



R I D E & S E E K

Our first European foray into running a gravel-specific tour. Where better to start than the home of the 'Strade Bianche' in Tuscany?



MAY 20 - MAY 29 | 2023

Tuscany Gravel Explorer Overview

TOTAL
DISTANCE:

546km | 339mi

ELEVATION:

6998m | 22,959ft

DURATION:

8
DAYS
7 Nights



ITALY



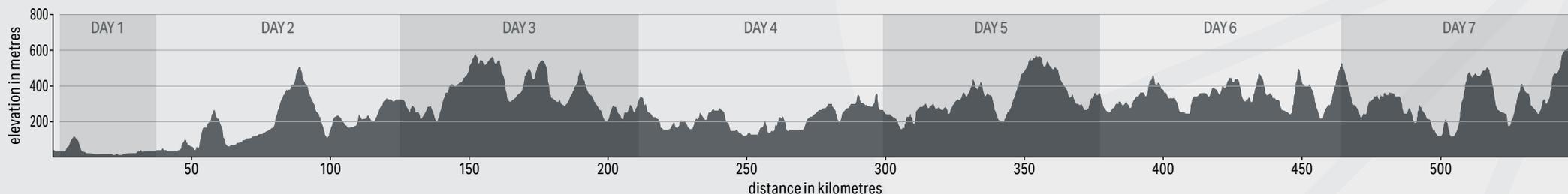
TUSCANY GRAVEL | FLORENCE to MONTALCINO

Tour Day	Destination	Distance (kilometres)	Elevation (metres)	Distance (miles)	Elevation (feet)
1	Florence Warm Up Ride	40	138	25	452
2	Florence to Siena	85	1056	53	3464
3	Siena Loop Ride	85	1250	53	4102
4	Siena to Molinello	87	806	54	2646
3	Molinello Loop Ride	81	1055	50	3461
6	Molinello to Montalcino	84	1291	52	4234
7	Montalcino Loop	85	1402	53	4601
TOTALS		546	6998	339	22959
AVERAGES		78	1000	48	3280



FLORENCE TO MONTALCINO

DURATION: 8 DAYS 7 Nights
TOTAL DISTANCE: 546km | 339mi
DAILY AVERAGE: 78km | 48mi
ELEVATION: 6998m | 22,959ft
DAILY AVERAGE: 1000m | 3280ft



This unique tour embraces quintessential Tuscany but from a more off-the-beaten-track perspective.



This exciting itinerary will appeal to any of you out there with a passion for finding the road less travelled. Our gateway for this tour is the beautiful city of Florence. From here we are able to explore many of the cycling routes of **'La Bella Toscana'** that we have got to know so well over the years including the Val d'Orcia and the Chianti. Our route takes in the beguiling towns of Siena and Gaiole in Chianti as well as a plethora of enchanting hill towns along the way. Our refreshments will focus on the Sangiovese grape and general relaxation catered for by the numerous natural springs – 'terme' – that can be found en route.



First day guidance

For meeting at the start of the tour please come dressed in regular clothes. Look out for the guides at the appointed time in their Ride & Seek attire or simply ask at the hotel reception where to find the group and they will direct you accordingly. The usual first day format involves grabbing a bite to eat together and the guides talking about the tour. We then focus on fitting bikes and set a time to meet in bike gear for a warm-up ride before catching up for pre-dinner drinks with the rest of the group.

Tuscany Gravel & Eroica Montalcino

**Saturday 20th May –
Monday 29th May**

Our Tuscany Gravel tour starts at 12:00 on Saturday 20th May at the Villa Neroli – www.villaneroli.com. Our hotel is a 20 minute taxi ride from the Florence Central Train Station – Santa Maria Novella (SMN).

There are fast trains from Milan and Rome to SMN so your gateway airport options could include both of those cities. Florence also has an international airport.

TUSCANY GRAVEL – AT A GLANCE

- **MEET TIME:** 12:00 Saturday 20th May
- **WHERE:** Villa Neroli – www.villaneroli.com
- **TRANSPORT HUB:**
Santa Maria Novella (SMN) Train Station
- **TRANSFERS:** Not included

TUSCANY GRAVEL – Conclusion

- **WHERE:** Il Chiostro di Pienza – www.relaisilchiostrodipienza.com
- **WHEN:** Friday 26th May, after breakfast
- **TRANSPORT HUB:**
Chiusi-Chianciano Terme Train Station
- **TRANSFERS:** We offer a transfer to the mainline station in Chiusi-Chianciano Terme (around 30 minutes) after breakfast

Tour Conclusion

Monday 29th May

The Tuscany Gravel leg of the tour concludes after breakfast on Friday 26th May at Il Chiostro di Pienza – www.relaisilchiostrodiapienza.com.

We'll organise a shuttle to the mainline station, Chiusi-Chianciano Terme (30 minutes). From here there are regular trains to both Rome and Florence that take around 90 minutes. We recommend Rome or Florence as the most expedient exit airports.

EROICA MONTALCINO – AT A GLANCE

- **MEET TIME:** 12:00 Friday 26th May
- **WHERE:** Il Chiostro di Pienza – www.relaisilchiostrodiapienza.com
- **TRANSPORT HUB:**
Chiusi-Chianciano Terme Train Station
- **TRANSFERS:** We offer a pick-up from Chiusi-Chianciano Terme train station at 11:00

EROICA MONTALCINO – Conclusion

- **WHERE:** Il Chiostro di Pienza – www.relaisilchiostrodiapienza.com
- **WHEN:** Monday 29th May, after breakfast
- **TRANSPORT HUB:**
Chiusi-Chianciano Terme Train Station
- **TRANSFERS:** We offer a transfer to Chiusi-Chianciano Terme Train Station (around 30 minutes) after breakfast

For those joining us for the Eroica Montalcino weekend, we will organise a pick-up from Chiusi-Chianciano Terme at 11:00. The official start time for this leg of the tour is at 12:00 at Il Chiostro di Pienza.

The Eroica Montalcino tour comes to an end after breakfast on Monday 29th May. Again, we'll offer a shuttle to the Chiusi-Chianciano Terme Train Station (30 minutes).

Tuscany Gravel | Florence to Montalcino

TOTAL
DISTANCE:
546km | 339mi

ELEVATION:
6998m | 22,959ft

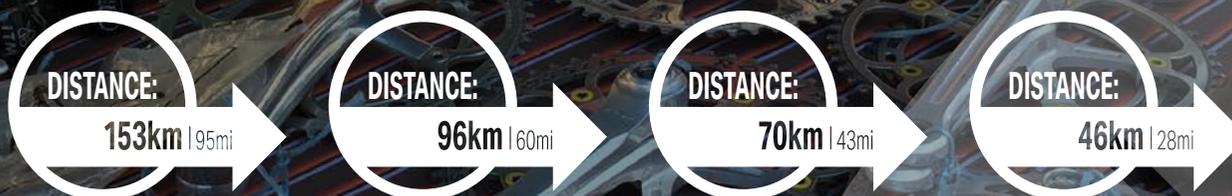
DURATION:
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- Explore the enchanting and majestic city of Firenze.
- Visit the atmospheric city of Siena and take an aperitivo overlooking the campo.
- Savour the hospitality of our friends Sandro and Elisa at the Agriturismo Molinello.
- Explore the 'strade bianche' of Tuscany.
- Choose your distance for the Montalcino Eroica – 153km/96km/70km/46km or 27km.
- Our favourite wine tasting in the world from Hannibal at the Nostra Vita winery.
- Florentine steak and Brunello di Montalcino – a culinary masterpiece.
- The road less travelled in around the Chianti, Crete Senese, and Val d'Orcia - truly world-class cycling.



 CLICK to see the Ride & Seek website for details of tour dates and prices

Stage 2 of our tour is the amazing Montalcino Eroica! | **Choose your distance:**



Join us on a ride of historical proportions and take your chance to be part of one of the world's greatest cycling events – L'Eroica (literally, 'The Heroic'). This can be ridden as a standalone stage or combined with the Tuscany Gravel Explorer.

For the Eroica, the rules are that you must ride on a pre-1987 steel frame bike with 'rat trap' pedals, down tube shifters, and exposed cables, wearing woolen jerseys, and fuelled by decadent Italian food and wine! Vintage bikes are available if you do not own one.





We carefully select the places where we stay based on their personality and the hospitality of our hosts

Be it an 18th-century villa in Florence, a converted convent in Pienza, or an agriturismo run by our friends in the heart of the Crete Senese we seek to connect you to Tuscany through the accommodations we choose.



Villa Neroli, Florence (1 night)

Surrounded by a relaxing 6000 m² garden from the late 1800s, Villa Neroli is a 10 minute drive from the historic centre of Florence. It is a classy place from which to begin our gravel odyssey.



NH Siena, Siena (3 nights)

Conveniently located within easy walking distance of the historic centre of Siena our 4 star hotel offers a blend of natural elegance and historic charm.



Agriturismo Il Molinello, Asciano (2 nights)

Situated in the heart of the Crete Senese this agriturismo is run by the Draghi family, long-time friends of ours and wonderful hosts. This is a place where you'll truly appreciate the essence of Tuscan hospitality.



Relais Il Chostro di Pienza (3 nights - Eroica)

This former Franciscan Convent dating back to the 13th century is located in an enviable position overlooking the Val d'Orcia. It has been converted into a 4 star hotel in the heart of Pienza.

Home of the world's most recognizable Renaissance art and architecture

Named after the Etruscans, one of its original inhabitants, Tuscany or Toscana in Italian corresponds closely geographically to ancient Etruria. The Etruscans, known mostly nowadays for their impressive tomb sites, withstood the inevitable Roman expansion for a century or two until succumbing in the mid-4th century B.C.

Roman rule lasted close to 8 centuries and besides a few minor hiccups (such as Hannibal!) the region flourished. Road networks throughout Tuscany facilitated transport and trade and settlements on the sites of modern Florence, Lucca, Arezzo, Pisa, and Pistoia prospered.

After the fall of the Roman Empire in the 5th century BC, and brief occupations by the Byzantines and Ostrogoths, Tuscany became a Lombard duchy (6th-8th cent. A.D.), with Lucca as its capital. Charlemagne destroyed the Lombard kingdom and the Frankish Empire ruled from the 8th to the 12th century. Castles, Monasteries, and Abbeys were built, many surviving today, and many of the towns developed into communes independent of the Holy Roman Empire.

The rivalry between these communes in Trade and the war was intense and after a period of Pisan dominance in the 11th to 13th centuries Florence became the foremost city in Tuscany. The relative peace that followed, initially ruled over by the Medici, was the catalyst for the prolific artistic style that identifies the area today and is known as the Renaissance period. This period marked great cultural change and achievement in Europe that spanned from the end of the 13th century to about 1600, marking the transition between Medieval and Early Modern Europe.

After the Medici, Tuscany was ruled by the Austrian Dukes of Lorraine. The Dukes of Lorraine modernized and developed the area but in 1861 Tuscany voted in favour of annexation to a united Italy. Florence was briefly, prior to Rome, the capital of the kingdom of Italy from 1865 to 1871.



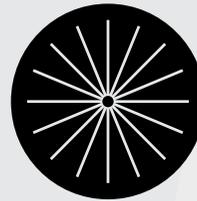


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R I D E & S E E K



Tuscany Gravel Explorer Overview