

SUMMER SPRING & AUTUMN

type :	Self-Guided Hiking Tours Solo Holidays Caminos
level :	
duration :	8 days
period:	Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct
code:	ITSM350

Via Francigena: Stage 5, Pontremoli to Lucca - Italy

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8 days, PRICE FROM *€ 886*



Ready to explore the **lesser-known side of Tuscany**? The sceneries you are going to walk through are not your typical picture-perfect rolling hills and cypress-dotted fields.

You start form Pontremoli, in the heart of **Lunigiana** - the land of moon, of mysterious **"Statue Stele"** - a green territory dotted with evocatory castles, to then descend towards the sea of **Versilia**.

Here you can **walk for hours on the sandy beaches**, stop to bath in the sun or in the salty water, enjoy the sea breeze - especially in Spring, when the sun is not so ferocious and the light wind tickles your skin under the hiking clothes.

You can visit the **artists' ateliers in Pietrasanta**, the Italian Athene, resting at the foot of the Apuan Alps - the most famous marble in the world is extracted nearby - and finally reach **Lucca**, guarding one of the most fascinating old town centres of Italy within its reinassance walls.

Route

Day 1 Pontremoli

Your trip starts from **Pontremoli**, a gem of a village in the heart of mysterious Lunigiana, in the Northern part of Tuscany. Stroll through the tower-houses of the city centre, admire warriors and Goddesses made of stone in the **Stele Statues museum** - the imposing castle perched at the top of the village, guarding the mystery of these ancient locals.

If you like the magic of written word, sit on the benches of the old town centre and try to guess the author of the literary quotations that they are decorated with. Or just enjoy a few pages of a book and **write the first page of your travelogue.**

To celebrate the beginning of your journey, nothing better than a **hearty portion of Testaroli** - the local pasta, made in a very unique and traditional way - served with almond pesto, or a very thick slice of delicious **"torta d'erbi"**, a salty pie filled with wild herbs.

Day 2 From Pontremoli to Filetto, 17 km

Ready to set off? In your first day you're walking in a beautiful scenery, where lush green forests alternate with small Medieval hamlets. The tower-houses in **Ponticello**, the **ancient hospital of Saint Jacob in Filattiera** - above all, the **Pieve di Sorano**, which treasured the statues of ancient Celtic warriors for centuries.

Villafranca is a Medieval hamlet of great beauty: you can walk up the hill to the walled village of Malgrate and its castle, or glimpse the ruins of the ancient **castle of Malnido** - home to the rich Malaspina family - among the trees.

The day is filled with **Medieval sceneries**, right to the last step: today's destination is **Filetto**, hosting a yearly Medieval festival that attracts people from all over the region.

Distance: 17 km

Elevation gain: +250/-300 m

Day 3 From Filetto to Aulla, 15,5 km

From Filetto you walk right into a **thick and fragrant forest,** following portions of an **ancient Roman road** - a fairytale scenery on the way to the **Terrarossa Castle**, where one would not be surprised to see knights and dragons.

The last part of the itinerary follows the tracks of **an abandoned railway,** now converted in a walking and cycle path.

If you are passionate about ancient history, don't miss the **museum of San Caprasio Abbey,** housing archaeological remains from the **Medieval period,** nor a stroll along the ancient walls of the Brunella fortress.

Feeling peckish? Go for the local **"focaccette"** - fragrant and warm, rigorously served with local cold cuts and cheese.

Distance: 15,5 km

Elevation gain: +200/-300 m

Day 4 From Aulla to Sarzana, 17 km

Have one more focaccetta for breakfast, because in the first section of today's itinerary **you will climb and conquer the hills just out of Aulla** - your much coveted price is a view so incredible that you can finally **glimpse the sea, sparkling and inviting at the horizon.**

Along the way, **lush green landscapes and Medieval hamlets:** the ruins of Brina Castle to re-build in your mind, and finally Sarzana with its **Baroque Cathedral and the Gothic church of Sant'Andrea**, the oldest building in town.

Sarzana is a gem - get lost in the narrow streets of the old town centre, opening in wide "piazzas" with plenty of chances to enjoy a great dinner. Something you must try? The **"Torta Scema"**: despite its name - meaning "dumb cake" - this local specialty is a true delicacy. Have your host tell you the reason of its name, then sink your teeth in the cruncy rice surface to discover its undeniable qualities.

Distance: 17 km

Elevation gain: +608/-646 m

Day 5 From Sarzana to Massa, 27 /18,5 km (with stretches by bus)

Today's walk is nice and easy as you follow the steps of the ancient pilgrims, embarking in the **Roman harbor of Luni towards Santiago de Compostela.** Don't miss a visit to the local archaeological area, with the ancient amphitheatre and the museum housing a splendid **mosaic of Neptune**, the God of Sea.

Among country paths and gorgeous views on the sea and the Apuan Alps you will finally reach **Massa,** today's destination.

Distance: 27 / 18,5 km

Elevation gain: +586/-544 m

Day 6 From Massa to Camaiore, 25 / 20 km (with stretches by bus)

Today's highlight is **Pietrasanta**, magical city of art and marble. Before wandering among art galleries and artisanal workshops, we suggest a quick visit to the **Cathedral** - the star of a wide piazza filled with extraordinary art pieces. The interior does not disappoint, with its marble columns and frescoed vaults.

Pietrasanta is not easy to leave, but today's walk is notover: today's final destination is **Camaiore**, with its old town centre and the ancient **San Pietro church**. Looking for a delicious way to recharge? Try the local dessert, **a chocolate cake made with rice.**

Distance: 25 / 20 km

Elevation gain: +515/-550 m

Day 7 From Camaiore to Lucca, 25 km / 23 km (with stretches by bus)

From Camaiore, continue with **ups and downs in the hills around Lucca,** until descending in the valley of Contesola stream and crossing the river Serchio. You are thus arrived in **Lucca**, the final point of your trip: cross the gates of the high walls and walk into the beautiful old town centre - **Lucca is full of wonders,** such as shops full of delicacies, frescoed churches and an amphitheatre-square in the heart of the city.

More ideas? **Conquer the Guinigi tower** and admire the city centre from the hanging garden - its holm oaks can be glimpsed from above, making the tower and its top one of the **symbols of Lucca.** If energy is lagging, just sit at a local bar and order coffee and a good portion of **buccellato, a local delicacy. You definitely deserved it!**

Distance: 25 / 23 km

Elevation gain: +412/-432 m

Day 8 Lucca

Last day is included. Service ends after breakfast.

Accommodation

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



B&B Ai Chiosi - Pontremoli
“Ai Chiosi” Bed and Breakfast consists of two recently restored ancient manor houses, separated by a 300 square metres stone paved patio and surrounded by 3 hectares of farmland.

Between the two farm houses there is the availability of a large open space in the green of nature, where it is possible to stay in relax, of a suitable area for the entertainment of children and of a reserved parking.

The hospitality is familiar and careful of guest expectations, respecting their privacy.



Locanda Gavarini - Mocrone



Bed and Bike - Aulla
Each suite has been designed to guarantee you a stay of relaxation and maximum comfort.

Inside the rooms you will have a sitting area for your moments of rest and tranquility, a kitchenette complete with induction hob, sink and fridge and a large private bathroom with shower. The modern style and attention to detail allows to respond to the needs of a single visitor, or a family, making each guest feel as if they were at home.

And for sunny days, if you want to relax outdoors, you can enjoy the large garden where you will find an equipped kitchen, wood-burning oven, barbecue and a comfortable whirlpool where you can refresh yourself before resuming your journey. Every corner of the structure has been designed to satisfy your every need for relaxation and carefree.



B&B In Piazzetta - Sarzana
B&B In Piazzetta is located in the centre of Sarzana on the second floor of an historic apartment block situated in one of the most important square of the city. Rooms are comfortable and have a modern look. These have free Wifi, TV and cooling fan. Breakfast is good and rich with sweet dishes.



B&B Il Cuore - Massa
Colourful brushstrokes brighten up the white walls, making joyous colour effects here and there.

The care for detail, the choice of the fabrics, the restoration of the beautiful double doors and old cast iron radiators, have brought back the antique splendour to this building of the eighteenth century, which opens up today to IL CUORE’S guests, receiving them in six magnificent rooms.



Locanda Le Monache - Camaiore
Locanda Le Monache, which takes its name from a monastery of Carmelite cloistered nuns which stood adjoining building, is located in the heart of the historical center of Camaiore. Each room has different characteristics and furnishings, with the early '900 and Liberty pieces rustic furniture. These are clean and well-finished with TV, shower and free Wifi. The restaurant offers good and quality dishes.



Hotel Rex - Lucca
Hotel Rex*** is 80 m from the main train station and 100 m from the ancient walls of Lucca. Rooms are quiet and well-finished with free Wifi, air conditioned, telephone and fridge. Staff is helpful and courteous. Buffet breakfast is rich and varied.

Practical info

From any airport, reach the closest railway station, from where you can get to Pontremoli by train. Trains are direct from Pisa, whereas you need to change if travelling from Florence, Bologna, Genova and Milano.

On departure from Lucca, you can easily get to Pisa and Florence by direct train. Trains to Genova, Bologna and Milano are not direct.

Check train timetables on www.trenitalia.com.

Thanks to our special APP, you will be able to follow the track of the whole trip on your mobile phone, with no need for internet. GPS tracks are available on request.

Included

What is included

- 7 Nights in double room in **/*** hotels , B&B and agriturismi with breakfast
- luggage transportation from hotel to hotel
- official guide of the route, 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
- cancellation insurance
- Transfers to reach the starting location or to leave the arriving location of the tour, which will be quoted on request.