

HIKING & NATURE TOURS IN ITALY AND AROUND THE WORLD

TREKKILANDSÅ



April 17th - 21st, 2024

THE BEST OF THE VIA LAURETANA TOSCANA

ROAD OF ARTISTS, MERCHANTS AND PILGRIMS
5 DAYS / 4 NIGHTS

THE TRIP IN A NUTSHELL

PRICE PER PERSON	630,00 €
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS	from 6 to 14 pax
TRIP TYPE	Semi - itinerant
DURATION	5 days / 4 nights from April 17th, 2024 to April 21st, 2024
LUGGAGE TRANSPORTATION	Included
BACKPACK TYPE	Daily
SINGLE BEDROOM	No
DIFFICULTY	2 fingers (Check out the SCALE OF DIFFICULTY on the TREKKILANDIA website)
WALKING DAYS	5 e mezzo
WALKING HOURS PER DAY	5 - 7
SUITABLE AS A FIRST EXPERIENCE	Contact the guide to discuss this point
ACCOMMODATIONS	Hotel and agriturismo in double, triple or quadruple rooms. En-suite bathrooms in the hotel and shared bathrooms in the farmhouse flats.
MEALS	Breakfasts at our accommodation. Packed lunches and dinners at our accommodation or restaurant.
HIGHLIGHTS	The experience of walking along an ancient, little-known route. The immense panoramas, authentic villages, the immensity and history of the fertile Val di Chiana and the fascinating arrival in Cortona.
WHERE WE WALK	Country roads, dirt roads, trails, crossing fields.



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TREKKILANDIA

THE JOURNEY

The **Via Lauretana** is a path through the heart of Italy to Loreto (Marche) in whose shrine the Holy Relic of Mary's Holy House in Nazareth has been kept since 1294. Called "**the world's oldest Marian path**," it passes through some of the most important places of Christianity in Italy, including Assisi.

We will walk selected parts - the best parts, in fact - of the section that connects the beautiful **medieval city of Siena** to the **Etruscan town of Cortona**, a recently reopened and promoted section that is all to be explored. In ancient times this route had not only a religious function, as it connected the fertile **Val di Chiana** with the city of Siena: of utmost importance to the Sienese was its maintenance and control. All of the inhabited places dotting it therefore played a strategic role so that so that plenty of food would reach the city .

Some of the great sights we will get to pass through? The "**biancane**" of **Leonina**, with the beautiful **artwork of the Sito Transitorio; Asciano**, nestled in the **Crete Senesi**, very rich in churches and works of art; the grancia and travertine quarries of **Serre di Rapolano**; the fertile **Val di Chiana**; the **Leopoldine farm of La Fratta**; and the villages of **Scrofiano, Sinalunga, Torrita** and **Cortona**, which alone would be worth the trip. We will take the time to visit the parish churches, villages and taste local products, without hurrying.

A journey through **great landscapes**, endless expanses of clay, cypresses and cereals, clouds, sheep and - in the distance - always a village to welcome us in the evening. It will be a real surprise: we cross an area that has long been on the fringe of the great Tuscan tourism and for this reason still rich in **authenticity in relationships, sociability, flavors...**

It is my privilege to introduce you, if you wish, to the great human, historical, artistic and naturalistic richness of these lands. A journey that you will carry in your heart, I am sure.



THE REGION

This section of the walk is predominantly within the **Province of Siena, Tuscany**. Only the last stage flows into the Province of Arezzo, with the arrival in Cortona.

We start at the gates of beautiful **Siena**, from **Crete Senesi**, a peculiar, lunar and incredibly beautiful territory. The Pliocene clays of the ancient sea of Siena hold sway, the hills are always topped by isolated farms, grancie (the ancient granaries of the **Santa Maria della Scala Hospital** in Siena), castles and a few cypresses; the valleys preserve traces of sparse woods. The **Leonina "biancane"** are geologically and scenically very interesting. The town of **Asciano** is a real jewel hidden from most.

A step further east and we enter the **Val di Chiana**: the hills slowly slope down, the plains appear before our eyes. This fertile area, with a strong agricultural vocation, was once marshy: the last attempt (of many) at reclamation was completed by Pietro Leopoldo, Governor of Tuscany, in the late 1700s. That is why the oldest towns are on the hills at its edges and have, in addition to beautiful views, much history to tell: **Sinalunga** and **Torrita** are perhaps the most representative. In addition, the entire valley, crossed by the **Canale Maestro della Chiana**, is dotted with farms and imposing farm villas from the Leopoldine era: magnificent.

Once past the village of **Valiano**, we begin to enter the hills that climb toward Cortona: the landscape changes, we are in the **Province of Arezzo** and we almost seem to perceive the influence of nearby Umbria, at the gates.

The mirror of **Lake Trasimeno** keeps us company in the distance. We leave it behind, to climb the mountain of Cortona, which welcomes us with its incredible view, the woods behind, the churches, the streets and the many Etruscan relics in eternal memory of its glorious past.

Needless to say, **Cortona** alone would be worth the trip.



THE CAMINO

The Via Lauretana runs along **dirt roads, paths, some sections of paved road and others in the middle of fields.**

There are some parts, especially along the first stage, that cross clayey areas: in case of rain so they can be muddy, constitute an extra effort to deal with or - even - become routes to avoid! No problem: the alternatives are equally beautiful!

One of the difficulties we may encounter is **walking, day after day, for rather long distances, from 5 to 8 hours of walking daily.** The stages are an average of 20 km per day, the altitude differences are variable (see data sheet). Therefore it is a recommended trip for those who are used to walking with some regularity.

Having the **luggage service included** in the package is really a great help: in fact, it allows us to move with only our **daily backpack**, without too much weight on our shoulders, legs and feet.

April is a beautiful month to walk the Via Lauretana: **spring** is beginning to appear with its colors, scents, and the earth preparing to awaken. The days begin to lengthen and the sun becomes kinder. But you know, in April the **weather can be variable**: cool or rainy days are not excluded and can alternate with beautiful sunny days. Layered and waterproof clothing/poncho that allows us to enjoy the walk whatever the weather and a lot of patience with mud is recommended. Trekking poles are recommended.

Ours is a **semi itinerant hike**, the stages will wind from village to village, in one case a short transfer by public transport is planned to avoid a long urban stretch. Private transfers will allow us to sleep for 2 nights in the same hotel.



EATING AND SLEEPING

The section of the Via Lauretana that starts in the city of Siena is a newly opened path and has yet to be well equipped for pilgrim accommodation, especially for groups. Ours is therefore a **semi itinerant journey**: although the logic of the tour is that of a walk in its own right, on one occasion (in Asciano), we will have the pleasure of staying in the same hotel for two consecutive nights.

Short private transfers will help us continue the linearity of our walk. In Asciano we will be accommodated in a hotel in the historic center, so we will not miss a single minute to totally immerse ourselves in the magical medieval atmosphere of this unexplored little jewel nestled in the Crete Senesi. We will have **double, triple or quadruple rooms** (much will depend on the composition of the group), as well as in Torrita and Cortona. **Simple and comfortable 3-star hotels**, just a step away from the heart of the historic centers. In Petignano del Lago, on the other hand, we will be guests of a **Agriturismo** in the middle of the countryside, in a very panoramic location with an in-house restaurant overlooking the magnificent Montepulciano and Val di Chiana: comfortable double or triple rooms and a green park all around. We will have some double beds to share: the **sheet bag** will be a good help to maintain privacy. An enchanting place, not to miss that extra pampering that is always nice!

The dinners will allow us to explore at will the various culinary specialties of the area, in **typical and delicious little restaurants**: we will be able to taste **Val di Chiana's pici all'aglione, ribollite, tagliatelle with wild boar, pecorino cheese, Chianina meat** (whether steak rather than cold cuts, it matters little, the important thing is to taste!), and much much more!!!

We are in the area of the fabulous white **truffle of the Crete Senesi**, the wine Bianco Vergine Valdichiana dop or, for lovers of red, the fine **wine Nobile di Montepulciano** of course!!! We will buy our picnics in the small village stores for picnic lunches. Whenever possible we will have lunch comfortably in typical cafes or local...



CHIANINA



AGLIONE of the CHIANA VALLEY

DATAILED SCHEDULE

Meeting place and time: Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 8:30 a.m. in Siena, in front of St. Dominic Church

Place and time of end of trip: Sunday, April 21, 2024 at 17:00 in Cortona. To get to the train station you will need to get off by a vehicle at the Cortona - Camucia station (by cab or public transportation, less than 10 minutes travel time)

Free for those arriving in Siena the evening before the start of the tour:

2 HOUR GUIDED TOUR OF THE CITY OF THE PALIO

DAY 1 - ARBIA - LEONINA - VESCONA - ASCIANO

26.3km - Elevation gain: +790m / -770m - Walking hours: 7 1/2 hours - MEDIUM

After a short transfer to the village of Arbia, we begin our walk towards Asciano. The longest leg of our adventure awaits us, but also one of the most spectacular. We immerse ourselves for hours in a picture postcard landscape, that of the Crete Senesi of Asciano: poetic, rugged, fascinating, open... something indefinable, a little desert, a little moon, a little seabed. The Geosito delle Biancane, Mucigliani, Vescona, Monte Sante Marie and the many brick farms punctuate it, enriching it with history and charm. Asciano is a little unknown gem: we will discover it on our arrival.

INCLUDED dinner and overnight stay in hotel

DAY 2 - ASCIANO - SERRE DI RAPOLANO - OSTERIACCIA

21 Km - Height difference: +660mt / -480mt - Walking hours: 5 - MEDIUM

We leave Asciano and visit - availability permitting - a true wonder, the Parish Church of Saints Ippolito and Cassiano, whose frescoes are attributed to the great Raphael! A few more kilometres of crete and we are in Serre di Rapolano: in medieval times this area was controlled by the Spedale del Santa Maria della Scala in Siena... the Spedale's grancia (fortified farm) in the heart of the village is a real discovery. We leave the evocative alleyways of the Serre to continue towards slightly more wooded areas: olive groves alternate with parish churches, farms and the immense travertine quarries, still active, that over the centuries have made the wealth of this area. Scrofiano, on our arrival, appears to us at the end of a beautiful wood. A short transfer takes us back to Asciano

Free dinner in a restaurant and overnight stay in a hotel



CHIANA'S CANALS

DETAILED SCHEDULE

DAY 3 - SCROFIANO - SINALUNGA - LA FRATTA - TORRITA

19 km - Elevation gain: +540mt / -780 mt - Walking hours: 5 - MEDIUM

We leave Asciano. A short transfer allows us to reach Scrofiano to continue our journey. The village is bordered by a stream that, in the past, had fed mills, fishponds and wash houses. The forest that surrounds the hamlet is really evocative... We enjoy it to the full before going out into the open, surrounded by the industrious and fertile vastness of the Val di Chiana. Suddenly the path becomes flat, the settlements more populous, the canals omnipresent. Along the way we come across the ancient Leopoldine farm of La Fratta, one of the most magical places on our journey: here part of Garrone's "Pinocchio" was filmed, here Chianina cows are raised, here the infamous Ghino di Tacco was born! We then continue on to Torrita, another beautiful village to discover.

INCLUDED dinner in a restaurant and overnight stay in the hotel.

DAY 4 - TORRITA - VALIANO - PETRIGNANO DEL LAGO

23 km - Elevation gain: +270mt / - 270mt - Walking hours: 6 - MEDIUM

Even more than the previous day we enter the heart of the Val di Chiana. We pass through the villages of Abbadia di Montepulciano and Montepulciano Scalo, which remind us of the area's agricultural vocation and its great expansion beginning in the late 1700s. The flat landscape is designed by a dense network of canals: we easily reach the embankment of the Canale Maestro della Chiana and enter the charming Sentiero della Bonifica. The Callone structure was built in 1723 by the Grand Duke of Tuscany Cosimo III to ensure the navigability of the canal, which for a long time was the main transport route for agricultural commodities to the markets of Arezzo and Florence. We cross the canal on the famous Valiano Bridge and, after much plain, slowly climb slightly to the castle of Valiano first and to our farmhouse soon after.

INCLUDED dinner and overnight stay at a farmhouse



LA FRATTA

DETAILED SCHEDULE

DAY 5 - PETRIGNANO SUL LAGO - OSSAIA - CORTONA

21 Km - Elevation gain: + 390Mt / -220mt - Walking hours: 6 - MEDIUM

We leave our country hotel and arrive in Petrignano sul Lago. We are in Umbria! But we stay there just long enough to buy a sandwich for today's picnic :) More plain until Ossaia, a name that recalls the bloody battle of Trasimeno by the Carthaginian Annibale Barca against the Romans. The lake accompanies us far to the south. The grand Cortona is in front of us, waiting for us, leaning against the hill: the climb begins, and with it the wonderful views of the Val di Chiana now behind us.

Cortona is indeed very beautiful: its extremely scenic location, its Etruscan history, medieval streets, churches and sanctuaries.

We say goodbye after a short group tour of the village, and a beer to celebrate our finish. Everyone is free to return as they please.



Chianina breeding



Val di Chiana



Crete Senesi



Serre di Rapolano

PRICE 630 € with a minimum of 6 participants

INCLUDES

- Hiking Guide Service
- Tour Guide Service
- Secretarial service and trip registration
- All overnight stays (5 nights in accommodations as described in "Eating and sleeping")
- All breakfasts
- 3 dinners
- Luggage transportation
- Private transfers as scheduled
- Video call assistance in filling out the contract
- V.A.T.

DOES NOT INCLUDE

- The trip to/from the meeting point
- Packed lunches and 4 dinners
- Drinks with meals in the dinner included
- Tourist tax to be paid locally
- Insurance
- Anything not specifically mentioned under "Includes"

Free for those arriving in Siena the evening before the start of the tour: **2 HOUR GUIDED TOUR OF THE CITY OF THE PALIO**

INFO E CONTATTI CON LA GUIDA

TECHNICAL COVERAGE

MALD'AVVENTURA di GIUSEPPE GAIMARI

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THE GUIDE



Sara Testi

I live in Chianti. I have been working as a hiking guide since 2003. In 2009 I also got my tour guide license actually, but nature always calls me louder than any other beauty.

I carry in my heart my degree in cultural anthropology, sharecropping, my beautiful and rugged Chianti, the old people able to tell me if the sky is putting rain or snow.

I have made reading the landscape a passion: being able to read between the folds of the earth, the stories of the people and the traces of time opens up a very different world than the one that normally unfolds before the eyes.

I like to be in company, a lot.

I like being alone, just as much.

My thoughtful lightness has saved me on many occasions.

I firmly believe in cheerfulness. But not at all costs. But you know, cheerful people God help them, though.

I hate hate, in all its forms.

I am not a housewife. Definitely not. But sometimes I am. I love the warmth of the hearth in winter, the home that welcomes in the evening, a meal made with love. I weave.

On the road I am always, whenever I can.

I just can't get enough of the cheese, of telling the story of the cypresses, of the heart-to-heart hugs, of speaking Tuscan and joking.

Surely most of the things I love would not exist without you.

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PLEASE NOTE

The program may be subject to change depending on weather conditions, availability of accommodations and other reasons that the guide deems necessary in order to ensure the safety of the group or otherwise the success of the trip in the interest of all participants.

We strongly recommend the stipulation of **insurance** policies with your insurance consultant to cover cancellation penalties, as well as health care policies, payment of medical expenses, baggage protection or compensation for inconvenience due to forced travel extension and which take into account, but not limited to, the unexpected causes of Covid-19 .

I recommend and kindly ask that you turn on your **cell phone** and use it only in the evening, at the end of the walk, and/or in the morning before leaving. This is out of respect for those who want to research a path away from daily routines. You can give my phone number (which will always be on) to your loved ones for emergency calls. If you use your cell phone as a camera just put it on "airplane" mode (so off line) and you are done.



CRETE SENESI AT THE SUNSET

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