



HEDONISTIC HIKING

Northern Tuscany and Ravenna – 7 Days

The Mugello, Medieval Villages and Mosaics

This brand new seven-night itinerary for **2018** starts and finishes in Bologna, the culinary capital of Emilia-Romagna. We drop down to the northern part of Tuscany to explore the unknown territory of the Mugello: a wide, green valley criss-crossed by the Sieve river, shaping a landscape filled with vines, chestnut woods and beech forests. Our hikes take us over lands which inspired great Renaissance artists and poets and we follow sections of the Gothic Line, the last major German defensive line in the Italian campaign of World War II. We travel towards the Adriatic coast to finish in the unrivalled city of Ravenna, once the capital of the Western Roman Empire, but still home to some of the world's most dazzling Byzantine mosaics.

What is included?

- **7 nights' accommodation** in three lovely hotels
- **Two experienced and knowledgeable guides** to bring this stunning area to life
- **All meals** including excellent wines
- **Gourmet picnic lunches** each day and snacks en route
- **Support vehicle**, enabling you to walk as much or as little as you please
- **Transport** in air-conditioned minibus
- **All museum entries** as per the itinerary
- Comprehensive **pre-trip information**

Tour Highlights

Private guided tour of UNESCO World Heritage sites of Ravenna
Fabulous tastings at wine and olive-oil estates, and the October chestnut festival
Outstanding hiking in lesser-known part of Tuscany

Accommodation

Villa Campestri: Family-owned olive oil resort with pool and excellent restaurant. Views of rolling Tuscan countryside

Locanda Senio: Albergo diffuso, scattered hotel in beautiful Mugello village on the Senio river

Palazzo Bezzi: Very comfortable 4-star hotel close to the historic centre of Ravenna

Itinerary

Day 1:

We meet in Bologna at 9.00am at the [UNA Hotel Bologna](#) in front of the Central Train Station and drive to the Futa Pass at 900 metres. Our hike touches on the Roman Via Flaminia and also the Gothic line of defence from World War II. (9km/5.5miles) After lunch we visit the pretty village of Scarperia, known for its beautiful handmade knives. We visit the old forge to see how the knives used to be crafted. A short drive takes us to our beautiful hotel at Villa Campestri, surrounded by woods and olive groves. Dinner in the hotel this evening.



Day 2:

We drive to the start of our hike at a small village. We start out walking along an old mule track before climbing on a woodland trail to reach a ridge with wonderful views. (7km/4.4miles) After a picnic lunch we visit the historic Castello Pomino, part of the estates of the noble Frescobaldi family. We visit the estate and family chapel and taste the wonderful Pomino DOC wines. Dinner this evening in a local restaurant.

Day 3:

Today we hike from the hotel. In the morning we climb up 600m through beautiful chestnut and beech woods to the highest point in the region – Monte Giove at 992m altitude. From the summit we can see Pomino castle, the vineyards of Chianti Rufina and, on a clear day, the towers of Florence. We descend to a small mountain restaurant where we have lunch. In the afternoon we continue descending through the woods, passing a small church, before reaching Villa Campestri. Dinner in the hotel this evening. (17km/10.5miles).



Day 4:



Depart Villa Campestri after breakfast and a scenic drive takes us to Passo Sambuca. A short climb takes us to just over 1000m. We enjoy some spectacular open views of the remote Mugello region before descending 650m to the delightful village of Palazzuolo del Senio. After a picnic lunch we check into the Locanda Senio, an “Albergo Diffuso” with rooms dotted around the village. Later in the day we visit the interesting local museum and have time to explore the village. Dinner in the hotel restaurant. (12km/7.5miles)

Day 5:

We drive to the start of our walk. Today is a beautiful hike of waterfalls and rivers in an area that time forgot. Legend says that the landscape inspired Dante when writing his *Inferno* and hence the valley is named Valle d'Inferno. We descend through the woods, detouring to see a beautiful waterfall before continuing to our picnic lunch. In the afternoon we continue hiking through ancient chestnut and beech woods to arrive at the 11th century Vallombrosan Abbey of Moscheta where our hike ends. (14km/8.6miles). Return to the hotel by van.



Day 6:



We leave Tuscany this morning and enter the region of Romagna. A short hike explores a fascinating rock formation – formed of gypsum - at the edge of the Apennine ridge. The trail leads us to the charming village of Brisighella with its castle, church and medieval streets. (7km/4.4miles) After lunch we explore the village before continuing to Ravenna. The city was seat of the Roman Empire in the 5th century and then of Byzantine Italy until the 8th century. It has a unique collection of early Christian mosaics and monuments which are part of UNESCO's World Heritage listing. We visit the magnificent church of Sant'Apollinare in Classe before arriving at our hotel in the centre of town. Dinner in a local restaurant.

Day 7:

This morning we have a private tour with a local guide which takes us to the principal early Christian buildings of Ravenna. Light lunch in a local café before a free afternoon to explore the shops and sights of the city. Final dinner in a local restaurant.



Day 8:

Return to Bologna central station for 11am and Bologna airport at 12pm

Walking

Shortest day: 7km/ 4.4 miles

Longest day: 17km/10.75 miles

There are 6 days of walking on the trip. We usually walk on strade bianche (gravel roads), woodland tracks and quiet tarmac roads. The Mugello region is part of the Apennine mountain chain and we hike between altitudes 400m and 1000m. The terrain is relatively hilly, with some significant ups and downs, but not mountainous. The walking is fairly rugged in sections so sturdy walking boots, with good ankle support, are required. Walking poles would be an advantage, especially on steeper sections.

Weather

Tuscany in spring/autumn has warm days, although heavy rain can be expected at times. The mornings and evenings are cool. At times we hike at 1000m of altitude so it is important to be prepared for cooler temperatures.

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[Chianti Rufina](#) Blog Post

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