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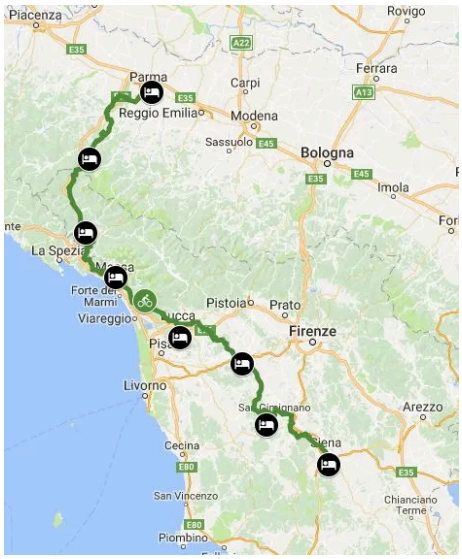


SUMMER VIA FRANCIGENA

type :	Self-Guided Cycling Holidays
level :	
duration :	9 days
period:	Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct
code:	ITSB170

Cycling on Via Francigena, from Parma to Siena - Italy

9 days, PRICE FROM *€ 1462*



A journey that starts across the agricultural plain dominated by the Po. You will start **Parma**, one of the most beautiful surprises of the Via Francigena, and a city that will lies in the middle of one of the most mythical areas of Italian food and wine. It is in fact home of the Prosciutto di Parma, the culatello di Zibello, and Parmigiano Reggiano. But don't eat too much though, because your ride still has beautiful surprises in store for you: you will continue your journey through the Appennines at the Cisa Pass until the descent towards **Pontremoli** and the crossing of **Lunigiana**, territory of castles and medieval villages.

Finally **Marina di Massa**, where you will be able to set your bike down and enjoy a nice bath, before ending your journey in **Lucca**, with its enchanting elliptical square.

Then, you will enter one of the most intersting and pictoresque sections of the whole itinerary of Via Francigena: the tuscan **Valdelsa valley** around San Gimignano, before reaching **Siena**, one of the gems of central Italy.

Route

Day 1 Arrival in Parma

Your trip begins in **Parma**, the Italian province with the highest number of **DOP** and **IGP food products**. For this reason, it is an excellent starting point for your cycling tour!

Do not miss a visit to the historical centre, where you will have the chance to visit the **imposing romanesque Dome**, Teatro Farnese and the **Galleria Nazionale** (with paintings by Leonardo Da Vinci, Van Dick, Tintoretto and Beato Angelico).

Day 2 From Parma to Berceto, 74 km

Today a demanding leg awaits you, but one that is rich in beauty: along your way you will come to the villages of Bardone and Terenzo, where you will be able to admire ancient churches and some bass-relieves treasured in their interiors. From this point you will face an ascent that will lead you to Cassio, where a brief descending trait will make you think you have reached your destination. However, this is not true: you will have to face another ascent towards Berceto, a little "stone jewel", where you can restore yourselves with local mushrooms and pattona, a typical cake made from chestnut flour.

Distance: 74 km

Ascent/descent: +1068/-332 m

Day 3 From Berceto to Aulla, 53 km

There will be no rest during the last leg, but this stage holds so many surprises in store that it will make all your efforts worthwhile. From the Cisa Pass you descend towards Pontremoli, the town of bridges and stele statues, where you can enjoy a relaxing walk among the alleyways of the old town centre. Once in Aulla set your bicycle down and visit the Abbey of San Caprasio, which contains archaeological finds from the medieval period. Do not miss a walk along the ancient walls of the Fortezza della Brunella, pretending to be medieval sentries, before taking a walk through the old town centre. And if you are hungry, there is nothing better than the tasty little local focaccias, to be enjoyed still hot accompanied by charcuterie and cheeses.

Distance: 53 km

Ascent/descent: +370/-1115 m

Day 4 From Aulla to Massa, 48 km

From Aulla you will travel along the first section of the journey over demanding but gratifying paths: from here you will glimpse the sea for the first time. Along the road you will pass through very green countryside and medieval villages. Once in Sarzana you will be amazed by the Baroque interior of the Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta, and you will admire the Gothic façade of the Pieve di Sant'Andrea, the oldest building in the town. You will discover the taste of the "torta scema": try to get one of the locals to explain the meaning of its name. Your journey will continue along flat paths, following in the footsteps of the ancient pilgrims who, from the Roman port of Luni used to embark towards Santiago de Compostela. Do not miss a visit to the archaeological area, with the ancient amphitheatre and the museum which is home to a splendid mosaic dedicated to the God Neptune. You will finally arrive in Marina di Massa, where you can enjoy the first bath of your journey.

Distance: 48 km

Ascent/descent: +716/-770 m

Day 5 From Massa to Lucca, 52 km

A nice cycle path along the sea will lead you from Marina di Massa towards Pietrasanta. Before browsing among its art galleries and shops we recommend a visit of the town’s Duomo, to walk among its marble columns admiring its frescoed vaults. From Camaiore you will continue up and down among the hills of Lucca, the end of our journey: enter through the walls and immerse yourself in its old town centre, where many attractions await you. You will be able to admire the decorated façade of San Frediano, browse in the little shops of the circular piazza to buy spelt and local biscuits to take home with you, conquer the top of the Guinigi tower and admire the town from up high in its hanging garden.

Distance: 52 km

Ascent/descent: +380/-356 m

Day 6 From Lucca to San Miniato, 46 km

A demanding leg, but one with unique beautiful scenery, awaits you. From San Miniato you will descend towards the bottom of Val d'Elsa to later ascend again towards Gambassi Terme, where you will be able to cross the threshold of the Pieve di Chianni and enjoy a healthy bathe in the hot springs of Gambassi, surrounded by ancient trees. You will continue your journey pedalling across a splendid natural scenery towards San Gimignano, one of the most beautiful towns along the Via Francigena: you will get a foretaste of your arrival when you see in the distance the famous towers that make its skyline unmistakeable. Do not miss a view of the medieval town and its surrounding valleys from the top of the Torre Grossa, or if you haven't yet run out of energy, venture up the steps of the Rocca di Montestaffoli, for an even more special view.

Distance: 46 km

Ascent/descent: +228/-122 m

Day 7 From San Miniato to San Gimignano, 41 km

A demanding but unique section awaits you. From San Miniato you descend in the bottom of Val d’Elsa to later ascend again towards Gambassi Terme, where you will be able to cross the threshold of the Pieve di Chianni, where the same Arcibishop Sigeric slept on his way to Rome. You will continue your journey pedalling across splendid natural scenery to San Gimignano, one of the most beautiful towns along the Via Francigena: its famous towers that make its skyline unmistakeable. Do not miss the view of the medieval town and its surrounding valleys from the top of the Torre Grossa, or if you don’t run out of energy, venture up the steps of the Rocca di Montestaffoli, for an even more special view.

Distance: 42,2 km

Ascent/descent: +640/-476 m

Day 8 From San Gimignano to Siena, 50 km

From San Gimignano you continue, up and down, through the Tuscan hills to Colle Val d’Elsa, an out-of-time Tuscan village with a charming old town centre and narrow alleyways winding through the stone walls. The itinerary then continues through one of the most beautiful sections of the Via Francigena: a meditative route, along which you can surround yourselves with the silence of the Pieve di Strove, with its Romanesque interiors, or stand in the quietness of the splendid Abbadia at Isola, with its imposing Abbey. Do not miss a stroll along the wall of the breath-taking castle of Monteriggioni, once defending the Repubblica of Siena, before reaching Siena through dirt roads and the ancient medieval hamlet of Cerbaia. An unforgettable way to celebrate your arrival? A plate of pici all’aglione in the illuminated Piazza del Campo. And don’t forget the panforte!

Distance: 50 km

Ascent/descent: +505/-470 m

Day 9 Arrivederci Siena!

Our services end after breakfast, unless you have booked any extra nights with us

Have a safe trip home!

Accommodation

Nights in double room in **/*** hotels , B&B and agriturismi with breakfast



Hotel Chiusarelli - Siena

Hotel Button - Parma



B&B La Casa dei Nonni - Berceto



Bed&Bike - Aulla

B&B Il Cuore - Massa



Hotel Rex - Lucca



Hotel San Miniato - San Miniato



Hotel la Cisterna - San Gimignano

Practical info

On arrival:

The closest airports are:

Parma and Bologna Airprts. From Bologna you can easily reach Parma by train.

Check train timetables on www.trenitalia.com

On departure:

From Lucca, you can easily get to Pisa and Florence by direct train.

Check train timetables on www.trenitalia.com

GPS tracks are available on request.

Included

What is included

- 8 Nights in double room in *** hotels, agriturismi and inns with breakfast
- Luggage transportation from hotel to hotel (1 item per person, max 20 kilos, size 65x40x30 cm)
- maps and detailed description of the itinerary in digital form, app
- Pilgrim Passport
- Medical and luggage travel insurance
- 24h phone assistance

What is not included

- Transfers to the starting location and from the arriving location of the tour
- Lunches and dinners, if not otherwise stated.
- Visits and entrance fees - tips
- Personal expense
- Possible sojourn taxes
- Everything that is not mentioned in the "What is included" section.

Optional Services

These services can be added to the ones included in the base price of the tour:

- Single room supplement
- Half Board supplement
- Bicycle rental
- Cancellation insurance
- Transfers to reach the starting location or to leave the arriving location of the tour, which will be quoted on request.