

TUSCAN COAST



Premium Inns Multi-Sport

Bike and walk along Tuscany's ancient Etruscan coast and the curving hillside roadways of the Mediterranean Island paradise of Elba with its charming seaside villages, magnificent beaches and crystal clear waters. Starting from the pre Roman hilltop city of Volterra, follow an easy walking route toward the Tuscan coast. Ride among Bolgheri vineyards and olive groves. As you meander this undiscovered coast, your route will pull you inadvertently toward the aquamarine colors of the Mediterranean Sea and the paradise Island of Elba, a place of unsurpassed natural beauty, from treeless mountain summits to lush forest covered slopes, and from magnificent beaches caressed by sparkling clear waters to Medieval fortresses and quaint fishing villages. Relax in a seaside cafe with a toast of local wine to its most famous resident and emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte, and discover why Elba was chosen as his exile paradise.

Trip Dates: all 2008 & 2009 trip dates

Reserve your Tuscan Coast Multi-Sport trip [here](#)
or visit our web site at www.clubtoscana.com

DAY 1 - VOLTERRA to the TUSCAN SEASIDE

Today's terrain - Moderately easy walk over a generally downhill route

Today's distance - Walking 8.3 kms. / 5.1 miles (with a Biking option)

As a special service to our guests, we will meet you at your hotel in Florence, with pickup around 9:00 am. or by special arrangement, the main train station or airport. Please be dressed in walking clothes at our rendezvous.

Benvenuti in Toscana! Welcome to Tuscany. After our rendezvous, we will take a 1 hour private transfer into the Tuscan hills south of Florence and up to the lofty heights of Volterra. This ancient pre-Roman Etruscan walled town is one of Italy's oldest cities and home to one of its largest fortresses. On arrival, we will take a casual town tour through its untouched Medieval streets to visit its Romanesque cathedral, its alabaster workshops and to view its Etruscan and 1st-century Roman ruins. An introductory lunch at a favorite trattoria located in "Piazza dei Priori", regarded as Italy's most beautiful square, will give us a chance to talk about the great trip ahead. Leaving Volterra through its 2,500 year old main gateway, we'll walk a downhill route through some of Tuscany's most picturesque rolling hills with their open landscapes sprinkled with hilltop stone farmhouses. At the end of our walk, we'll meet at a roadside cafe before a short transfer to our villa hotel located among the forested hillsides near Castagneto Carducci. This 17th-century villa, once the countryside home of an aristocratic family still retains its old world charms updated with all the modern comforts including a welcoming garden pool. Tonight, we will gather on the villa's terrace before dining on delectable Tuscan specialties served in their elegant dining room. (Note: today has a biking option available instead of walking. Please let us know at least a week in advance of your trip if you would prefer easy to moderately easy biking. The distance is 55 kms / 34 miles with some slight itinerary adjustments.)

DAY 2 - BOLGHERI VINEYARDS and the ETRUSCAN COAST

Today's terrain - downhill to the flat coastal plain with a moderately challenging ride back to the hotel (lifts available)

Today's distance - Biking 57 kms. / 35 miles with shorter distance options

After a buffet breakfast on the terrace, your trip leaders will fit your bike, review your trip route instructions, give you a little orientation of riding on Italian roads with some safety tips and away we will go. Our ride will take us along a meandering downhill route toward the hilltop village of Castagneto Carducci. The town's castle is still inhabited today by the descendants of the della Gherardesca family, regarded as Italy's oldest aristocratic family. We'll pass by the town for now but we'll be returning back on the way to our hotel later this afternoon. Our destination will be Marina di Castagneto and our first tastes of the salty air flowing off the shimmering waves of the Mediterranean Sea. This small resort community located in the heart of the Etruscan Coast, named for the early inhabitants of this area, is the perfect stop for a cappuccino break. Returning inland we will ride along narrow side roads through a flat landscape of fruit orchards, vineyards and olive groves, some famous for producing Italy's finest olive oils and its celebrated Super Tuscan wines. Fans of Italian vintages and connoisseurs of its olive oils are familiar with such celebrated names as Ornellaia and Sassicaia, both located along our route. Lunch today is a Club Toscana treat, and located under the imposing facade of the castellated country residence of the Counts of the Gherardesca we will lunch on local specialties in the charming village of Bolgheri. We invite you to meander through the village's streets with its many "enoteche" wine shops before we head back along the coast. Our next stop is a small but very significant producer of olive oil. Here we will discover how the various types of olive oil are produced and we'll get a chance to sample some of their production. A final moderately challenging ride awaits our return to our hotel. If you are one of our more enthusiastic riders or you would like a little extra challenge, we invite you to ride the 9 km / 5.7 mile "finale" up a forested serpentine road to our hotel, or you can meet your trip leader at the bottom for a lift. Tonight, we will venture into the medieval streets of Castagneto Carducci and a favorite trattoria where traditional local cuisine enjoyed "al fresco" will be complemented by fabulous views overlooking the sea with an always beautiful sunset.

DAY 3 - The CORNIA VALLEY to ELBA

Today's terrain - flat to moderately flat route on quiet side roads

Today's distance - Biking 36 kms. / 22 miles with longer distance options

After another hearty breakfast, we will ride our bikes to Sassetta, a forest surrounded hillside village of ancient origins where many of the townsfolk still earn their living gathering chest nuts, mushrooms, harvesting cork and cutting firewood for Italy's pizza ovens. Following a winding side road once used by pilgrims in the Middle Ages on their journey from the Holy Lands, this route is now considered one of the Tuscan coast's most enjoyable cycling roads for everyone from the casual cyclist to professional bikers using it as their preferred training ground. Bordered by lush forests of chestnut, oak and cork trees and serenaded by song birds, we will work our way to Suvereto, a little known Tuscan hilltop gem with a 9th-century hilltop fortress. This picturesque walled village with a bird's eye view of the surrounding Cornia Valley plain is the perfect stop for a cafe break. We will continue along quiet side roads into this flat verdant valley where Italy's next generation of wine producers are making a name for themselves. Our next stop is Riotorto, a small rural community where lunch options range from a renowned restaurant to the village cafe for light lunches, to the town market for a personal picnic. A short transfer will later take us to Piombino, where ancient Etruscans once refined iron from local mines. A one hour ferry will transport us with our bikes to the magical Island of Elba and Portoferraio, Elba's colorful main town and harbor dominated by several Florentine fortresses. The lodging for our stay on Elba is located in a beautiful cove where crystal clear waters, sandy beaches and small village life create the perfect mix. Tonight, we will dine overlooking the sea with that omnipresent sunset.

DAY 4 - The ISLAND OF ELBA

Today's terrain - easy to moderate walking and hiking along gravel laneways and dirt pathways

Today's distance - Walking 12.4 kms. / 7.6 miles with longer distance options (Biking option)

After a buffet breakfast on the hotel terrace overlooking the beach, we will take a quick shuttle to the small village of Poggio located high on the lush side of the island highest mountain. This pretty village, one of Elba's oldest, offers a glimpse into the traditional lifestyle of the island's inhabitants. A quick stop at the village springs, and source of the island's bottled water, will kick off our hike along the vibrant slopes of Elba's Monte Capanne and the 5th-century sanctuary of San Cerbone, a saint that retired here to escape the invasions of northern tribes arriving in Italy after the downfall of the Roman Empire. Nature lovers will enjoy this walk through a forest of chestnut and ilexes. Watch for mountain goats grazing, songbirds singing and butterflies fluttering in this natural park reserve. A well worn dirt pathway will lead us over small brooks flowing down from the bare granite rocks of Monte Capanne. A flat walk along a gravel side road will lead us through majestic Mediterranean umbrella pine trees with an optional diversion to the 11th-century Sanctuary of the Madonna where Napoleon used to "meditate" with his mistress, Maria Walewska. Look for spectacular views of Elba's coast and the nearby French island of Corsica seen in the distance. Arrive down in Marciana Alta, a charming Medieval hillside village dominated by a 12th-century Pisan castle, used by the town's inhabitants during invasions by pirates. This charming hillside village offers many light lunch options with its cafes located on a

terrace overlooking the sea in the distance below. Leaving town, we will walk a meandering side road downhill past Elba's most important vineyards to the quaint seaside village of Marciana Marina, regarded as one of Italy's top seaside locations. Wander the harbor side village street with its artisan shops. Enjoy a refreshing Italian gelato at a sea side cafe or visit its shops specializing in locally produced wines and traditional foods. At your convenience, a short transfer will take us back to our hotel and the sandy beaches of Procchio. Tonight is "dinner on your own" to enjoy your own romantic corner of this island paradise, and your trip leaders would be more than happy to show you the options and arrange reservations.

(Note: today has a biking option available for those that prefer cycling over walking. This route will circumvent the western part of the island including the villages of Poggio and Marciana with its amazing scenery, quiet sea side villages and picturesque sea shore locations. Please let us know the evening before if you would prefer easy to moderately challenging biking. The distance is 54 kms / 33 miles with some slight itinerary adjustments. Lifts are always available to bypass any difficult sections.)

DAY 5 - MARINA DI CAMPO

Today's terrain - a coastal route with usually calm water

Today's distance - Sea Kayaking 8 kms. / 5 miles with shorter distance options

After a buffet breakfast overlooking the glistening waters of the Procchio cove, we will take a short transfer to Marina di Campo, Elba's longest sandy beach, and the best location to enjoy a morning of sea kayaking along the Elban shores. Don't forget to grab a few extra things from the buffet for snacks, and to bring your swim suit and towel for a dip in the island's azure waters before leaving for our sea kayaking adventure. The coast at Marina di Campo offers calm sparkling clear waters, a natural coastline of rocky outcroppings, isolated coves, sea caves and uninterrupted sunshine. Perfect for beginners to veterans, our sea kayaking expedition will be accompanied by a professional sea kayaking instructor who will show us the basics on how simple it is to use a sea kayak and guide us along this natural paradise bathed by warm Sirocco winds. We expect to be back on the beach at Marina di Campo in time for a late lunch in the lively village center where cafes, restaurants, markets and specialty shops offer every option. We will return to our hotel at your convenience just in case you wish to extend your time here relaxing on the soft sandy beach. Tonight, we will dine in Portoferraio, Elba's largest town. You might wish to ask your trip leaders for an early transfer into town to discover its historic streets, Medici castles, Napoleon's residence museum at Villa dei Mulini, and the shops and cafes surrounding its scenic harbor filled with luxury pleasure crafts and fishing boats. A final trip celebration will take place at a favorite restaurant located among its Medieval streets where the island's specialties come fresh from the town's fishing fleet.

DAY 6 - CAMPIGLIA MARITTIMA - Homeward bound

Saturday morning is a busy time for people returning to the mainland after their island vacation and like them, we need to reserve our return ferry trip in advance, so after breakfast, we will transfer to the port at Portoferraio for our scheduled boat. After our arrival on the mainland an hour or so later, our destination will be Campiglia Marittima, a small town located along the main train route from Rome to Pisa with connections to Milan, Genoa or Florence. We should arrive in Campiglia around 11:00 am. Your trip leaders will accompany you to the train station and remain with you until you are safely aboard your selected train. As always, your trip leaders would be more than pleased to assist you with any of your post-trip travel planning.

Arrivederci and Buon Viaggio !

THIS TRIP IS DESIGNED FOR ALL ABILITIES - We have designed this trip to be suitable for everyone, from the casual or occasional walker with other travel and site seeing interests to the experienced hiking enthusiast looking for that extra challenge. Since your preferred walking & hiking pace and your walking interests might vary from day to day, we have a daily list of optional routes, distances and route sections to give you exactly the kind of walking & hiking you would like to experience.

For Trip Details including Date & Prices, Trip Activity Levels, Trip Map, Selected Trip Hotels, and Arriving & Departing Information, please consult this trip's web page at:

www.clubtoscana.com/tuscany_cinque_terre_walking_tours_pg.html

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