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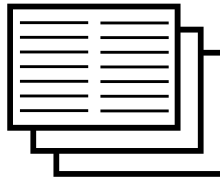
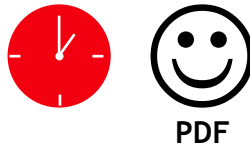
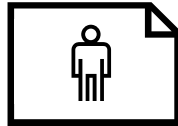
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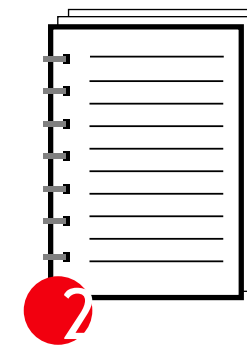
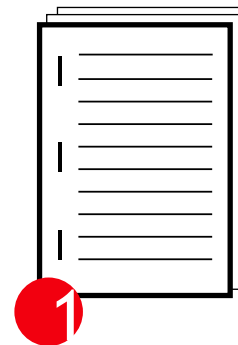
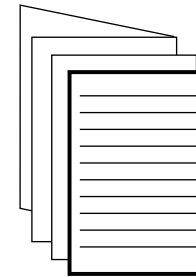
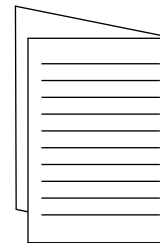
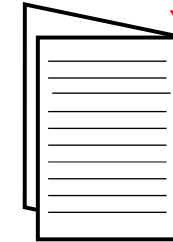
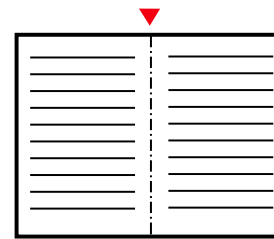
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assembling the guide



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THE GROSSETO & MAREMMA CITY GUIDE





Summary



THINGS TO KNOW

- 3 Getting there
- 4 History and culture



THINGS TO SEE

- 5 Churches palaces and monuments



THINGS TO TRY

- 8 Eating and Drinking
- 10 Shopping
- 11 Hotels and lodgings



THINGS TO EXPERIENCE

- 12 Events
- 14 La Dolce Vita



ITINERARIES

- 15 Beaches, marina and nature reserves
- 17 Saturnia hot springs & Tufa Towns
- 20 The Islands of Giglio and Giannutri

Getting there



Grosseto & Maremma: landscape

Grosseto and the Maremma are within easy reach in Italy thanks to the region's central position.

By car: from Milan take the A1 highway toward Parma, continue on the A15 toward La Spezia and merge onto the A12 toward Pisa/Rosignano. From here continue on the E80-expressway to Grosseto. **From Rome** take the A12 highway toward Civitavecchia and continue on the E80 expressway (Aurelia) to Grosseto. **From Florence** take the Firenze-Siena expressway to Siena and continue on road 223 to Grosseto. **From Bologna** take the A1-highway to Florence, exit at Firenze-Certosa, take the Firenze-Siena expressway and continue on road 223 to Grosseto.

By train: Grosseto is on the Rome-Genova route, with frequent services running in both directions. There are train stations in Orbetello, Albinia and Capalbio too, but less trains stop in these places. Services to and from Florence are frequent, but in most cases you have to change train in Pisa or Livorno.

By plane: Rome-Fiumicino and Pisa are the nearest airports to Grosseto, both operate national and international flights. From Rome-Fiumicino airport, the "Leonardo" shuttle train takes you to Rome-Termini central station, where trains to Grosseto leave. Pisa airport too is linked via shuttle train to Pisa Centrale station. Trains to Grosseto depart from here.

History and culture



Grosseto & Maremma: Orbetello

For a long time the Maremma was one of the poorest parts of Italy. It was covered by unhealthy swamps where malaria and cholera were endemic.

Grosseto, the provincial capital of the Maremma, began to develop around 935, after Roselle, an ancient city that was first Etruscan and then Roman, was devastated by the Saracens.

In 1138, it was granted the rank of *Civitas*, when Pope Innocent II also transferred the archdiocese from Roselle. From the 11th century, it was a feudal holding of the Aldobrandeschi, passing under the dominion of Siena until they both fell under the control of Florence and Cosimo de Medici in 1559. The noble Florentine family stimulated the city's economic recovery, digging canals and constructing the city's present walls and public buildings. The Medici attempted to reclaim the countryside but without much success. It was only in 1765, with the arrival of the Grand Dukes of Lorraine, that the

swamps began to be drained. Grosseto came definitively to life under Grand Duke Leopold II (1828) and the great reclamation that was achieved through significant hydraulic engineering works that made the Maremma fertile and luxuriant. In those days, the fields were owned by a few great families while the peasant laborers lived in conditions of misery. This period saw the development of banditry whose unquestioned hero was the brigand **Tiburzi**. The life of this Italian Robin Hood has become legend and his fame as a defender of the poor has come down to us intact.

Finally, the Agency for the Maremma was created in 1951, an important event that had a tremendous impact on a large part of the area. Houses and roads were built and the Agency for the Maremma expropriated, subdivided and reclaimed the entire area, assigning plots of land to a peasant class that had never owned anything.

Churches palaces and monuments



Grosseto & Maremma: Duomo of Massa Marittima

GROSSETO

The Maremma's provincial capital sits on a plain traced by the Ombrone river. Grosseto was originally surrounded by a marine gulf that, over the centuries, was transformed into a large lagoon.

Although it was damaged by bombing during the 2nd World War, the city has a lovely old town center enclosed by its marvelous **Hexagonal Walls**. They were built by the Medici at the end of the 16th century from a design by Baldassarre Lanci; the Fortezza Medicea, the northeast bulwark of the walls, is a site of particular fascination consisting of tunnels, magazines and gatehouses.

The **Duomo** is the city's most interesting monument even though its many renovations have removed much of its primitive splendor. While the north side remained unfinished, the façade and south city feature bands of white and red stone. The interior is in the shape of a Latin cross divided into three naves by strong pillars. In the second bay on the left, you will note a lovely octagonal baptismal font from 1470 with very elaborate work.

Museo Archeologico e d'Arte della Maremma

The archeological and art museum is housed in the former courthouse. The museum has a collection of 5,000 prehistoric, Etruscan and Roman relics. It is organized into 5 sections and presents the vicissitudes of the Etruscan city of Roselle in chronological order. One section is dedicated to the archeology of the province of Grosseto, excluding Roselle, from prehistory to late antiquity.

Roselle Archeological Area: ruins of the Etruscan, Roman and Medieval cities. It was located on a plateau that allowed controlling the present plain of Grosseto, which in ancient times was occupied by the ancient lagoon system that formed a large saltwater lake deep enough to be navigable. You can see the stratified remains of the Etruscan-Roman city: the city wall, remains of Etruscan houses and the Imperial age complex, with forum, stone streets and a well-preserved amphitheater. Visiting hours: from 09:00 to sunset.

THE MAREMMA

MASSA MARITTIMA is located in lovely position on a hill. Called the "Jewel of the Middle Ages" due to the beauty of its Romanesque and Gothic buildings, it is a monumental city where everything has remained in the harmonious proportions of past centuries. The city has always derived its wealth from copper and silver mines, agriculture and crafts and, in recent years, from tourism. The **Piazza del Duomo** is striking: here, due to the positioning of the buildings, the architectures of the religious power and that of the lay authorities seem to avoid rather than confront each other. The **Cathedral**, located at the top of a flight of stairs, is in an asymmetric position with respect to the piazza. All this gives it a very dynamic appearance compared to the surrounding space. The cathedral was enriched over the centuries to the extent that what we see today is the sum of different styles, from Lombard to Romanesque and Gothic.

The façade has recently been restored and returned to its original splendor. The inside is imposing in its naked simplicity. There are the remains of frescoes from the end of the 13th century and there are several 11th-century Lombard frescoes in the interior façade. There is an imposing Baptistery, closed by an iron gate, which consists of a Travertine basin from 1267 and a marble tabernacle that was added later.

The piazza contains several medieval palazzi, including the centers of the civil power of the time: facing the Duomo, there is the **Palazzo del Podestà** that was built around 1225 to house the family that ruled the city in the middle ages. On the other side of the piazza is the **Palazzo Comunale**, formed from the fusion of three house-towers constructed in different periods. Climbing Via Mancini, one comes to the **Fortezza dei Senesi**, joined to the Torre del Candeliere by an arched bridge. The fortress is a splendid example of medieval architecture and was built by the Sienese conquerors to physically separate the three parts of the city (terzieri) and prevent the residents from rising up against them.

Museo della Miniera: the mining sector, which today is in decline, was the backbone of the local economy for decades. The Mining Museum is housed in a system of subterranean tunnels that were used as an air-raid shelter during the war. In about 700 m of tunnels, the museum recreates the various systems for reinforcing and excavating the deposits. There is a display of mining machinery and a small collection of local minerals.

MAGLIANO This small town has a medieval appearance and a fortified center that is one of the most enchanting of the Maremma. During the Middle Ages, it was a dominion of the Republic of Siena, which fortified it with a mighty wall, which is still well-preserved today. Visitors are astonished by the imposing and elegant architecture of Magliano's wall. The walls on the southeast side are the oldest, constructed by the Aldobrandeschi

counts in 1300. The western walls were constructed by the Republic of Siena in 1400, with semi-circular rather than square towers, and many other strategic novelties. The southwest walls, overlooking the sea, are the best preserved. The walls preserve the very suggestive ancient nucleus of the town. The two churches of **San Giovanni Battista** and the **Santissima Annunziata** are worth visiting for the many works of art they preserve inside. In particular, in the second church you can see the valuable painting, "La Madonna che allatta il Bambino" (Madonna Nursing the Child) by Bartolomeo di Lando.

CAPALBIO A land of brigands and wild boar, Capalbio is a splendid medieval town that rises on a wooded hill covered with typical Maremma thatch. The view from the town is astonishing and embraces the entire Maremma from the plain to the coastal pine forests and the silver sea. The atmosphere of the village's narrow streets is unique and has made Capalbio a summer resort destination for Italy's cultural, political and economic elite.

During the Middle Ages, it was first a possession of the Aldobrandeschi family, passed to the Orsini counts and, in 1416, was annexed to the Republic of Siena. The territory was later assigned to the Medici of Florence and began a slow and inexorable decline. In the 19th century, the town was home to bandits that terrorized the Maremma for many years and the most famous was the brigand Tiburzi, whose legend has survived to our own days.

The town, dominated by the **Rocca Aldobrandesca**, preserves its medieval plan almost intact, to the extent that you can follow the entire ancient "camino di ronda" (patrols path) along the walls. The Pieve di San Nicola, with its splendid Romanesque capitals and frescoes from the Siena school, is also worth a visit. Finally, we recommend a visit to the fascinating "Giardino dei Tarocchi" (Tarot Garden) created by the great Franco-American artist, Niki de Saint

Phalle. The garden is located in the hamlet of Garavicchio and can be visited from May to the end of October.

Every year, Capalbio is the site of Capalbio Cinema the International Short Film Festival.

ORBETELLO is a very special town on a thin tongue of land that extends into the lagoon that gave it its name. The city has a singular hull shape which is surrounded by the homonymous lagoon and joined to the Monte Argentario promontory by a dam built in 1841.

Orbetello was already inhabited in the Etruscan period and was later dominated by the Roman Empire. In the past, its favorable geographic position made it an attractive conquest, not only by noble Italian families, but also by foreign states. From 1555 to 1707, it was occupied by the Spanish, who proclaimed it the capital of the "Stato dei Presidi" and constructed mighty fortifications there.

The old town center is surrounded by about 2 kilometers of Etruscan walls. The walls probably date from the 5th century BC and are formed from large masses of polygonal shapes, set in place without mortar. Inside the walls, the ancient Cattedrale di Santa Maria Assunta rises in Piazza del Duomo, with a Tuscan Gothic façade. Taking a walk through the center, you can see the Palazzo del Governatore, alongside the Torre dell'Orologio and the monument to Garibaldi. In the 17th century, the Spanish built fortifications like the Polveriera Guzman, a large powder storehouse that contained tons of explosives and that, today, houses the city's archeological museum.

The area around Orbetello contains a wealth of interesting places such as the port of Talamone, a picturesque fishing village built around an ancient 15th-century fortress that provides a charming panoramic view of the coast and islands.

Eating and drinking



Grosseto & Maremma: tortelli maremmani

Maremma cooking is simple but very genuine and flavorful, based on peasant traditions. It could be said that the Maremma is divided into two very distinct areas: a lot of fish is eaten on the coast, either caught or farm-raised in the lagoon; in the hinterland, on the other hand, there is a predominance of seasonal vegetables, wild game, deli meats, cheeses and its famous truffles.

Among the **pasta dishes**, one that is very popular is *tortelli maremmani*, stuffed with ricotta and spinach and seasoned with tomato or truffle.

There are also the very typical pici, large, rough spaghetti that are seasoned with a sauce made from hare or wild boar.

One famous dish from Orbetello is *bottarga*, made from mullet or tuna eggs that are dried and then grated on pasta or bruschetta.

It's a specialty that you ought to try at least once in your life.

There are many soups that come from poor peasant cooking, in particular, *acquacotta*: there are many versions, but the basic one is made from onion, egg and seasonal vegetables.

There is also *ricotta soup*, made from spinach and ricotta, or fish soup. All Maremma soups are served on slices of toasted stale bread.

The meat in Maremma cooking is of three main types: wild boar, lamb and, of course, Maremma beef.

The wild boar is stewed, as in *cinghiale alla maremmana*, but it also used a great deal to make excellent deli meats such as *prosciutto* and *culatello*.

Maremma cows are typically allowed to graze wild and provide a lean, flavorful meat: and don't pass up a chance to order a buttera, a steak at least 3 fingers high, grilled over the coals and seasoned with salt, pepper and olive oil.

As for the lamb, the most original Maremma recipe is, without doubt, *buglione*.

Fish is represented by many varieties, from the sea or lagoon, and is prepared in many tasty recipes, on the grill, baked or in soups. One typical dish is *scaveccio*, made from the so-called poor fish because full of spines and not very saleable; these are marinated to soften them and make them more appetizing.

There is also the delicious *baccalà alla maremmana*, which is dried salt cod fried and seasoned with tomato and spices while, from Orbetello we have a tradition of eating eel, which is marinated in vinegar or lemon and then fried. Spanish domination left a heritage of *anguilla sfumata*, which is eel smoked after a very long and laborious process.

The sweets of the Maremma are the typical "poor sweets" made with simple, always available ingredients, such as dried fruit, honey and eggs. This tradition has also provided *panforte* which is made from dried, candied fruit, *castagnaccio* made with chestnut flour, or *sfratti*, which are the typical sweets of the Jewish community of Pitigliano. You should also try *pastiera*, a cake filled with ricotta.

Wine has been present in Maremma since Etruscan times.

Recently, production has made enormous strides forward, reaching prestigious levels of quality. The northern area of the Maremma,

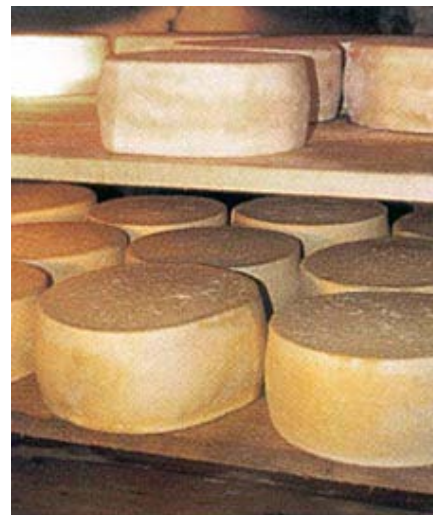
around Massa Marittima, produces the good **Montegio** DOC wines, which can be red, white or rosé.

The area of volcanic origin between Scansano and Pitigliano, is distributing new types of wines, the pleasant and fruity *Baby Tuscans* that, unlike the more famous *Super Tuscans*, require shorter aging of two or three years.

The best known of these red wines are **Morellino di Scansano** and **Sovana**, but there are also **Capalbio Rosso** and **Parrina Rosso**. This area also produces a good white wine: the **Bianco di Pitigliano**.

Finally, the entire coastal area near the **Argentario** produces excellent white wines like **Ansonica** and **Vermentino**, which is very popular in Tuscany, and even a good desert wine: the **Vin Santo**.

Shopping



Grosseto & Maremma: Pecorino cheeses

Corso Carducci is the main **shopping** street of **Grosseto**, but almost the entire city center is a pedestrian mall and offers visitors the opportunity to browse comfortably among the many local craft shops.

Moreover, even the medieval villages of the **Maremma** and the resorts along the coast are well-supplied to satisfy the demand for typical products.

The local **crafts** are centered on ceramics, no doubt inspired by Etruscan art, wrought iron and leather accessories handworked in the tradition of the Maremma cowboys.

Naturally, in addition to crafts, **gastronomy** is the star of Maremma shopping.

You'll have a hard time choosing: there are the deli meats like "finocchiona" and wild boar prosciutto, wild game sauces, Pecorino cheeses, olive oil and the many excellent wines produced by its generous land.

There are many **holiday farms** scattered throughout Maremma countryside and it is possible to buy fresh, genuine products directly on the farm.

The villages of the Maremma regularly hold **antique fairs** and we list the most important. In Orbetello: Mercatino dell'Antiquariato, every 1st weekend of the month; in Marina di Grosseto: Maremma Antiquaria, every 3rd weekend of the month.

Hotels and lodgings



Grosseto & Maremma: view of Grosseto

The recent development of tourism in the Maremma has expanded the pool of accommodations and significantly raised quality levels. Depending on your needs and budget, you can choose from a wide range of lodging solutions.

If you prefer the comfort of staying in the city, choose one of the many **hotels in Grosseto**, from four stars and down, but if the sea interests you, why not pick one of the many **hotels and other lodgings on the Maremma coast**. If you're seeking contact with nature, there is an embarrassment of choices among the many **Maremma holiday farms** or you can experience all the charm of a medieval village by opting for a **historic Maremma residence or hotel**.

Events



Grosseto & Maremma: Torciata di San Giuseppe

In the Maremma, the entire year is filled with a succession of events linked to folklore, religious traditions, gastronomy or cultural happenings.

Travelplan offers a selection of the most singular and best known events.

Torciata di San Giuseppe - Pitigliano 19 March.

A traditional nighttime procession by torchlight dedicated to San Giuseppe that culminates in an impressive "Rite of Fire." The entire community gathers in the town's central piazza around the great bonfire of the "invernacciu" in which a puppet (winter) is burned and the new season is greeted with the wish that it will bring well being and abundance.

Il Balestro del Girifalco - Massa Marittima, two times a year: around 20 May and the second Sunday of August.

This medieval spectacle includes the participation of 8 crossbowmen from each of the three districts into which the city is

divided: the archer who comes closest to the center of the target wins a golden arrow and the district receives a silk flag painted by an artist.

Each time, the piazza is filled with thousands of residents and tourists who come to watch the historic procession of over 150 persons in medieval costumes that begins the contest.

Capalbio Cinema - International Short Film Festival - Capalbio, at the beginning of July.

This is one of the most important events in the short film industry. The festival specializes in short films (a maximum length of 15 minutes) and presents a selection of the best international production. An international jury composed of directors, actors, producers and critics bestows an award for the best film, best director, best photography, etc.

Toscana Fotofestival - Massa Marittima, in July and August.

A photographic review consisting of exhibitions of the best masters, meeting-debates on themes connected to photography, projections and workshops.

Rodeo della Rosa - Alberese, 15 August.

The main event for the Maremma's cowboys. They meet in Alberese every 15 August to test themselves in a unique tournament. Divided into two teams - Rosa Gialla and Rosa Rossa (the Yellow and Red Roses) - the herdsmen challenge each other to a contest of riding ability.

Two horsemen of opposite colors complete, saddled on their horses, and attempt to snatch the band with the other team's colors. In a rapid succession of escapes and body to body fighting, the contest continues until all the contestants have met.

The team that manages to conquer the most enemy "roses" wins.

Palio Marinaro dell'Argentario - Porto S. Stefano, 15 August.

It is a regatta of 4 boats, each with 4 oarsmen

and a tiller, who represent the city's four neighborhoods. The contest's origins are very ancient: legend has it that it represents a Saracen felucca chasing a boatload of local fishermen, who escape because of their rowing prowess.

Le Carriere del 19 - Scarlino, 19 August.

This popular festival recalls a miracle that occurred in this village in 1855 when a cholera epidemic suddenly stopped. The residents of the three neighborhoods of Scarlino challenge each other to a contest that takes place from 9:00 in the morning until midnight. The events include a historic procession, a competition between the archers of the three districts and a race through the town. The night before the nineteenth, the village is decorated with wood cathedrals, papier-mâché castles, fountains and everything else until it becomes unrecognizable to its own residents. Towards evening, every village street becomes a theater with local actors playing a scene assigned by the organizing committee.

La Dolce Vita



Grosseto & Maremma: Porto Santo Stefano

Travelplan offers three interesting ideas for those who want to taste a bit of the local pleasures and good life after filling their eyes with the beauty of the Maremma. You are guaranteed to return home with a good bit of nostalgia in your bags as well.

A romantic evening in the Argentario: at sunset, you will follow the road that, from Porto Santo Stefano wends its way along the Argentario coast to Porto Ercole. It is one of the most fascinating roads of the Maremma and follows the coast through a success of extraordinary landscapes, touching the many lookout towers left by the Spanish in the 16th century. You will then spend the evening in **Porto Ercole**, a small jewel overlooking the Tuscan sea with a charm that few others have. The fishermen return every evening at sunset and the seaside promenade is filled with the voices, sounds and lights of Italian night life.

At the exclusive Punta Ala to experience the atmosphere of the most "in" yacht club on the entire Tyrrhenian coast. After a day spent

relaxing on the beautiful sandy beaches, or playing 18 holes on a golf course overlooking the sea, then you immerse yourself in the atmosphere of the most famous sailing club of Italy, strolling along the piers of the marina before granting yourself the pleasures of the good cooking in one of the fine fish restaurants at the port or along the beach. Reservations are recommended! And if you happen to be there on a Saturday night, you won't mind spending the evening in the trendy atmosphere of the Black Sun Disco club.

A day with the Cowboys. The "buttero," or the horseback cattle herder, is one of the symbols of the Maremma. When the Maremma was still owned by the large estate holders, the buttero's job was to tame the wild cows and horses that roamed free in the countryside. Watching one of their performances that they put on regularly in the Maremma from May to September is an experience you will never forget. Alternatively, you can spend a day with them, helping in their work. The Equinus farm in Grosseto organizes days on the farm, trekking on horseback and shows in the setting of the Maremma countryside.

Beaches, marina and nature reserves



Grosseto & Maremma: Parco Naturale della Maremma

Visiting the Maremma always means visiting nature. The Maremma is bathed by a clear sea that, for 160 km, laps its varied coast of sandy beaches protected by thick pine forests, steep cliffs overlooking the Tyrrhenian and islands of rare beauty. The waters of the Maremma seashore are among the cleanest in Italy and its beaches have been winning the recognition of the Blue Flag for years. The seaside resorts of the Maremma are equipped for sailing, windsurfing, kitesurfing and canoeing and divers will find diving centers in the Argentario and the *Isola del Giglio*.

The Maremma also has many protected areas that allow you to experience the subtleties of the Mediterranean thatch and its wildlife in total freedom. Travelplan recommends the most important stops when following the coast from north to south.

Punta Ala is one of the most exclusive seaside resorts on the Tyrrhenian, whose success is built around its famous marina and yacht club. This elegant resort is located in a large pine

forest with well cared for gardens and clean streets. The sandy coast is served by a series of well-equipped beaches and, if you push a little further on, you will find unforgettable bays surrounded by nature: *Cala Martina* and *Cala Violina*.

Dedicated golfers will find a satisfying challenge at the famous **Punta Ala Golf Club**, 18 holes with a view of the sea, which hosts important international competitions, and the new **Toscana Golf Club**, in Gavorrano. They are many lodging choices with a series of excellent **hotels and residences** as well as friendly holiday farms.

Castiglione della Pescaia a famous, well-equipped resort and the most popular of the Maremma, is known for its long beaches and magnificent Tombolo pine forest. The town is an ancient fishing village, with a center climbing the hill and enclosed by mighty walls with towers, gates and a 15th-century castle. Every evening the fishing boats tie-up with their loads of fresh fish along the picturesque port-canal.

Castiglione della Pescaia has many bathing beaches equipped for water sports, but it is also possible to take walks, ride bicycles or go horseback riding on the dunes or in the huge pine forest. Tourists will find a broad choice of lodgings: **hotels, residences, apartments, houses and campsites** to meet every need.

Parco Naturale della Maremma. Also called the **Parco dell'Uccellina**, it extends along the Maremma coast for the entire length of the mountains of the same name. The park's appeal lies precisely in the diversity of its environments: the swamp area to the north that preserves the typical appearance of the Grosseto plain before its reclamation radically changed the landscape; further south, there is the Alberese pine forest and the Monti dell'Uccellina covered with a luxuriant Mediterranean thatch and the wild sand dunes of the coast. It is easy to find herds of Maremma horses and cattle grazing in the

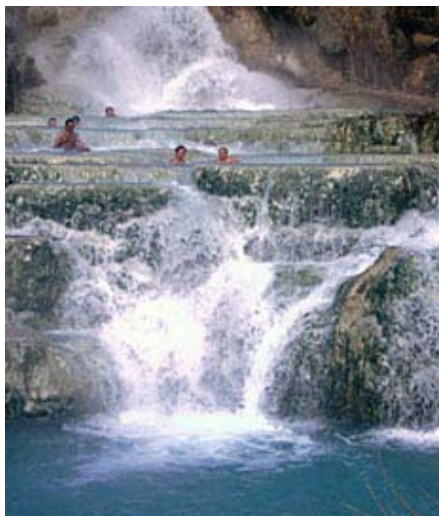
park or to see wild boar, deer and roebucks. The Trappola swamp is populated by scores of migratory species and are famous for the opportunities it provides for **bird watching**. The area also contains evidence of a human presence, such as the fascinating ruins of the 11th-century **Abbey of San Rabano**, in a splendid panoramic position dominating the coast.

Monte Argentario is one of the most famous spots in the Maremma and Tuscany. The promontory, which was originally an island, is characterized by a high, rocky coastline covered by a thick Mediterranean thatch, interrupted by olive groves and vineyards. It is now connected to the land by the Feniglia and Giannella sand bars, two strips of uninterrupted sandy beach and thick maritime pine. The sandy isthmuses are separated by the **Laguna di Orbetello**, an area protected by the WWF because it sits on one of the most important migratory routes and is one of the principal wintering sites for birds that nest in Europe. The serene tranquility of this lagoon contrasts with the high jagged Monte Argentario coast that hides small inlets in rocks that are inaccessible from the land.

Porto Santo Stefano is the largest town on Mount Argentario, and connections leave from here for the **islands of Giglio and Giannutri**. The town descends on large steps along the slopes of the promontory to a picturesque bay. Today, thanks to its splendid sea and beautiful landscapes, is it a famous resort with two ports, Porto Nuovo and Porto Vecchio. Every 15 August, they play the **Palio Marinaro**, preceded by a historical procession in Spanish costumes. In Porto Santo Stefano, you will also find the Acquario Mediterraneo dell'Argentario, with panoramic tanks that reproduce the typical ecosystems of the Costa d'Argento. A scenic road connects Porto Santo Stefano to **Porto Ercole** with breath-taking views. Porto Ercole is located on the eastern coast of the Argentario; it is a charming seaside village that overlooks a

bay protected by a small promontory. It is a maze of lanes and staircases that descend tortuously from the fortress to the port. The principal works to visit in Porto Ercole are its fortifications that date from the period of Spanish domination in the 16th century: Forte San Filippo, Forte Santa Caterina, Forte Stella and the Rocca. But, most of all, Porto Ercole is a center of cosmopolitan life frequented by many tourists, with a wealth of stores and fashionable, always lively nightspots.

Saturnia hot springs and the Tufa Towns



Grosseto & Maremma: the hot springs of Saturnia

This itinerary covers the interior of the Maremma, an area still unknown to mass tourism, that will allow you to capture the mysterious heart of its appeal. The traveler feels as if he has entered an enchanted land populated by fairies, wizards and brigands, where you will be strongly tempted to wander without a precise goal, letting yourself be carried away by the emotions of the landscape. You will visit the great **Etruscan necropolises** and medieval cities like **Pitigliano**, **Sovana** and **Sorano**, which seem to have grown from the very rock on which they stand. You will soak in the hot waters of **Saturnia**. The itinerary can be covered in two days, but it's worth staying longer to explore the territory through fascinating trekking on foot, mountain bike or horseback. You can select from **hotels in Saturnia**, **hotels in Pitigliano** and **hotels in Sorano** for a stay characterized by relaxation and charm. Those who prefer a different type of lodging will be able to choose from comfortable **bed & breakfasts** and **Maremma holiday farms** in ancient villages or the open countryside.

MANCIANO is a town in a scenic location that has been nicknamed the "spy of the Maremma" because from here you can see the surrounding territory in every direction. Inside its walls, the village has narrow little streets that follow an elliptical route.

The top of the hill is dominated by a castle with an imposing tower.

Nearby, you will find the **Museo di Preistoria e Protostoria**, which documents the rich Pre-Etruscan period of this region, from the Paleolithic to the Bronze Age, with many archeological finds on display.

Near Manciano, don't miss an opportunity to visit the town of **Montemerano**, an authentic medieval jewel constructed on a hill covered with olive trees.

You will be enchanted by the poetry of this village, which surrounds its castle and is enclosed by a wall. Visit the Romanesque-Gothic Church of San Giorgio that contains precious frescoes and works of art, including a polyptych painted by Sano di Pietro in 1458.

SATURNIA is a city of mysterious origins that, according to legend, was founded by the god Saturn. In the Middle Ages, it was completely destroyed by Siena because it was considered a center of conspirators.

Today, its fame is linked to the nearby **Saturnia Hot Springs**, whose sulfurous waters gush all year round at a temperature of 37.5°.

In the Middle Ages, these springs were the source of disturbing legends: the place was the meeting place of wizards and witches, magic spells and witches' sabbaths and it was said that this was the devil's doorway from hell.

The waters were thought to be bewitched because they gave off a strong satanic odor (sulphur). The springs are divided between two sites: the enchanting natural pools with waterfalls where access is free and you can always bath; the **Terme di Saturnia Spa Resort** complex, an oasis of relaxation with four open-air hot spring swimming pools, waterfalls, hydromassage and mud treatments.

SOVANA, the ancient capital of the Aldobrandeschi, seems to be a corner frozen in a remote age, rich with history and artistic beauty that creates an deep and unforgettable impression.

Sovana was one of the principal Etruscan cities and was reborn in the Middle Ages when it became the property of the Aldobrandeschi family.

During this period, Pope Gregory VII was born here. Its splendor lasted until about 1300, when it began a slow decline that led to its complete abandonment in the 19th century. The village has been reborn in the last ten years, thanks to the discovery of the great Etruscan necropolis and, today, is a favorite destination of academics and tourists.

Once you have crossed the threshold of the Rocca Aldobrandesca, you can continue on to **Piazza del Pretorio**, which has several lovely buildings, such as the Church of Santa Maria, dating from the late Romanesque period, the Palazzo dell'Archivio, with its strange clock, and, facing the church, the Palazzo della Loggia and the Palazzo Pretorio. The latter houses a small, but interesting, museum of the area's history and archeology. In the immediate vicinity, you will find the fascinating **Sovana Necropolis**, with many tombs of various types.

Don't miss the **Necropolis of Poggio Felceto**, where you will find a complex of spectacular tombs including the Tomb of Hildebrand, the masterpiece of all Etruscan burial places.

In Sovana, you can also experience a walk in the enchanting "**Vie Cave**", imposing walkways excavated from the tufa by the Etruscans, perhaps as communication lanes, perhaps for magic rites.

Among the best known is the "Cavone," with tombs cut into the rock and inscriptions.

PITIGLIANO Constructed on a spur of tufa below the imposing Orsini castle, Pitigliano appears to the visitor like a scene from a fable, rising on a rocky cliff of savage beauty surrounded by deep valleys.

The houses are constructed at the top of sheer tufa cliffs that make the construction of defensive walls superfluous.

There are characteristic grottos and Etruscan tombs excavated from the high tufa walls, some of which are used today as cellars for the preservation of wine.

Entering the city on foot, you immediately find yourself before the **Fortezza Orsini**, which has preserved its original 16th-century appearance. Inside, you will find the Diocesan Museum of Sacred Art, which we recommend visiting because it will allow you to see the sumptuous interiors of the palazzo.

Also of interest are the 18th century Cathedral and Church of Santa Maria, but Pitigliano's magic is best savored by walking along the old streets and, especially, visiting the famous **Jewish Quarter**.

Since the 16th century, Pitigliano has been the home of a thriving Jewish community; today, you can visit the Synagogue, cemetery, library and the oven where unleavened bread was baked.

The Synagogue dates from 1598 and was renovated in the middle of the 18th century. A renovation in 1995 rediscovered its ancient classic expression.

The ritual **Torciata di San Giuseppe** takes place in Pitigliano every 19 March.

SORANO The village is constructed from dark tufa and is one piece with the rock on which it rises, dominated by a high fortress that time has made to resemble a natural peak.

Of Etruscan, and later Roman, origin, it was a possession of the Aldobrandeschi and then, from 1312 on, of the Orsini, who gave it its current appearance and build the walls and mighty fortress that made it one of the strongest defenses of the Earldom of Pitigliano.

The best thing is to walk along its narrow lanes observing the structure of the houses until you come to the Fortezza Orsini an impregnable fortification that, by following its underground walkways, also provides an

understanding of many aspects of renaissance military life. In town, you can also visit the Church of San Nicola and "il Cortilone," a huge granary built by the Orsini in 1554.

There is a lovely excursion from Sorano to Vitozza, in the hamlet of San Quirico, one of the largest rock settlements in central Italy, with over 200 grottoes that were inhabited from prehistory until the Middle Ages. Along the path that runs along the site, you can see the remains of three fortresses, the Church of Sant'Angelo and an important Roman "columbarium," all in an uncontaminated environment.

The Islands of Giglio and Giannutri



Grosseto & Maremma: the Island of Giannutri

This itinerary will take you from Monte Argentario to the two southernmost island of the Tuscan Archipelago, Giglio and Giannutri. The itinerary can be covered in two days but you will probably be so swept up by the beauty of these places that you will decide to stay longer to enjoy the splendid sea or go diving. In fact, these are considered some of the most important and spectacular sea bottoms of Italy. You can choose from a list of hotels on Giglio or stay in a comfortable **Giglio bed & breakfast**.

Ferries and boats depart from Porto Santo Stefano on the Argentario on a regular schedule operated by **Maregiglio** and **Toremare** companies.

The **ISLAND OF GIGLIO** is the second largest of the three islands of the Tuscan Archipelago and consists of three towns: Giglio Porto, Giglio Castello and Campese. It's name comes from the Greek, "aegilion," goat island, probably because its rocky terrain is only suitable for them to graze. The coast is jagged and rocky, alternating with a few

sandy inlets. But it is the emerald water and sea bottoms with a thousand colors that will leave you breathless. For a long time, the island's terraces have been planted with olive trees and vineyards that produce highly-prized Ansonica wine. The island's history is somewhat tormented having passed from one conqueror to the next, but its most difficult period dates from the 15th century when pirate incursions caused its population to flee. The Medici repopulated the island and gave Giglio's castle strong fortifications, making it safe again. The itinerary begins from **Giglio Porto**, a lovely town overlooking a bay and enclosed by hills behind it cultivated with vineyards. From here, there is a twisty road to **Giglio Castello**, the most interesting town on the island, which has preserved its ancient appearance as a fortified village with high walls and towers. The town is a maze of little streets, underpasses and steep staircases cut into the rock and old houses that sit on top of the other. The Church of Giorgio preserves some of the arms that the islanders took from the pirates after defeating them in a terrible battle in 1700. If you want to explore the marvelous coast in the best possible way, you can rent a boat, either in the main port of Giglio Porto or the secondary port of Giglio Campese.

The ISLAND OF GIANNUTRI. There is a daily excursion from Giglio Porto to the small, wild island of Giannutri, with its characteristic half-moon shape and its sheer coastline overlooking a crystalline sea. The island is rocky and has only two beaches, but is of significant interest for its many grottoes that open along the coast, the most famous of which is Gala dei Grottini. In addition to a truly fascinating natural spectacle, the island's main attraction is the ruins of the Roman villa of Domizi Enobarbi, built on a terrace overlooking the sea. The island can be visited in a day-trip from **Giglio** or the **Argentario** and has no hotels or campsites, just two restaurants and a supermarket.



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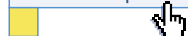


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