



## TUSCAN BIKE CHALLENGE

Our bike challenge takes place mainly in Tuscany and partly in the Umbria region of Italy. We'll cycle on quiet Tuscan roads, our chosen mode of transport allowing us to soak up the atmosphere in this world-renowned region of Italy. Every day we will enjoy the more subtle aspects of this region, off the tourist track, we really will get the feeling we're in the heart of Italy!

..... *if Tuscany is the heart of Italy, then Umbria is its soul* .....

### **Day 1: Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June**

#### **Fly London to Florence**



On arrival, transfer from the airport to our starting point just south of the city.

We enjoy dinner and a briefing on the weekend ahead.

### **Day 2: Friday 13<sup>th</sup> June**

#### **Cycle Florence to Radda (via Chianti Mountains)**

We cycle south following quiet lanes, past hidden villas, monasteries and medieval hilltop villages. We take a classic route along the famous Strada in Chianti, with its rolling hills, passing vineyards and olive groves. After lunch we make our way to Radda the historic capital of Chianti and one of its highest and most impressive towns. There are ruined fortification walls, sculpted fountains, armorial gateways, and curving lanes leading to the central piazza Ferrucci, with its imposing *Palazzo del Podesta*. The church of San Niccolo is also worth a visit. Here we will have our overnight stop.

### **Day 3: Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June**

#### **Cycle Radda to Asciano**

After breakfast we're back on our bikes cycling out of Radda towards Asciano. There'll be plenty of classic Tuscan villages en route today. If there is time, we'll make a stop at one of these villages, perhaps Castellina to explore. We continue our cycling towards Siena. The landscapes south and east of Siena are among the most classic and beautiful in the region. Undulating green hills capped by medieval, tile-roofed towns and punctuated by cypresses, churches and stone farmhouses. After a challenging day we arrive to our overnight stop in Asciano.

**Day 4: Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> June**

**Cycle Asciano to San Quirico d'Orcia (via Montalcino)**

Today we will see some change on the way to Pienza, one of the region's architectural centerpieces and where *The English Patient* was filmed! We'll ride through a couple of villages that time has forgotten, importantly, the roads we cycle on will still be quiet. It's likely we'll take lunch at Montalcino and have the opportunity for some wine tasting! Montalcino has an Abbey, Sant'Antimo; a notable example of Romanesque architecture. After lunch we continue to San Quirico d'Orcia, another fine example of the historic importance of this region of Italy. San Quirico d'Orcia is mentioned in many history books thanks to the historic meeting in 1155 between the ambassadors of Pope Adrian IV and Federico I of Swabia known as 'Barbarossa'. It is this meeting which is re-enacted each year in the town.

**Day 5: Monday 16<sup>th</sup> June**

**Cycle San Quirico d'Orcia to Lago Trasimeno / Cortona (via Montepulciano)**

On this, our last cycling day, the first stretch of the road is quite hilly as we make our way to Montepulciano. It is said that no visit to southern Tuscany would be complete without a visit to Montepulciano, the highest of the hill towns and filled with glorious Renaissance buildings. It is here that we will have lunch. If there's time, we can discover hidden squares, Renaissance palaces and churches as well as enjoy the superb views over the Val di Chiana. After lunch we cross into the province of Umbria, known as the "Green Heart" of Italy and either side of our route we will see vineyard clad valleys and hillsides covered with olive trees and ancient walled cities. From here it's plain sailing to our final destination, the shores of Lago Trasimeno, let your wheels do the work on our way downhill to the valley floor! Here we will enjoy our celebratory meal!



**Day 6: Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> June**

**Fly Italy to UK**

Day of rest / sightseeing. Flight to UK.

***Flights not included in provisions of this itinerary.  
Please note this itinerary is subject to a full recce and may change.***