

Italy: Southern Tuscany & Giglio Island

Bike Vacation Only

Like Tuscany itself, seaside Maremma is pure pleasure. Sweeping seascapes, fertile farms, medical walled cities, and a fascinating Etruscan past combine to create a cycling paradise kissed by Tyrrhenian breezes and nourished by farm-to-table banquets. VBT introduces you to its cultural treasures during Tuscan wine tastings, lunch at an olive oil mill and an organic vegetable and cattle farm, a cooking lesson, and more. If it's Italian bicycling pleasures you seek, you'll find them here along breathtaking routes that showcase Tuscany's coastal splendor, rolling hills, and famed rustic culture.

Cultural Highlights

Indulge in the amenities of an agriturismo featured in Condé Nast Traveler

Ride the pathways of Maremma Park, a World Wildlife Fund preserve

Sample renowned Morellino and Tuscan wines

Savor fresh farm cuisine during stays at fattorie lodgings

Dip your toes or go swimming at Tyrrhenian Sea beaches

Learn from a Tuscan chef how to prepare cantucci almond cookies

Taste freshly pressed olive oil at the Andreini family mill

Enjoy a memorable picnic at an organic vegetable and cattle farm

Pedal across Orbetello Lagoon, a scenic treasure

Pause from invigorating rides to seek out your favorite gelato

Walk a panoramic trail with a local guide on Giglio Island

What to Expect

This tour offers a combination of easy terrain and moderate hills and is ideal for beginning and experienced cyclists. Our VBT support shuttle is always available for those who need assistance with the hills. Most accommodations on this tour are on country estates that are not in or near towns. Please note there is one non-biking day to explore Giglio Island.

Tour Duration: 7 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 15 - 35

Average Cycling Time: 01:45 - 04:00

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

May 72°/53°, Jun 78°/60°, Jul 83°/65°, Aug 83°/65°, Sep 79°/60°, Oct 71°/54°

Average Rainfall (in.)

May 1.2, Jun 0.6, Jul 0.6, Aug 1.3, Sep 2.7, Oct 3.7

DAY 1: VBT Bicycle Vacation begins / Transfer to Parrina, Albinia

Meet your VBT Trip Leaders in the Orbetello-Monte Argentario train station at 2:15 p.m. Your Trip Leaders will be wearing VBT staff garments. Please plan to buy some lunch on your own before this meeting. If your arrival at Orbetello-Monte Argentario train station is scheduled later than 2:15 p.m. or if you are delayed, you must take a taxi at your own expense (approximately 30 euros) to Antica Fattoria La Parrina (approximately 10 minutes). Contact the hotel if you need a taxi.

If you prefer, you can meet your group at the VBT hotel in Orvieto (Hotel Duomo, Vicolo Maurizio 7, Orvieto, phone +39 0763 341887) at 10:00 a.m. You will transfer by motorcoach (approximately 2 hours) to Antica Fattoria La Parrina. If you arrive at our Orvieto hotel later than 10:00 a.m. or if you are delayed, you must take a taxi at your own expense to Antica Fattoria La Parrina (approximately 250 euros/2 hours). Please contact Antica Fattoria La Parrina to advise of any travel delays or changes, and the staff will pass your message on to your VBT Trip Leaders.

In the afternoon, you'll join our Trip Leaders for a safety and bike-fitting session, followed by a short warm-up ride over the estate along quiet country roads. Later, gather with the group for a welcome cocktail reception on the terrace. Dinner is at the hotel.

Hotel: Antica Fattoria La Parrina

Meals: Dinner

Daily Options: 8 miles (13.1 km)

DAY 2: Cycle by the Maremma Park / Talamone / Cooking class

After breakfast, you'll leave La Parrina and cycle to the coast and Talamone, where you'll discover the many Greek legends linked to this little fortress village. There'll be time during the morning's ride to swim in the glittering blue sea. The medieval hilltop town of Talamone overlooks the Mediterranean and is set in the rolling countryside of the Maremma, one of the least-developed areas of central Italy. Its skyline is dominated by an ancient Sienese castle. This little town of fishermen originally stood on Talamonaccio Hill and served as an ancient Etruscan port. Currently, Talamone is set inside a World Wildlife Fund nature reserve known as Parco Regionale della Maremma (Maremma Park), which features an incredible variety

of protected flora and fauna. Lunch today is a delicious picnic prepared by your Trip Leaders.

In the afternoon, you'll cycle back to your hotel, where you can relax at the wonderful pool or take a walk on the mapped trails that weave through the estate. Or you may opt for horseback riding in the area, well known for its local breed of Maremma horses.

Tonight, join your hosts at La Parrina on the terrace for a hands-on cooking class. Learn how to prepare typical Tuscan *cantucci*—delicious almond cookies that are best when dipped in sweet Vin Santo wine. Enjoy dinner at the hotel.

Hotel: Antica Fattoria La Parrina

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Daily Options: 17 or 32 miles (28.6 or 53.9 km)

DAY 3: Cycle to Feniglia and Orbetello

This morning, ride through the countryside toward the coast and Ansedonia, passing elegant villas and gardens and enjoying splendid views of the sea and the old watchtower that once defended this coast. Enjoy a picnic lunch along the way at a typical Maremma country farm that grows its own organic vegetables and breeds cattle. This afternoon, you'll cycle through a thick pine forest, and then roll alongside a sandy beach; if you wish, you can pause here for a refreshing swim. This is one of the most beautiful routes of the week.

Later, you'll continue to the old town of Orbetello, traversing a cycling path built on the lagoon. Explore the lush byway around the lagoon, then rejoin your Trip Leaders and follow them to a great *gelato* spot. A short shuttle ride will take you back to your hotel.

Tonight, you'll shuttle to Orbetello for a stroll and maybe some shopping before enjoying dinner on your own; you can opt to remain at your hotel if you prefer..

Hotel: Antica Fattoria La Parrina

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Daily Options: 20 or 32 miles (33.2 or 53.3 km)

DAY 4: Porto Santo Stefano / Ferry to Giglio Island

This morning, you'll say goodbye to your hosts at La Parrina and transfer to the bustling harbor and quaint village of Porto Santo Stefano. From this port town, board a ferry to Giglio Island, arriving in the village of Giglio Porto. With a local guide, you'll shuttle to the walled hilltop town of Giglio Castello, where you'll explore the imposing Rocca Pisana fortress. Giglio Castello is the oldest inhabited center on the island and still retains much of its medieval atmosphere.

After, continue westward to Campese Beach for an informal lunch in one of the restaurants. You have free time to swim or relax on the beach. If you prefer, opt for a hike along the Faraglione cliffs: Learn about the 700 different species of wildflowers and plants that grow in this remote corner of Tuscany. On your way back to Giglio Porto, stop for a gelato before ferrying back to the mainland.

This evening at Fattoria di Magliano, our small local country resort and your home for the next three nights, you'll have time to relax by the pool and enjoy the sunset from the landscaped gardens. Dinner is at the hotel.

Hotel: Fattoria di Magliano

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Daily Options: Non-biking day

DAY 5: Capalbio / Wine tasting

After breakfast, cycle to the medieval town of Capalbio. Dating to the 11th century, historic Capalbio is surrounded by massive walls. Stroll along these ancient ramparts above the city and take in the panoramic views of the surrounding countryside. Then enter the historic center through one of two gates—the Sienese or the Porticina—and visit the city's Romanesque Castle of Saint Nicholas, with its dramatic bell tower. The tower features two rows of mullioned windows dating to the 12th century. Explore the town's winding cobblestone streets, medieval churches, and shops. Finish your day with a rewarding reel all the way back to the hotel. If you prefer, you may hop our shuttle.

Back at the hotel this afternoon, relax or swim in the pool before sipping local wines—produced right on the farm—during an included wine tasting. Fattoria di Magliano is one of the region's most renowned producers of the Tuscan wines that have changed the Italian wine industry. Dinner is at our agriturismo tonight, where your chef has prepared a delicious soup, local cheeses, fresh vegetables grown locally and gelato!.

Hotel: Fattoria di Magliano

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Daily Options: 18, 29, or 42.5 miles (29.3, 49, or 68.3 km)

DAY 6: Follow the Wine Road / Magliano /Olive-oil tasting

After a leisurely breakfast, set off on quiet country roads, passing fields of poppies and sunflowers and vineyards gently sloping down to the sea. Tour the wine roads south of Scansano, famous for red Morellino wine. Then join the Andreini family at their olive-oil mill. Enjoy a personally hosted tour of the facility and indulge in an interesting olive-oil talk and tasting. After a specially prepared picnic lunch, continue cycling through Magliano. In the Middle Ages, this walled city was the winter home of the Aldobrandeschi court. Some of its 14th-century city walls are still intact.

From Magliano, those who wish to sample the hills of Tuscany on two wheels can join an optional, gentle-but-steady climb to the lovely villages of Pereta and Scansano.

Tonight, enjoy an *aperitivo* as the sun sets behind the Tuscan horizon one final time during your trip. Then celebrate with a festive farewell dinner at a local farm, featuring organic vegetables from the garden and local wines.

Hotel: Fattoria di Magliano

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Daily Options: 13, 15, or 37 miles (21.1, 25.8 or 62 km)

DAY 7: Transfer to Rome / Free time / VBT Bicycle Vacation ends

After breakfast, transfer back to the Orbetello-Monte Argentario train station by private motorcoach, arriving at approximately 9:30 a.m. Important: Flight departures from the Rome airport prior to 3:30 p.m. are not recommended. If you depart earlier, you must make transfer arrangements from the last hotel at your own expense. Taxi cost to the Rome airport is approximately 300 euros (travel time approximately 3½ hours). Taxi cost to the Orbetello-Monte Argentario train station is approximately 40 euros (travel time approximately 30 minutes). If you prefer, you are welcome to board our coach to Rome and continue with your own travel plans from our Rome hotel.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Antica Fattoria La Parrina (Days: 1,2,3)

This Tuscan treasure is a classic agriturismo. The owner, Marchesa Franca Spinola, makes her guests feel at home on her century-old, 1,200-acre (485.6-hectare) farm, which produces wine, olive oil, vegetables, fruit, flowers and tasty cheeses. The main villa is part of a four-star country resort, featured in Condé Nast Traveler magazine. The hotel is in a large park in the bucolic Maremma area, a few miles from a white-sand beach. You'll find fresh ingredients on your plate during your delicious meals. It truly is tranquility personified, as you'll discover fully when you stroll the mapped walking trails and enjoy a swim in the outdoor pool. Free WiFi is available throughout the property. A/C is available.

Fattoria di Magliano (Days: 4,5,6)

This ancient farm estate, set in a secluded location in the Maremma, boasts many amenities for its visitors—even its own cantina! The Fattoria was one of the early producers of the so-called “Super Tuscan” wines, and today, the estate practices 100% organic viticulture. The original farmhouses have been converted into a simple but very comfortable country hotel that has a warm, welcoming feel, with terra-cotta tile work and designer furniture. The Fattoria offers extensive park grounds for exploration, well-manicured gardens and a large outdoor swimming pool with panoramic views of the countryside—perfect for a refreshing dip after the day's ride. Free WiFi is available throughout the property. A/C is available.