

WALKING IN TUSCANY



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WALKING IN TUSCANY

by Gillian Price

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Updates to this Guide

While every effort is made by our authors to ensure the accuracy of guidebooks as they go to print, changes can occur during the lifetime of an edition. Any updates that we know of for this guide will be on the Cicerone website (www.cicerone.co.uk/712/updates), so please check before planning your trip. We also advise that you check information about such things as transport, accommodation and shops locally. Even rights of way can be altered over time.

The route maps in this guide are derived from publicly available data, databases and crowd-sourced data. As such they have not been through the detailed checking procedures that would generally be applied to a published map from an official mapping agency, although naturally we have reviewed them closely in the light of local knowledge as part of the preparation of this guide.

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Front cover: The splendid town of Pitigliano in southern Tuscany (Walk 42)

CONTENTS

Map key	7
Overview map	8–9
Preface	11
INTRODUCTION	13
Exploring Tuscany	14
Plants and flowers	15
Wildlife	17
Getting there	19
Local transport	20
Information	21
When to go	21
Accommodation	22
Food and wine	23
What to take	26
Maps	27
Emergencies	27
Using this guide	29
THE WALKS	33
1 The environs of Florence	34
Walk 1 Fiesole to Settignano	36
Walk 2 Around Artimino	40
Walk 3 The hills of Vinci	44
2 The foothills and high Apennines	48
Walk 4 Collodi and Pescia	51
Walk 5 Le Piastre to Pontepetri	56
Walk 6 Lago Scaffaiolo	61
Walk 7 Libro Aperto	65
Walk 8 San Pellegrino and Giro del Diavolo	68
Walk 9 Monte Prado	71
3 Alpi Apuane	75
Walk 10 Monte Forato loop	77
Walk 11 Monte Croce	82
Walk 12 Around Monte Procinto	85




















4 Pratomagno and the Foreste Casentinesi	89
Walk 13 Vallombrosa	92
Walk 14 Monte Falco, Monte Falterona, Lago degli Idoli	96
Walk 15 Eremo di Camaldoli loop	100
Walk 16 Monte Penna	103
Walk 17 Cortona	107
5 Chianti	111
Walk 18 Gaiole and Badia a Coltibuono	113
Walk 19 Castellina to Radda in Chianti	117
Walk 20 Volpaia loop	123
Walk 21 Poggio San Polo	126
6 West of Siena	129
Walk 22 Sovicille loop	132
Walk 23 Monteriggioni circuit	137
Walk 24 San Gimignano	141
Walk 25 Volterra to Saline di Volterra	145
7 The Crete and Val d'Orcia	149
Walk 26 Chiusure and San Giovanni d'Asso	153
Walk 27 Montalcino to Sant'Antimo	157
Walk 28 San Quirico d'Orcia to Pienza	161
Walk 29 San Quirico d'Orcia to Bagno Vignoni	164
Walk 30 Bagno Vignoni circuit	167
Walk 31 Montepulciano loop	170
Walk 32 Radicofani	174
8 Elba and the Tyrrhenian coast	177
Walk 33 The Enfola promontory	180
Walk 34 Marciana Marina circuit	183
Walk 35 Marciana to Pomonte	187
Walk 36 Porto Azzurro	191
Walk 37 Baratti and the Populonia headland	193
Walk 38 Campiglia Marittima–Suvereto circuit	196
9 The Maremma coast and hinterland	201
Walk 39 Le Torri loop	205
Walk 40 San Rabano circuit	208
Walk 41 Feniglia	212
Walk 42 Pitigliano to Sovana	215
Walk 43 Sorano to San Quirico	219

Appendix A	Route summary table	223
Appendix B	Italian–English glossary	226
Appendix C	Accommodation	230
Appendix D	Useful information	233
Appendix E	Further reading	236

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Symbols used on route maps

	route
	alternative route
	direction of walk
	start point
	finish point
	start/finish point
	woodland
	urban areas
	station/railway
	parking
	peak
	manned/unmanned refuge
	campsite
	buildings
	church/monastery/cross/shrine/chapel
	castle/fortress/tower
	pass
	water feature
	other feature

Relief in metres

2000–2200

1800–2000

1600–1800

1400–1600

1200–1400

1000–1200

800–1000

600–800

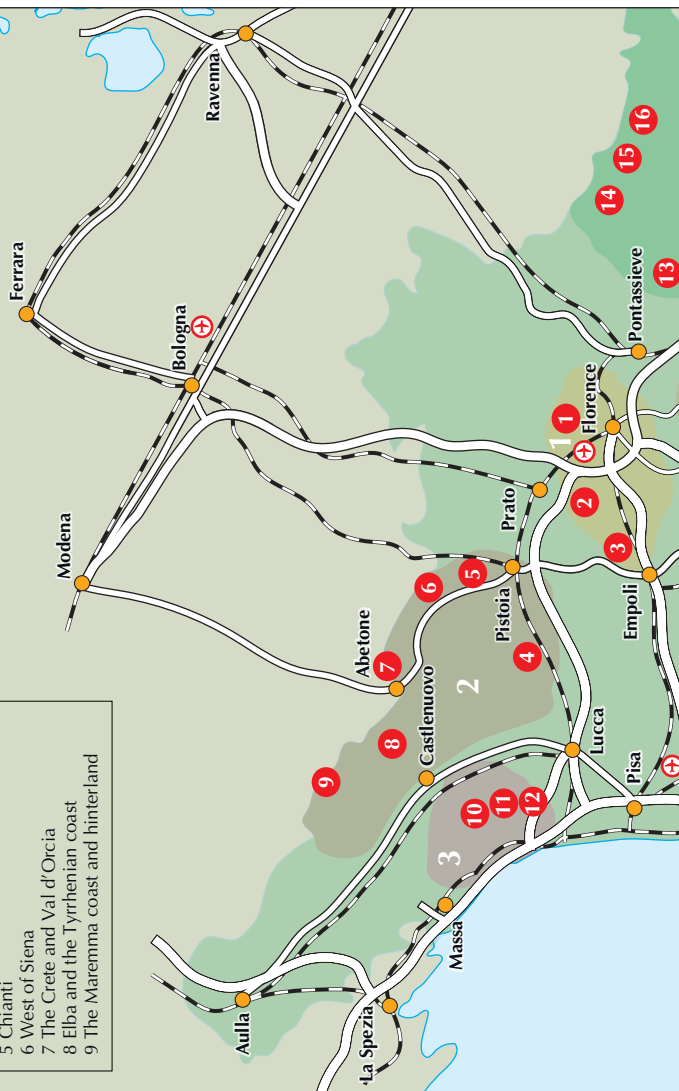
400–600

200–400

0–200

Tuscany overview map

- 1 The environs of Florence
- 2 The foothills and high Apennines
- 3 Alpi Apuane
- 4 Pratomagno and the Foreste Casentinesi
- 5 Chianti
- 6 West of Siena
- 7 The Crete and Val d'Orcia
- 8 Elba and the Tyrrhenian coast
- 9 The Maremma coast and hinterland



rolling countryside are famous the world over thanks to the celebrated red wine.

Chapter 6, West of Siena, introduces little-known gems such as Volterra and Sovicille, alongside top tourist choices the walled town of Monteriggioni and San Gimignano 'of the fine towers'.

Chapter 7, The Crete and Val d'Orcia, reveals gorgeous post-card scenery and walks lined with cypresses.

Chapter 8, Elba and the Tyrrhenian coast, describes routes on the divine island of Elba and the

adjacent coast, with their heritage of industrial archaeology.

Chapter 9, The Maremma coast and hinterland, embraces an exciting pristine coastal park then quiet inland villages joined by ancient Etruscan ways. Magical places.

See Appendix E for further reading material on Tuscany, including guides to trekking and climbing as well as more general literature.

PLANTS AND FLOWERS

The marvellous array of unusual trees and flowering plants is reason alone

Clockwise from left: the curious fruit and blossom of the strawberry tree; cyclamen thrive in the woods; lavender and trefoil on Elba; fissured bark of the cork oak; olives ripening in autumn; delicate paper-like rock roses flower in spring



WALK 1

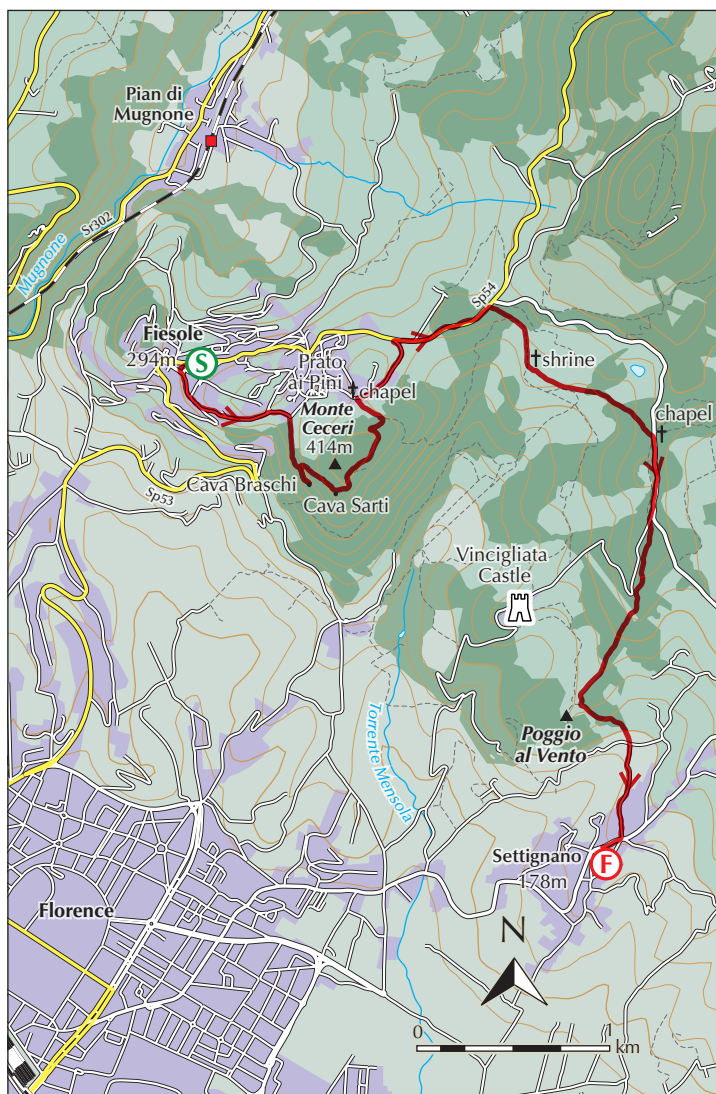
Fiesole to Settignano

Start	Fiesole
Finish	Settignano
Distance	7.6km
Ascent	180m
Descent	300m
Grade	1–2
Walking time	2hr 15min
Map	Kompass n.2439 Toscana Nord 1:50,000 map 2
Access	ATAF n.7 bus from Florence (near Piazza San Marco) goes up to Fiesole, terminating in the main square, Piazza Mino da Fiesole. At the walk's end, ATAF n.10 from Settignano runs down to Piazza San Marco.

After savouring the wealth of monuments in this delightful hill town, a wander through the surrounding countryside is in order. History and nature alternate on this easy, clearly marked itinerary through woods, olive groves and fields.

There is a gentle climb via old quarries to scenic Monte Ceceri, well known to the great Leonardo da Vinci for his flying machine experiments in 1506. Apparently he would launch his apprentices from the top! Then it's mostly descent through farmland and woods, passing close to Vincigliata Castle before terminating in the quiet village of Settignano. Red-and-white marked path n.1 is followed the whole way. There are no refreshments en route, but plenty at the start and finish.

Start out in **Piazza Mino da Fiesole** (294m), named after the 15th-century sculptor. Up in the topmost southern corner, the furthest away from the cathedral, take Via Giuseppe Verdi (*passeggiata panoramica* sign and red-and-white waymarking n.1). The narrow road passes stately houses and gardens, and not far uphill it forks L to become Via di Monteceleri at a house where Frank





*A worthwhile
detour to the Cava
Braschi quarry*

Lloyd Wright stayed in 1910. A superbly panoramic stretch leads around E to a playground where Via degli Scalpellini (the stonecutter's road) takes over. This soon becomes a gravelly track, heading S between high walls shaded by tall pines and oak trees. Past a map board for Parco di Monteceneri, continue uphill and take the signed fork R for **Cava Braschi**.

This brief but worthwhile detour leads down to **Cava Braschi**, a fascinating walk-in quarry with huge columns. Thick overlying layers of marly terrain had to be cut through in order to reach the blue-grey sandstone known as *pietra serena*.

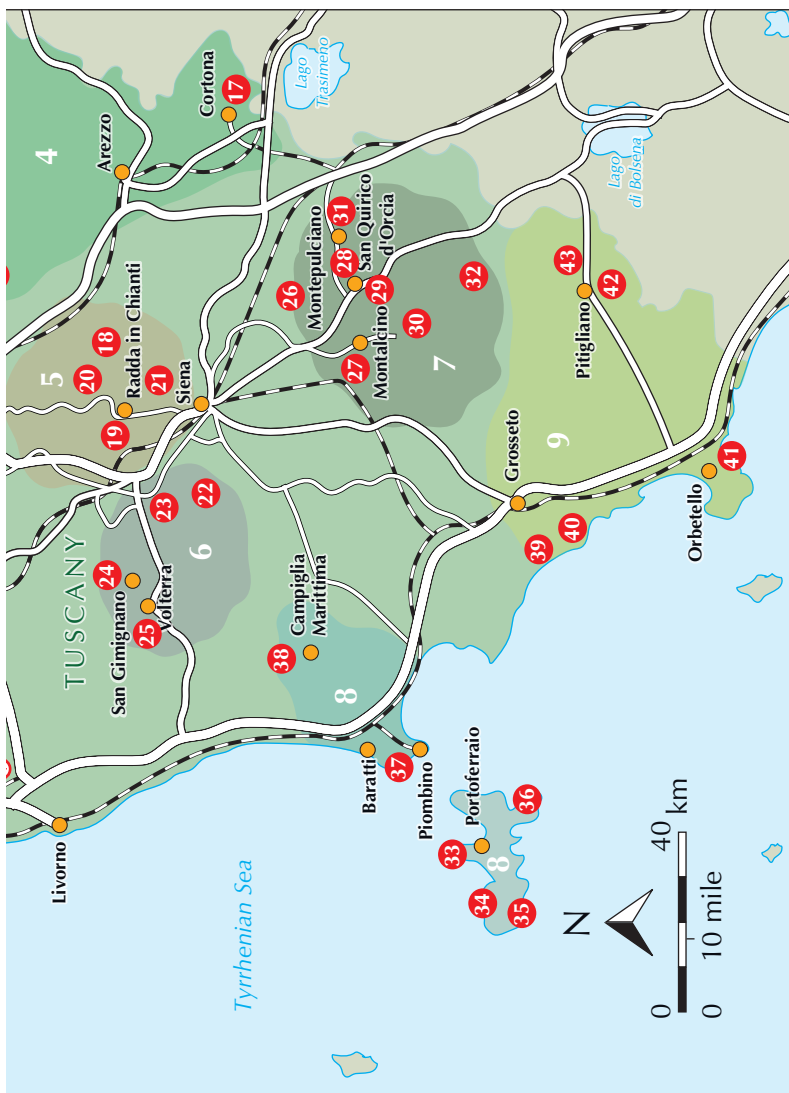
After visiting the quarry, return to the fork and turn R, passing a cavity where *pietra morta* (a type of sandstone used for fireplaces) was once extracted. Ignore the marked sharp fork L (a shortcut to Monte Ceceri) and proceed to the flat area alongside **Cava Sarti**, dotted with old stone huts for storing masons' tools. Then a short climb

leads up to Piazzale Leonardo, a cypress-bordered panoramic platform on **Monte Ceceri** (414m, 45min), where a stone marker commemorates da Vinci and his early experiments.

Ignore path n.7 (for Maiano) and stick with n.1 (NE). ▶ It emerges from the lovely woods and parkland at the olive groves and houses of **Prato ai Pini** (371m). Past Villa Rigoli and a **chapel**, turn R down the road to an intersection, and go R again. Not far along, soon after Hotel Villa dei Bosconi, red-and-white markings point you R on narrow Via Baccano, which quickly becomes a lane. At a crumbling **shrine**, you're pointed sharp L (SE) into an olive grove, following waymarks on trees. After crossing a stream in a thicket of reeds, continue up to a fence where you turn R through woodland up to tarmac at a **chapel**. Turn R with care along the edge of the narrow road beneath Castel di Poggio and its noisy jackdaws. About 0.5km on, at a fork, turn R to where markings for n.1 immediately point you L onto a path. This leads S in descent through woods and shrubland frequented by roe deer and boar. All of a sudden you reach the edge of an olive grove with a lovely view west to the curious castle of Vincigliata backed by Monte Ceceri, not to mention the sprawl of Florence.

Down at a house on **Poggio al Vento** don't miss the sharp L turn (before the building and a lane) for the steepish descent to Settignano. Keep straight ahead along Via Desiderio da Settignano past the cemetery, then further on turn sharp R at a wine bar/restaurant along Via San Romano. This quickly leads to the small square of **Settignano** (178m, 1hr 30min), where there's an inviting outdoor café near the bus stop.

The wide track dates back to 1932–33, part of the Italian army's plan for anti-aircraft guns on Monte Ceceri.



Torre Collelungo (Walk 39)



WALK 2

Around Artimino

Start/Finish	Artimino
Distance	7km
Ascent/Descent	200m
Grade	1–2
Walking time	2hr 15min
Map	Tamari Edizioni Il Montalbano a piedi e in bicicletta 1:20,000; or Kompass n.2439 Toscana Nord 1:50,000 map 2
Access	CAP bus from Prato railway station.

High above the River Arno in beautiful hill country clad with olive trees and grapevines, flowering Mediterranean shrubs and woodland, this lovely route follows clear lanes and paths visiting a peaceful walled village, a Medici villa and modest Etruscan necropolis. Although the latter dates back to the 7th century BC, it was not discovered until the 1990s. The tomb artefacts are on display at the Artimino Archaeological Museum (www.parcoarcheologicocarmignano.it), which can also arrange for visits to the villa. Refreshments are available in Artimino and Poggio alla Malva.

As you reach the entrance to the villa, by all means detour briefly L into the grounds of Hotel Paggeria to see the remains of the ancient Etruscan settlement.

Leave **Artimino** (257m) from Porta Turrita, an elegant gateway-cum-clock tower, and walk due E on Viale Papa Giovanni XXIII, lined with holm oaks and olive trees. With views to the River Arno, Prato and the Apennines, this leads towards **Villa Ferdinanda**. ◀

From the entrance to Villa Ferdinanda, take minor road Via del Palazzone (signposted for Poggio alla Malva), skirting below the villa. Not far downhill, after the tennis courts, ignore Via Querceto (you need this on the return stretch) and branch L at a sign for the Necropoli Prato Rosello and red-and-white waymarking. You follow a stony lane leading SE past rock roses, tree heather and myrtle shrubs to an open outcrop. Ignore the



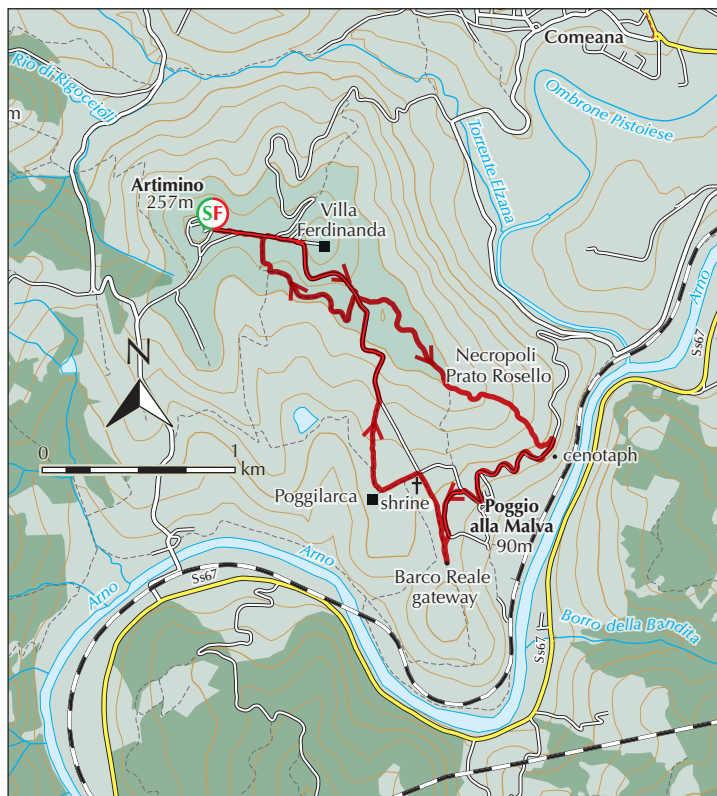
fork R for Poggio alla Malva and keep straight ahead in descent, accompanied by marvellous views stretching for miles around over the beautiful hills. Stick with the way-marks at forks and you'll reach an information board at **Necropoli Prato Rosello** (30min). ►

From the information board, take the first path R (E) in gentle descent past a shed. Marked red-and-white n.300, the way is a veritable corridor of tree heather, broom and lavender. Down at a minor road (98m), turn R (SW) along the tarmac to a **cenotaph** and park, which doubles as a delightful lookout over the River Arno. Continue into the village of **Poggio alla Malva** (90m) and Piazza Ario Dante Naldi. After a short uphill stretch past a madonna statue, turn L on narrow Via Pineta, flanking the church and bell tower. A short stretch S past fields leads to a hamlet and the **Barco Reale gateway** (40min).

Standing near the base of a knoll clothed in pine woods, the **Barco Reale gateway** marks the entrance to what was once a vast hunting reserve adjoining

Villa Ferdinanda with its host of chimneys

Here, paths lead off through woodland in different directions to the tumuli tombs. After a wander around, return to the information board.



Villa Ferdinanda. Set up by the Medicis in 1626, the reserve was enclosed by a 52km boundary wall.

Now abandoned, Poggilarca stands on a marvellously scenic knoll, a perfect picnic spot.

Retrace your steps but leave Via Pineta very soon at a shrine and proceed N on a stony lane, going gently uphill between vast vineyards backed by Artimino and Villa Ferdinanda. As you reach a road and another **shrine**, branch L (SW) on unsurfaced Via Poggilarca, which leads to erstwhile Medici farm **Poggilarca** (122m, 20min). ◀ As you approach the property, fork R on the white gravel



*The walk begins
and concludes
at Artimino's
Porta Turrita*

lane below the buildings. This leads N through vineyards. At an orange tank where the lane enters a property, leave the lane for the wide way to its R between rows of vines. Where the vineyards end, walk straight ahead on a rough track past olive trees, to emerge on Via del Palazzone.

Go L uphill, sticking with the quiet road up to the turn-off for Necropoli Prato Rosella, but this time branch L on Via Querceto past groups of old houses. A couple of minutes on, leave it for a lane R (mostly W) in gentle ascent. Further on, at a concreted stretch near a villa, take the uphill fork, which quickly brings you out onto Viale Papa Giovanni XXIII again. Turn L back to **Artimino** (45min).