



exodus

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Trip Notes

TUSCANY: CYCLE SIENA & CHIANTI

Trip Code: MWI
Country: Italy
Amended: April 2013
Edition No: ODT 02 2013
Valid from: 01 April - 31 Dec 2013

ADULT GROUP

MODERATE



NEW



HIGHLIGHTS

- Door-to-door riding without the need for daily transfers
- Time to explore the classic towns of Siena, San Gimignano, Montepulciano and Florence
- An excellent mix of charming towns, quaint villages and stunning countryside ,from Le Crete to Chianti
- Enjoy the famous Tuscan cuisine and wine
- The chance to spend some extra days in the beautiful city of Florence at the end of your trip

SUMMARY

The Tuscan landscape is one of the most evocative and romantic in Europe with cypress trees lining the roads, olive groves, vineyards, ancient hill-top towns and, of course, classic Renaissance cities. Our two-wheeled exploration is carefully planned to take in the best of Tuscany without feeling rushed or over-cultural: part of the joy of the Italian lifestyle is sitting and watching the world go by with a glass of Chianti in your hand! During the week we cycle through diverse areas of Tuscany, such as the hills of Chianti and the beautiful around Montepulciano. Riding north, we enter 'Le Crete', a wonderfully scenic region that's home to some of Tuscany's best towns and villages. We then enjoy Siena's magnificent Campo before cycling past the towers of San Gimignano and onto our final destination in Florence. Following quiet roads, we mix point-to-point and circular rides to make a perfect cycle tour of this region, without the need to transfer at the beginning of each day.

IS THIS TRIP FOR YOU?

This region is famous for its rolling hills, so be prepared for some climbing in places. Most days will require a reasonable level of fitness. The Chianti section of the tour falls into the upper category of B grade riding.

Distances per day vary from 50-65km; there are options to make the days longer if required. There are no transfers to or from hotels on this trip: all the rides are designed to be door-to-door. There is one free day in Siena and two circular rides, where vehicle support is not provided.

We aim to use quiet roads where possible, but sometimes we need to pass busy sections in order to reach the quiet roads on the other side. Sometimes the most scenic routes are on tarmac, with a possibility to cross onto some dirt / gravel roads (locally known as 'white roads').



Simple route notes are provided, so the group can spread out on certain sections.

This trip is classified road and graded B. 5 days cycling, average 58km/day (37 miles), 60% vehicle support (on point-to-point days only).

Terrain: 85% tarmac, 15% easy gravel roads (most optional).

LAND ONLY ITINERARY

The entries in bold at the end of each day indicate the type of accommodation normally used (if different standards of accommodation are used - see accommodation section below for key to codes), and meals included (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner).

Day 1 Start San Quirico, in the heart of Val d'Orcia. After the trip briefing, hired bikes are issued to clients. The leader will arrange an optional group meal, normally taken at the hotel's own restaurant. **CH**

Day 2 Circular ride through historic towns and abbeys

Following an ancient pilgrimage route, the Via Francigena, we head towards Pienza, a charming town full of history and culture. From here we cycle to the wine centre of Montepulciano, famous for its Vino Nobile. We then head towards the mediaeval village of Monticchiello and on to Bagno Vignoni, before making our way back to the hotel.

Distance cycled 61 km **CH (B)**



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Day 3 Cycle through vineyard to Siena

A classic day's riding, showing Tuscany at its most picturesque. Following quiet roads we head out of San Quirico with a first stop at Montalcino. We then descend on gravel roads via Castiglione del Bosco and the road to Murlo. From here we ascend the short but steep Rospatoio Pass and take a lovely road section via Ville di Corsano, as we approach the splendid Gothic town of Siena.

Distance cycled 60km **CH (B)**

Day 4 Siena

There is plenty to see in Siena and its sights are best explored on foot, as the town is compact, but hilly. There are many museums and buildings of interest to visit, such as the impressive Duomo and the Campo, Siena's wonderful main square. Alternatively you may choose to head out for an unguided ride. **CH (B)**

Day 5 Classic Chianti

From Siena we head directly into the heart of Chianti. Our route takes us via some lovely small villages and hamlets, as well as some spectacular vineyards and castles, such as that of Castello di Brolio. Here there is the option to take a wine tasting of some of the area's finest wines. We then cycle via Gaiole and Radda in Chianti, with options to ride to the abbey of Coltrabuono, before our final section to Castellina in Chianti, where we stay for two nights.

Distance cycled 55km **CH (B)**

Day 6 Circular ride through ancient walled towns

From Castellina, we travel through some lovely countryside before taking an amazingly scenic descent into the lower valley. From Poggibonsi we head towards the distant towers of San Gimignano nestling between the hills and small hamlets. San Gimignano is sometimes crowded, but this does not take away from what is one of the most interesting sights in Tuscany. We spend a few hours enjoying the atmosphere, walking by the walls and admiring the town's high towers. Our return route passes through the quieter Colle di Val d'Elsa, and on to the walled town Monteriggioni, before returning to Chianti and the quiet roads leading to our lodge. There is an option to take a transfer back to Castellina from Monteriggioni.

Distance cycled 56km **CH (B)**

Day 7 Cycle to Florence

From our hotel in Castellina, we first ride to a spectacular panoramic road via San Donato in Poggio towards Panzano in Chianti, before taking a back road via lovely walled village of Montefioralle and then to Greve in Chianti. Here we have time for lunch and to admire the market square, before heading towards Stada and Impruneta, home to terracotta production. We finally take a panoramic road towards Florence, cycling all the way to Piazzale Michelangelo for a final group shot. We will arrive in Florence in the early afternoon, which will give you time to start to explore this beautiful city.

Distance cycled 62km **CH (B)**

Day 8 End Florence. Please speak to our sales team if you would like to book extra nights in Florence. **(B)**

For those on group flights, these depart in the afternoon and will arrive in the UK the same day.

ACCOMMODATION

We spend the week in four 3 and 4 star hotels, spending 2 nights in each (except day 7, where only 1 night). All hotels are high quality and some have swimming pools. All twin and single rooms have en suite facilities.

Single Accommodation:

Single rooms are available for a supplement of £170. Please advise our sales team at the time of booking.

Extra Accommodation:

If you require extra accommodation in Florence at the end of the tour, please contact our sales team for up-to-date prices and availability.

KEY TO ACCOMMODATION: We indicate in the itinerary what type of accommodation is provided on each day. The descriptions are guidelines only and are used to give an idea of the accommodation offered, rather than an exact description.

CH Comfortable Hotel, Lodge or Gite - twin rooms with en suite facilities, reliable electricity and water supply, good service and some added amenities.

FOOD & TRANSPORT

Food

In the itinerary we state which meals are included on which day.

All breakfasts are included and are Continental in style, consisting of coffee or tea, bread, jam and/or honey.

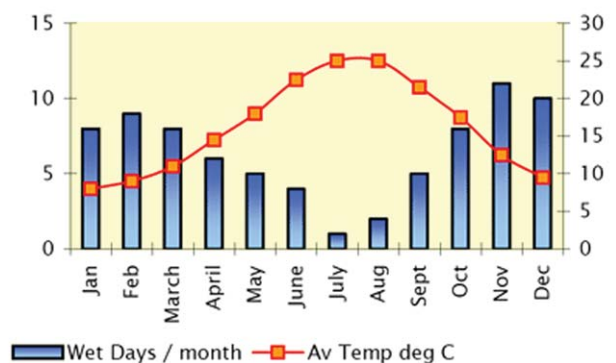
Vegetarian choices are available. If you are vegetarian please advise us when you book.

Transport

Your luggage is transferred from one hotel to the next for you. We use a minibus and custom-built bike trailer to transport the bikes and your luggage. The minibus is used as a support vehicle during the rides.

WEATHER AND SEASONALITY

Weather chart for Pisa



Italy has a good all year round climate, with plenty of sunshine and warm/hot temperatures. The summer departures ought to have daily hot sunshine and temperatures can reach the low to mid 30s centigrade. The earlier and later departures are likely to be cooler with a slightly higher chance of rain. In late summer there is the possibility of heavy thunderstorms (generally in the afternoons), but these are usually short-lived.



If you would like us to organise a private transfer, please ask your sales consultant for a quote. Please ensure that you provide us with all relevant information at least 2 weeks before departure.

The cost of a taxi is likely to be about €180-200 should you decide to make your way independently.

Full joining instructions including local emergency numbers will be sent to you as part of our Final Joining Instructions. If you do not receive these at least a week before departure, or require them earlier please contact our office or your travel agent.

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

Tourism can be a real help to local communities, providing income, positive cultural exchanges and a financial incentive to protect their natural environment. Ours is a 'total approach' to responsible tourism, covering everything from the way we plan and operate our trips to the practices of Exodus as a company.

Being on bikes, we can be quite versatile and are able to visit places that are not as easily accessible by other means of transport. We stay in locally owned hotels, so contributing directly to the local communities and our food on the trip is bought fresh at local stores and markets, helping to support the local economy and ensuring that our clients sample the local delicacies that Tuscany has to offer.

For full details of our Responsible Tourism Policy please visit:

www.exodus.co.uk/responsible-travel

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Passports and Visas

Most nationalities, including British, require a full passport that must be valid for 3 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information below is primarily for UK passport holders, and other nationalities should check with their travel agent or the relevant embassies. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

Certain European nationalities may be able to travel within Europe on their national identity card. Check carefully with the relevant authorities if you intend to do this.

No visa required for British passport holders.

Please note in Italy it is compulsory to carry ID with you at all times.

Visa regulations can change without notice: please check the current regulations in good time to obtain a visa if one is required.

Vaccinations and Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad.

There are no specific health risks on this trip.



JOINING THE TRIP IN THE UK

8 days, normally depart London Sat, return Sat

Please remember to book early as flights are extremely limited and become more expensive depending on availability.

Itinerary Start

The group flight from London is a daytime flight departing on Day 1 of the itinerary.

Flights from London

We normally use the scheduled services of British Airways (depending on availability). As flight timings and schedules change regularly we recommend you call one of our specialist sales staff or your agent to confirm up-to-date timings. Please note timings may change at a later date and cannot be confirmed until approximately two weeks before departure.

UK Regional Flights

The Flight Inclusive price is based on a London departure, but we are happy to tailor this to your local or regional airport. Please visit www.exodus.co.uk/regionaldepartures for a useful overview of the options available, and contact our sales team for expert advice.

If booking regional flights other than with Exodus, you must allow a minimum connecting time (in addition to the international check in time) of 1 hour at Gatwick, and 1½ hours at Heathrow; this is longer than the official minimum, but baggage handling is known to be subject to delays.

Airport Transfers

Airport transfers are included for those on the group flights. Please note that transfers are not included for clients arriving on any other flight, even if Exodus have booked it. Those arriving from London on non-group flights should read the airport transfer section below for information on reaching the start point. Please check with the Exodus office.

JOINING THE TRIP IN SAN QUIRICO

8 days, normally start San Quirico Sat, end Florence Sat

Itinerary Start

Your trip normally starts at our hotel in San Quirico in the afternoon of Day 1 of the itinerary. Details of how to reach the start point are provided in the Final Joining Instructions - sent approximately two weeks before departure. Hotel check-in times are normally from around 2pm.

Airport Transfers

If you require airport transfers, you may (by prior arrangement only) be able to join the group transfer. Transfers are arranged to coincide with the arrival time of the group flight - please check the group flight details 2 weeks before departure. If you do not take this transfer, or miss it, you must make your own way to the joining point at your own expense.



The above information can change at short notice; as we are not qualified to answer all your questions about travel health we strongly recommend you contact your Medical Professional or a Travel Health Clinic at least 8 weeks prior to departure for up-to-date information.

Insurance - are you adequately covered?

You must have adequate travel insurance, and if you are joining a trip which goes to high altitude, you must check that you are covered up to the maximum altitude of the trip. If you are resident in the UK we strongly recommend Exodus travel insurance, which is specifically designed to cover all activities on your trip.

Local Time

GMT + 1

Group, Staff and Support

The group will generally be between 7 and 15 people. There will be a UK leader and drivers and local guides where needed.

The trip has two leaders, one who cycles with the group and acts as a mechanic, helping with any bike problems. The other leader drives the support vehicle and transports the luggage from one hotel to the next.

The minimum age of clients on this trip is 16 years. Please note that anyone aged under 18 must be accompanied by (and share accommodation with) a parent or legal guardian.

MONEY MATTERS

Currency Information

The national currency of Italy is the Euro (EUR), with an exchange rate of 1.2 to the UK£ and 0.75 to the US\$.

Exchange rates are correct at the time of publication.

ATM availability/Credit Card Acceptance/Travellers cheques

ATMs are available in most towns. Payment by credit card is normally fine, but they are not quite as widely accepted in restaurants as in the UK.

Extra Expenses and Spending Money

For the meals not included, allow from €8-15 for lunch and from €15-30 for dinners. The exact amount spent depends entirely on the type of restaurant visited, and the menu chosen.

LOCAL TAXES: many Italian cities have recently introduced a tourist tax for non-residents. The local administration is in charge of the tax, which will be collected by the accommodation provider at check-in or check-out. This fee varies depending on the hotel category, the season and number of days of stay. It is usually between €0.50 and €1.50 per person per night. For this trip, please allow between €5 and €10, depending on the season, for the week. Children and people aged 75 or over are exempt from this tax.

WHAT TO TAKE

Local Bike Hire:

Ridgeback Momentum hybrid bikes with 27 gears and front suspension forks £95, paid on booking. The bikes are fitted with hybrid tyres, and an adjustable height stem, so we can get the bike to fit you as well as possible. 'In-country' bike hire should be arranged at the time of booking, and the cost will be added to your invoice. Please note that in a few locations, there is a limited number of bikes available locally, and very occasionally late bookers may be required to bring a bike from the UK (either a UK hire bike, or their own).

Bringing Your Own Bike:

Many people choose to bring their own bikes on our trips. If you wish to bring your own bike, please note that we cannot guarantee against small scratches and paintwork damage involved in the loading and unloading from support vehicles. For more detailed information on bringing a bike from the UK, Information Sheet MBX will be sent to you on booking. This can also be found on our website at: www.exodus.co.uk/assets/pdf/MBX.pdf

Any clients bringing their own bike should ensure that they have adequate cover for loss, damage or theft under either their travel or home contents insurance policy.



Extra Bike Bits

You may like to bring your own pedals and saddle (excluding the seat post) or gel saddle cover to fit to the hire bikes. We encourage this, if it is your preference. However, please note that you are responsible for your own equipment, and removing your saddle/pedals at the end of the trip. We cannot guarantee the return of any bike parts left behind.

Exodus Policy on Cycling Helmets

Helmets and safety: Exodus believes that all cyclists should wear helmets in the interests of personal safety, and our leaders are required to do so at all times on all trips. Customers must wear helmets at all times on any 'off-road' cycling holiday and certain 'road' cycling trip (where this is applicable it is clearly stated in these Trip Notes).

On most road cycling holidays, wearing a helmet is strongly recommended, but we accept that some customers will want to exercise their own choice in this matter. Please note that not wearing a helmet may affect the validity of your insurance. Those who decide not to wear a helmet do so entirely at their own risk, and in the knowledge that some 'road' trips may include some 'off-road' sections. If wishing to use a helmet you must bring your own with you as they are not available for hire.

Cycling of all kinds has its dangers and accidents can happen from time to time. Please ensure that you are properly prepared for the riding you are going to undertake.

Essential Equipment and Clothing

Personal Equipment

On all Exodus cycling holidays you are required to bring the following personal items, which we view as crucial for the health and safety of our clients:

A helmet, eye-protection (sunglasses), cycling gloves and waterbottles or hydration system (e.g. camelbak).

Recommended Cycling Clothing

Padded cycling shorts (with loose 'over-shorts' where recommended), breathable clothing, and a lightweight waterproof/windproof top. Shoes with relatively stiff soles are better for biking, but are not essential unless you are cycling long distances

Most people want to carry certain items with them during the day while cycling, for this we recommend a large bum-bag or small close-fitting daysack.

Cycling helmet.

Padded shorts and gloves.

Sunglasses/eye protection.

Stiff-soled shoes suitable for cycling.

Waterproof jacket and long cycling trousers; warm top.

Suncream.

We also recommend: bath/beach towel and swimming costume for the hotels which have swimming pools.

Baggage and Baggage Allowance

At time of writing the standard weight limit for hold baggage on the recommended international carrier for this trip is 23kg. We recommend packing only one piece of checked baggage.

As advice about luggage allowances for both hand and hold luggage is subject to change, we suggest you check www.baa.com and/or the airline's website for the latest information prior to your departure.

JOIN THE EXODUS ONLINE COMMUNITY

Don't forget to visit the Community area on our website. You can view the range of Exodus videos and podcasts, read trip write-ups which have featured in the national media and take advantage of some special deals on travel gear and equipment.

In the Compass Café forum you'll find the Departure Lounge where you can discuss your trip with fellow travellers before you depart. When you get back from your holiday remember to upload your images to the relevant trip page on our website. This helps other people see what our holidays are really like and you'll be entered automatically into our monthly photo competition.

To make full use of the Compass Café you'll need to join My Exodus. It's free, registration is simple and easy, so what are you waiting for?

<http://www.exodus.co.uk/community>

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL CLIENTS

Exodus operates a 24 hour duty office for emergencies, which can be contacted on 0044 (0) 1582 644 100.

Every time that you travel abroad you should take the time to read the warnings in the essential information in the brochure or at www.exodus.co.uk/about-exodus/essential-information?


Full joining instructions including local emergency numbers, and details of how to reach the start point, will be sent to you approximately 2 to 3 weeks prior to departure. If you do not receive these at least a week before departure, or require them earlier please contact our office or your travel agent.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; in order to enjoy them you should be prepared to be flexible where necessary. Occasionally, as stated in our brochure, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned. This may be for a variety of reasons - climatic, political, physical or other. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements that maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

As fuel prices, airport taxes and exchange rates fluctuate, and airlines manage their rates to match demand, it is proving harder than ever to guarantee our Flight Inclusive prices. Although we endeavour to keep our website as accurate as possible, daily fluctuations mean that our Flight Inclusive price may be out of date. For accurate prices we recommend that you contact one of our Travel Experts, or your Travel Agent.

Prices and exchange rates were correct at the time of publication. The most up-to-date prices can be found on the Exodus website.

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EXODUS CYCLING JERSEYS

These high-tech professional level jerseys are made with 100% SpeedPro advanced moisture transfer fabric, perfect for keeping cool. Raglan cut, the jerseys have $\frac{3}{4}$ length hidden zippers and 3 rear pockets so they're ideal for serious cyclists.

Designed by Primal in both men's and women's cut, so you can get an expertly tailored fit.

Order yours now! Just £45 each.

For more details visit www.exodus.co.uk/cycle-jersey

HOW TO BOOK YOUR TRIP

1. *Check availability*

Go online to check availability, or contact us by phone or email.

2. *Secure your place*

You can provisionally hold a place on this trip, usually for between three and seven days.

3. *Complete your booking and payment*

When you're ready to book, go to www.exodus.co.uk for online booking, book over the phone or you can complete a booking form (available online or on request by calling us). We accept all major credit and debit cards, or you can pay by cheque.

Book with confidence: Exodus is fully licensed and bonded as a tour operator. We hold Air Traffic Organisers Licence (ATOL) number 2582 issued and bonded with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). We are also bonded to the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and we are members of the Federation of Tour Operators (FTO) and ABTA - The Travel Association. This means you can book your Exodus holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected.



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