 580m. Descent: 570m. Distance 9km. 6hrs

Day 3 Pania di Corfino

A short drive to Corfino on the Apennine side of the Serchio valley shows the Garfagnana valley opening up with views to ancient villages perched on the hillsides. Starting from the ancient shepherds' hamlet of Pruno, we wind up a trail in the beech forests and then join an ancient cobbled mule track along the south of the Pania. We pause for a sip from the Fonte del Amore - Fountain of Love - and then stop at the mountain village of Campaiana at 1,358m for lunch. Winding up to the summit of the Pania di Corfino takes us to an excellent view of the jagged ridges and peaks of the Apuane Alps to the west, before we head down the well worn trail to Rifugio Isera and back to Pruno. Ascent: 775m. Descent: 750m. Distance 12.5km. 6 hrs

Day 4 Pania della Croce

This is a 'big mountain day' which begins with a short drive to Piglionico at 1,008m where there is a memorial to WWII partisans who fought a fierce battle on Monte Rovaio. We then traverse round the north side of the Pania to the Refugio del Freo before beginning our main climb of the day on a steady zig zag path. Gaining the ridge we are offered a vista of a rugged, wild landscape, with impressive faces and cliffs as well as glimpses of numerous marble quarries. The Gulf of La Spezia can be seen in the distance and on a clear day Corsica is visible. An easy path takes us along the ridge to the summit 'cross' at 1858m and a well earned picnic lunch. Our situation provides us with views of all our summits done, and still to be done during this week. You may be quizzed on where you have been! The descent of the Canale d'Inferno, across meadows and down through the beech forest is direct and swift. Ascent: 940m. Descent: 890m. Distance 11.5km. 7 hrs

Day 5 Free day for relaxing, or enjoying a short hike from the house

Today you have a free day to either enjoy the beautiful grounds of Lavacchio, relaxing by the pool and resting tired limbs, or undertaking a short hike (3-4 hours) with lunch at a local trattoria or exploring the provincial capital. The medieval walled city of

[Lucca](#) is absolutely stunning and a great place to relax or engage in some serious retail therapy! It is the birthplace of

[Puccini](#),

_____ and the museum documenting his life. The railway station will be offered in the morning with a return service late afternoon. Massage is also available as we have an excellent local masseuse who can come to the house. In the evening, you can prepare a meal in the farmhouse or stroll along to the local restaurant, Il Sassone di Fobbia.

Day 6 Monte Giovo

We head across the Serchio Valley and up through the foot hills of the Apennines to the village of Renaio, before stopping at Vetricia, at 1,308m. The walk climbs through sun dappled beech forest before emerging on the Apennine pasture and along the hillside to the pass at La Porticciola, at 1,700m. Here we drop down via Hannibals camp (yes, he got everywhere!) to another pass, where we start our climb of the ridgeline. A steep climb, but nothing difficult or exposed, and with excellent views of the blue green waters of Lago Santo to our left. We aim to have lunch at the summit of Monte Giovo, at 1,991m. A 'gelato' stop in the historic town of Barga is an essential part of the day; even those who profess not to like icecream have usually succumbed by the end of the week! Ascent: 930m. Descent: 920m. Distance 11.3km. 6.5hrs

Day 7 Monte Forato

A brilliant end to our week as we head for the ridgeline which boasts the impressive archway of Forato. From the quintessential Italian village of Fornovolasco we take to the cobbled streets, before joining the trail through the forests. A steady climb takes us to the pass at Foce di Petroschiana and breathtaking views of the rock tower of Monte Procinto, and of the mountains all the way to the Mediterranean. We follow the ridgeline until the huge limestone archway, below the summit of Monte Forato. A compulsory photostop, before a short climb to the summit itself for lunch. After our picnic we continue along the ridge until Foce di Valli, and a descent through the meadows and forest back to Fornovolasco, and a well earned drink at the gelateria in Galliciano! Ascent: 915m. Descent: 895m. Distance 10km. 6.5hrs

Day 8 Departure Day

Today you head home, having experienced a week of exploration which revealed the wilder side of the mountains of Tuscany.

Please be aware that the itinerary is flexible and at the discretion of the guide, and that changes may be made due to weather and conditions.

Price

Included: The guiding services of a fully qualified International Mountain Leader. Accommodation at Col di Lavacchio is based on two people sharing. A single room may be available for a supplement, but these are limited in number, please inquire. Otherwise single travellers may find themselves sharing a room with someone of the same gender. Accommodation includes breakfast, fantastic picnic lunch, and 3 course dinner with wine. All meals are prepared by our professional chef making use of local seasonal produce, which often comes from the farm gardens. All dietary requirements can be met. On your free day breakfast is provided, but not lunch or dinner to allow you to make the most of your day. Depending on the season it includes use of either the hot tub or the swimming pool. Airport transfers and all transport in Italy on walking days are also included.

Not included: Travel Insurance and flights. We are happy to advise on the best options for flights. Lunch and dinner on your free day are not provided to allow you to make the most of the day if you choose to visit Lucca or Florence. Return train tickets to Lucca cost 8.60 Euros and to Florence 20.40 euros. Massages and also the wine tasting are optional extras. Massage is usually 50 Euros per hour, and the wine tasting can be as inexpensive as 10 Euros each if everyone in a group of 8 participates.

Accommodation



You will stay in "La Fattoria" in the remote hamlet of Lavacchio. La Fattoria is a traditional Garfagnana farmhouse with chestnut beams, exposed stone and terracotta tiles. Sitting above a terraced amphitheatre it has a covered breakfast terrace and wisteria clad dining terrace with huge rustic table and benches. Antique furniture, art and excellent beds add a touch of luxury to this rural retreat. There are five bedrooms with three bathrooms. The sitting room has a wood burning stove. The house is well stocked with books, cards and games. There is a kitchen where you can make teas/coffees and access a fridge, honest bar and snacks. The terrace is equipped with an enormous barbecue and ancient bread oven. There is a covered table tennis table, marked badminton court, and yoga decking for those who wish to stretch at the end of the day. Depending on the season you will also have access to either the pool or the hot tub with bathrobes available for guests to use.

Weather

In mountainous terrain the weather can vary considerably. Temperatures can reach over 30°C in the height of the summer (July/August), but can be as low as 5°C on the passes. It is often sunny with good clear days, but it can rain and snow (even in July or August) so you should be prepared for any eventuality. The average temperatures range from 15-25°C in the valleys and 5-15°C on

the passes.

Insurance

Please note that you must have the appropriate insurance for your chosen activity. You must be covered for helicopter rescue, repatriation and medical costs. With regard to this please be sure you have read the Insurance section in our Terms and Conditions.

Minimum numbers

This trip will run once a minimum number of 5 clients have booked. We will take a maximum of 10 clients. We advise you not to make your travel arrangements until the trip is guaranteed to run.

Getting there

Italy is easily reached from other European and worldwide destinations by road, rail, coach or plane. For suggested travel links please refer to our Booking & Information pages for further details.

A single, timed group transfer from Pisa airport to the farm is provided on day 1. This transfer, by private minibus, takes approximately one hour and will normally depart the airport at 1430 hrs. If arriving much earlier or later in the day it is very easy to reach the local town of Barga-Galliciano by train and we will pick you from the station and take you to the farmhouse. The train journey is around 9? (including the transfer from the airport to the main Pisa station) and takes about 2 hrs. The train line which you need to take to get to Barga-Galliciano is usually going to Aulla or Piazza al Serchio. Train information and advanced tickets can be bought/sourced here at .

[Trenitalia](#).

There are left luggage facilities in the airport (approximately 7 Euro per day per piece) and the train ticket office and information centres are right next door. There is a station in the terminal and the journey to Pisa Central Station is just 5 minutes. The return fare is approximately 3 Euros. At the end of the holiday there will be a single timed transfer back to Pisa Airport which will depart after breakfast, arriving at the airport for approximately 0930 hrs.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch to chat through the details. Once you have booked we will send you a list of suggested walking equipment and clothing for the trip.

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Our Partners

As our niche trips such as the Tour de Monte Rose are of a specialised nature we work with our partner companies to attract sufficient clients to reach the minimum number of participants to allow these trips to go ahead, meaning you are more likely to have your chosen holiday 'guaranteed'. Tracks and Trails in these instances may, in collaborating with our associates, make use of their guiding services. If you have any queries with regard to this please contact us.

No



Our hosts at
Lavacchio