

Walking Tour in La Tuscia - Tuscany / Lazio/Umbria

7 days/6 nights:

The La Tuscia tour starts with a transfer in a private vehicle from either Florence or Rome Fiumicino airport, taking you to La Tuscia (pronounced Toosha), the Roman name for the wonderful area that starts on the southern border of Tuscany and overlaps with the lakes of northern Lazio and the mountains of the south-west corner of Umbria. It is dramatically beautiful, set in the volcanic centre of central Italy and is characterised by rolling downs of black soil, deep basalt canyons, mountain ranges and crater lakes.

The walk starts in the 'three lost villages of Tuscany' and finishes in the spectacular Umbrian town of Orvieto. On the way you follow paths that pass cross the heart of ancient Etruria, following stretches of the Via Francigena, the original stone road that carried pilgrims, merchants and crusader armies from Papal Rome to northern Italy and the rest of Europe.

The walks:

This is a Grade 3 Walk. The walks range from 8 to 18 kms. It starts with shorter walks for the first couple of days, finishing with longer walks at the end up to Orvieto. It mostly follows unsealed country roads through undulating farmlands. There are a couple of rougher sections which follow small but clear trails.

The accommodation:

The accommodation is one of the special features of this tour. As usual, Hidden Italy uses the best accommodation available: all the hotels are in historical buildings in the centre of the small villages and towns including a 4-star resort built on Etruscan foundations; a hotel built in a restored Medici fortress; a family-run hotel in the shadow of the Orvieto cathedral and, my favourite, a 3rd generation country hotel in a tiny rural village. Costings are calculated on two people sharing a double room. All rooms have an en suite bathroom and air conditioning.

The food:

Generous breakfasts are included each day (you'll need them for your walks). With notice, the hotels will be able to prepare a cut lunch for the walk. Dinners are not included in the standard however, if you select the 'Dinners option' (which we recommend) this will include 3 course meals alla carte (ie free choice) in some of the finest restaurants in the area. The dinner option also means you'll have a guaranteed booking each night.

Inclusions:

- six nights accommodation
- all breakfasts
- recommendations for lunch and dinners
- reading lists and historical and cultural notes
maps and detailed walking instructions
- daily transfers of baggage between hotels
- pick-up from Rome airport or Florence and transfer to Pitigliano on Day 1
- 24 hour backup from local manager

The La Tuscia self-guided walking itinerary

Day 1

Transfer from either Rome Fiumicino Airport or Florence to Pitigliano, the beginning of the tour, in a private car (approximately a two hour drive). Pitigliano is spectacularly located on basalt cliffs above the Lente River. On the border between Tuscany and the Papal States, the town had considerable strategic importance during the Renaissance and was a haven for outcasts from Rome. It's dominated by a 16th century castle and a Medici aqueduct.

Day 2

The first leg is a short but extraordinary walk from Pitigliano to tiny neighboring town, following an Etruscan path carved out of living rock three thousand years ago. You will have time in the afternoon (or the following morning) to walk down to the valleys surrounding the village to explore the well-marked Etruscan sites. (8 kms, 3 hrs)

Day 3

The next leg of the walk is to another extraordinary neighbouring town, founded at the same time as Pitigliano and with an equally extraordinary location, perched on volcanic cliffs above a river, staying in a hotel situated in the town's medieval fortress. (11 kms, 3 hrs)

Day 4

After a morning exploring town, the next walk is to charming farming town following a shaded stream and a route that originally joined landlocked Orvieto with the coast, visiting on the way the ruins of a very interesting abandoned medieval town, swallowed up by forests centuries ago. (11 kms, 2.5 hrs)

Day 5

Today you walk to Lake Bolsena via a sleepy country town, leaving Tuscany and crossing into Lazio. The walk finishes on the shores of the lake at a tiny trattoria shaded by willows where you'll be able to have lunch. You will be picked up from here by our driver Luigi and taken around the lake to your accommodation in a 4-star hotel on the lakeshore. (15 kms, 4 hrs)

Day 6

Walk from Lake Bolsena to the marvellous town of Orvieto following for much of the way the original route of a branch of the medieval Via Francigena. On the way you will pass through forest, past an Etruscan excavation and a rock that was miraculously split to allow a medieval procession carrying a relic of Christ's blood to reach Orvieto before picking up a paved section of the Roman road which will take you into Orvieto. (18 kms, 5 hrs)

Day 7

Breakfast in your hotel. Orvieto station is on the main Rome/Florence line and you will be able to continue your holiday from there.