

Self-Guided Walking in Tuscany

Trip Code: SGCF

Version: SGCF Self Guided Walking in Tuscany



WALK & TREK



SELF-GUIDED



LEISURELY



HIGHLIGHTS

- Discover the sights of Florence, Siena and San Gimignano with its recognisable skyline.
- Spend time in the medieval hilltop towns of Panzano and Volterra
- Walk along sections of the Via Francigena and Ria Romea Pilgrim routes
- End your Tuscan adventure on the coast at Cecina Mare, just a train journey away from the Cinque Terre.

AT A GLANCE

- Self-Guided
- 5 days walking and sightseeing
- Saturday departures
- Join at Florence, End in Cecina Mare

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- 7 Breakfasts
- 7 nights Hotel

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

Fantastic fresh Italian food, Tuscan vineyards, rolling hillsides and hilltop towns steeped in Etruscan and Renaissance architecture. This self-guided walking holiday showcases real Tuscany; its famous cities of Florence and Siena, the wine roads through Chianti and the hidden gem of Panzano with its traditional festivities. This romantic part of northern Italy regarded as the birthplace of the Renaissance has inspired some of the most prestigious artists of all time including Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. When you have finished basking in the history and grandeur what better way to end your week in Tuscany than getting off the beaten track and heading to Cecina Mare to relax on the Tuscan Coast with a glass of fine wine as you watch the sun go down over Elba, Capraia and La Gorgona on the horizon.

This self-guided holiday really does provide the ultimate Tuscan experience. Each day you will walk approximately 3 to 4 hours each day with time to stop and enjoy the sights, the wineries and the history of this magnificent region. Staying at a fantastic selection of 3* and 4* hotels full of Tuscan charm on a bed and breakfast basis you will have plenty of opportunity to unwind after a busy day and to indulge in the local cuisine at nearby restaurants.

Itinerary

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DAY 1

Arrive at your hotel and explore Florence.

Arrive in beautiful Florence and settle in to your hotel. Arrival time depending, you will have the opportunity to explore this enchanting city, its narrow cobbled streets, its breath taking cathedral and elegant palazzi (palaces). It may be compact but Florence is oozing romantic Renaissance architecture and magnificent marble basilicas with paintings by famous artists including Michelangelo himself. Not only does the city offer an abundance of sights to explore, when your day draws to an end, its location in the heart of Tuscany means you will be spoilt for choice for excellent cuisine and world reputable wines.

In the evening, before you head out to enjoy the culinary delights, a representative will host a short welcome meeting at your hotel and will be able to answer any questions you may have.



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 2

Discover the enchanting landscapes on Tuscany as you walk to Greave in Chianti.

Today begins catching the public bus to Gabbiano, a quaint little hamlet in the hills of the Chianti region, and home to Castello di Gabbiano, producers of award winning Chianti wines. Hopping off the bus your route today is a real introduction to Tuscany and the Chianti region as you make your way through meadows and along famous gravel covered 'strade bianche' backroads as they weave between vineyards and olive groves. The true picture perfect Tuscan landscape. Your route continues, taking you through fragrant woodland and past old stone villages with high rising cypresses to the town of Greave in Chianti, the gateway to the Chianti region. You will have time to explore and inhale the small town atmosphere. In the evening, you can enjoy a glass of the local produce, Chianti, over dinner in the town's triangular shaped main square.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel



Ascent
400M



Descent
300M



Time
4 hours



Distance
11KM

DAY 3

Explore Panzano and ride to Castellina in Chianti to learn of its wine production.

Your route today begins along beautiful remote forest paths past numerous wine growing estates towards the little town of Panzano where you can stop for a coffee and an explore. This historical town has had something of a turbulent past being half way between Florence and Siena as the two cities fought for power. Rebuilding itself four times between the 13th and 16th Century what remains of the medieval centre is incorporated in the bell tower of the church in Panzano Alto. More recently, this lovely hilltop town was put on the map by local butcher Dario Cecchini, an extrovert dubbed the world's best butcher and his restaurant attracting food connoisseurs from around the world.

Leaving Panzano your route continues through golden cornfields and more vineyards to the pretty hamlet of Lucarelli, home to just a few houses, a church and a welcoming restaurant. From here you take a short bus ride to your home for the evening in Castellina in Chianti. Castellina is a little known hilltop town amongst visitors to Tuscany yet it is a major centre of the wine industry boasting huge silos of Chianti Classico. You will have time to settle in to your hotel and perhaps enjoy a glass of this fine produce too.

PANZANO FESTIVALS: Panzano hosts several festivities throughout the year celebrating the regions fine wine producing skills. On 25th April each year Festa della Stagion Bona brings the town alive as locals don their historic dress, play music and celebrate the beginning of a good season of crops. After all the hard work of the season, Vino al Vino festival is held on the third weekend and proceeding two days of September in the main square of the town. The festival showcases the produce of the wineries and an opportunity to sample them. Definitely worth a visit!

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel



Ascent
350M



Descent
300M



Time
4 hours



Distance
11KM

DAY 4

Walk along the Via Romea to Siena and discover Piazza del Campo.

Feeling refreshed, today you will walk along the Via Romea, also known as the Eurovelo 5. This popular Pilgrim route stretches some 2,200km from Strade, Germany, to Rome. You will be pleased to know you will only be walking as far as Siena today!

Following the marked route you will meander south through olive groves, across vineyards and under the shade of forests. Today's route is one of peace, as you will encounter just one tiny village along your route to Siena, home to the traditional Palio horse race which sees ten horses ridden bareback around the Piazza del Campo. Arriving in Siena you will have time to enjoy a stroll around Siena's Piazza del Campo which is ordinarily bustling with cafes, along the narrow streets and perhaps stop for a taste of Panforte in one of the many local shops. In the evening you can delight in dinner in one of the many restaurants the city has to offer.

Meals: **B**

	Accommodation Hotel		Ascent 300M		Descent 500M		Time 4-5 hours		Distance 16KM
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DAY 5

Walk along the Via Francigena and explore the hilltop town San Gimignano and its many towers.

After breakfast, you will take the local bus to Colle Val d'Elsa, a charming crystal glass producing town to the northwest of Siena where there will be time to explore before beginning your walk. Your route will take you out of town towards the small medieval village of Quartaia and perhaps a morning coffee before continuing through the rolling hills to Coneo Abbey, a Romanesque abbey founded by the Benedictines and restored in the 1920's when it was opened to the public. After a visit to the abbey you continue, soon walking on a section of the Via Francigena. Similar to the Caminos leading to Spain's Santiago de Compostela the Via Francigena is an ancient pilgrimage route connecting Canterbury, England to Rome. You may meet some pilgrims on their way to Rome as you make your way to Molino d'Aiano. Upon reaching Molino d'Aiano the peaceful panorama is already dominated by your final goal for the day, San Gimignano and its distinctive towers. Encircled by 13th century walls this delightful town is centred on the Piazza della Cisterna and is recognised from afar by its medieval towers, which interrupt the skyline. You can roam San Gimignano and soak up the atmosphere and explore the many little alleyways.

Meals: **B**

	Accommodation Hotel		Ascent 350M		Descent 250M		Time 4 hours		Distance 13KM
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DAY 6

Experience an unexpected Tuscan landscape in the Monte Nero Nature Reserve and discover the enchanting hilltop town of Volterra.

Today's walk is a contrast to the typical Tuscan landscape you have experienced earlier in the week, as you explore the Alpine like landscapes of the Monte Nero Nature Reserve and follow the ancient Via del Sale to Volterra. Your day begins with a transfer to the nearby Monte Nero Nature Reserve from where your route will take you through the lush green forests to unveil the Cascade della Strolla, a picturesque waterfall with clear blue waters. The perfect spot to stop for a drink and cool your feet before ascending and crossing the waterfall to a rewarding viewpoint (a head for heights and some surefootedness is recommended). Leaving the shade of the forest behind you soon join the ancient Via del Sale leading you to your final goal, Volterra. This once vital route for transporting salt from the lakes of Volterra to San Gimignano, the main sources of income into the area, is today it used as a popular walking and cycling

trail.

Arriving in Volterra, through the city gate, you will have time to discover its enchanting alleyways and cosy cafes. This medieval walled village, perched atop the hill overlooking the picturesque landscape below, has a rich Etruscan heritage and is bursting with charm which will soon capture your heart. We recommend taking time to explore the village walls, the impressive Teatro Romano built in 1st century AD and the Cathedral, which may seem unassuming from the outside, is a highlight inside. In the evening, enjoy dinner at one of the restaurants at Palazzo dei Priori where Twilight fans may recognise the bell tower from the novel and film New Moon.

Meals: **B**

	Accommodation Hotel		Ascent 500M		Descent 250M		Time 4 hours		Distance 11KM
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DAY 7

Your final day gives you a choice of routes leading you to the Tuscan Coast.

We have split today's route into three parts to offer you ultimate flexibility. You can choose whether to linger a little longer in Volterra, work up an appetite with a full day walking, make the most of your time on the coast or if you cannot choose, why not enjoy a mixture of all three!

The first part of your route follows a disused historic railway line which was once the main transportation route of goods between Saline and Volterra. Today this section of railway offers a fantastic route for walkers as it leads you through sparse and wild hillside with fantastic views back to Volterra. Arriving at Saline railway station, you can hop on the train to Cecina where your choices for the day continue.

The second part of your route begins in Cecina and follows the river towards the coastal town of Cecina Mare where you explore the Tomboli de Cecina Nature Reserve, one of the most beautiful woods in Italy, full of thick varied vegetation and scattered with tranquil picnic areas for you to enjoy. Alternatively, you may wish to arrive in Cecina Mare, grab your book and relax on the sandy beach.

In the evening take a stroll to the Marina and dine in one of the many restaurants serving freshly caught seafood and toast to a great week in Tuscany as you watch the turquoise glistening of the Tyrrhenian Sea, whilst the two islands Elba, Capria and La Gorgona sink into the sea beneath the crimson evening sun.

Meals: **B**

	Accommodation Hotel		Time 3-4 hours		Distance 10KM
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DAY 8

Departure Day.

Enjoy a relaxed breakfast and a stroll along the coast before making your onward journey.

Meals: **B**

Holiday Information

What's Included

- All accommodation as described
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Luggage transfers
- Self-guided information pack containing your map and route notes
- Welcome briefing
- Transfer on day 6 only (San Gimignano - Ugnano) Wine tasting

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Travel to Florence
- Travel from Cecina Mare
- Public buses
- Visas (if applicable)
- Some meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Personal equipment
- Any additional activities/excursions indicated as optional

Your Self-Guided Pack & Route Notes

Each self-guided holiday comes with comprehensive route notes and a map or pocket guidebook of the area you are exploring. The route notes contain information about the places you will visit, about the local transport you might need, along with the detailed route notes for your daily walks or cycle rides. We even include some tips for the best places to stop for lunch.

You can expect to receive your Self-Guided Pack containing your route notes, a map or guidebook and all your relevant documents no later than 3 weeks before your holiday start date. We will send your documents using signed for courier so that you can track your package and know that they are safely on their way to you. For bookings of more than 4 people we will send an additional Self-Guided Pack. If you do not need this additional pack please inform our sales team. Your pack will be sent to the lead booker so please remind them to pack it before you set off.

Should your self-guided trip be part of a longer adventure requiring you to leave home more than three weeks before your holiday start date, please do inform our sales team so that we can make alternative delivery arrangements.

Self-Guided Families

Our Self-Guided Holidays are perfect for your next family holiday and are suitable for children of all ages.

Our partner hotels and accommodations are able to provide cots for young children, and some offer family rooms. We can also arrange hire of children's bikes and tag along bikes for our self-guided cycling trips and with trips such as Lake Constance and the Danube offering routes on designated cycle paths you can rest assured in keeping your family safe.

As a parent we trust that you know your own child's capabilities, please read the itinerary details to ensure the distances covered each day are suitable for your family. If this is a first time walking holiday for your family, a centre based trip is a fantastic option as it allows you to easily opt out of a days walking if a day of building sand castles, swimming in the pool or visiting museums is calling.

Please discuss this further with our sales team who will be happy to assist in picking the best trip for your family.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

This trip starts in Florence and ends in Cecina Mare. The nearest airport for this trip is Florence Airport, however Pisa Airport is also very accessible with many departures from regional UK airports.

Train connections are extremely good in Italy with many high speed services on offer. If you are flying into Pisa you can take the train direct from Pisa Central Station to Florence in approximately 1 hour 30min and enjoy the journey as the landscape evolves outside your window.

The return journey from Cecina Mare to Pisa Central is just as easy with the direct train journey taking approximate 1 hour along the scenic coast. You can book your tickets in advance at www.trenitalia.com

Meal Plan

This trip is on a bed and breakfast basis to allow you the opportunity to enjoy dining in one of the local restaurants.

Food & Water

Water is drinkable from the taps on this holiday. Please fill your personal bottles for your day in the morning. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your diet with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Accommodation

We have selected a great range of 3* and 4* hotels for your trip all chosen for their Tuscan charm and great facilities with some hotels offering swimming pools, perfect for cooling off after a day exploring. All the hotels offer comfortable bedrooms, and great communal areas including a restaurant and bar area as well as a tasty continental buffet breakfast.

It is possible to arrange additional nights accommodation in Florence before the start of your trip so you can see more of the beautiful city. It is also possible to arrange additional nights accommodation in Cecina Mare if you would like a little more time to relax by the coast before heading home. Please refer to the dates and prices tab for further details or speak to one of our sales team.

General Information

Passport & Visas

Europe

Your passport must meet 2 requirements. It must be:

- less than 10 years old on the day you enter (check the 'date of issue')
- valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave (check the 'expiry date')

For the latest details on visiting countries within the EU or the European Economic Area (EEA), please check the UK Government website

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

Health & Vaccinations

Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations.

GHIC / Medical cover

UK residents should carry a free Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). This entitles you to state provided medical treatment when you're visiting an EU country or Switzerland. This is not a substitute for medical travel insurance which is vital when travelling overseas.

Severe Allergies

Please inform our KE Sales and support team of any severe allergies you may have before travel. We will always do our best to help but we are unable to guarantee an allergy free environment on our KE trips. We advise that you always carry your own treatment for the allergy with you such as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' if required. We also recommend that you discuss this with your accommodation on arrival so that they can better assist you.

Preparing for your Holiday

The advantage of a self-guided walking holiday is that you decide the pace however getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable your walks will be. You should be comfortable with walking 4 - 5 hours for consecutive days, a head for heights and some surefootedness is required for your walk on day 6. We suggest that you try to fit in a number of daily walks in hilly countryside before your trip and it's always a good idea to spend some time walking in the footwear you are going to use on this holiday.

Climate

Tuscany benefits from a generally mild transitional Mediterranean climate with mild winters and hot sunny summers and temperatures reaching up to 30 degrees. As a prime farming region it is no surprise that the area can also have rainfall throughout the year, so it is always worth packing your rain cover just in case.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Please note that a paper copy of your travel insurance is required if you are travelling to Huaraz and the Huayhuash region.

Equipment Information

Self Guided Equipment List

- Hiking boots with good grip soles
- Functional base layer
- T-shirts
- Hat
- Windproof jacket
- Fleece / extra layer
- Long/short hiking trousers
- Hiking socks
- Waterproof Jacket
- Waterproof Trousers
- Rucksack (approx. 20 l)

- Small first aid kit for your rucksack
- Sunscreen
- Water bottle or hydration pack
- Camera (batteries/memory card)
- Mobile Phone (ensure your data package covers your destination)
- Power bank
- Waterproof phone cover
- Sun glasses
- Personal wash kit
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping to avoid the use of plastic bags
- Tupperware for picnics
- Walking poles
- Headtorch & spare batteries
- Your self-guided route notes

Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers.
[>> Find out more](#)

Land Only Information

Please note our 'from price' listed is based on 4 persons on twin or double occupancy, however we can quote for any number of travellers, including solo travellers, contact our sales team for a quote.

All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. You may even wish to make this holiday part of a bigger adventure or pair it with one of our other holidays. We can arrange additional nights accommodation before or after your self-guided trip, ask our sales team to find out more about this.

Our sales team will be happy to provide you a quote for scheduled flights or alternatively you may wish to book your own flights with a low cost carrier from your nearest regional airport.

Please DO NOT book your flights before you have received your booking confirmation and your deposit has been taken.

Why Choose KE

Why KE?

As well as incorporating the popular UNESCO-listed cities of Florence and Siena, and the iconic hilltop town of San Gimignano, within this very special hiking trip we have also included a final night on the Tuscan coast so you can toast your week of walking whilst enjoying views across to Elba. This trip pairs perfectly with our Self-Guided Walking on Cinque Terre, so you can enjoy the lures of Italy a little longer.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 20/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change