

Art and culture



The Secrets of Etruscan Tuscany

A fascinating journey through the history of Tuscany



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Tuscany holds the fascinating history of the Etruscan civilisation, a mysterious group of people who left an indelible imprint on the region. From Volterra to Cortona, passing through Florence, the museums and archaeological sites tell stories of art, life and spirituality. Paths through necropolises, ancient city-states and evocative landscapes allow visitors to immerse themselves in the history of a refined and modern people. Exploring Etruscan Tuscany is a journey between past and present, between myths and extraordinary works of art.

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On the trail of the Etruscans



Imagine walking in a land where the past, **even the most distant and remote past**, is a breath that lives in every village, under every stone. Imagine a secret that Tuscany has guarded for centuries: **it is the civilisation of the Etruscans**, a mysterious and fascinating people who left indelible traces in this region. **Discovering their places means entering a world of myths, ancient rituals and extraordinary works of art.**

The Etruscans were not only a people of craftsmen and warriors, but also of **refined lovers of life**. The fulcrum of their lands was ancient Etruria, where cities such as **Volterra, Cortona and Populonia** retain the clearest traces of their civilisation. In these places, their stories are hidden and fragments of a past just waiting to be rediscovered.

In Volterra, **the ancient walls, of Etruscan origin**, embrace the city and showcase its ancient past to anyone who visits. The **Guarnacci Etruscan Museum holds treasures** such as funeral urns sculpted with faces and scenes that reveal the emotions and fears of a vanished people.

In Cortona, **the Museum of the Etruscan Academy recounts the customs and daily life** of people who loved life and beauty, where **women enjoyed a freedom unparalleled among contemporary civilisations**, while the archaeological park is home to **the imposing monumental tombs** that tell of Etruscan beliefs in the afterlife.

In the heart of Florence, at the **National**

Archaeological Museum, you can admire **the Chimera of Arezzo**, one of the most enigmatic and fascinating bronze works of antiquity, **which demonstrates that the Etruscans were masters in the art of metalworking.**

Exploring Tuscany in the footsteps of the Etruscans is an adventure that leads on a **journey beyond conventional routes**. Paths linking ancient city-states, woods and countryside concealing extensive necropolises, coastlines where once flourishing cities stood: each stage of this journey brings the traveller closer to understanding a people who left an indelible mark on history. **An experience that allows one to feel the call of a civilisation that, despite the passage of centuries, continues to speak to us and demonstrate its modernity.**

For anyone wishing to explore Tuscany through the lens of the Etruscan civilisation, **there are numerous itineraries** that lead through **the ancient streets, necropolis, museums and archaeological remains** scattered around the region. These routes not only **offer an insight into the daily life of the Etruscans**, but also allow one to immerse oneself in the **scenic wonders of Tuscany**, an area that has preserved its charm intact for millennia.

To visit Etruscan sites in Tuscany is to take a journey of discovery into the roots of this land, a journey through the mysteries of one of the most influential civilisations of the ancient Mediterranean, which left a cultural legacy that continues to inspire and fascinate.



A great variety of landscapes

Etruscan Tuscany is a mosaic of enchanting landscapes: from the hills of Volterra to Populonia and the 'Costa degli Etruschi', and then necropolises amidst centuries-old woods and countryside, traces of ancient settlements within villages clinging to hilltops. Every corner tells a different story



History and nature: itineraries in Tuscany

The routes of the Etruscans in Tuscany pass through cities, run along the coast and lead you into the countryside. Discover the variety of the region by retracing the history of the ancient civilisation of the Etruscans.

The archaeological sites

A journey through time: visit the archaeological sites to see the places where the Etruscans settled. It is here, among

the stones on which you will walk, that the Etruscans lived, it is here that their civilisation flourished



The Museums

Learn all the details of the history of the Etruscans by visiting Tuscany's archaeological museums. Works of art and artefacts will tell you about the fascinating life of this ancient civilisation.



Trekking, Nature and Archaeology

The Etruscan landscapes of Tuscany reveal fascinating combinations of nature and Etruscan archaeology, offering ideal itineraries for trekking lovers. The Costa degli Etruschi, with the Via dei Cavalleggeri, offers a route that winds along the Piombino coastline, with glimpses of the Gulf of Baratti, where the ancient Etruscan town of Populonia preserves its historical soul intact. Along the way, Etruscan tumuli emerge from the vegetation. In southern Tuscany, Monte Amiata rises majestically: the villages of Cinigiano, Roccastrada and Civitella Paganico, on its slopes, reveal their Etruscan roots. Among the most suggestive routes, the Monte Amiata loop allows you to explore this mountain in depth, until you reach the monumental cross that towers above it. Nearby, in the tuff area of the Maremma, the ancient villages of Sorano, Sovana and Pitigliano form the backdrop to the vie cave, paths dug into the tuff in Etruscan times, capable of providing spectacular experiences. In the heart of the Casentino forests, along the slopes of Monte Falterona, lies the Lago degli Idoli, while the Val di Chiana in the Arezzo area, with the village of Cortona at its centre, is another area rich in Etruscan remains. Finally, the hills around Artimino, on the slopes of Montalbano, offer an immersion in the most authentic Tuscan landscape: the village, of Etruscan origin, holds archaeological treasures in the Francesco Nicosia Museum and is the starting point of the Via degli Etruschi, an itinerary that crosses the hills and the Apennines, reaching Emilia Romagna.



The Etruscan Spas of Tuscany

The Etruscans, a people who loved the pleasures of life, knew how to combine hedonism and health by relaxing in the thermal waters, of which Tuscany abounds: the region is known for its spas. In Tuscany, the ancient custom of bathing in the thermal baths is still alive thanks to numerous thermal sites that, besides offering wellness and relaxation, tell the story of a fascinating past. Here one can really bathe in sites that are still intact or that continue to offer exciting surprises. San Casciano dei Bagni is the perfect example: the town, famous for the recent discovery of 24 Etruscan-Roman statues and for its thermal waters, was the site of an Etruscan sanctuary near the Bagno Grande spring, and today, as then, with its springs offers pleasure and refreshment. Saturnia, with its Cascade del Mulino waterfalls, is another destination not to be missed: here, amidst wild nature and sulphurous springs, one can enjoy the most famous free thermal baths in Tuscany. Chianciano Terme, with its sacred waters, was already a reference point for the Etruscans, while Bagno Vignoni, in the heart of the Val d'Orcia, enchants with its historic baths. Bagno San Filippo, at the foot of Monte Amiata, is famous for its thermal water pools hidden in the woods, while Rapolano Terme combines luxury and archaeology in the Crete Senesi. Finally, the Petriolo thermal baths in the Civitella Paganico countryside, with their beneficial waters, were also appreciated by the Etruscans.

Treasures of Etruscan Tuscany

Discover Etruscan Tuscany among ancient cities, art and nature. Explore necropolises, museums and landscapes that tell of a unique millenary heritage.



Choose your Itinerary

Explore Tuscany's Etruscan routes: itineraries through history, art and unique landscapes. Discover villages, necropolises and museums, where past and food and wine traditions intertwine in unforgettable experiences.

1 Ancient cities

Immerse yourself in the charm of Etruscan Tuscany! Ancient Etruscan cities such as Volterra, Chiusi, Cortona and many others offer a journey through time with their well-preserved ruins and enigmatic necropolises. Stroll among the vestiges of a civilisation that left an indelible mark on the heart of Tuscany.

2 Art and Culture

The Etruscans were masters of art and craftsmanship. Their elegant ceramics, splendid jewellery and vivid tomb paintings offer a glimpse into their life and spirituality. Visit Tuscan museums to admire these extraordinary works that tell fascinating stories.

3 Trekking and Etruscan nature

The paths through the woods and hills, ideal for trekking, lead you to wonderful views and hidden historical remains. Discover the harmony between nature and history as you explore the unique landscape that inspired and influenced a civilisation thousands of years old.

4 A millennial heritage

Tuscany was forged by the civilisation of the Etruscans. Discover how their culture influenced Roman history and society. Ruins, museums and archaeological sites offer you a unique opportunity to explore and appreciate this fascinating heritage.

Trade routes

The itinerary through the Etruscan trade routes offers a journey from the hills of inland Tuscany to the coast. It starts from Monte Amiata, where the villages of Cinigiano, Civitella Paganico, and Roccastrada guard a significant Etruscan heritage. The necropolis of Casenovole, near Civitella Paganico, is a fine example of the funerary artefacts of the period, including the Tomba del Tasso and gold objects that speak of the prosperity of the region. Continuing towards the coast, one reaches the Grosseto area, which offers numerous Etruscan sites. The cities of Roselle and Vetulonia are among the main sites of archaeological interest. Roselle, founded by the Etruscans before the 7th century B.C., and Vetulonia, located near Castiglione della Pescaia, preserve important finds in the Isidoro Falchi Archaeological Museum.

Further south are Capalbio and Porto Ercole on Monte Argentario, which bear

witness to the Etruscan presence in this region, with settlements and ancient tumuli. On the Costa degli Etruschi, the coastal panorama is enriched with history and natural beauty. Populonia, the only Etruscan town overlooking the sea, is a focal point of the itinerary. Its castle houses the Archaeological Museum with the Gasparri collection, and the Archaeological Park of Baratti and Populonia offers an in-depth view of Etruscan life. Cecina and Campiglia Marittima enrich the journey with archaeological remains and parks that document the mining and processing of metals, testifying to the area's ancient vocation. This route, which crosses mountains and coastlines, reveals the traces of an ancient civilisation of merchants and craftsmen, offering a glimpse into the trade routes and daily practices of the Etruscans, immersed in a landscape that bears witness to a rich and fascinating past.



Discovering the Etruscans through archaeological sites

Tuscany is dotted with Etruscan archaeological sites that tell the story of this civilisation. From the coast to the hinterland, here are some of the main archaeological areas and parks, starting with the Archaeological Park of Carmignano, which stretches across the hills of Prato and includes sites such as Pietramarina, the necropolis of Artimino, and the burial mounds of Montefortini and Boschetti. At Pieve Socana, in the Casentino, there is an ancient Etruscan temple dedicated to Tinia and Menerva, the remains of which were discovered in the 1960s and 1970s.

The Archaeological Park of Sodo in Cortona houses important Etruscan burial buildings, while the Archaeological Site of Poggio Renzo in Chiusi is known for the Tomba della Scimmia and other significant tombs. Chianciano Terme offers a combination of Etruscan history and thermal baths, with finds such as the Tomba della Pedata and the farm of Poggio Bacherina. The Pianacce necropolis near Sarteano is famous for the Tomba della Quadriga Infernale. The Archaeological Park of Baratti and Populonia covers a coastal area and includes necropolises and ancient industrial areas. The Vetulonia Archaeological Area inland from Castiglione della Pescaia is famous for its monumental tombs. In Roselle, near Vetulonia, you can visit the remains of the Etruscan and Roman city, while the Poggio Tondo Archaeological Site in the Alma River Valley includes tombs and the ruins of an Etruscan farm. Finally, the Città del Tufo Archaeological Park in southern Tuscany brings together Sorano, Sovana and Vitozza, with rock settlements and hollow streets excavated in the tuff.

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Etruscan painting

The enigmatic Etruscans were also known for their refined art, and left a unique legacy, especially in their tombs. Despite Greek and oriental influences, Etruscan art retained distinctive stylistic characteristics. The funerary frescoes, painted on the walls of the tombs, capture scenes of daily life and mythology, enriching the burial sites with vivid and symbolic representations. Among the masterpieces are the Tomba della Scimmia and the Tomba della Quadriga Infernale. The Tomba della Scimmia, in the necropolis of Poggio Renzo in Chiusi, dated 480-470 B.C., is decorated with frescoes depicting aristocrats in recreational activities such as games and chariot races. The name of the tomb derives from the depiction of a monkey in the frieze. The Tomba della Quadriga Infernale, in the Pianacce necropolis in Sarteano, dating back to the 4th century B.C., features a pictorial cycle with a disturbing demon driving a quadriga drawn by lions and griffins, symbolising the journey to the afterlife. These frescoes offer a valuable insight into Etruscan culture and beliefs.

Etruscan museums

Tuscany is home to an extraordinary variety of museums that allow visitors to explore the rich heritage left by these fascinating people. The MAEC in Cortona is one of the main reference points for those wishing to discover Etruscan art, with exhibits such as the Etruscan chandelier and treasures from around 20 local archaeological sites. In Bibbiena, the Casentino Archaeological Museum houses important bronze votive statuettes found in Lago degli Idoli, offering a significant insight into the Casentino valley. In Vetulonia, the Isidoro Falchi Archaeological Museum presents grave goods and finds from the surrounding necropolises, including the famous stele of the warrior Auvele Feluske. In Chianciano Terme, the Archaeological Civic Museum delle Water is renowned for its collection of Etruscan canopic jars and a life-size reconstruction of an Etruscan temple pediment. The Etruscan Museum in Chiusi exhibits a rich collection of grave goods, including the famous Coperchio dell'Abbraccio and the Sphinx, the museum's symbol. In Sarteano, the Archaeological Civic Museum hosts finds from the local necropolises, with a room dedicated to the Tomba della Quadriga Infernale.

Etruscan Passion: the richness of the Etruscan civilisation

The mysterious Etruscan world continues to fascinate scholars and enthusiasts. In Tuscany, the heritage left by the Etruscans is manifested in enchanting villages, museums and archaeological sites. The itinerary explores the richness of Etruscan culture, highlighting the organisation in city-states and the grandiose necropolises. In Carmignano, the Archaeological Museum of Artimino and the necropolises of Prato Rosello and Montefortini offer an insight into Etruscan life. Castiglion Fiorentino, with its Cassero Tower and archaeological museum, preserves Etruscan traces in its historic centre. Cortona, an ancient lucumonia, hosts the MAEC and the archaeological park with the Sodo tumulus. Murlo, with the Etruscan Antiquarium Museum and the Poggio Civitate site, offers the opportunity to discover one of the oldest and most prosperous centres of Etruria, with unique archaeological evidence. Chianciano Terme, with the Civic Archaeological Museum, and Chiusi, with the National Etruscan Museum and the painted tombs, are two of the most important centres for discovering the Etruscan civilisation. Sarteano, with the Tomba della Quadriga Infernale, and Sorano, with the Città del Tufo Archaeological Park, offer other extraordinary testimonies. Finally, Pitigliano, Manciano, Roselle, Vetulonia and Piombino complete the itinerary with their precious archaeological sites and museums, including Populonia and the Baratti Archaeological Park, between the Maremma and the coast.

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Wine routes

Tuscany is known the world over for wine growing, a tradition that has its roots in Etruscan times, when wine was considered a treasure to be produced and traded throughout the Mediterranean. And along the Tuscan 'wine routes', the passion for wine is intertwined with Etruscan archaeology. We start in Chianti, the queen land of wine, where the village of Barberino Tavarnelle hosts the Antiquarium of Sant'Appiano, with precious Etruscan finds, as well as in the nearby Castellina in Chianti and its Archaeological Museum. From here we continue towards Cortona, in the heart of the Arezzo countryside, to explore the Accademia Etrusca Museum and the archaeological park.

The itinerary continues to Torrita di Siena, where Montefollonico is famous for its vinsanto, and onto Montepulciano, famous for its underground cellars and the prized Nobile wine. Through San Quirico d'Orcia and Castiglione d'Orcia, we immerse ourselves in ancient history and local flavours. In Maremma, between Pitigliano and Scansano, you can enjoy a unique experience among the vineyards and the Etruscan vie cave, ancient paths carved into the tuff. The itinerary ends in the Grosseto area, between the archaeological area of Roselle and the Etruscan findings in Gavorrano and Civitella Paganico, where there is a recently discovered Etruscan tomb. This journey combines history and archaeology with Tuscany's finest wines: Chianti DOCG, Nobile di Montepulciano DOCG, Orcia DOC, Bianco di Pitigliano DOC, and Morellino di Scansano DOCG. A tasty and fascinating journey between past and present.

The ways of stone

It is known that in Tuscany every stone tells, literally, an ancient story: so why not embark on a journey among the Etruscan stones? You can start from Monte Argentario, a promontory that juts out into the sea and is home to the seaside village of Porto Ercole, whose name dates back to the Etruscans. From here you reach the suggestive 'Città del Tufo': Sorano, Sovana and Pitigliano. The latter is home to civic archaeological museums and offers an extraordinary spectacle with its medieval aqueduct and the 'Alberto Manzi' open-air archaeological museum. Here, you can visit a reconstruction of an Etruscan dwelling and the rock necropolis. In Sovana, the mysterious vie cave and the Tomba Ildebranda, carved into the tuffaceous rock, are not to be missed. Continuing north-west, you reach Roselle, where the archaeological area preserves the essence of one of the most important Etruscan cities, and Vetulonia, famous for its necropolis and burial mounds that blend in with the landscape.

In northern Tuscany, among the Casentino forests, two Etruscan sites of spiritual importance emerge: the Pieve di Socana in Castel Focognano, an ancient place of worship, and the Lago degli Idoli on Monte Falterona, where votive statuettes have been found that are now preserved in the Casentino archaeological museum. The itinerary ends in the hills of Carmignano and the foothills of Montalbano, where there is the archaeological site of Pietramarina, an ancient Etruscan settlement that, thanks to its elevated position, dominated the surrounding territories.

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The ways of oil

The Etruscans were also known as great producers of olive oil. This precious product, which was used for culinary as well as religious, medical and aesthetic purposes, is evidenced by numerous containers for perfumed essences on display in the archaeological museums of Tuscany. The journey into the oil lands of Etruscan Tuscany begins in Barberino Tavarnelle, famous for its Chianti and its hills covered with vineyards and olive groves. Here, near Sant'Appiano, San Martino ai Colli and Semifonte, Etruscan artefacts of great value have been found, which are preserved in the Antiquarium housed in the evocative parish church of Sant'Appiano. Continuing southwards, the landscape becomes gentler and hillier in the Valdichiana of Arezzo, famous for its food and wine traditions. Cortona and Castiglion Fiorentino offer precious Etruscan remains in their museums, including the Etruscan chandelier in the MAEC in Cortona. In Valdichiana and neighbouring areas, villages such as Civitella in Val di Chiana, Monte San Savino, Foiano della Chiana and Lucignano preserve numerous Etruscan tombs. Moving towards the Sienese territory, Montepulciano, Sinalunga and Chiusi offer extraordinary discoveries, such as the Tomba della Scimmia and the Labyrinth of King Porsenna in the National Archaeological Museum of Chiusi. Finally, in the area between the Sienese Val di Chiana and Val d'Orcia, the Giancarlo Pallavicini Archaeological Museum in Trequanda and the Sarteano Archaeological Civic Museum, with its reproduction of the Tomba della Quadriga Infernale, allow visitors to explore the fascinating Etruscan world and its links with the land and oil.

Waterways

Water was sacred and vital to the Etruscans, and following in their footsteps leads us to explore places where water and civilisation intertwined. In Chiusi, the Labyrinth of Porsenna, which can be visited through the 'Underground City' civic museum, reveals a sophisticated system of tunnels for water management. Nearby, Lake Chiusi, known to the Etruscans for its agricultural resources, offers an environment for relaxing moments. Near Montepulciano, famous for its wine, is the lake of Montepulciano, part of an ancient lake system together with that of Chiusi. Chianciano Terme, renowned for its springs, houses an archaeological museum that explores the Etruscan connection with thermal waters. Bagno Vignoni, with its historical thermal baths, and the free thermal baths of Bagni San Filippo, famous for their limestone formations, are places that arose in ancient times near their thermal springs, which were already known in antiquity.

Sarteano is known for its thermo-mineral waters, and San Casciano dei Bagni, another thermal centre, was recently the scene of one of the most significant archaeological discoveries in recent years, that of the statues of the Etruscan sanctuary of Bagno Grande. The journey can continue to Saturnia, with its famous natural thermal baths, to Rapolano Terme, with its Etruscan and Roman past, to San Gimignano and Montaione, two very ancient centres that arose near the Elsa river, or to Capannoli, which flows near the springs of the Era river, or to Signa, born on the Arno (and on which the age-old debate on its origin, whether Etruscan or Roman, hangs), to complete a journey that celebrates the profound relationship between the Etruscans and water.