

## ROUTE SUMMARY TABLE

Stage number	Title	Distance	Total ascent	Total descent	Duration	Page
1	Lucca to Altopascio	18.3km	185m	189m	4¾hr	36
2	Altopascio to San Miniato	28.7km	537m	410m	7¾hr	44
3	San Miniato to Gambassi Terme	24.1km	820m	639m	7hr	52
4	Gambassi Terme to San Gimignano	13.7km	476m	468m	4hr	58
5	San Gimignano to Monteriggioni	27.4km (or 30.9km)	719m (or 753m)	777m (or 812m)	7¾hr	63
6	Monteriggioni to Siena	20.6km	514m	456m	5¾hr	72
7	Siena to Ponte d'Arbia	25.9km	391m	572m	7hr	81
8	Ponte d'Arbia to San Quirico d'Orcia	26.2km	807m	541m	7½hr	88
9	San Quirico d'Orcia to Radicofani	32.9km	1164m	790m	9¾hr	94
10	Radicofani to Acquapendente	23.1km (or 31.3km)	392m (or 708m)	801m (or 1117m)	6¾hr	104
11	Acquapendente to Bolsena	23.2km	503m	564m	6½hr	113
12	Bolsena to Montefiascone	16.4km	638m	356m	5½hr	119
13	Montefiascone to Viterbo	18.1km	247m	515m	4¾hr	124
14	Viterbo to Vetralla	16.8km	340m	363m	4½hr	132
15	Vetralla to Sutri	24.0km	475m	511m	6½hr	138
16	Sutri to Campagnano di Roma	27.7km (or 24.5km)	513m	538m	7½hr	145
17	Campagnano di Roma to La Storta	24.2km (or 23.3km)	559m	669m	6¾hr	151
18	La Storta to Vatican City	19.2km	409m	550m	5½hr	157
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>410.5km</b>	<b>9689m</b>	<b>9709m</b>	<b>115hr</b>	

*This book is dedicated to my amazing granddaughter, Frankie,  
a constant joy and wonder since the day she was born.*

#### **Acknowledgments**

Many people helped push this series out into the world. Jonathan and Joe Williams at Cicerone graciously gave it the nod at the start, then the talented Cicerone Team took over once the manuscript landed on their desks. Andrea Grimshaw contributed wise and careful edits, while John Bingley skillfully edited the maps. Raffaele Mannelli and his colleagues at the Regione Toscana gave important guidance and contacts. Rebecca Winke was my lifeline in an emergency. Dear friends at Comitato Linguistico in Perugia helped me through my first steps in the Italian language. Contacts and advice were always joyfully offered by Gigi Bettin. It was a pleasure to work with Luca Bruschi and Sami Tawfik of the European Association of Vie Francigene. Along the way many pilgrim friends broke up the solitude with friendship and laughter, while my wife, Theresa Elliott, walked with me many over delightful kilometers.

## **WALKING THE VIA FRANCIGENA**

### **PART 3**

### **LUCCA TO ROME**

**by Sandy Brown**

**CICERONE**

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Contains OpenStreetMap.org data © OpenStreetMap contributors, CC-BY-SA. NASA relief data courtesy of ESRI

### 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. This guidebook was researched and written before the COVID-19 pandemic. While we are not aware of any significant changes to routes or facilities at the time of printing, it is likely that the current situation will give rise to more changes than would usually be expected. Any updates that we know of for this guide will be on the Cicerone website ([www.cicerone.co.uk/1079/updates](http://www.cicerone.co.uk/1079/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.

We are always grateful for information about any discrepancies between a guidebook and the facts on the ground, sent by email to [updates@cicerone.co.uk](mailto:updates@cicerone.co.uk) or by post to Cicerone, Juniper House, Murley Moss, Oxenholme Road, Kendal, LA9 7RL.

**Register your book:** To sign up to receive free updates, special offers and GPX files where available, register your book at [www.cicerone.co.uk](http://www.cicerone.co.uk).

*Front cover:* Cypress trees frame two pilgrims between Buonconvento and San Quirico d'Orcia (Stage 8)

## CONTENTS

Route summary table . . . . .	1
Map key . . . . .	7
Overview profile Lucca to Rome . . . . .	8
Foreword . . . . .	11

<b>INTRODUCTION: THE VIA FRANCIGENA FROM LUCCA TO ROME</b> . . . . .	13
A brief history of the Via Francigena . . . . .	14
Sigeric and the modern Via Francigena . . . . .	16

<b>PLANNING YOUR WALK</b> . . . . .	18
Where to begin. . . . .	18
When to walk. . . . .	18
Where to stay . . . . .	18
What and where to eat . . . . .	19
Should I make reservations ahead? . . . . .	20
How much money should I budget? . . . . .	21
How do I get to this portion of the Via Francigena? . . . . .	21
How do I return from Rome? . . . . .	23
How do I secure my credential and Testimonium? . . . . .	23

<b>TIPS FOR MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR WALK</b> . . . . .	25
Topography of the Via Francigena in Central Italy . . . . .	25
Understanding local cultures . . . . .	25
Training for your walk. . . . .	26
What and how to pack . . . . .	26
Baggage transport and storage . . . . .	27
Health and well-being . . . . .	28

<b>HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE</b> . . . . .	29
Route descriptions . . . . .	29
GPX tracks and accommodation downloads. . . . .	32

<b>SECTION 1: TUSCANY</b> . . . . .	33
Stage 1 Lucca to Altopascio. . . . .	36
Stage 2 Altopascio to San Miniato . . . . .	44
Stage 3 San Miniato to Gambassi Terme . . . . .	52
Stage 4 Gambassi Terme to San Gimignano. . . . .	58
Stage 5 San Gimignano to Monteriggioni . . . . .	63

Stage 6	Monteriggioni to Siena . . . . .	72
Stage 7	Siena to Ponte d'Arbia . . . . .	81
Stage 8	Ponte d'Arbia to San Quirico d'Orcia . . . . .	88
Stage 9	San Quirico d'Orcia to Radicofani . . . . .	94
Stage 10	Radicofani to Acquapendente . . . . .	104

<b>SECTION 2: LAZIO</b> .....		111
Stage 11	Acquapendente to Bolsena .....	113
Stage 12	Bolsena to Montefiascone .....	119
Stage 13	Montefiascone to Viterbo .....	124
Stage 14/15	Cimino Variant: Viterbo to Sutri .....	130
Stage 14	Viterbo to Vetralla .....	132
Stage 15	Vetralla to Sutri .....	138
Stage 16	Sutri to Campagnano di Roma .....	145
Stage 17	Campagnano di Roma to La Storta .....	151
Stage 18	La Storta to Vatican City .....	157

<b>Appendix A</b>	Stage planning table . . . . .	166
<b>Appendix B</b>	Useful contacts . . . . .	168
<b>Appendix C</b>	Bibliography . . . . .	170
<b>Appendix D</b>	Sigeric's journey: then and now . . . . .	171

A Via Francigena guide in three parts . . . . .	176
Map of the Via Francigena Canterbury to Rome . . . . .	177
Profile of the Via Francigena Canterbury to Rome . . . . .	178

### Note on mapping

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. However, we have reviewed them closely in the light of local knowledge as part of the preparation of this guide.

## Symbols used on maps

	main route		international boundary		castle
	alternative route		distance marker		viewpoint
	main route (alternative stage)		alt distance marker		point of interest
	start point		footbridge		obelisk/monument
	finish point		bridge		park area
	bus stop/bus station		building		tunnel
	railway station		summit		church/cathedral /monastery

## Facilities

	Accommodation
	ostello (hostel)
	hotel
	camere (rooms)
	B&B
	agriturismo
	camping

	Catering
	bar
	restaurant
	café

	groceries
	public toilets
	ATM
	drinking water tap
	rest/picnic area
	pharmacy
	hospital
	medical clinic
	tourist/pilgrim information

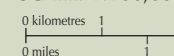
### Relief in meters

800–1000	
600–800	
400–600	
200–400	
0–200	

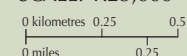
### MAP SCALES

Route maps at 1:100,000  
Town maps at 1:25,000 unless  
otherwise stated (see scale bar)

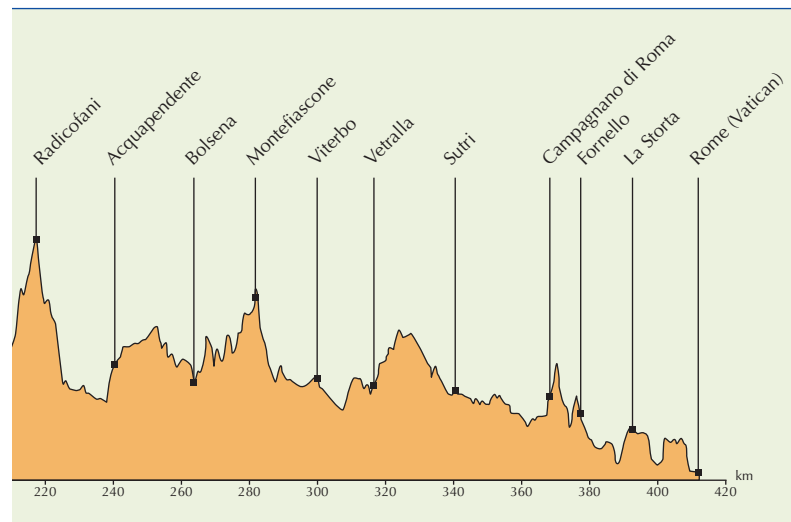
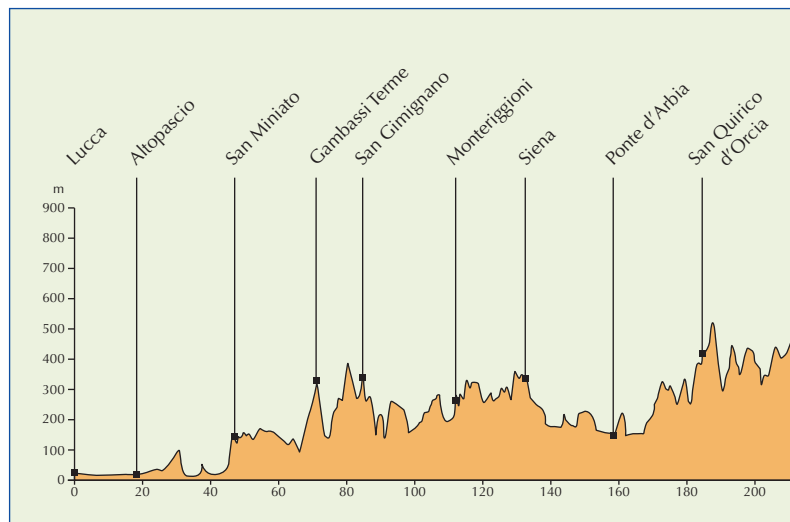
#### SCALE: 1:100,000



#### SCALE: 1:25,000









## FOREWORD

The Via Francigena – Road to Rome – was designated a Cultural Route by the Council of Europe in 1994. The European Association of Via Francigena Ways (EAVF) is a voluntary association of regions and local authorities in England, France, Switzerland and Italy, which currently has more than 180 members. It was established on 7 April 2001 in Fidenza (Italy) to promote the Via Francigena – 3200km (2000 miles) from Canterbury to Rome and, in the Via Francigena del Sud (certified since 2019), to Santa Maria di Leuca.

The route travels from Canterbury in the UK through France and Switzerland to Rome, and continues to the south of Italy, heading towards Jerusalem. It passes through 16 European regions (Kent; Hauts-de-France; Grand Est; Bourgogne-Franche-Comté; Vaud; Valais; Valle d'Aosta; Piedmont; Lombardy; Emilia-Romagna; Liguria; Tuscany; Lazio; Campania, Basilicata, Apulia) in four countries (UK; France; Switzerland; Italy). The association carries out activities to enhance and promote the route at all institutional levels: local, regional, national and European. In 2007 the Council of Europe declared the EAVF the Lead Agency of the Via Francigena, assigning it the role of official reference point for safeguarding, protecting, promoting and developing the Via Francigena in Europe.

This guide to the Via Francigena from Lucca to Rome is the result of collaboration between the EAVF, Cicerone Press and local associations. It is aimed at walkers and pilgrims who want to discover the beauty of the Italian section of this historic European route between the superb landscapes of Tuscany and the eternal city of Rome. This is a journey to the heart of Europe, a fascinating way to encounter its traditions, cultural heritage and art treasures while getting to know new people.

The Via Francigena was defined as a 'bridge of cultures between Anglo-Saxon Europe and Latin Europe' by the famous medievalist Jacques Le Goff. The Via Francigena of the third millennium is a path of peace, tolerance and dialogue between cultures, religions and countries.

We wish you all a good journey! *Buon viaggio!*



European Association of Via Francigena Ways (EAVF)

For information, visit [www.viefrancigena.org](http://www.viefrancigena.org), or follow us on social media:

Facebook: @ViaFrancigenaCulturalRoute Instagram: viafrancigena\_aevf





## INTRODUCTION: THE VIA FRANCIGENA FROM LUCCA TO ROME

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While every step of the Via Francigena speaks with its own voice, the final 400km from Lucca to Rome speaks with the most Italian accent. By the time the Via Francigena finds Tuscany at Lucca it is in the heartland of Italy – it was the Tuscan dialect that gave birth to modern Italian, here the Renaissance was born, and here many of Italy's most amazing frescoes, statues and paintings can be admired. The colors which inspired that artistic explosion are visible in the landscape – raw sienna, burnt sienna, sepia, gold, deep greens and vermillion blue – colors that entrance tourists and locals alike.

The Tuscan portion of the Via Francigena crosses through two of the region's most important cities – Lucca and Siena – each with tales to tell about their rivalries with neighbors Florence and Pisa and each worthy of extra time for exploration. As if Lucca and Siena aren't enough, the track also winds its way through San Gimignano, widely recognized as one of the best-preserved medieval towns in Italy, Monteriggioni with its remarkable medieval walls, San Miniato home to an iconic tower and cloistered convent, San Quirico d'Orcia with its medieval churches, and Radicofani known for its mountaintop fortress and legends of bandit heroes.

If Tuscany is the heart of Italy, Lazio is its soul. The Vatican City and Rome are the center of the world's largest religion, after all, and the 900 churches of this city each have a story to tell of saints and martyrs, of holy ones and hypocrites who've colored Christianity's 20 centuries. A Via Francigena pilgrim walks to the Eternal City in the footsteps of Charlemagne, Willibald, Winibald, Nikólás Bergsson of Iceland, Philip Augustus of France, Martin Luther, and of course Sigeric the Serious, 10th c. Archbishop of Canterbury.

There are so many sights to enjoy, like Piazza Anfiteatro in **Lucca**, one of the most picturesque places to sip a cappuccino on the entire Via Francigena. Stop at Lucca's San Martino Cathedral to view the Volto Santo and run your finger along the labyrinth carving at the right portico. Climb the Tower of Federico II in **San Miniato** and enjoy vast views of the surrounding countryside. Book ahead to see the frescoed interior of the Collegiate Church in **San Gimignano**, one of the most colorful in Italy. Walk atop the walls of **Monteriggioni** and imagine you're standing guard as a medieval soldier. No visit to **Siena** is complete without at least an hour inside the amazing Duomo. It's a stiff hike up to the top of the fort at

*Two pilgrims make their way toward Bagno Vignoni in morning sunlight (Stage 9)*



**Radicofani**, but the views are unsurpassed. In Lazio, make certain to pay a euro to turn on the lights so you can see the 1000-year-old crypt at the Basilica Cattedrale di San Sepolcro in **Acquapendente**. If weather permits, a refreshing dip in the **Lago di Bolsena** is free of charge. On the next day see the lake from the Rocca dei Papi in **Montefiascone** with its azure and emerald vista. Admission to the relaxing Bagnaccio hot springs before **Viterbo** is free to pilgrims, and the park is right on the trail. Take the time to tour the Ancient City of **Sutri** and the Roman amphitheater there. Walk up the glass steps at the Ostello Maripara in **Formello** to see names of important cities on the Via Francigena and remember your walk.



Lucca's red tile roofs stand out in this view from the Guinigi Tower  
(photo: Rod Hoekstra)

If you've never been, plan at least two days to enjoy **Rome and the Vatican City**: St Peter's Basilica and the Vatican Museum on the first day and the Ancient Rome of the Pantheon, Coliseum and Forum on the second. In between, relax among the sun-dappled piazzas and splash-ing fountains. Try dinner and a stroll in Trastevere and toss a coin into the Trevi Fountain, which legends promise will bring you back to visit this amazing city once again.

#### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE VIA FRANCIGENA

Newly appointed as Archbishop of Canterbury in 990, Bishop Sigeric of Ramsbury set out to see the Pope and receive his *pallium*, the simple

St Peter's Basilica towers above the buildings of Rome and the Vatican



woolen cloak embroidered with a cross that signified both his ascension to archbishop and his allegiance to Rome. While today we might want to think of Sigeric as a hero or pioneer, history remembers him as a fairly undistinguished church leader doing a relatively routine errand of church business while walking a relatively well-trod route journeying down a spoke in the wheel toward the hub of Rome, capital of Western Christianity.

Ancient Rome had established an overland link to Britannia some 1200 years prior in order to speed its conquest of these islands rich in silver, copper, tin and lead. Evangelists traveled in both directions on the route after the fall of Rome, spreading the gospel to the British Isles and then back from Britain and Ireland into the northern reaches

of the Italian peninsula. Pilgrims like Fridrianus of Ulster, Richard of Wessex and his sons Winibald and Wilibald headed south to Rome and then beyond Rome to Jerusalem in the 6th–8th c. By the time of Sigeric's journey in the 10th c. there was an Anglo-Saxon residential enclave in Rome – the *Schola Saxonum* – where British and Irish pilgrims made their homes in Rome.

Sigeric's notes, probably an afterthought for him, propelled him into the history books. The archbishop concisely documented the churches he had visited in Rome and then his overnight stops on his trip home. A lettered and cultured man, he donated his papers to Canterbury Cathedral where scribes maintained them, copying parts that were in need of preservation. His papers ultimately made

## STAGE 1

## Lucca to Altopascio

<b>Start</b>	Lucca, Piazza San Michele
<b>Finish</b>	Altopascio, Piazza dei Ospitalieri
<b>Distance</b>	18.3km
<b>Total ascent</b>	185m
<b>Total descent</b>	189m
<b>Difficulty</b>	Easy
<b>Duration</b>	4¾hr
<b>Percentage paved</b>	97%
<b>Hostels</b>	Capannori 6.6km, Badia Pozzeveri 16.4km, Altopascio 18.3km

This jaunt through the ‘Plain of Lucca’ is a stage of roadside walking, often accompanied by the noise of trucks and speeding cars. Some pilgrims instead spend 15 guilt-free minutes on the train and skip directly to Altopascio (twice-hourly departures from 05:00–22:00, €2.60, [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com)). Those who walk will find a virtually flat landscape of suburbs, exurbs, commercial and industrial zones with intermediate refreshment stops at the towns of Capannori and Porcari.

## 0.0KM LUCCA (ELEV 24M, POP 89,346)


 (410.5KM)


This red-roofed, sepia-tinted Tuscan town is best known for its fully-intact Renaissance-era city walls whose top surface – the **Via delle Mura Urbane** – makes for a convenient and scenic circumnavigation of the city on foot or by bike. Because of its historical sites, museums and innate charm, Lucca is an excellent place to spend an extra day or two for rest and exploration.


On a fertile plain at a narrow point among the low foothills of the Apuan Alps, this Tuscan gem traces its roots to the 3rd c. BC when coastal tribes created a settlement in what was then marsh land (*luk* is the Ligurian word for ‘marsh’). The Romans found its location to be strategic and laid out a city along a typical

Roman template of perpendicular main streets culminating in four major city gates. Remnants of the Roman-era amphitheater remain at the **Piazza Anfiteatro**, and the Roman Forum, or central plaza, is preserved adjacent to the 11th–13th c. church of **San Michele in Foro**, right on the Via Francigena route. Here in Lucca, Julius Caesar, Pompey and Crassus affirmed their First Triumvirate alliance in the Lucca Conference of 56BC. As with most other central Italian cities after the fall of Rome, Lucca was ruled by a succession of northern European kingdoms. In 1160 it began a long period of uninterrupted independence, until in 1805 it was conquered by Napoleon, who installed his sister, Elisa, as its ruler. It later became part of the Duchy of Tuscany and was subsumed into a unified Italy in 1861.

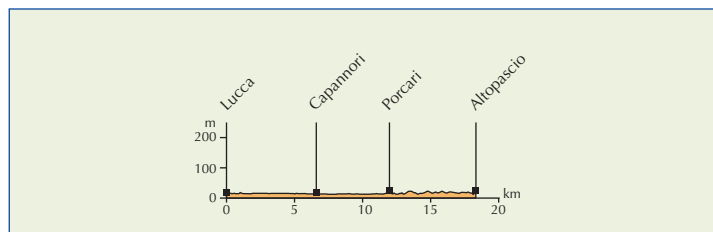
Lucca hosts several important architectural and ecclesiastical monuments. The 11th–14th c. **Duomo of San Martino** hosts one of Italy’s most important relics, the Volto Santa (‘Sacred Countenance’), a carved wooden crucifix brought to Lucca in 782 and said to have been made by Nicodemus of the New Testament. On a column in the cathedral’s façade is a small, carved labyrinth, along the same design as, but perhaps even older than, the famed labyrinth at Chartres. The 12th c. Romanesque **Basilica of San Frediano**, named after the 6th c. Irish saint who became bishop of Lucca, includes a monumental 13th c. mosaic on its façade. Inside, of special interest to VF pilgrims, is the tomb of St Richard the Pilgrim, likely a nobleman of Wessex, England, who died in Lucca in 722 during his pilgrimage to Rome and Jerusalem. Finally, the **Puccini Museum** remembers Lucca’s favorite son and famed opera composer, Giacomo Puccini (1858–1924), at his birth home (€7, Corte San Lorenzo 9, [www.puccinimuseum.it](http://www.puccinimuseum.it)).

🏠 **Casa del Pellegrino San Nicolao**  4/10, €Donation, Via San Nicolao 76, tel 331 131 1522. A house of the Canonici Regolari Lateranensi hosted by Donatella and Stefano.

🏠 **Misericordia**  1/3, €Donation, Via Cesare Battisti 2, [www.misericordialucca.org](http://www.misericordialucca.org), tel 058 349 4902. Tel reservations only, from 09:00–18:00. Closed Sun.

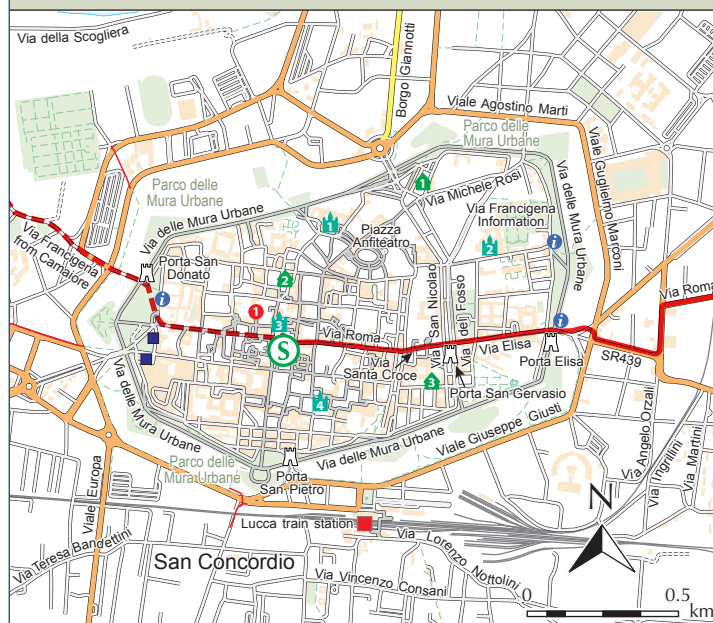
🏠 **Pellegrinario San Davino**  1/10, €Donation, Via S Leonardo 12, [www.luccatranoi.it](http://www.luccatranoi.it), tel 058 353 576.

Follow along the south side of the San Michele in Foro church and continue through town on the Via Roma/Via Santa Croce, passing among shops and eateries, through the medieval Porta San Gervasio, and then the Renaissance **Porta Elisa**. Once outside Lucca’s walls, cross into modern Lucca alongside the roundabout and onto the sidewalk of the SR439 for two blocks. Jog one block left onto the **Via Roma** and follow it to a small **shrine (2.9km)**, where you fork to the right



## Lucca

- |                          |                                     |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Basilica di San Frediano | Pellegrinario San Davino            |
| San Francesco            | L'Arciconfraternita di Misericordia |
| San Michele in Foro      | Casa del Pellegrino San Nicolao     |
| Duomo di San Martino     | Puccini Museum                      |



onto a blessedly quieter and smaller road heading in the same direction. Soon join a bike path alongside this road, passing the Church of **San Michele Arcangelo** (**1.6km**) on the left in the suburb of Antracoli. Much of the church's 12th c. construction can still be seen today, including remains of the original entrance. The tower dates from 1797. Cross two highways soon, leave the bike trail, pass a cemetery on your right, and make two left turns to come to central **Capannori**.

### 6.6KM CAPANNORI (ELEV 16M, POP 46,542)

(403.9KM)

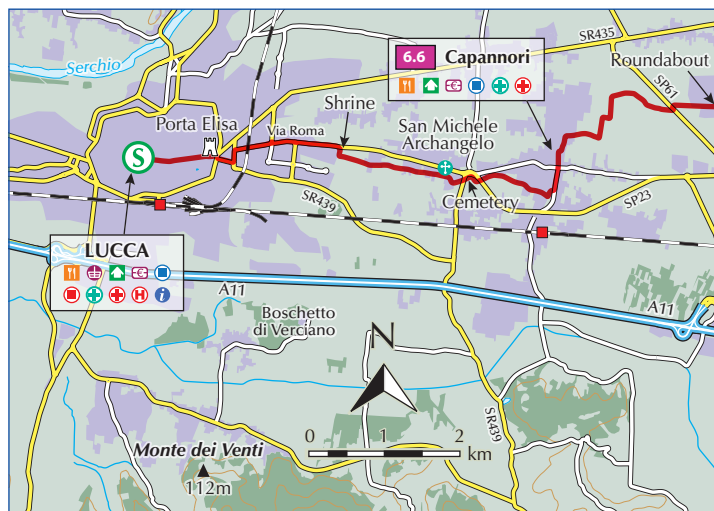
Centerpiece of the town is its **Church of Saints Quirico and Giulitta**, whose 12th c. façade is in the Pisan style. Otherwise the town itself is relatively undistinguished, though just 2km outside is the Santuario della Madonnina, a 20th c. church connected to a 16th c. edifice that contains behind the altar an image of the Madonna del Carmine, believed to be responsible for miracles and wonders. (Bus: to Altopascio, [www.lucca.ctnord.it](http://www.lucca.ctnord.it).)

**Ostello la Salana** Pr Do R K Br Cr W S Z 5/24, €15/15/30/45, Via del Popolo 182, [info@ostellolasalana.it](mailto:info@ostellolasalana.it), tel 058 341 4292 or 339 723 7912, bar & restaurant onsite, menu from €10. In winter book early.

Architectural influences of Pisa can be seen in the 12th c. façade of the church of San Quirico in Capannori



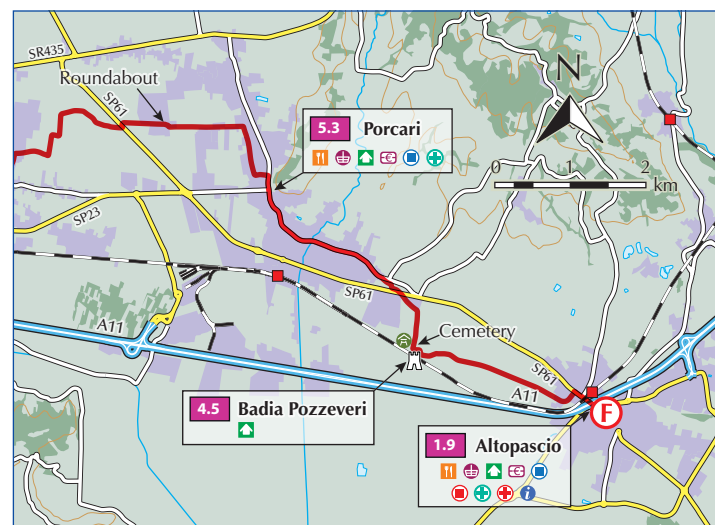




After the commercial district, join a pink-paved bike track that picks up to the right and zigzag your way through the outskirts of town, ultimately finding yourself on a quiet asphalt road among small cornfields. Cross the **SP-61** highway and walk on the narrow margin of an industrial road among small factories and warehouses where car and truck drivers give little thought to foot traffic. After passing alongside a **roundabout** (**3.2km**), the industrial traffic fades. Pass a few more small factories, cross a canal, turn right and soon the signs lead you into the heart of **Porcari**.

#### 5.3KM PORCARI (ELEV 18M, POP 8604) 🏠 🚶 🚲 🚗 🚚 🚛 🚚 🚚 (398.6KM)

The town's first documented mention was in Lombard correspondence in 780. Over the centuries it became an important stopover on the Via Francigena, which Sigeric included as his Stage XXV Forcari. The hill behind town was a strategic lookout, used to guard the Plain of Lucca on Lucca's eastern flank and now site of the white marble 15th c. **Church of San Giusto**. In the Middle Ages the town's once-prominent castle was site of several battles, including the Battle of Altopascio on 23 September 1325 between Florence and the victorious forces of Lucca. Only a few traces of the castle remain today. (Bus: to Altopascio, [www.lucca.cttnord.it](http://www.lucca.cttnord.it).) Tourist lodging available.



Continue along the Via Roma, forking right onto Via Roma Est as you leave town. Follow the pink sidewalk until it ends at the town's far boundary where you very soon fork right onto the first unpaved road of the day. Continue until it turns to asphalt in a few hundred meters and carefully cross the SP61 highway (**2.5km**), skirting behind a big-box pharmacy warehouse-store. Soon turn right between fields at a derelict house, briefly entering woods in the stage's only sylvan respite. A rest area and drinking fountain appear just before a **cemetery** and the large, archeological site of the Church of San Pietro and Abbey of **Badia Pozzeveri** with the modern hostel adjoining (**0.9km**).

#### 4.5KM BADIA POZZEVERI (ELEV 20M, POP 2500) 🏠 🚶 🚲 🚗 🚚 🚛 🚚 🚚 (394.2KM)

From the 11th to 19th centuries a large monastery stood at this site, with the existing church and tower all that remain. The discovery of an adjacent, undisturbed, 1000-year-old cemetery has made it an important bio-archeological research site. Summer digs here under the guidance of the University of Pisa welcome archeological students from around the world. The town itself is a suburb with no services and is 1km beyond the archeological site and hostel.



*Each summer archeologists return to Badia Pozzeveri to learn from human remains in the cemeteries surrounding the once prosperous abbey*

**Hostal Badia**       6/23, €10/10/20/30, Via della Chiesa  
1, info@iniziativaTuristica.org, tel 335 702 5335 or 058 3180 8194. Dinner avail-  
able for €10.

Pass the church on its left side and find a sidewalk paved in pink cobblestones beyond, which you follow through the sparse settlement of Badia Pozzeveri (**1.0km, bakery**). Turn right at the SP61 stop sign and cross the railroad tracks and then a bridge under the highway continuing to the tall brick tower and stucco façade of the Church of Sts. Jacopo, Cristoforo and Eligio in **Altospacio**.

### 1.9KM ALTOPASCIO (ELEV 20M. POP 9413)

















 (392.2KM)

Few towns along the *Via Francigena* connect as strongly to the *Via Francigena* as Altopascio. In the center of town remnants of its prominent medieval **pilgrim hospital** are preserved in the 51m bell tower, built in 1280, and in the façade, cloister, and apse of the Church of Sts. Jacopo, Cristoforo and Eligio, better known as **San Jacopo Maggiore** (St James the Great). Here in the 1070s, Matilda of Tuscany, one of medieval Europe's foremost female military and political leaders, founded the international Order of St James of Altopascio or 'Cavalieri del Tau.' This influential semi-military order spread its mission of hospitality and protection of pilgrims from

here as far away as Portugal and Germany, and continued as an influential social, political and military force until it was suppressed and absorbed into the Order of St Lazarus in 1672. At the Calderone festival each year on St James Day, 25 July, a large cauldron of soup is paraded through town, commemorating the giant crock of potage from which pilgrims were fed here for centuries. Still ringing from the church tower is the 14th c. bell, La Smarrita (tr: 'The Lost One'), that summoned pilgrims and others each evening to safety inside the city walls.

The older and more charming part of the town lies behind the church tower, where three courtyards stand that roughly comprise the outline of the original castle and pilgrim hospital. To the left is the **Piazza dei Ospitalieri** with its interesting octagonal well, at the center is **Piazza Garibaldi** with the modern Magione dei Cavalieri pilgrim hostel, and to the right is **Piazza Ricasoli**, site of the La Magione del Tau restaurant that specializes in authentic medieval dishes and where the medieval city gate opens north at the end of Via San Jacopo. The most common family name in Altopascio is Pelligrini (tr: 'Pilgrims'). (Train: 2hr to San Miniato–Fucecchio, €10, [www.trenitalia.com](http://www.trenitalia.com). Bus: 2hr incl transfer to San Miniato, [www.capautolinee.it](http://www.capautolinee.it).)


**Magione Cavalieri del Tau**       2/10, €Donation, Piazza Ospitalieri 6, turismo@comune.altopascio.lu.it, tel 058 321 6280. Check-in by 18:00 at Biblioteca Comunale in Piazza Vittorio Emanuele. Closed Sun.



*The La Smarrita bell in Altopascio's tower peals each evening before dark*