

VIA FRANCIGENA (ITALY)

LUCCA TO ROME

ITINERARY: 24 DAYS

Day 1

ARRIVE LUCCA

Your journey begins in the captivating city of Lucca. We recommend you arrive early to allow enough time to explore its Romanesque churches, Renaissance sculptures and splendid gardens. Take a walk or bike ride around the tree-lined, red-brick walls that contain this elegant city for views over the Apuan Alps. Lucca's duomo, Cattedrale di San Martino, is well worth a visit, as is the impressive Piazza Anfiteatro, a 2nd century Roman amphitheatre. Dinner is on your own – there are many dining options to choose from.

- Overnight: Lucca

Day 2

LUCCA TO SAN MINIATO

This morning you have some more time to enjoy Lucca before making your way by train (~1¼ hours) to San Miniato. Take some time this afternoon to discover why this town is considered one of the pearls of the Via Francigena. The seminary, from which the main square takes its name, has a unique facade; take a stroll past it in the evening when it is illuminated. This evening you may like to enjoy the local speciality of risotto with white truffle.

- Overnight: San Miniato
- Meals: B



RAW TRAVEL

ICONIC WALKS WORLDWIDE

Day 3

SAN MINIATO TO GAMBASSI TERME (25KM, 7 HOURS)

Today's walk is gently undulating and takes you on a paved road from San Miniato through to olive groves, past vineyards and farmland crossing typical countryside of the Val d'Elsa. Along the way you will pass Pieve di Coiano, a parish church thought to have been built before 1000AD. The church is particularly significant due to a visit by Archbishop Sigeric on his journey from Canterbury to Rome.

The last half of the walk ventures along the top of rolling Tuscan hills with fantastic views of rustic farmhouses, fields of wheat, sunflowers and vineyards. As you near the town of Gambassi Terme you will pass Pieve a Chianni (the church of Santa Maria), a lovely Romanesque church that has been restored and is now a *ostello* (hostel). You will stop for the night in Gambassi Terme, a town known for its thermal baths and the thermal springs found in the area.

- 781m ascent, 654m descent
- Overnight: Gambassi Terme
- Meals: B, D

Day 4

GAMBASSI TERME TO SAN GIMIGNANO (18KM, 6 HOURS)

Leaving behind the quaint village of Gambassi Terme, the trail today will take you along country roads, passing more vineyards and olive trees into sections of lush green forest. Keep your eye out for remnants of ancient Roman roads.

Cypress lined paths with beautiful views of the rolling Tuscan hills either side of you lead to the town of Pancole, dominated by the Santuario di Pancole (Sanctuary of Pancole). Continuing on you will come across the working monastery of Pieve di Cellole. It is set amongst lovely grounds with panoramic views over the countryside. If a mass is not being held, you can visit the church and purchase some of the local farm produce or pottery.



Even though you will be walking alongside the road as you approach San Gimignano, the views remain captivating as you look toward this evocative hilltop town where you will stay for the night.

- 595m ascent, 540m descent
- Overnight: San Gimignano
- Meals: B

Day 5

SAN GIMIGNANO TO GRACCIANO (21KM, 6 HOURS)

Leaving the fairy tale village of San Gimignano this morning, the Via Francigena takes you along quiet, local roads, through farmland and a number of forested sections. The terrain can be uneven at times with tree roots and rocky sections, particularly on the forest trails. The trail meets and follows a stream with the clearest water, offering a place to swim during the warmer months.

A detour worth taking today is to see the fascinating Abbey of Santa Maria Assunta in Conèo; a Romanesque church built around the year 1,000 and located in the lovely surrounds of the Colle di Val d'Elsa.

Some of the areas you are walking through today and tomorrow were once underwater. If you look carefully, some sections of road have shell fossils embedded in them.

- 209m ascent, 204m descent
- Overnight: Gracciano
- Meals: B

Day 6

GRACCIANO TO MONTERIGGIONI (13KM, 4 HOURS)

From Gracciano you will walk along one of the more beautiful sections of the Via Francigena. Today's highlights include Pieve a Elsa and the ancient Etruscan thermae (thermal pools) of Caldane. Continuing on you will be able to admire



the facade of the Pieve di Strove and Abbadia a Isola, a resting place for Archbishop Sigeric of Canterbury on his pilgrimage.

There is no mistaking Monteriggioni as you approach. The small village is perched on a hilltop and is enclosed by medieval walls and 14 striking towers that make quite an impact on the landscape. Explore the narrow streets with its ring of vegetable gardens, houses and the Piazza Roma at the centre. Make sure you climb up on one of the walls to take in the view.

- 132m ascent, 57m descent
- Overnight: Monteriggioni
- Meals: B

Day 7

MONTERIGGIONI TO SIENA (20KM, 6 HOURS)

After breakfast, depart Monteriggioni on dirt roads through the Montagnola Sense, a hilly area of the region passing through the now deserted medieval village of Cerbaia. The trail today is gently undulating along wide gravel country roads lined with the iconic cypress pine. The landscape consists of large expanses of open, rolling hills dotted with castles, farms and forests; land that has seen many legendary battles between Siena and Florence.

After a meditative walk through the Renai forest, you will pass through the *Porta Camollia*, the traditional pilgrims' entrance to the epic town of Siena. Situated along three ridges at the southern end of the Chianti hills, Siena is another UNESCO city not to be missed. The town explodes with excitement during the famous Palio horse race run several times over summer in Piazza del Campo.

The striking Duomo is jam-packed with artworks by Bernini, Michelangelo and Donatello and is only one of many fascinating sites to explore during your stay. This evening, take the opportunity to walk the cobblestone streets of this vibrant town before soaking up the atmosphere of Piazza del Campo over a glass of prosecco and antipasto.



RAW TRAVEL

ICONIC WALKS WORLDWIDE

- 224m ascent, 245m descent
- Overnight: Siena
- Meals: B

Day 8

SIENA

Situated along three ridges at the southern end of the Chianti hills, Siena is another UNESCO city not to be missed. The town explodes with excitement during the famous Palio horse race run several times over summer in Piazza del Campo. The striking Duomo is jam packed with artworks by Bernini, Michelangelo and Donatello and is only one of many fascinating sites to explore during your stay. Today is free to explore this exciting town; art galleries, museums, atmospheric squares, churches, boutiques, gelatarias – the choice is endless!

- Overnight: Siena
- Meals: B

Day 9

SIENA TO LUCIGNANO (21KM, 7 HOURS)

Today your journey takes you along the crests of the Val d'Arbia offering unforgettable views. The typical dirt country roads continue to lead you along the Via Francigena to the fortified village of Lucignano.

Monteroni d'Arbia sits on the Via Francigena and was an agricultural centre for the Republic of Siena. At its borders is Grancia di Cuna, a fortified farm. Evidence of a 'spedale' existing here in the 12th-century would have given assistance to merchants and pilgrims on the Via Francigena which passed through the nearby town of Arbia.

Lucignano is known for its unique town planning where its streets spiral inwards to the heart of the village, the square of Tribunal where the 16th-century Collegiata church and town hall sit. Spend some time exploring the narrow streets and the treasures this village has hidden away.



RAW TRAVEL

ICONIC WALKS WORLDWIDE

- 307m ascent, 467m descent
- Overnight: Lucignano
- Meals: B

Day 10

LUCIGNANO TO BUONCONVENTO (14KM, 5 HOURS)

Your walk along the Via Francigena today takes you through the Valle dell'Ombrone – a valley of woods, Mediterranean scrub and farmland. The Ombrone river weaves its way amongst the landscape, isolated monuments and historic towns. The trail is predominantly along wide, gravel or grassy country roads.

Arriving at Buonconvento, you will enter this small, historic town via a walled gateway. Appropriately named “the good convent” as it was an important haven for pilgrims and travellers, you will notice the relaxed pace here where life slows to the rhythm of a provincial village. Art lovers will appreciate a visit to the Museum of Sacred Art of the Val d'Arbia which features artworks by some of the most famous Sienese painters Duccio, Sano di Pietro and Matteo di Giovanni, who also left a Madonna and Child in the 14th-century Santi Piero e Paolo church.

- 307m ascent, 467m descent
- Overnight: Buonconvento
- Meals: B

Day 11

BUONCONVENTO TO SAN QUIRICO D'ORCIA (21KM, HOURS)

Today your journey will take you towards San Quirico, on dirt and bitumen roads accented with cypress trees and vineyards. There are splendid views across the vast landscape of the Val d'Orcia. San Quirico d'Orcia is a lovely example of medieval architecture and city planning. At the centre of the historic town sits the stunning Collegiata. Built in the 11th-century on the site of an old baptistry, it has three main doorways, one of which overlooks the Via Francigena. Before dinner, enjoy a relaxing amble among the green hedges of Horti Leonini, a 15th-century garden.



RAW TRAVEL

ICONIC WALKS WORLDWIDE

- 641m ascent, 376m descent
- Overnight: San Quiroco d'Orcia
- Meals: B

Day 12

SAN QUIRICO D'ORCIA TO CASTIGLIONE D'ORCIA (9KM, 3 HOURS)

Only a short walk today to allow you time to amble and enjoy the striking scenery of the Val d'Orcia and some special highlights along the way. Not long after leaving San Quirico you will enter the timeless world of Vignoni Alto. Discover the remains of an 11th-century castle and stop for a peaceful meditation at the Roman church of San Biagio.

Continuing on you will come to the delightful town of Bagno Vignoni, popular for its hot spring pools since the Etruscan era. Famous popes, saints and pilgrims frequented the hot springs, due to their proximity to the Via Francigena pilgrimage route. The focal point of the town is the large rectangle pool of thermal waters. While this ancient pool is no longer open to public bathing, visitors can enjoy spa treatments and bathing sessions at nearby wellness centres or the free access pools further down the hill. Spend some time exploring this UNESCO World Heritage site and relaxing in the therapeutic waters.

After an indulgent afternoon you make your way through one of the most beautiful panoramic sections of the whole Via Francigena to arrive in Castiglione d'Orcia. Affording excellent hill views, this village is also UNESCO listed as a World Heritage Site. Locate the walled old town and stroll the cobblestone streets, past medieval houses, Roman churches and the town hall to Piazza il Vecchietta. The square is dedicated to Lorenzo di Pietro, a sculptor, architect and painter.

- 400m ascent, 300m descent
- Overnight: Castiglione d'Orcia
- Meals: B



Day 13

CASTIGLIONE D'ORCIA TO RADICOFANI (25KM, 7 HOURS)

Today you will embark on a longer, tougher hike as you make your way through valleys, olive groves and agricultural fields. You will have great views across the rolling hills to the dormant volcano, Monte Amiata.

Approaching Radicofani, you will see that the imposing citadel dominates the town and can be seen over 10kms away! You will spend your evening in a lovely Tuscan country house just outside of Radicofani, where you will receive a warm welcome and cozy accommodation. Take a swim in the pool or wander the beautiful gardens before enjoying a home cooked meal.

- 1000m ascent, 757m descent
- Overnight: Radicofani
- Meals: B, D

Day 14

RADICOFANI TO ACQUAPENDENTE (18KM, 6 HOURS)

This morning you will be driven a short way to the town of Radicofani. Spend some time exploring this fortress that dates back to 973AD and admire spectacular views of Monte Amiata, the Apennines, Bolsena Lake and the Val d'Orcia from its tower. The village also has some special features including the Romanesque church of San Pietro. Built in the 13th-century, the church suffered damage during WWII but was later restored in 1946. Within its gothic arches is a collection of terracottas by Della Robbia, a famous sculptor from Florence.

Depart the town and travel along the old Via Cassia, an ancient route used by travellers in the Middle Ages between northern Italy and Rome. Surrounded by a landscape of infinite hills, you continue on to Centeno where you will take another short transfer to avoid busy and noisy road sections. Your last stretch of walking will lead you on an ascent to Acquapendente, the northernmost municipality of Lazio. Charles Dickens travelled to Acquapendente on the Via Cassia in 1845 and details it in his writings. If you have time, experience a silent walk through the Romanesque crypt located beneath the Basilica del Santo



Sepolcro. It is rumoured that stones bathed in the blood of Christ have been kept here.

- 400m ascent, 900m descent
- Overnight: Acqupendente
- Meals: B

Day 15

ACQUAPENDENTE TO BOLSENA (23KM, 7 HOURS)

Today the trail is fairly easy going and offers enchanting views of the slopes of Monti Volsini. You will eventually catch your first glimpse of Lake Bolsena with its tranquil, clear waters. From here you will descend into a volcanic crater along cart and dirt tracks and through dense woodland and open meadows dotted with olive trees. Lake Bolsena is the largest volcanic lake in Europe, formed over 370,000 years ago with the eruption of the Vulsini volcano. After the eruption, the surrounding land collapsed, creating a caldera and forming what is now, the bed of Lake Bolsena. Not only an important stop for pilgrims on the Via Francigena, Bolsena is famous for a miracle recorded in 1263 at the church of St Christina. This church is well worth a visit for its frescoes, architecture and underground catacombs. For dinner you may wish to try one of the local seafood specialties, fresh from the lake: *Sbroscia* is a soup made from lake fish and tomatoes.

- 424m ascent, 452m descent
- Overnight: Bolsena
- Meals: B

Day 16

BOLSENA

Today is yours to relax or further explore the lovely town of Bolsena. Take a walk along the lake promenade, book a boat cruise or simply wander the shops and enjoy a coffee while taking in the cafe culture.

- Overnight: Bolsena
- Meals: B



Day 17

BOLSENA TO MONTEFIASCONE (17KM, 6 HOURS)

After breakfast today, you will set off on a route that offers continual views of the lake. You will pass through fields and forests and an area famous for its olive oil production, and we recommend experiencing a tasting with a piece of warm, fragrant bread. Your walk ends in the papal town of Montefiascone. Located on top of a hill overlooking Lake Bolsena, this town is surrounded by vineyards that produce the EST! EST!! EST!!! wine the region is famous for. There are many sites worth visiting such as the Fortress of the Popes and the Santa Margherita Cathedral, both of which dominate the town's landscape.

- 607m ascent, 374m descent
- Overnight: Montefiascone
- Meals: B

Day 18

MONTEFIASCONE TO VITERBO (18KM, 7 HOURS)

This morning after breakfast, you make your way from Montefiascone and along a plain that segregates Lake Bolsena from the Cimini Mountains. You may choose to spend some time soaking up the hot spring waters at Bagnaccio thermal pools as the Romans once did, before continuing on to Viterbo, a well-preserved historic town founded by the Etruscans. Amble through the narrow cobblestone streets of the medieval quarter to the well photographed Piazza Pellegrino then on to Piazza San Lorenzo where you will find the gothic cathedral and Palazzo dei Papi – the location for papal elections in the 12th-century. Viterbo is the ideal setting for medieval movies and film crews are a frequent sight here. This evening find a cosy restaurant to enjoy some pizza and local wine – your host will know a good one!

- 607m ascent, 374m descent
- Overnight: Viterbo
- Meals: B



Day 19

VITERBO TO VETRALLA (17KM, 6 HOURS)

You depart Viterbo via Piazza San Lorenzo and the city walls. To make your way to the outskirts of town, you will follow a section of road built by the Etruscans known as “hollow roads”. This road is recognisable as it is carved into the surrounding rock/hill creating a natural, walled road. The Etruscans used these roads to transport produce from the farms into the city.

The trail merges from paved country lanes to dirt roads, through olive groves and agricultural fields. You will pass through an area called “Masse dio San Sisto”, an area well known for its thermal springs. It was here that aristocrats built their villas to benefit from the healing properties of the mineral waters underground. Arriving at your accommodation you have time to relax in the lovely gardens before dinner.

- 326m ascent, 387m descent
- Overnight: Vetralla
- Meals: B, D

Day 20

VETRALLA TO SUTRI VIA CAPRICANA (24-27M, 8 HOURS)

A long hike is ahead of you today but the route is interesting and scenic. After walking through the outskirts of town, you will spend much of your time on tranquil stretches of forest and country trails that pass through meadows and hazelnut groves. Etruscan ruins are dotted throughout the landscape. Enroute you will come across the delightful village of Capricana. You will enter through the main gateway and amble along a cobblestone street, past churches, a bell tower and locals going about their business in the alleyways off the main street. There is a short, steep descent down the village stone walls and you continue to travel on a beautiful forest trail beside a creek until the trail meanders out of the forest and arrives at the pretty town of Sutri. Holding a strategic location in the region, Sutri was occupied by both the Etruscans and the Romans. Highlights include the Roman Amphitheatre, thought to have been carved from volcanic ‘tuff’ rock in the 1st-century, and the nearby Etruscan Necropolis that has tombs cut into the rock.



RAW TRAVEL

ICONIC WALKS WORLDWIDE

- 424m ascent, 435m descent
- Overnight: Sutri
- Meals: B, L, D

Day 21

SUTRI TO CAMPAGNANO DI ROMA (24.5KM, 7 HOURS)

It is possible to shorten today's walk to 15km (5 hours) with a transfer.

More hazelnut and olive groves await you today as you travel along the Via Francigena towards Campagnano di Roma. You initially encounter vast farmland and cornfields with the occasional flock of grazing sheep overseen by a shepherd or loyal dog. The trail takes you to the quaint town of Monterosi which is a good place to stop for lunch.

Leaving the town behind, the road leads you to a forested regional park where you will come across the Monte Gelato waterfalls and a 19th-century watermill and villa. This is a good place to stop for a rest and a swim in warm weather. Your walking day ends as the town of Campagnano looms up ahead of you. A short, steep ascent leads you to the hilltop town and your accommodation for the night.

- 359m ascent, 375m descent
- Overnight: Campagnano di Roma
- Meals: B, L

Day 22

CAMPAGNANO TO ISOLA FARNESE (20KM, 6 HOURS)

There are steep hills to navigate on your way out of Campagnano today. The Sanctuary of the Madonna del Sorba occupies one of the hill-tops overlooking the Sorba valley that you will pass on your way and makes for a good photo stop. The trail does flatten out in sections but it is predominantly hilly and undulating. The route takes you through quiet country roads, typical Roman countryside and the 'Parco Naturale di Veio' to the charming village of Formello. A highlight of the day is the Etruscan ruins of Veii, once one of the most important and richest Etruscan cities outside of Rome. Many archaeological



excavations in this area have unearthed tombs, aqua tunnels, graves, pottery and weaponry.

- 451m ascent, 636m descent
- Overnight: Isola Farnese
- Meals: B

Day 23

TRANSFER FROM ISOLA FARNESE TO THE VIA APPIA ANTICA – HIKE INTO ROME (14KM, 4 HOURS)

Today you will be transferred to the Via Appia Antica (Appian Way) to enjoy a beautiful walk on the historic cobblestone road leading to Rome. Despite the Via Francigena route into Rome travelling through two parks, it is mainly along busy and noisy roads in the outer suburbs of Rome and thus we believe that the Via Appia Antica option is a much more pleasant experience for our guests.

The Via Appia Antica (312 B.C.) was the vision of Appius Claudius Caecus, a Roman politician, and extended over 600km from Rome to the port town of Brindisi. The ancient highway helped trade thrive and also served as an important way for the Roman army to move supplies within the empire. The Via Appia Antica is also where Spartacus and 6,000 rebel slaves met their demise when they were crucified here in 71 B.C.

Today the cobblestone road is smooth, having been worn down over the centuries by merchants, pilgrims, emperors and great Roman armies. Take your time as you stroll this ancient road, shaded by pines and surrounded by remnants of a different time. Impressive, ornamental gates give suggestion to the grand villas hidden behind them and are a reminder that the Via Appia Antica predominantly ran through the wealthy suburbs of Rome. The section that you will walk along today is through the Parco dell'Appia Antica, a park that protects and conserves the ruins and monuments within.

There are many sites that you can explore (some entry fees may apply), and highlights include the 300km of underground catacombs where early Christians buried their dead, ruins of villas, aqueducts, a *circus maximus* where chariot races were held, and a Roman bath complex.



Upon reaching the tourist information office, you can choose to take a bus or taxi into the city and your hotel for the night.

- Overnight: Rome
- Meals: B

Day 24

DEPARTURE DAY

Your trip ends today but we highly recommend spending some time in the Eternal City to visit iconic sites like the Colosseum, Roman Forum and Pantheon. A testimonium can be obtained from the Vatican and it is a wonderful place to end your pilgrimage.

- Meals: B

