



2018
HOLIDAYS

San Quirico d'Orcia

TUSCANY

hf holidays
walking and activity holidays .co.uk

WELCOME TO *Tuscany*

The medieval town of San Quirico d'Orcia lies in the heart of the Orcia valley, amidst a wonderful landscape of green and golden hills for which Tuscany is famous. Due to its position in the middle of the main Via Francigena pilgrimage route, it has long been a staging post for wayfarers, pilgrims and merchants on the way to Rome. San Quirico is just one of the many hilltop towns and villages that dominate the skyline of this part of Tuscany.

During our stay we'll visit a number of these, including beautiful Pienza, Montalcino and Montepulciano. These fortified villages contain a wealth of architectural treasures and offer an insight into the turbulent history of the Republic of Siena and the legacy of Etruscan and Roman settlement. On one day we make a sightseeing excursion to Siena, whilst your free day offers opportunities to explore San Quirico or further afield. Tuscany's rural countryside,

where traditional farming methods can still be seen, offers a variety of enchanting walks amidst scented woodlands and vine-clad hillsides. The hilltop towns and the forested slopes of Monte Amiata provide wonderful backdrops. Walks are amongst gently undulating hills. Conditions are generally good underfoot, but can be a little muddy after rain showers. Some steeper ascents are also required to reach some of the beautiful hilltop towns.



ACCOMMODATION

Hotel Albego Palazuolo

Via S. Caterina 43
San Quirico d'Orcia
53027 Siena

Tel: 0039 0577 897080

The attractive 3-star Albego Palazuolo is a converted farmhouse with modern additions on an ancient agricultural site, located on the edge of San Quirico d'Orcia. The Simonelli family, who own the hotel, also own a wine business, a traditional olive oil processing business and local agriculture. There are fields situated just beyond the hotel's swimming pool and garden and the complex has superb views across the southern Tuscan countryside to Montalcino. San Quirico d'Orcia is just a few minutes' walk, accessed through one of the gates in the old walls of the town.

Bedrooms: There are 39 en-suite bedrooms, many of which overlook the gardens and outdoor pool. Each is equipped with a television, telephone and air conditioning. The rooms have fridges to store packed lunch supplies. Tea and coffee making facilities are not available in the bedrooms, but hot drinks can be bought from the bar.

Facilities: Public rooms include a restaurant, adjacent open terrace area with chairs and tables, bar with TV, and a quieter lounge area above the bar area, ideal for card games. Outside, the swimming pool is surrounded by lovely gardens with seating areas. The pool bar is open in the main season. Free internet access is available at the hotel.

Meals: All our holidays include breakfast and evening meal. If you have special dietary requirements, we recommend that you spend a few minutes at the start of your holiday discussing your preferences with the restaurant manager.

Breakfast: There is a wide choice from a self service buffet.

Evening meal: This is taken around 7.30pm and is a traditional Tuscan 4-course meal served at the table, consisting of an antipasto, a starter of soup or pasta, main course and dessert. Tea and coffee are included.

Lunch: You may be able to purchase a picnic lunch from the hotel. Alternatively it is possible to buy ingredients from local shops or on some days to eat at one of the local cafés; your leaders will advise you of the options.





Guided Walking

ITINERARY

A unique feature of our Guided Walking holidays is the daily choice of walks. Each evening your leaders will give a short talk about the options for the next day and answer any questions that you may have. In San Quirico you'll have a choice of two guided walks on each walking day. The cost of the transport to and from your walks each day is included in the cost of your holiday.



Easier Walks: 4 to 7 miles (6.5-11km) on good tracks and paths, with short but steep ascents. Up to 900ft (270m) of ascent in a day.



Harder Walks: 6 to 10 miles (9.5-16km) on good tracks and paths, with short but steep ascents. Up to 1,800ft (540m) of ascent in a day.

Please note that the itinerary outlined below is provisional and could be subject to change. For the most up to date information, please check our website. A finalised itinerary will be available at the resort and your leaders will talk every evening about the next day's walks.

Day 1: Arrival day

You should arrive at the hotel with time to settle into your room. On the first evening your leaders will explain more about the organisation of the week and there will be plenty of time to meet with your fellow guests.

Day 2: Bagno Vignoni

The hot springs at Bagno Vignoni have been known since Etruscan times. Santa Caterina of Siena and Lorenzo the Magnificent were amongst those to have taken advantage of the therapeutic values of the waters. The Medici family built the splendid arcaded pool which sits in the middle of the village where you would expect to find the main square.

Easier Walks: We start our week with an exploration of San Quirico, a fascinating town in its own right with some spectacular views from the town walls. We then head south out of town through beautiful countryside to Vignoni Alta with its truncated tower. Our route continues descending towards Bagno Vignoni accompanied by great views to Rocca d'Orcia. We end our walk with time to explore the village and hot springs before meeting our coach. 4 miles (6.5km) with 400ft (120m) of ascent.

Harder Walk: After exploring San Quirico with the easier group, we too head south, taking a loop out to the west via Forn del Chigi and Poggio Grande. We then head east past the ruins of the old bridge, swept away in 1929, and up the side of the calcite cliffs, past bathing pools, to arrive in Bagno Vignoni to join the easier group. 6 miles (9.5km) with 700ft (210m) of ascent.



Day 3: Montalcino to Abbey of San Antimo

Montalcino is a Tuscan hill town with a full circuit of walls. It was permanently settled in 1,000AD by fugitives from the Saracens and their family groups, the Borghetto, Pianello, Ruga and Travaglio. To this day you will see rival flags outside the houses and they compete against each other in an archery competition. The final destination of both walks is the Abbey of San Antimo with time to explore before enjoying refreshments in the village of Castelnuovo dell Abate.

Easier Walk: Our walk starts with a bus ride to Montalcino where we can explore the town and enjoy a drink before rejoining the coach to take us to the start of our walk a couple of miles south. Our route takes us through forests, vineyards and farmlands as we make our way to our objective of the day, the Abbey of San Antimo. Our coach then picks us up at the edge of Castelnuovo dell Abate. 6 miles (9.5km) with 600ft (180m) of ascent.

Harder Walk: The harder walk begins at Montalcino where, after a chance to look around, we head off towards the Abbey of San Antimo through undulating countryside, woodland and farmland. 8 miles (13km) with 700ft (210m) of ascent.

Day 4: Siena - full day excursion

We will make the one hour journey by coach from San Quirico to the city of Siena, a magnet for visitors to this region of Italy. At the heart of the walled city lies the Campo, where the famous 'Palio' horse race takes place. The surrounding central core is entirely medieval in plan and appearance.

The 320ft Torre del Mangia bell tower dominates the scene and you can ascend its many steps to get a bird's eye view over the city. The Museo Civico, in the Palazzo Pubblico, contains 13th century frescoes. In the Piazza del Duomo, the Museo dell Opera is worth a visit, housing elaborate frescoes and works by Simone Martini and an unusual work of art – the Maesta, a huge altar piece painted by Duccio in the 1270s. An additional bonus, if you go into the museum, is ascending the 'new nave', arguably a better viewpoint than the more famous Torre del Mangia. The Duomo itself is incredible both inside and out: the black and white marble decoration, the unique marble floor panels and sculptures are all breathtaking. While the Duomo will be crowded, a far quieter place to visit is the Ospedale di Santa Maria Della Scala, across the square, recently converted into a museum. The church itself is very airy and then inside the old hospital is a wonderful cycle of frescoes, which depict entirely secular scenes and are described in English. As well as visiting these principal sights there will also be opportunities to relax in the pavement cafés, or to wander through some of the city's quieter corners







before the return to San Quirico.

Day 5: Pienza/Montepulciano

Pienza was once a small village named Corsignano, where Pope Pius II was born. When he became Pope in 1459 he commissioned the most famous architect of his day, Bernardo Rossellini, to create a city fit for a Pope on the site of his birthplace. Pius died within three years of the completion of the city, which was largely ignored by future Popes, leaving us with a beautifully preserved renaissance city not much bigger than a village.

Easier Walk: After looking around the beautiful city of Pienza we reboard our coach for Monticchiello where our walk starts. We leave this beautiful walled hilltop town across rolling countryside past the pilgrimage church of San Biagio to Montepulciano for a well-earned drink. 6 miles (9.5km) with 900ft (270m) of ascent.

Harder Walk: Our walk starts from Pienza. After a spot of sightseeing we head east out of town towards Monticchiello where we pick up the route of the easier walk to Montepulciano where we can join them for refreshments. 10 miles (16km) with 1,600ft (480m) of ascent.

Day 6: Free day

Each week there is a free day when no guided walks are offered. This is an ideal opportunity to relax around the hotel, walk independently or visit local places of interest. If there is sufficient demand, leaders can organise a visit to San Gimignano.

San Gimignano

This is a fascinating hilltop town with a breathtaking skyline of towers. You can enter the town through the Porta San. Giovanni and then head to the Piazza del Duomo. The Duomo has an exotic interior containing fresco cycles of the Old and New Testament stories. It is worthwhile visiting the Rocca and ramparts which offer extensive views across the countryside. The church of St. Augustine is well away from the crowds and has frescoes on the life of Saint Francis. On the return to San Quirico you could stop at the heavily fortified small town of Monteriggioni, once the border of the Florence and Siena republics.

Pienza

Pay a return visit to Pienza to visit the Piccolomini Palace, the Diocesan Museum and the medieval Pieve di Corsignano church where Pope Pius II was baptised.

Day 7: A View from the Rocca

Today we travel south to the castle keep of Tentennano, known locally as Rocca d'Orcia. The harder walk is circular, starting and finishing at the Rocca and taking in three castles. The easier walk takes in a beautiful stretch of the Via Francigena heading for the little village of Gallina which sits on the 43rd Parallel. Both groups walk through undulating farmland and woodland where wild game, such as deer and boar have been seen. At the end of both walks there will be the opportunity to climb the tower of the castle keep and/or take refreshments at the café nearby before we return to the hotel.

Easier Walk: Today's walk begins with a circuit of the beautiful village of Castiglione d'Orcia before walking through Rocca d'Orcia village and picking up the Via Francigena which we walk almost all the way to Gallina. After a short refreshment stop we will board the coach to return to our starting point and meet up with the harder walkers at Rocca d'Orcia. 7 miles (11 km) with 400ft (120m) of ascent

Harder Walk: The walk starts by wandering through the medieval streets of Rocca d'Orcia village. An old road, now just a track takes us down to the Orcia River with views of Ripa d'Orcia. We follow the river for a while before gaining height to join a ridge with stunning views of Monte Amiata to the south. The return allows us to explore the village of Castiglione d'Orcia and its castle – the Rocca Aldobrandesca. Finally we return to Rocca d'Orcia to join the easier party with time to explore the castle and/or take refreshments. 9 miles (14.5km) with 1,600ft (480m) of ascent.

Day 8: Departure day

In the evenings

In Europe, our walking holidays continue into the evening. Enjoy a glass of wine or local beer whilst listening to your leaders outlining the next day's walks. The daughter of the Simonelli family will talk to your group about wine, the local agriculture and the traditional process of pressing olive oil. After a relaxing evening meal, you may like to join your group for a short walk into San Quirico for a nightcap.

Your Walking Leaders: HF Holidays' leaders are a pivotal feature of our walking holidays. During the day they will guide you on the walks in a caring and considerate way, showing you places of interest on the route. All our leaders have been selected on an intensive residential course so you can relax and enjoy your holiday knowing that you are in safe hands. Our leaders welcome your comments on the holiday survey; constructive suggestions are very helpful.

We take pride in the quality of our holidays and work closely with all our providers to ensure our holidays meet your expectations. If for any reason you are not satisfied our leaders are the best people to help.

Local interest guides: In some of our resorts we may employ the services of a local interest guide who will accompany you on a walk to enhance your enjoyment of the area by giving you an insight into its history and culture. Tips for local guides have not been included in the price of your holiday. This is at your own discretion and we invite you to do this directly with the local guide.

Maps: Your leaders will of course carry all the maps and detailed walk instructions needed for the walks. The best map for the area is Kompass 2463 Area Probeta Val d'Orcia. Maps can be obtained by mail order from The Map Shop, Tel: **0800 0854080** or visit www.themapshop.co.uk

Children: We welcome unaccompanied children of 14 or over on our walks on the basis that they can take full responsibility for themselves. Children under the age of 14 must be accompanied by an adult.

WALKING SAFETY

Hydration: In warm weather it is very important to keep hydrated. You will need to carry water with you on walks, more during hot weather or on more demanding walks.

One good way of hydrating is to use a hydration pack which allows drinking without constant stopping. This can then be filled up from water sources as required.

Insurance: Insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so, and advise us of the insurance company and policy number.

We have negotiated special holiday insurance and full details of this cover can be found in our brochure or at hfholidays.co.uk. There is no extra charge for pre-existing illnesses. If you would like to purchase insurance from us please call us on **020 8732 1220** or email holidayservices@hfholidays.co.uk.

Even with an EHIC card, medicines and out-patient treatment normally have to be paid for at the time and the costs reclaimed afterwards – details are available at dh.gov.uk/travellers. Therefore insurance is extremely important, as is access to emergency money, preferably a credit card.

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WHAT TO WEAR & BRING

To enjoy your walking comfortably and safely, it is essential that your footwear, clothing and equipment are suitable. Changeable weather is possible throughout the year, so our advice is to come prepared for all eventualities. You will need:

- comfortable outdoor clothing
- waterproof jacket and overtrousers
- ankle supporting footwear with non-slip soles
- small rucksack
- water bottle (at least 2 litres, more for hot climates) and a thermos flask if you wish
- sunhat, sun cream and sunglasses

The following are recommended to all walkers, and are essential for mountainous and hilly areas:

- walking boots
- spare pullover or fleece
- hat and gloves
- spare high-energy food e.g. chocolate bar or Kendal mint cake
- torch

You may also wish to consider bringing:

- walking pole(s) – many guests find these useful, particularly for descents
- camera
- personal first aid kit

Footwear: We recommend wearing walking boots on all our walks, as these provide the best ankle support and grip. Modern 'approach shoes' offer appropriate levels of grip and may be worn on some low level walks, but users should be aware that they offer less ankle support. Lightweight trainers, denim jeans and waterproof capes are not recommended for any walks.

HOLIDAY TIPS

Language: Italian

Currency: Euro

Money: There are several ATM machines in San Quirico where you can obtain money.

Electricity: 220 Volt AC with round two pin plugs; you will need an adaptor for any appliances brought from the UK.

Tap water: Is considered safe to drink, but if you prefer, bottled mineral water can be purchased from the hotel or local supermarkets.

Telephone code: If the international number you wish to call starts with a 0, you must drop the starting digit when dialling the number.

To dial a UK number 0044

To dial an Italian number 0039

linger a little

LONGER



If you enjoyed your holiday in our destination of San Quirico d'Orcia, we recommend our other holiday at our new destination in Catalanian Spain, Roses.

Two weeks or more

Make the most of your break and enjoy a longer holiday – either two weeks of walking at one resort or by combining complementary holidays, such as Sorrento on the Neapolitan coastline and Altamura, in the undiscovered

region of Puglia. We arrange the transfers between the resorts so that you don't have to. See our brochure or website for more information.

Self-guided Walking

For those who prefer to explore independently, we recommend our Self-guided Walking holidays. In selected European destinations you can discover unspoiled scenery, historic sites and the local culture at your own pace by following our carefully planned walking routes.

Leisure Activities

We offer a range of Leisure Activities holidays at some of our European destinations, including Discovery or Garden Tours, Photography, Painting, or Yoga.

Worldwide

From Alaska to Australia our Worldwide Journeys invite you to explore world famous destinations, and some lesser known gems, on six continents including Europe.

TRANSFER INFORMATION

If you have booked your holiday 'with flight' you will arrive at Pisa Airport. From the UK we offer flights from London Heathrow and Manchester which will arrive at different times.

Please note that meals are not provided on most European flights, although some airlines may offer a small snack.

You will meet your leader and the rest of your group in the arrivals hall outside customs. Due to new security regulations, the group will then travel by monorail to Pisa Railway station to meet up with the transfer coach taking you to San Quirico.

The onward journey to San Quirico by coach takes approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes.

For independent travellers: For guests who have booked their holiday 'without flight' HF Holidays can help you to reach the hotel in the following ways:

HF Holidays' transfer coach from Pisa airport. These are timed to meet the HF Holidays' flights (provisional HF Holidays' flight times can be found on www.hfholidays.co.uk or call **(1)20 8732 1220**). Cost per single journey is £31.50. Please note that HF Holidays is not responsible for your onward travel if you fail to meet the transfer coach under any circumstance.

Our **Airport Taxi** service is available on request. **Transfers and taxis must be pre-booked.** If you have not already booked your transfer or taxi please call **+44 (0)20 8732 1220**

Airport parking and accommodation

If you require airport parking or accommodation before your flight, we recommend our partner Holiday Extras. Call **0871 360 2603** and quote **HX031** or book online at holidayextras.co.uk/hfholidays



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