

# Volterra to San Gimignano

Hotel-to-hotel   independent walking

- Quintessential Italian landscapes: rolling hills, sunflowers, endless vines and hilltop hamlets
- Scenic walking on Etruscan trails and pilgrims' paths; wildlife in abundance
- Exceptionally friendly family-run hotels, all with gorgeous swimming pools
- Mouth-watering local cuisine; world famous wines
- Possible day trips to the "Super Tuscans": Florence, Siena, Pisa and San Gimignano!



On this independent hotel-to-hotel walking holiday you explore the timeless countryside between picturesque Volterra and the soaring towers of San Gimignano. You'll feel as though you're strolling through history as you effortlessly discover sleepy hilltop hamlets crowning sun dappled hills, verdant vineyards and panoramic picnic spots in fields ablaze with sunflowers. And, there's the option too to visit the eternal cities of Siena and Florence - Tuscan favourites right on your doorstep!

You start in Volterra, a real Etruscan gem with its tangle of alleys home to alabaster workshops and secret chapels, from where you walk along panoramic *strade bianche* to reach Orgiaglia, nestling in the verdant Berignone forest. Your journey then takes you east to mediaeval Colle Val d'Elsa, enjoying balcony views across the Elsa valley. As you move towards the pretty hamlet of San Donato, the landscape is dominated by vines – plenty of wine tasting opportunities here!

Our carefully picked hotels, all with pools, are full of contrasts - from signor Lazzari's convivial agriturismo, where you'll dine en famille under the stars, to the refined elegance of the ★★★★★ Relais della Rovere in Colle Val d'Elsa, a magnificently restored C12 abbey. Chianti is synonymous with excellent food and wine; evening meals are a celebration of local cuisine throughout – perhaps try *pappardelle alla lepre* (fresh ribbons of pasta with a hare sauce) or *bruschetta* (toasted bread rubbed with garlic and olive oil, topped with sun ripened tomatoes), perfect washed down by a glass or two of full bodied Chianti!



Book now on 1-800-567-6286 or visit [www.breakaway-adventures.com](http://www.breakaway-adventures.com) for more information

# VOLTERRA TO SAN GIMIGNANO | DAY BY DAY



## Day 1 Arrive in Volterra

We meet you at Pisa airport, and take you to your ★★★★★ hotel (75mins) just outside Volterra's mediaeval gates.

## Day 2 Volterra to Orgiaglia 18km/11mi/5hr

You follow an ancient Etruscan trail as it meanders through archetypal rolling countryside to reach the honey-coloured hilltop hamlet of Mazzolla. Its peaceful piazza is perfect for a relaxing lunch in the shade of the pretty 14C chapel. On through holm oak forest alive with wild boar, deer and fox, you arrive at signor Lazzari's 200 year old *agriturismo* in time for a swim before dinner.

## Day 3 At Orgiaglia

Our *agriturismo* is a real rural retreat, with lots of walking possibilities taking you into the Nature Reserve with great views over the Val di Checina - your hosts will happily provide maps. Or you can play tennis, relax by the pool or join the family for lunch! The organic olive oil here is pressed on site and recently won a 4-star European ecological award.

## Day 4 Orgiaglia to Colle di Val d'Elsa 18km/11mi/5hr

A gentle forest trail leads to Casole d'Elsa, a beautiful Etruscan village atop a panoramic ridge. From the vermilion hued 14C castle, views stretch as far as Monte Amiata in the south of Tuscany. After lunch in the mediaeval piazza, an orchid-sprinkled path guides you to Quartaia. We meet you and take you to your stunning ★★★★★ hotel, a beautifully converted C12 Benedictine Abbey with lovely gardens and pool.

## Day 5 At Colle di Val d'Elsa (optional 2-night extension, see opposite)

Take the local bus to Siena (30mins) or Florence (1hr). Or stroll into impressive Colle di Val d'Elsa - a fascinating town of two halves with a lift linking the lovely new *piazza* with the medieval upper town.

## Day 6 or 8 Colle di Val d'Elsa to San Donato 17km/11mi/4.5hr

Today you follow in pilgrims' footsteps along the Via Francigena. Bright with sunflowers and fragrant apple orchards, this historic path skirts tiny hamlets and lonely chapels towards the lazy Foci river. Perhaps stop for wine-tasting in Montauto, with its fabulous backdrop of San Gimignano's towers rising beyond the vineyards. Time for a swim in the pool before dinner.

## Day 7 or 9 At San Donato

Visit San Gimignano's mystical towers in the morning (complimentary shuttle bus runs from the hotel), built by warring neighbours in the 12C to outdo one another! Or for a longer day out, hop on a local bus to Siena (30 mins), a perfectly preserved mediaeval gem with a stunning striped 14C Gothic cathedral and beautiful square.

## Day 8 or 10 San Donato to Volterra 20km/13mi/6.5hr

You follow a woodland trail dotted with rock roses and strawberry trees to reach a panoramic *strada bianca*, where hawks soar overhead. With open views across cypress studded ochre fields to Monte Voltraio, you pass through Sensano and Ullignano, historic hamlets with 16C villas. Perhaps picnic by the Era valley before ascending an ancient mule track back to Volterra - pool open until mid September.

## Day 9 or 11 Leave Volterra

## Optional 2-night extension in Colle di Val d'Elsa

There's simply so much to see in and around Colle di Val d'Elsa that we are proposing two additional nights (making four in total) here in order that you can really get the most out of your stay - plus the hotel is pretty special too! Regular buses to Siena (30mins) and Florence (1hr) leave from just outside the hotel grounds so you can easily explore Il Campo, the Duomo, and the treasures of the world-famous Uffizi. The historic town of Colle di Val d'Elsa dates back to Etruscan times with cathedral, museums and fine Renaissance buildings. Back at the hotel, you can relax in the pleasant gardens surrounding the sparkling outdoor pool. Your extra nights will be on a B+B basis allowing you to sample the many local restaurants.



## Dates and Prices

| Departs every two days       | Tour Only |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>2012 departures</b>       |           |
| Sep 26-Oct 14                | \$2,851   |
| May 9-Jun 20                 | \$2,958   |
| Jun 22-Jul 14, Sep 8-24      | \$2,974   |
| Jul 16-Sep 6                 | \$2,974   |
| Child (any dates, see notes) | \$1,721   |

**Singles:** Add \$66 per night (2 nights will be in a single room; 6 nights will be sole occupancy of a double room).

**Child:** Over 2 and under 12, sharing with 2 adults.

**Room upgrade:** Prices from \$36 per person, per night, based on 2 sharing.

**Holiday type:** Independent walking, hotel-to-hotel, no minimum group size.

**Departs:** Every two days from May 9 to Oct 14.

**Duration:** 9 days (8 nights). This holiday may be adapted into a 10 night version - just add \$542 per adult and \$362 per child to the above prices.

**Meals:** Continental breakfast and evening meals.

**Other details:** For "What your holiday price includes," see "Holiday Planning" section pp 48-51.

## Tailor-made travel choices

### Nearest Arrival Airport: Pisa Airport

Flights can be arranged from most US/CANADA airports, with connecting transfers as required, prices and details on request.

**The above prices include our standard transfers:** Pisa Airport at 12:20 (transfer to hotel, 75 mins, provided). **Return:** Pisa Airport by 11:15 (transfer included).

**Tour only:** Transfers included from Pisa airport at 12:20, and back to Pisa airport departing hotel at 10:00.

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## VOLTERRA TO SAN GIMIGNANO | WHERE YOU STAY



**Park Hotel Le Fonti**

★★★★

Volterra

Days 1+8



**Agriturismo Orgiaglia**

●●●●

Orgiaglia

Days 2+3



**Relais della Rovere**

★★★★

Colle di Val d'Elsa

Days 4+5



**Hotel Casolare Le Terre Rosse**

★★★

San Donato

Days 6+7

For extra nights we recommend Volterra and the optional 2-night extension in Colle di Val d'Elsa. City add-ons can be arranged in Siena.

## VOLTERRA TO SAN GIMIGNANO | WALKING DETAILS



The walking mainly follows reasonably flat *strade bianche* (white roads) with some asphalt lanes and partly shaded forest and valley trails. Walking boots are recommended. *Strade bianche* are mainly exposed, affording excellent views - sunhat essential.



**Average daytime temperature (°C):**

22 26 29 29 26 21  
MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT



**Average monthly rainfall (mm):**

72 63 41 45 70 95  
MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT