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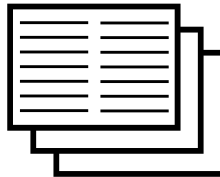
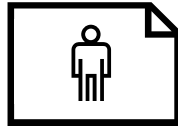
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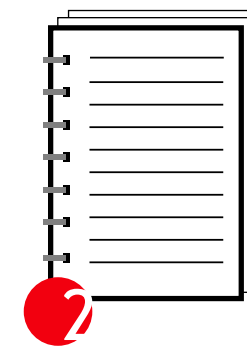
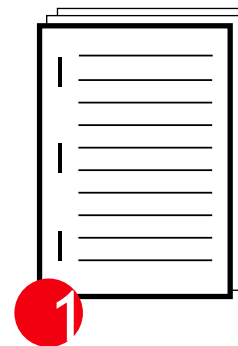
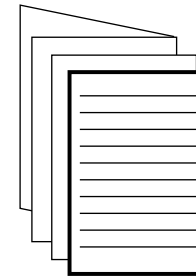
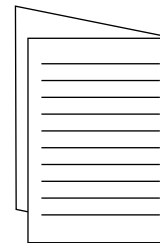
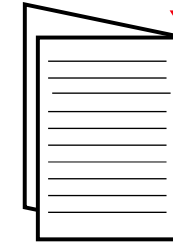
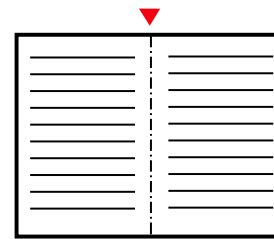
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assembling the guide



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THE LIVORNO & ETRUSCAN COAST CITY GUIDE



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Summary



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Getting there



Livorno: Amerigo Vespucci school ship

Livorno can be easily reached in different ways.

By car: from Milan take the A1 freeway to Parma, then the A15 for La Spezia, and the A12 to Livorno.

From Rome take A12 Roma-Civitavecchia freeway and continue on highway E80 (the "Aurelia") until Livorno. From Florence take the Firenze-Pisa-Livorno (Fi-Pi-Li) until the city center.

From Bologna take the A1 freeway until the Firenze-Signa exit and then the Firenze-Pisa-Livorno highway.

By train: Livorno is on the Rome-Genoa line with frequent trains in both directions. Livorno is also connected to Florence by direct trains, the trip lasts around one and a half hours. See the Trenitalia website for train schedules.

By plane: The closest airport to Livorno is Pisa's "Galileo Galilei" International Airport in Pisa.

A shuttle bus will take you to the Pisa Centrale train station where trains leave for Livorno. Otherwise, you can fly to Florence or Roma Fiumicino, and go to Livorno by train.

History and culture



Livorno: Venezia Nuova

The origins of present day Livorno date back to the 15th century. A small port called Liburna existed in Roman times, built from a natural cove, which was under the domination of Pisa for all of the Middle Ages. A 1017 document mentions the presence of a castle named Livorna.

In 1421 the small port, under the reign of Genoa, was sold to Florence, at that time undergoing major expansion and needing an efficient outlet at the sea. From this time on Livorno was ruled by the Medici family who for more than three centuries transformed the small village into one of the most important ports of the Mediterranean. At the end of the 16th century Francesco I assigned Buontalenti with the task of making Livorno a full-fledged city and he made it able to house 20,000 people inside the walls and 300 ships in the port.

In 1606 Ferdinando I presented Livorno with the "Costituzione Livornina", which gave incentives and privileges to merchants

from everywhere who moved to the city to work. Thus the foreign communities, called "Nazioni" flourished; primarily Jews, who lived here free from the humiliation of a ghetto, but also Greeks, Armenians, English, French, Dutch, Spaniards, Portuguese, Russians, Muslims and Waldensians. Many remains can still be seen of this old cosmopolitan city: the various churches of the Nazioni, cemeteries, cuisine and obviously Livorno's inhabitants. Livorno was declared a free port, where goods were completely exempt from taxes. In 1629 Ferdinando II had a new quarter built by Venetian masters which connected the 23 islands by bridges: this quarter is now called Venezia Nuova. The year 1736 marked the end of the Medici dynasty and the rise of the Grand Dukes of Lorraine, connected to Austria's Hapsburgs. The city began to expand outside the Medici walls, slowly losing its city-fortress appearance.

The 19th century was, after the 17th century, the city's golden century, a time of a great drive of the economy, arts, publishing and culture. Many important public works were built like the Aqueduct of Colognole and Cisternone, which brought and purified water from the inland hills; the Molo Nuovo, train station and new city walls were constructed at the same time. The bathing concessions also rose at the same time, making Livorno one of the major vacation centers for Italians. The seaside promenade is still one of the prettiest areas of the city. Livorno became part of the united Italy in 1860. The suppression of the free port marked the transformation of the economy from maritime to industrial. Livorno was seriously damaged during the Second World War and is currently trying to recover its past role as cultural and tourism leader.

Historical Buildings and Museums



Livorno: the Four Moors

Francesco I De' Medici had Buontalenti design an "ideal city" to give the new port a residential area during the second half of the 16th century. This was the origin of the oldest part of Livorno, a fortified city with a pentagonal shape surrounded by navigable canals, the Fossi Medicei, and cut down the middle by the present day Via Grande. The main sights of Livorno are concentrated inside the Medici part of the city.

Quattro Mori is the symbolic monument of Livorno, located in Piazza del Padiglione, in front of the old wharf and Medici port. The monument is composed of a marble statue of Grand Duke Ferdinando II and four bronze statues depicting chained prisoners. The bodies of the four Muslims has a great moving effect which contrasts with the cold and detached appearance of the Grand Duke.

The monument celebrates the Order of the Knights of St. Stephen, founded in 1561 by Cosimo I De' Medici to liberate the Mediterranean from the threat of Turkish pirates.

Fortezza Vecchia (Old Fortress) is an impressive pentagonal fortress surrounded by moats, built in the 16th century to defend the Medici port. It contains a medieval (11th century) keep and cylindrical tower. The fortress is enclosed by powerful ramparts reinforced in the 19th century to house artillery. The small church of San Francesco (mid-16th century) also merits a visit.

San Ferdinando, behind Fortezza Vecchia, is a church worth seeing for its splendid interior decorations, which seem completely unimaginable looking at the unfinished exterior. The interior is a triumph of marble sculpture, all late Baroque works by Giovanni Baratta who sculpted them based on a single design. The environment thus acquired an extraordinary uniformness of forms and styles rarely found in a church.

Fortezza Nuova (New Fortress) is an impressive polygon fortress in stone and brick, built at the end of the 16th century. The fortress is completely surrounded by Medici canals and dominates the old working class district of Venezia Nuova. It is a beautiful example of 16th century fortification, its underground passages, large vaulted halls and walkways for the guards can be visited, while inside is a buttressed rampart which now is home to a public park.

Cisternone is an impressive Neoclassical building inspired on Roman baths, which was used to purify the water brought to the city from the Colognole aqueduct. The portico with eight Doric columns is surmounted by an impressive niche. The interior is a large decantation cistern divided into naves by pilasters emerged in the water.

English Cemetery A very interesting monumental cemetery which contains the tombs of the numerous English community from the 17th to 19th century. The tombs are finely decorated and display poetic

inscriptions. During the past century the cemetery was a spot visited by many literati and scholars. The Scottish novelist Tobias Smollet is one of the many famous people buried here.

G. Fattori Town Museum, this museum, housed in the 19th century Villa Mimbelli, near Terrazza Mascagni, is home to the most important collection of works by the Macchiaoli and Postmacchiaoli painters, fundamental movements in Italian art between the 19th and 20th centuries, which had its focal point in Livorno.

Open: from Tuesday to Sunday; 10:00am-1:00pm / 4:00pm-7:00pm

Yeshivà Marini Jewish Museum, displays a collection of furniture and sacred paraments, a collection of 17th to 20th century books and a 16th Hekhàl which contains the rolls of the Torah. The exhibited works come from the old Synagogue which was destroyed during the war. The flourishing trade that enlivened the port of Livorno, and of which the Jews were the main protagonists, made the patrimony of the synagogue equally heterogeneous. The museum is home to Dutch, Northern African, Florentine, Roman and Venetian objects as well as those made by Livorno's inhabitants. The museum is open by reservation only. Information and reservations: tel. +39.0586.893361 - fax +39.0586.889198

Places and charm



Livorno: Terrazza Mascagni

Venezia Nuova

The charming quarter filled with canals, islands and bridges, many from the 17th century, which was designed in the same century to house the mercantile class.

The network of streets and canals was designed so that goods could be easily transported to and from the nearby port.

The dwellings of the quarter perfectly met the trade and living needs, and concealed elegant buildings divided into apartments, which contained warehouses on the first floor.

These buildings can be best seen in the centrally located Via Borra, one of the prettiest streets of the city. Venezia Nuova was seriously damaged during WWII. It is currently home to the Effetto Venezia every summer, the biggest event of the city.

Fossi Medicei

Is a large moat which was built at the beginning of the 17th century around the walls of the city designed by Buontalenti half a century earlier.

Work began in 1601 and was completed in a few years, integrating it in the defensive system of the city. It seems that 5000 peasants and 2000 slaves worked on it.

Piazza della Repubblica

With its characteristic oval shape, is actually a large bridge.

The square was built above a section of canal which surrounded the Medici city ramparts to connect the old city and new city.

The architect Bettarini designed an impressive vault 20 meters long, which the square covers, to cross the Fosso Reale.

Mercato delle Vettovaglie

A majestic covered market built at the end of the 19th century in Neoclassical and Art Nouveau style.

A large hall opens in the interior, almost one hundred meters long, with a central entrance and four side entrances.

The steel eaves sits on pilasters connected to large arches with Baroque brackets.

The building has ninety-two cellars while the warehouses are located above the many workshops (more than 180).

Seafront

A pretty 9 kilometer route stretches from the port of Livorno, flanking beaches and rocky cliffs leading to the town of Antignano: it is the 19th century Viale Italia, a boulevard flanked by palm and tamarisk trees, beach concessions, Art Nouveau villas and characteristic kiosks which are perfect for a stop.

The most famous stretch is Terrazza Mascagni, an elegant outlook built in the 1920's with a lovely view over the sea and the islands of the Tuscan Archipelago.

Many of the beach concessions bathed by the sea were already famous in the 19th century, including the Scoglio della Regina and Pancaldi, which frequently hosted the royal family and Acquaviva.

Casini di Ardenza

Along Viale Italia, after the horse track, is an 1844 Neoclassical complex composed of thirteen buildings laid out in a horseshoe. The architect Giuseppe Cappellini used the Royal Crescent in Bath for inspiration.

The Casini were built to rent apartments to wealthy tourists who, between the 19th and 20th centuries, made Livorno the privileged spot for their vacations.

Eating and Drinking



Livorno: Cacciucco

Livorno's cuisine is mainly based on seafood with the addition of inexpensive but wholesome inland ingredients, a cuisine full of aromas and tastes, where fish is the absolute star. The gastronomy is also characterized by the city's strong ties with its history, made of different peoples and cultures who lived in Livorno for many centuries.

The most famous dish is **cacciucco**, a stew with various types of fish (at least five) with garlic, tomato, red pepper, parsley and toasted bread, other first courses include soup or pasta with mussels and rice with squid ink, a true delight. For a tasty snack do not miss the **torta di ceci**, a focaccia made from chick pea bean flour and eaten between two slices of bread. Lastly a curious fact: the Jews from north Africa brought **cuscussù** to Livorno, a particular version of cous-cous.

Entrees are also based around fish: classic recipes include mullet "alla livornese", cooked in tomato sauce with garlic and parsley, or dried cod "alla livornese". Fish

lovers will be embarrassed by the selection of shellfish, squid, bream and calamari, prepared in a variety of ways. Braised lettuce and artichokes and cauliflower with slices come from Livorno's Jewish tradition. Inland beef predominates, of the top quality "chianina" race, and naturally wild boar.

Some of the **typical sweets** are also Jewish, like *roschette*, Passover cookies and *schacciata di Pasqua*, an anisette flavored cake. To finish a meal in the Livornese tradition, nothing is better than a glass of **ponce**. This is Livorno's version of punch made with coffee, rum and lemon rind.

Wine: the **Etruscan Coast** is home to the DOC areas of Bolgheri, Val di Cornia and Montescudaio, which since the 1990's have been gaining international fame thanks to prestigious labels like **Sassicaia** and **Ornellaia**. In addition to these famous "Supertuscans" more affordable reds include Sangiovese, Cabernet and Merlot. Whites include Ansonica, Vermentino, Sauvignon, Chardonnay and **Aleatico**, an excellent after dinner wine which goes well with pastry.

Shopping



Livorno: the Covered market

Livorno's main shopping drag is without doubt Via Grande, flanked by porticos which house shops of all types, in particular big name Italian and international designers. If you leave Piazza Grande and take Via Cairoli and cross Piazza Cavour you'll reach via Ricasoli, another great spot for shopping.

Those looking for a more authentic Livorno should not miss the **Mercato Centrale**, a splendid example of a public Art Nouveau style building.

Inside 180 stalls offer all sorts of foodstuffs, including a retail outlet for kosher meat.

Not far from Piazza della Repubblica is Piazza XX Settembre, home to the famous **Mercatino Americano**.

This American market originated with the arrival of the American troops in Livorno in 1944.

Today it is a major bazaar where goods imported from the United States, Japan and Asia are sold.

For antiques head for Borra, one of the most

representative streets of Livorno in the heart of the Venezia Nuova quarter. An antique and modern piece show is held the first Saturday and Sunday of every month.

Hotels and lodgings



Livorno: Fortezza Vecchia

The accommodations offered in Etruscan Coast include a wide range of original proposals, able to meet all needs. The culture of hospitality is deep-seated here, as early as the end of the 1800's the first beach concessions went up as well as hotels destined for housing the wealthy tourists of the time.

If you prefer the convenience of staying in the city, select one of the hotels in Livorno, if you are drawn to the sea, you can choose from the many hotels on Etruscan Coast. For those who desire contact with Mother Nature there is plenty to choose from: there are many, many country guesthouses in Livorno and on the Etruscan Coast. If you are planning a long stay an excellent solution is to rent an apartment in Livorno or a villa in Livorno.

Events



Livorno: Effetto Venezia

Effetto Venezia is the most important summer festival, it takes place during the first days of August amidst the canals, squares and bridges of Venezia Nuova.

The event includes many initiatives which animate the quarter: stalls of artisans and collectors, street performers, acrobats, exhibits and charming boat rides in the canals.

"Accademia Navale e Città di Livorno" Trophy - end of April. A various category sailboat race held in the sea in front of the Navy Academy. The race has increased in size and now involves competitors from all over the world, with an average of 500 crews. Performances, exhibits and concerts accompany the event for the entire week.

Palio Marinaro is Livorno's main rowing race. The Palio Marinaro is raced the second Sunday in July in the sea in front of **Terrazza Mascagni**. The city's quarters challenge each other for the prize on 10 oar "gozzi", typical 10 meter boats.

The event concludes with the award ceremony for the crews and a great city party.

Risi'atori Cup Another rowing race between quarters reserved for boats with 10 to 4 oars. The race is held the second Sunday of June and recalls the races between the old dock workers who tried to win the right to unload ships entering the port.

Castagneto a Tavola Between February and April in Castagneto Carducci a major gourmet show is held by the Etruscan Coast Wine Route and Slowfood association. The program includes wine and oil tasting, guided tours of wineries, conventions, exhibitions, special menus in restaurants and an exhibit/market of local products

Beaches, marinas and nature reserves



The Etruscan coast: the gulf of Baratti

The coast between Livorno and Piombino is a succession of famous resorts and well-maintained clean beaches, many of which have been awarded Europe's Blue Flag various times.

The coast road which leaves Livorno runs along a pretty pink cliff. The first spot along the way is Quercianella, a lovely town situated in the greenery of pines and Mediterranean scrub.

Quercianella sits on a section of rock washed by a very clean sea, its sea bottom is very popular with skin divers and underwater fishing fans. The restaurants propose an excellent cuisine based on fish from local fishermen.

Castiglioncello

Is a famous vacation spot due to its charm and red cliffs hanging over the sea surrounded by a thick forest of pines. The beauty of Castiglioncello has long been celebrated by artists, writers and leading cultural figures; the landscapes immortalized by the Macchiaioli at

the beginning of the 20th century are famous. Castiglioncello is currently a top notch beach resort, awarded the EU's Blue Flag; it offers beautiful beaches and beach concessions enclosed in sheltered bays.

It is also the home of cultural events, dance festivals, literary awards and international conventions.

The Cala De' Medici pleasure boat harbor, with space for 650 boats was built recently and sits in a strategic position in front of the islands of the Tuscan archipelago.

Here you can also visit the National Archeological Museum of Castiglioncello. At the beginning of last century more than 300 Etruscan and Roman tombs with a vast amount of objects were found here. The Museum exhibits a selection of materials from the necropolis.

Vada

Is a peaceful vacation spot known for its fine white sand beach and clean sea full of life, awarded the Blue Flag various times. The long beach, sheltered by a pine forest, offers beach concessions and long stretches of public beach. The fish-filled sea bottoms attract seawatching enthusiasts and fishermen.

Marina di Cecina

Is the largest beach resort on the Etruscan Coast. Marina di Cecina offers numerous beach concessions equipped for practicing all marine sports, with swimming, windsurf and sailing schools.

The long wide sand beach is bordered by green Mediterranean plants and a large pine forest. Long stretches of empty beaches extend south of Cecina with a coastal pine forest crossed by bike paths and trails for horseback riding, but also with picnic tables and playgrounds.

The area called La Cinquantina is home to the Archeological Museum of Cecina, which contains an extensive collection of remains of the Etruscans from Volterra and the coastal cities.

Marina di Bibbona

Is a small but popular beach resort, awarded the EU's Blue Flag. The beach concessions are located around a 1700 fort which was built to defend the area from pirate raids.

The sand beach is characterized by the presence of typical Mediterranean dunes with a splendid pine forest framing it in the background. There are long stretches of public beach in addition to the beach concessions.

Macchia della Magona

Is a protected area of 1600 hectares which extends over the hills behind Bibbona. It was once used as a reserve for wood. Today it is a pretty spot for nature and sports tourism: 50 km of trails which can be covered on foot, horseback or mountain bike, in the typical environment of the Tuscan scrub. Numerous animal species live in the Mediterranean vegetation including wild boar, roe deer, mouflons, foxes, porcupines and many others.

San Vincenzo

Is a modern town, with a wide range of accommodations and sports facilities and a pleasure boat harbor. The sand beach possesses beach concessions and stretches for many kilometers dotted with old watchtowers once used to defend against pirate raids. San Vincenzo also has a pleasure boat harbor with space for one hundred boats.

Rimigliano Park

Is located along the coast road leading from San Vincenzo to Piombino. It is a natural oasis characterized by sandy dunes covered with juniper, myrtle and mastic; behind the dunes open woods of holm oaks, cork oaks and cluster pines. The park is equipped with picnic areas, trails, signs on the plant and animal species present in the park and areas for watching animals as well as showers and restrooms.

The beach is public, with fine, light sand and the sea is ideal for swimming.

The Gulf of Baratti

Opens at the end of the road, with its sand beaches and rocky inlets, surrounded by a lush, fragrant vegetation. Many sports can be practiced here and there are sailing and surf schools and a diving center.

The Etruscan coast



Etruscan Coast: San Silvestro Archeomining Park

This itinerary leads to the discovery of the coastal area which extends south until Piombino, crossing what was once the enormous feud of the Della Gherardesca counts. This is the "Etruscan Coast" wine road. This is the homeland of precious gems of modern enology, like Sassicaia and Ornellaia, two of the most praiseworthy Cabernets in the entire world. The road winds around a very charming hilly area, passing through woods on one side and the sea on the other, dotted with age-old peasant villages where the hordes of tourists have not touched.

The itinerary is best covered in two or three days, but you can stop longer to relax on one of the many beaches or take to the Tuscan scrub for long hikes, bike rides or horseback riding. You can choose from a selection of hotels on the Etruscan Coast for a stay characterized by relaxation. For those who prefer a different type of accommodation, there is a vast selection of cozy bed-and-breakfasts on the Etruscan Coast or one of the numerous country guesthouses on

the Etruscan Coast, scattered in the gentle landscapes of this countryside.

Bolgheri This town situated in a fertile countryside among vineyards and olive groves is famous throughout the world for its great wines (Sassicaia, Ornellaia etc) and for its long road of cypresses which the poet Carducci immortalized in his famous "Davanti a San Guido". The village is entered through a 16th century castle in red brick. The historical center has maintained its old ring shaped structure where the paved alleys, stone houses and old artisan factories and workshops surround the visitor in an atmosphere of past times.

Castagneto Carducci Another enchanting medieval village built around the Gherardesca Castle, starting in the year 1000. Wander around the paved roads of the town, which lead to pretty squares and terraces overlooking the sea and countryside. A visit to the former Courthouse, now home to the municipal government and Church of San Lorenzo is interesting. Each spring Castagneto is the venue for a major gourmet festival which attracts enthusiasts from all over Italy.

Suvereto This is the prettiest medieval village of the Etruscan Coast, filled with history and art, situated in a green valley among typical woods of cork oaks, oaks and chestnut trees. The town has preserved its historical appearance: The old walls contain a myriad of buildings, churches, paved roads and the medieval workshops in stone.

Things to see: outside the walls, near the main gate, is the church of San Giusto, dating back to the 12th century. The Romanesque portal with Byzantine decorations stands out on the facade; the interior with typical Romanesque forms bathed in a dim light is charming. Rocca Aldobrandesca, dating back to before 1000, just like the walls and towers which surround the village, sits at the top

of the hill. One of the prettiest buildings of the village is the Palazzo Comunale dating back to the 13th century. The entrance is interesting. It is known as the Loggiato dei Giudici, because it was from here that the local judges read their verdicts in the Middle Ages. The former San Francesco Monastery is located in the opposite part of the city. It was built starting in 1286 and suppressed by Napoleon at the beginning of the 19th century. The fascinating cloister of the convent, which has remained intact, is not to be missed. The Suvereto Festival is held every year in December: exhibitions, culture, folklore and gourmet specialties revolving around wild boar.

Campiglia A medieval village enclosed by walls, where the alleys and street are laid out in concentric semi-circles around a castle. Artisan workshops, museums, shops and restaurants line its squares. Things to see: Palazzo Pretorio, the seat of political power, its current appearance is the result of various architectural transformations. The facade contains 72 coats of arms which bear witness to the passage of captains who rose to power. The building houses an archeological museum (with artefacts from the old fortress) and an interesting Public Wine Shop. The Wine Shop is open every day by reservation: Tel/Fax +39.0565.837201. Other things worth seeing: the church of San Lorenzo, built in the 13th century, but modified over time, and church of San Giovanni, which stands outside the walls, and is beautiful with its pure Tuscan Romanesque simplicity.

San Silvestro Archeomining Park Located a short distance from Campiglia, it is an extraordinary outdoor museum which preserves unique remains of the mining and metal working activity from the Etruscan period to present. You will visit the remains of the medieval mining village of San Silvestro, the old underground mine and the Park Museum and you can enjoy thrilling

archeological/mining hikes to discover the Park.

Venturina hot springs In Venturina, a short distance from Campiglia, there is a hot spring which supplies the "Il Calidario" spa. The water gushes out at a temperature of 36 °C in a pretty thermal spa, known as early as Etruscan times. The thermal lake is open almost all year, from morning until night.

Populonia Populonia was one of the most powerful Etruscan cities, the most important center for working and trading iron. The city was divided into an upper part (acropolis) and an "industrial" part on the coast where the port and iron furnaces were located. Populonia declined with the rise of Rome, so much so that in the 1st century AD it had already been abandoned. The city now sits at the top of a hill surrounded by the sea. It has a medieval appearance with defensive walls and a massive 15th century fortress.

Archeological Park of Baratti and Populonia Located in a setting of rare beauty, the Park offers an extraordinary view of the history of this great Etruscan city. You'll visit the remains of the buildings used for refining minerals in the old industrial quarter. Next you'll discover the ancient necropolises, with superb examples of monumental tombs. Lastly, there is a nature route which crosses the woods leading to the Grotte necropolis, ancient Etruscan caves of the Hellenistic period (4th-3rd century BC) which were converted into a burial area. Archeology enthusiasts can learn more about the history of this area in the Archeological Museum in Piombino set up inside the fortress. Prehistoric, Etruscan and Roman artefacts from Populonia are displayed as well as scale models of prehistoric and Etruscan furnaces and tombs.

Volterra and Val di Cecina



Volterra: The Roman Theater

The itinerary leads from Livorno to Volterra, through the beautiful landscape which is typical of the Tuscan countryside.

It is worth booking to explore the city and the surrounding area in complete tranquility. You can choose from a selection of hotels in Volterra for a relaxing and charming holiday. If you prefer something a little different, you can choose from the vast selection of inviting apartments, bed and breakfasts and farm holidays in Volterra immersed in the historic center or in the open countryside. Volterra is also an excellent base for anyone wanting to visit Siena and San Gimignano.

From Livorno follow the A12 highway in the direction of Grosseto/Rome and, when you are near Cecina, take the 68 state road for Volterra.

By doing so you arrive to the Val di Cecina, countryside full of cypress trees, olive groves and vineyards, with medieval and fortress villages set among the highest hills. If you have time, take a break in Montecatini Val di Cecina.

The center of the village has a beautiful small square within a castle, that hosts a church and the Palazzo Pretorio, one of the most authentic corners of Tuscan medieval architecture.

Volterra

Volterra in ancient times was one of the major Etruscan centers and still conserves some unique traces of this civilization today. But the city is also a gem of Romanesque, medieval and Renaissance art. It is located at 550 meters on a hill that dominates the entire Val di Cecina right up to the sea. Passing through the streets of the historic center, you will immediately note the urban layout, with alleys, houses, squares, towers, churches and buildings enclosed within the medieval walls. Since ancient times, Volterra has been a center renowned for its work in alabaster, as the surrounding land is full of the substance. Still today, shops in the center have craftsmen who work these hot and bright stones.

The current walls date back to the XIII century and surround the city entirely. They are equipped with watch towers and moats. The southern side of the walls hosts the famous Porta all'Arco gate, dating back to the Etruscan wall from the IV century B.C.

Piazza dei Priori

The heart of the city is Piazza dei Priori, with its various medieval buildings which include the Palazzo dei Priori. Dating from the XIII century, it is the oldest building in the square. The facade of the building has the coat of arms of the Florentine commissioners who governed the city and the lions on the side pillars. The clock was later added, as were the battlements crowning the building. The entrance door leads to an ornate atrium full of coats of arms and medallions. Palazzo dei Priori is the seat of the Municipality, where you can visit the City Council Hall and the Council Room.

The Cathedral

The cathedral is a Romanesque building dating from the XII-XIII centuries with a simply decorated facade with a marble portico. The interior consists of three naves divided by granite columns and with walls painted in bands of black and white. In the sixteenth-century various work was carried out, which included the coffered ceiling. The left nave is the location of the valuable pulpit from the XII century. It was redesigned during the XVII century by supporting it with four small columns.

The Baptistery

Dating from the XIII century, is located behind the cathedral. Its octagonal domed shape features a facade covered in white and green marble. Inside, it is quite simple and stark with six cavities in the thick walls; you can admire the different works of art, the most important of which is the Sansovino baptismal font in white marble dating from 1502 to the left of the altar. The large baptismal font, however, dates to 1760 and contrasts with the somber surroundings of the baptistery.

Palazzo Incontri Viti

Is one of the most beautiful private residences in Italy and a splendid example of a Renaissance building. Two wings of the building remain unfinished and contain two cloisters. In 1850 the alabaster dealer Benedetto Giuseppe Viti bought the building and restored it. In 1964 the director Luchino Visconti shot the film "Sandra Of A Thousand Delights" there, which won a Golden Lion in Venice. The building is today open to the public. The 12 rooms are full of furniture, paintings, porcelain and art collections which represent Italian, European and Eastern art from the XV to XX centuries.

The Medicea Fortress

Is a huge military complex built on the top of the hills and one of the strongest fortresses in Renaissance architecture. It is composed of

two distinct parts: the ancient fortress dates back to the fourteenth-century. It is of a trapezoidal shape with a strong circular keep in the center. The New Fortress was built by Lorenzo The Magnificent between 1472 and 1475. The four sided layout has strong corner towers, with the center hosting the monumental Mastio tower. The two fortresses are connected by a long building and the location of the barracks and prisons, which are still in use today.

The Roman Theater

Is located near the medieval walls leaving from Porta Fiorentina. There are 19 remaining rows of central and lower seats and part of the stage structure and columns.

Volterra also contains some interesting museums:

The Etruscan Museum preserves archeological materials of considerable interest, including a collection of 600 Etruscan urns, in tufa, alabaster and terracotta and the famous bronze statue entitled "The Shadow of the Night", which has become an authentic symbol of the city.

The Alabaster History Museum includes splendid works of art in alabaster subdivided by era: from a cinerary urn from the medieval period, right up to the Renaissance and then the nineteenth-century.



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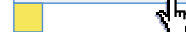
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