

Tuscany



The Val d'Orcia, the ideal Tuscany *Sustainable, Extraordinary, Universal.* *Welcome to the most beautiful landscape in the world.*

Five municipalities are found in the **Val d'Orcia**, which lies in the heart of Tuscany in an area rich in history, culture, and tradition within a perfect, essential landscape. The sinuous course of the river, which gave its name to this valley, carries it past hills on which are located churches, fortresses, and villages of extraordinary charm. An enchanting landscape shaped and moulded for centuries by the wise hand of people who, with attention and love, have been able to respect and balance environmental, economic, and social forces. A vast, undulating, welcoming valley, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**, a land of popes, leaders, merchants, painters, and pilgrims, it is also an ideal destination for travelers of any era looking for stories, adventure, relaxation, and excellent food and wine.

Val d'Orcia - Regional Tourist Board, consisting of the municipalities of Castiglione d'Orcia, Montalcino, Pienza, Radicofani, and San Quirico d'Orcia.

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Castiglione
d'Orcia



Montalcino



Pienza



Radicofani



San Quirico
d'Orcia

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The Val d'Orcia, the ideal Tuscany

Photo credits: Jean François Bonacheta

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ENG



“

Down at the bottom we found a very fertile plain, which, because of the River Orcia, running through its entire length, is called the Val d'Orcia.

”

Giorgio Santi,
Viaggio al Montamiata,
Viaggio primo 1795



Val d'Orcia

Down at the bottom we found a very fertile plain, which, because of the River Orcia, running through its entire length, is called the Val d'Orcia.

Its fields were formed by soil deposited by the river, and the neighboring slopes are very rich and produce copious harvests of grains, especially wheat, of excellent quality.

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Credits

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The Val d'Orcia as you like it

*Six suggestions for discovering
the Val d'Orcia*

TRAVEL MOOD

1

Compelling

The Val d'Orcia, a borderland dotted with fortresses, strongholds and castles, a theatre for compelling stories thanks to its strategic position in the midst of the Grosseto area dominated by the Aldobrandeschi, the Republic of Siena, Medici Tuscany, Umbria, and Tuscia subject to the Papacy.

2

Mystical

Saints, pilgrims, and hermits seem to have found a home in the Val d'Orcia in various eras and in various locales, places full of charm surrounded by silence and nature.

3

Artistic

Pictorial tributes live on in paintings and frescoes scattered throughout the valley, while historic architecture still inhabits the ancient villages as in the past, creating unique and evocative settings.

4

Romantic

The Val d'Orcia, a muse inspiring artists and poets of the past and present seems born from the brushstrokes of a painter. With its perfect, harmonious landscapes, the valley is the ideal setting to crown a dream of love.

5

Natural

The hills, a true symbol of Tuscany, are dotted with cypresses, alternating with white craggy cliffs (calanchi) and with thermal waters, and they lead to gardens where art and nature merge along the paths created there.

6

Flavourful

The Val d'Orcia presents a perfect synthesis between the work of humankind and nature, a combination reflected in the folds and shapes of a landscape boasting excellent agricultural products that demonstrate great attention and care for the land.



COMPELLING

A valley of stories and adventures

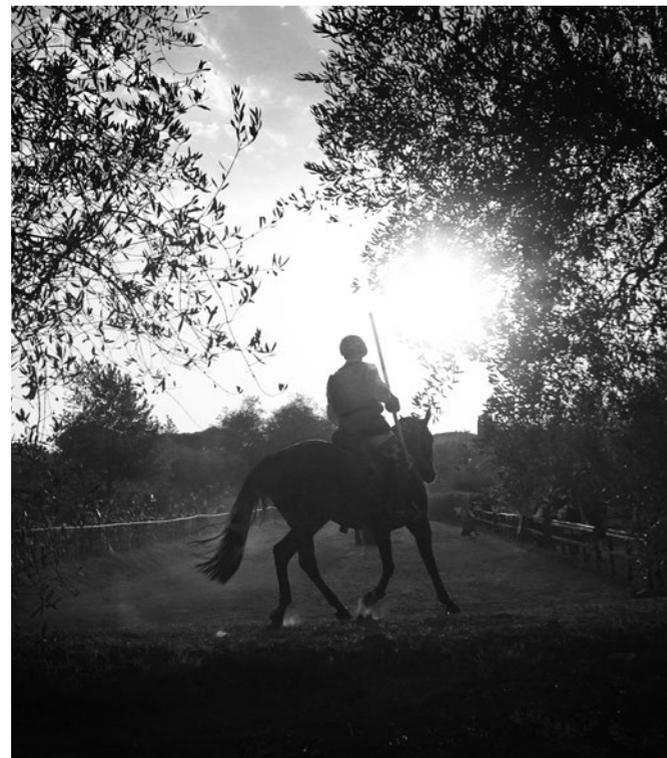
The Val d'Orcia is a land dotted with fortresses, strongholds, and castles, a theatre for compelling stories, thanks to its strategic position along the via Francigena.

The presence of the via Francigena is the reason behind many of the fortified villages, abbeys, and fortresses found along the route that runs from Siena to Montalcino, crosses San Quirico d'Orcia, and reaches Radicofani, the last stage of the **via Francigena Toscana**. Many are the characters who have told stories of long journeys and adventures. In the background are the landscapes, castles, and fortresses that bore witness to battles, sieges, and conquests which seem to come back to life on a journey in the **Val d'Orcia**.

Sigeric and his travel diary

The first to document a journey in the Val d'Orcia was **Sigeric, Archbishop of Canterbury**, who, returning from his visit to the Pope in Rome in 990, **described in his diary stops on the road that would come to be called the via Francigena**. It was an ancient communication route for wayfarers and pilgrims who contributed to the cultural landscape, facilitating the intense exchange of information, ideas, and economic resources related to the movements of people and things between northern Europe, Rome, and the Holy Land.

*Left: Radicofani, the church of San Pietro on the via Francigena
Below: Montisi, a reenactment of a medieval tournament, la Giostra (the Joust) di Simone*



Compelling Events

Parades in period costumes, ladies, knights, historical reenactments, and challenges between archers and knights are some of the events you can enjoy in the Val d'Orcia.

JUNE

San Quirico d'Orcia
Feast of
Barbarossa

JULY

Contignano
Medieval Festival

AUGUST

Montisi
Giostra di Simone

AUGUST

Castiglione d'Orcia
Charta Libertatis

SEPTEMBER

Radicofani
Palio del Bigonzo

SEPTEMBER

Pienza
Corza di Pio

OCTOBER

Montalcino
Sagra del Tordo



Federico I Barbarossa, Arnaldo da Brescia, and the Visconti of Campiglia

Duke of Swabia, King of Germany and Italy, but above all **Holy Roman Emperor**, these are the titles of **Frederick I, of the Hohenstaufen** dynasty, one of the most powerful men of the whole 12th century, remembered by his nickname, Barbarossa (Red Beard). In 1155, **during his journey to Rome to be crowned Emperor** by the Pope, **Barbarossa** stopped along the via Francigena at **San Quirico d'Orcia**, where Cardinals sent by Pope Adrian IV brought him a request to capture the **heretical friar Arnaldo from Brescia**. Frederick I immediately set out in search of the fugitive in the countryside of the Val d'Orcia and soon discovered that Arnaldo was a "guest" of the **Visconti**, lords of the castle of **Campiglia d'Orcia** and the imposing fortress of **Campigliola**. He ordered the counts of Campiglia not to resist and to hand over the heretic, which smoothed his way to the imperial coronation that took place on June 18 of that year.

The Abbot of Cluny and Ghino di Tacco. A story of abductions and healings

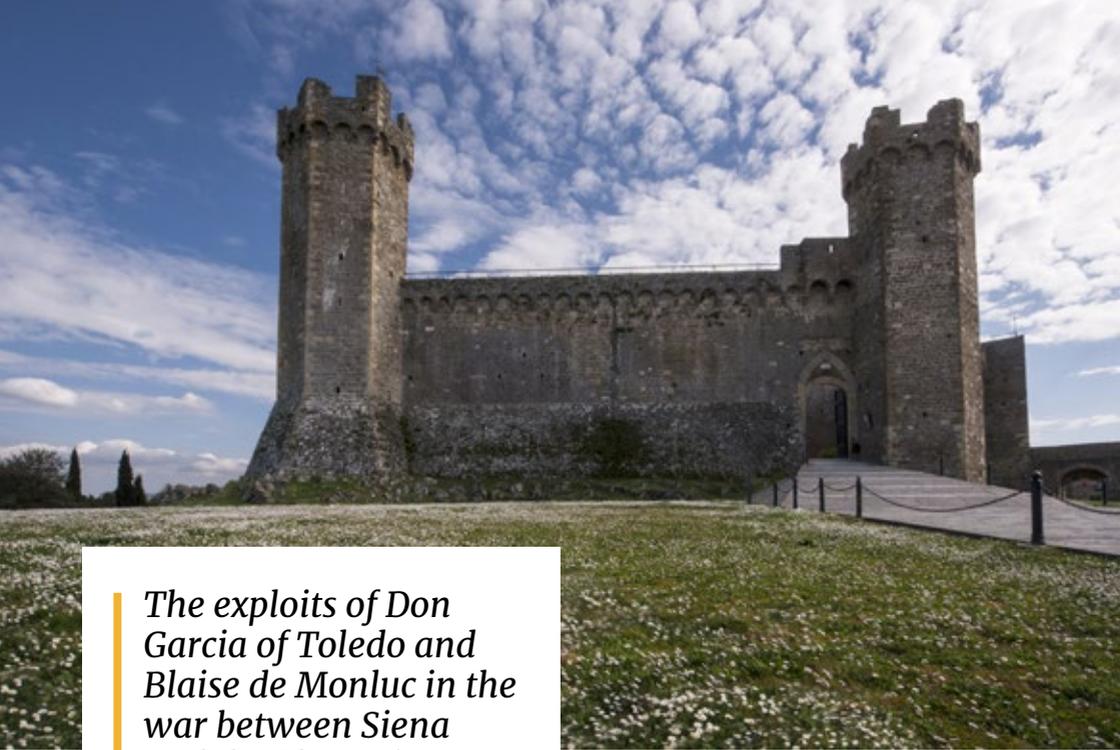
A few centuries after Sigeric made his journey, another prelate, the **Abbot of Cluny**, also traveled with trepidation and concern on foot from Rome to the valley, **headed to a spa** for treatment of stomach pain. The abbot was already familiar with the exploits of the bandit **Ghino di Tacco, called "the Robin Hood of the Val d'Orcia"**. He knew that since Christmas eve of 1297, the young man had been in control of the tower of **Radicofani**; he was aware of raids and ambushes of travelers and

Above: Radicofani, the statue of Ghino di Tacco, "the Robin Hood of the Val d'Orcia"
Left: Castiglione d'Orcia, the invincible and impregnable Torre di Tentennano

aware that **Ghino robbed the rich and let the poor pass freely**. But despite knowing all this, the abbot still fell into an ambush set by Ghino di Tacco, who kidnapped him and locked him in one of the towers of the fortress. While he remained a prisoner, the abbot was subjected to a **strict diet**. The prelate recovered from his stomach pain and was above all overcome by the personality of Ghino, so much so that he interceded with Pope Boniface VIII **to remove the sentence of excommunication** imposed on Ghino after he captured the Castle of Radicofani.

Cocco Salimbeni and the resistance to the Republic of Siena

In 1400, la Rocca (the Fortress) of Tentennano was defended by multiple walls, **making it a secure location, and that is why Cocco, of the Salimbeni family**, made it his headquarters. The discord between the Salimbeni and the Sienese government grew and exploded into an outright war that lasted several decades. Cocco was certainly not afraid of a surprise attack by the Sienese army, **as it was easy to spot approaching troops from the Tower of Tentennano**. But then the Sienese acted with cunning. On a cold February night in 1419, with the help of fourteen **"rocchigiani"** (inhabitants of the village of Rocca d'Orcia) from whom they had got keys, the Sienese managed to penetrate inside the castle walls. To prevent Cocco from receiving help from his allies, **the Sienese also attacked the nearby village of Castiglione**, which was unprepared for a sudden assault. Cocco Salimbeni, surrounded and without the possibility of any rescue, was forced to surrender and, after being deprived of all his possessions, was exiled. The Sienese celebrated, victorious and intent on demolishing the Tower, for fear that it might again be occupied by enemies. Fortunately, the pleas of the inhabitants, along with real technical difficulties, made them abandon that decision.



The exploits of Don Garcia of Toledo and Blaise de Monluc in the war between Siena and the Florentines

In 1553, during **the War between Siena and the Florentines**, the Val d'Orcia was besieged by Spanish troops allied with the Florentines and led by commander Don Garcia of Toledo. After the siege of the Tower of Tentennano, the first serious obstacle to the invasion was unexpectedly posed by the **Castle of Monticchiello, located in an impassable position for cannons and infantry troops**. The difficulty of the attack and resistance by the local garrison put the Spanish troops in serious difficulty. The huge losses suffered in Monticchiello were decisive for the fate of the siege of **Montalcino, which represented the first essential step in conquering Siena**. The Fortress of Montalcino was the target of an attack by Don Garcia's troops, which made use of all available techniques for conducting a siege: bombing, excavation of tunnels and trenches, and armies. **But after about 80 days of siege**, according to legend, **the commander had a vision of the virgin and was so troubled by this di-**

vine apparition that he not only lifted the siege but gave the city a silver statue of the Madonna that still remains in the sacristy of the Church of the Madonna del Soccorso, patron saint of Montalcino. But the adventures had not yet ended for Montalcino, and in 1555, when Siena fell into the hands of the Florentines, it was right here that the exiles from Siena took refuge, **led by the Frenchman Blaise de Monluc: thus was born the Republic of Siena, in retreat in Montalcino**. And so began a long, exhausting war that saw two great powers face off against each other: **Spain, allied with Florence under the Medici of Cosimo I, and France, ally of Siena**. In 1559, four years later, a peace treaty was signed at Cateau-Cambrésis: the Sieneese were forced to hand over Montalcino to the Spanish, who passed it directly to the Medici, along with the other castles and fortresses of the Val d'Orcia.

Compelling Places

The valley of long journeys and adventurous stories of the past, and the places featured in them.

*Left: Montalcino, the fortress overlooking the surrounding valleys
Top: Radicofani, the fortress
Bottom: Campiglia d'Orcia, its Rocca, and the view of the Val d'Orcia*



Campiglia d'Orcia

Its history is linked to the Visconti Counts, the family whose fortress dominated the countryside. The village preserves the urban planning approach in use before the year one thousand.

Fortezza di Radicofani

Located on top of an important basalt cliff, it was built by Pope Adrian IV over Lombard fortifications that had, in their turn, replaced an ancient Bronze Age place of worship.

Rocca di Tentennano

Built with the same limestone rock as the outcropping on which it stands, the fortress is composed of various elements including its watchtower.

Fortezza di Montalcino

The construction dates back to 1361, and it is in the classic style of a castle, a pentagonal design for an enclosure with towers at all corners. The walls are equipped with a walkway for patrols which you can still walk in its entirety today.

Monticchiello

Monticchiello preserves almost all of the walls that enclose the whole town. The village may be of Roman origin, and its name might derive from the Latin *Mons Cloelii*.



MYSTICAL

Finding yourself between mystery and spirituality

In the footsteps of saints and hermits to discover places dedicated to prayer and meditation, for any religion, faith, or belief.

A journey in the footsteps of saints, mystics, and hermits, to the places where they lived and did their work. All around the via Francigena, discover the places where they testified to their faith, among them hidden corners close to the woods or natural springs, places born of legend or surrounded by mystery, rich in charm and charisma, making your visit an intimate and unique experience.

Saint Catherine of Siena in the land of the Salimbeni

Catherine's mystical charisma was revealed early on, at the age of seven. Later, once she entered the Dominican Third Order, she began her religious and political mission. In the Val d'Orcia, she arrived at the **Rocca di Tentenna** to pacify the two branches of the Sienese Salimbeni family, torn apart by a fratricidal struggle. And here the Saint **miraculously received the gift of writing**: moved by divine inspiration, she took hold of a pen and wrote in clear and precise characters the Letters of Divine Providence, her most important work. The biography of the Saint, in addition to mentioning visits she made as an adult, records her visiting **Bagno Vignoni** as a child, in the company of her mother.

Below: Castelnuovo dell'Abate: the Abbey of Sant'Antimo, in its perfect country setting
Left: Bagno Vignoni, the scenic Piazza delle Sorgenti (Piazza of the Springs)



Mystical Places

Bagno Vignoni

At the small hot springs, a gallery named after Santa Caterina da Siena overlooks the large pool in the town centre, inside the building you can still see, through a grate, the chapel where, according to local tradition, the Saint took refuge to pray.

The grotta di San Filippo

The cave-oratory is still well preserved today. It is made from a large block of vault-shaped travertine limestone, closed at the ends by walls and divided in two by a partition. Above the altar there is a wooden bust of San Filippo as well as devotional objects.

Abbazia of Sant'Antimo

A jewel of medieval architecture, the Abbey of Sant'Antimo is one of the most beautiful monuments of the Romanesque style, with obvious references to French and Lombard models. Note the columns topped by beautiful capitals, decorated with geometric elements and others inspired by flora and fauna, all different from one another.

Romitorio and Buche del Beato

Romitorio di Pienza is a sacred place located not far from the historic centre of the city. An epigraph engraved on a sepulchral stone dates back to 1344, the oldest evidence of the cave dug into the steep slope. Outside the town of Monticchiello is found a cave once inhabited by the Blessed Benincasa, who spent most of his life as a hermit.

Filippo Benizi, the saint of the thermal cave

The cave is in a large block of vault-shaped travertine and takes its name from Filippo Benizi who, according to tradition, took refuge there in 1269 because during the long conclave in Viterbo held to elect the successor to Pope Clement IV, Benizi's name had also circulated. Not feeling up to this honour, he chose to escape a probable election **by taking refuge in the Val d'Orcia**. Welcomed and supported by the locals during his stay, as a sign of his gratitude, like Moses he beat his stick against a rock from which **miraculously sprang a source of healing waters**: today we know them as the **Bagni di San Filippo** (the Baths of St. Philip).



*In the photo:
Vivo d'Orcia, The Palazzo Cervini
or "Contea" of the Cervini family, in
its timeless setting*

Charlemagne and the Fairies at the Abbey of Sant'Antimo

According to **an ancient legend**, the abbey was founded by Charlemagne, who, returning from Rome with his followers, stopped in the valley of the Starcia River because of the danger unleashed by an epidemic plague. It is said that the Emperor **made a vow, asking for protection from the scourge**, and when he and his people were spared, he founded the abbey. One of the characteristics that distinguishes this monumental temple is the material of which it is built: a travertine rock with **alabaster veins**, which gives a glowing effect that varies with the variations in color of the sky and the surrounding countryside. The beauty of the Abbey gave rise to another legend, according to which **it was built by fairies** who carried columns on their heads and stones on their fingers and built it in a single night.

Once a hermitage then Palazzo Cervini

The Hermitage of Vivo was founded around the year 1000 by Saint Romualdo. The community that formed on the banks of the Vivo River must have been structured like the monastery of Camaldoli. In fact, there were two settlements: a hermitage higher up (the current Romanesque church of San Benedetto all'Ermicciolo) and a monastery lower down. However, centuries later the structures were in a state of decline and became the property of the Farnese family. **The monastery and the remaining assets were ceded in 1538 to Cardinal Marcello Cervini of Montepulciano**. Marcello is noted in history for his vast activity, so distinguishing himself for his lively intelligence and his strong qualities as a humanist that, as Cardinal, he received important diplomatic missions. Having become Apostolic Librarian, he undertook various

historical and archaeological research projects. It was during this period that **he commissioned the Florentine architect Antonio da Sangallo the Younger to build the Palazzo Cervini on the ruins of the monastery**. The cardinal, an expert in architecture, worked on the design of the palace himself, to which was later added the grandiose project laid out by Jacopo Barozzi da Vignola. On the death of Pope Julius III, **Cervini was elected Pope and took the name of Marcellus II**. He did not have time, during his brief pontificate, to implement new and wise reforms of the ecclesiastical body, but until the end he was the enemy of all forms of nepotism. **It was for him that G.P. Palestrina composed a famous Mass, later called "Missa Papae Marcelli" (Mass for Pope Marcellus)**. To this day, the Palazzo Cervini, the village below with the church dedicated to San Marcello, and the church of Ermicciolo are owned by the Cervini family.

A monastery in the "clay field"

The **monastery of Sant'Anna in Camprena** was founded by Bernardo Tolomei, and the order of Olivetans moved there in 1334. The monastery and the attached church were re-built in the Renaissance forms still seen today. The most interesting part is undoubtedly the refectory of the monastery, frescoed between 1503 and 1504 by **Giovanni Antonio Bazzi**, known as Sodoma. The monastery of Camprena (meaning clay field), situated in a very intimate and evocative environment, fascinated the film director Anthony Minghella, who chose several places to set scenes of the film **"The English Patient"**, which received nine Academy Awards in 1997.

The Church of the Mermaids and the Serpents

The parish church of Saints Vito and Modesto, dating back to the **7th century** and known as the **Pieve di Corsignano (an ancient name for Pienza)**, underwent renovations until the 13th century. Built of sandstone, this church saw two Popes baptized: Pius II and his nephew Pius III. The portal gives us amazing and odd bas-reliefs such as the two mermaids (one of which has two tails) and the two serpents who seem to whisper in their ears. Serpents are also carved inside on a column. These reptiles would be connected to the **Serpent Regulus, which Gregory the Great called "the king of serpents"** or "little king." Legend has it that the Regulus Serpent, guardian of fabulous treasures, looks like a large reptile with scales that shine like metal, two small wings on his back, and eyes that hypnotize anyone who has the misfortune to meet him.



Santa Maria, the church with an exchanged portal

It is believed that the portal of the Church of Santa Maria arrived here only later and had been originally designed for the Abbey of Sant'Antimo. One element remained unchanged, however: as in Sant'Antimo, **the portal was intended to welcome pilgrims** who walked along the via Francigena. Just in front of the church stood a **hospital for pilgrims**, a branch of the Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala in Siena, as evidenced by the coat of arms (the staircase surmounted by the cross) still visible on the exterior of the building.

A relic to protect yourself from earthquakes

Sant'Agata has been the patron saint of Radicofani only since 1727. In that century, **the town was rocked by an impressive series of earthquakes**. The desperate inhabitants decided as an extreme remedy to send a delegation of citizens to Catania to get a relic of Saint Agatha, protector against earthquakes. A group of locals set out on foot and walked over a thousand kilometers on a pilgrimage to acquire **a fragment of the bones of the Saint**, which was sealed in a silver case. On the way back, the pilgrims stopped in Rome to get the necessary authentication from the Pontifical Curia. Back in Radicofani, they were greeted with exultation by the whole population, and the City Council proclaimed Sant'Agata the main patron saint of the town.



*Left: San Quirico d'Orcia, the church of Santa Maria Assunta on the via Francigena
Top: Radicofani, the pyramid in the Bosco Isabella
Bottom: Pienza, the Pieve dei Santi Vito and Modesto, or Pieve di Corsignano (an ancient name for Pienza)*



Pieve di Corsignano

At the foot of the hill where the town of Pienza sits is the Pieve dei Santi Vito and Modesto, also known as the Pieve di Corsignano, an ancient name for Pienza. This church is a Romanesque building mostly dating back to the 12th century, built of sandstone, the rock of the ancient sea that was the Val d'Orcia in prehistoric times.

The Collegiata of Saints Quirico and Giulitta

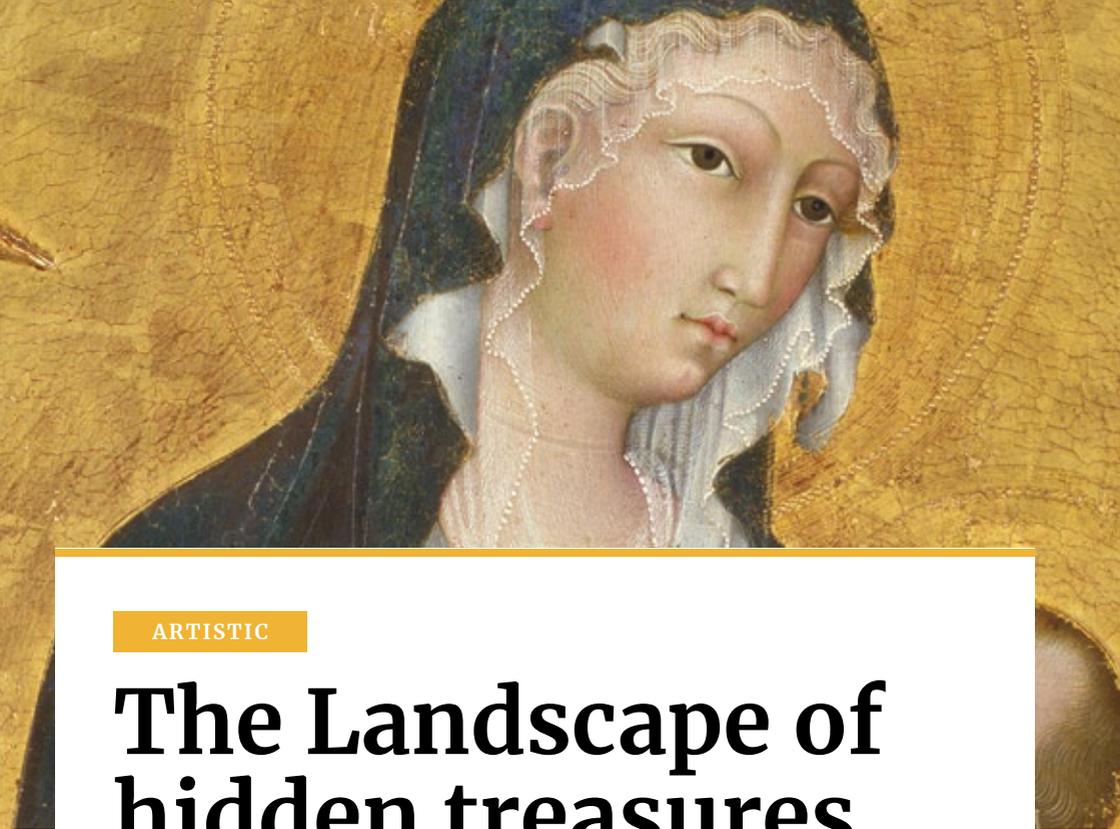
This sacred building has been known since the 8th century, when it was called Pieve in Osenna, but its current form dates back to the 12th – 13th centuries. Located at the entrance of the village, the architectural structure is made of travertine with some decorations made of sandstone. One of the side portals is attributed to Giovanni Pisano.

Church of Sant'Agata

The interior space is almost completely occupied by the beautiful ornamental altarpiece of the Madonna in Trono with Saints Francesco, Margherita, Cristina, and Lorenzo by Andrea Della Robbia. This work is certainly the most important one preserved in Radicofani, for its size, composition, and pure style.

Bosco Isabella

Odoardo Luchini (1844–1906) wanted to recreate, in the garden he dedicated to his wife, Isabella, a sort of “initiatory-esoteric” path like an open-air Masonic temple. Thus was determined the arrangement of trees planted in groups of three, a symbolic number.



ARTISTIC

The Landscape of hidden treasures in Churches and Palaces

The landscape, in which humankind lived in harmony with nature, became a Renaissance icon of Tuscany and inspired the works of the great painters of the Sienese School.

Buildings, structures, places that hold treasures of enormous value open their doors to visitors who are surprised when they enter the rooms of **small museums**, with the stones of a church or palace in an unexpected, golden, colorful, and silent world. The journey in the artistic Val d'Orcia tells us about great artists who worked during the height of the Sienese Republic. The works of the painters of the Sienese School, scattered in the most far-flung and remote places, are the concrete expression of the effects of "good governance" in the countryside of the Val d'Orcia.

Hunting for precious treasures

The five faces of the Madonna in Castiglione d'Orcia

In Castiglione d'Orcia, in the heart of the historic centre, hidden from less attentive visitors, is the **Sala d'Arte San Giovanni**, located in the ancient seat of the brotherhood of the same name. Here are preserved, **as in a small precious casket**, five faces of the Madonna executed for the churches of Castiglione d'Orcia and Rocca d'Orcia by such important Sienese artists of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as Pietro Lorenzetti, Simone Martini, Giovanni di Paolo, and Lorenzo di Pietro, known as il Vecchietta. The extraordinary nature of the works is worth a visit to a historic centre that offers many other pleasant surprises, such as the central square named after Il Vecchietta.

Sala d'Arte San Giovanni
museicastiglione@gmail.com

When gold and wood come to life at the Museum of Montalcino

Among the many works held by the Museum of Montalcino, which is located inside the beautiful complex of Sant'Agostino, is the outstanding nucleus of **polychrome wooden sculpture**. Expressive and elegant faces reveal the art of carving and painting by the likes of **Angelo di Nalduccio**, and the imposing San Pietro marks the apex of the career of **Francesco di Valdambino**, a kind and refined sculptor and a contemporary of Jacopo della Quercia. Among **the paintings on gold leaf you will notice the grandiose polyptych recomposed by Bartolo di Fredi** and dedicated to the Coronation of the Virgin and the stories of her life. The Museum also offers an interesting archaeological section with finds that go from the Paleolithic to the Etruscan period; of particular interest are the discoveries from the archaeological park of **Poggio della Civitella**, which you can visit just outside Montalcino.

Civic, Diocesan, and Archaeological Museum of Sant'Agostino in Montalcino
orodimontalcino@operalaboratori.com



Top: Castiglione d'Orcia, Sala d'Arte San Giovanni, Giovanni di Paolo, Madonna with Child
Left: Montalcino, Museo di Sant'Agostino in Montalcino Civico Diocesano e Archeologico, Domenico d'Agostino, Vergine Annunciata (The Virgin after the Annunciation)



"A new art form, useful and beautiful, that fascinates and attracts": glazed terracotta in Radicofani

It was Vasari who defined glazed terracotta. **Clay, enamel, tin oxide, lead, and fire** are the ingredients of a mysterious "recipe" where sculpture mixes with painting. It's an artistic formula of unknown origin, but thanks to the works of the artists of a Florentine family, the **Della Robbia**, between 1300 and 1500, it conquered half of Europe and in time, the style became an identifying element of Tuscany. The presence of many Della Robbia terracottas **in Radicofani testifies to the town's central role from the Middle Ages on**. In a strategic position on the **via Francigena, Radicofani** found itself at the centre of disputes between the Republic of Siena and Orvieto, which was allied with Florence, and between Guelphs and Ghibellines, with the constant interference of the Roman Papacy. Pilgrims, monastic orders, and wealthy Guelph families from Siena made Radicofani strong, spiritually important, and socially very lively. A visitor to Radicofani fits into this context and encounters a concentration of unexpected beauty on entering the **Churches of San Pietro Apostolo and Sant'Agata**, there to be surprised and impressed by the bright white of the terracottas with figures resting on a blue background.

The wooden panels of the Collegiata Church of San Quirico d'Orcia

In the Collegiata Church, half hidden by the stucco altar, there is a wonder: **seven panels of a wooden choir**. In 1492, Antonio Barili, a wood carver and architect from Siena, received a commission for 19 panels for the chapel of San Giovanni in the Cathedral of Siena. Why did only seven panels come here? It is known for certain that the panel bearing the date, the self-portrait, and the signature of the artist had been ceded to the Vienna Museum of Art and Industry, then destroyed in the bombings of 1944-45. The fate of the other panels is unknown, although it is thought that they could be held in private collections. **Various subjects are depicted in the inlays**, such as sacred objects and beings, musical instruments, and landscapes. The particular **chromatic effect** of the different tones and shades does not come from any dye but from the careful choice of different woods.

Wooden choir: visits by appointment
ufficioturistico@comune.sanquiricodorciasi.it



Illustrious people and their homes in Val d'Orcia

Cardinal-Nephew Flavio Chigi and the Palazzo Chigi in San Quirico d'Orcia

It was 1677 when Cosimo III de' Medici granted the head of the Chigi family the title of marquis, and as the family's fiefdom, the territory of San Quirico. Cardinal Flavio, during an inspection for the construction of his new palazzo, **charmed by the beauty of the area**, chose to site the palazzo next to the Collegiata Church. The work was entrusted to the **architect Carlo Fontana**, Bernini's favorite pupil; the building had to be big, beautiful, and designed to amaze guests. It was to make it surprising that the many frescoes were created, with iconographic motifs such as zodiac signs, the seasons, and historical and mythological subjects, and on the walls were placed precious stamped leather hangings in silver and ruby. To his uncle, Pope Alexander VII, Cardinal Flavio dedicated the reception room that today hosts conferences and other events. The entire building is the seat of the municipal administration, and in the large second-floor rooms, important temporary exhibitions are set up.

Palazzo Chigi Zondadari
ufficioturistico@comune.sanquiricodorciasi.it

*Far left: Radicofani, the Church of Sant'Agata, Andrea della Robbia, Crowned Madonna with Child and Saints
 Top: San Quirico d'Orcia, frescoes inside the Palazzo Chigi Zondadari
 Below: San Quirico d'Orcia, one of the southern portals of the Collegiata Church*

The story of Enea: man, humanist and Pope in the ideal city

In October 1405, in the medieval castle of Corsignano, Enea Silvio of the noble Piccolomini family was born. The family, long a major force in the political and economic life of Siena, had been forced, for political reasons, to take refuge in the Val d'Orcia in the mid-fourteenth century. In the course of his life, **Enea Silvio Piccolomini** came into contact with important personalities of his time: Frederick III of Austria, Niccolò Cusano, and many others. A diplomat, scholar, and poet, at age of 40 he began an ecclesiastical career and was elected **Pope in 1458 under the name of Pius II**. He was one of the most important humanists of his era due to his deep knowledge of classical culture and his ability to grasp the fundamental aspects of the literary genres of the Latin and Greek worlds. He is considered one of the most significant pontiffs of the fifteenth century thanks to his diplomatic skills and the high authority of the Papal Magisterium. Following his election as Pope, Enea, Pius II, chose his native Corsignano as a laboratory in which to give shape to the utopia of the "Ideal City." Perfect new forms intended to revive ancient wisdom, to rediscover nature and history in harmony: that's what inspired the foundation of **Pienza**, so named precisely in honor of the one who dreamed of it first, as "from a thought of love and a dream of beauty" (as Giovanni Pascoli would write). The project was entrusted to Bernardo Rossellino, and the construction lasted about four years and brought forth a harmonious town with typically 15th-century forms. The city represents a rare example of **urban planning focused on the monumentality of the central square**, around which were arranged the main buildings, among them the **Palazzo Piccolomini designed by Rossellino for the Piccolomini family**. Today you



Above: Pienza, Piazza Pio II and the façade of the Cathedral

Right, top: Pienza, Palazzo Borgia-Diocesan Museum, Domenico di Niccolò "dei Cori" San Regolo

In the centre: Pienza, Palazzo Borgia-Diocesan Museum, detail of the cape

Bottom: Monticchiello, scene from a performance at the Teatro Povero

can visit the first floor from which you can access a loggia with a superb view of the Val d'Orcia and Mount Amiata. Also overlooking the central square is the **Palazzo Borgia**, which belonged to Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia, who later became Pope Alexander VI, and which is now home to the **Diocesan Museum of Pienza**. An entire room of the Museum is dedicated to works from the time of Pius II and exhibits a series of "gifts" that the pontiff wanted to make to the new diocese, such as the beautiful **pastoral staff in silver and enamel** and the beautiful shining **piviale** (a cape which priests wear during the most important liturgical celebrations) made by an English manufacturer (first half of the fourteenth century, 1310-1330) with the technique "opus anglicanum" (linen embroidered with golden silver thread and polychrome silks) used to portray stories of the Virgin Mary, St. Catherine of Alexandria, and St. Margaret of Antioch.

Palazzo Borgia – Diocesan Museum
info.turismo@comune.pienza.si.it

Palazzo Piccolomini
info@palazzopiccolominipienza.it

Pienza City of Light
All inclusive pass: the best way to discover the city of the Renaissance
www.pienzacittadiluce.it



Around museums

A journey to explore the museums of the Val d'Orcia where you will find works from churches and palaces. Small museums that guard the memory of an era, an artistic heritage of immense value that is intertwined with the beauty and architecture of the surrounding countryside.

CASTIGLIONE D'ORCIA

Sala d'Arte San Giovanni
 Via San Giovanni, 10
 Torre di Tentennano
 Loc. Rocca d'Orcia
museicastiglione@gmail.com

MONTALCINO

Museo di Sant'Agostino in Montalcino Civico Diocesano e Archeologico
 Via Ricasoli, 31
 Tel 0577 846014 – Tel 0577 286300
orodimontalcino@operalaboratori.com

Museo del Tartufo (Truffle Museum) San Giovanni d'Asso
 Piazza Antonio Gramsci, 1
 Tel 0577 286300
museodeltartufo@operalaboratori.com

PIENZA

Palazzo Borgia – Diocesan Museum
 Corso Il Rossellino, 30
 Tel 0578 749905
info.turismo@comune.pienza.si.it

Palazzo Piccolomini
 Piazza Pio II, 2
 Tel 0577 286300
info@palazzopiccolominipienza.it

TePoTraTos Scene del Teatro Popolare Tradizionale Toscano (Poor theatre)
 Monticchiello, Piazza Nuova, 1
 Tel 0578 755118
info@teatropovero.it

RADICOFANI

Parco Museo della Fortezza
 Via della Fortezza
 Tel 3398283953
www.fortezzadiradicofani.it

SAN QUIRICO D'ORCIA

Palazzo Chigi Zondadari Exhibition halls and Barbarossa Museum
 Piazza Chigi, 2
 Tel 0577 899728
ufficioturistico@comune.sanquiricodorcia.si.it

ROMANTIC

The beauty and enchantment of the ideal landscape



The cultivated landscape is the highest pact of love between humankind and nature, an ideal setting for romantic holidays and fairytale weddings.

A valley that seems born from the brushstrokes of a painter, an ideal background for love stories and romantic escapes. Let yourself be lulled by the sweet views of hills, delight your palate in local restaurants and taverns with an intimate and discreet environment, indulge in moments of relaxation at a spa or in the pleasure of a wine cellar tasting of Brunello or Doc Orcia. In the Val d'Orcia, there are all the ingredients for vacationing as a couple, for important declarations and anniversaries but also for perfect weddings celebrated in select new places.

Famous couples, from real life and fiction

The Val d'Orcia is a muse of artists and poets of the past and today. The poet Mario Luzi was among the greatest to sing its praises, but he is only one recent addition to a long list. This land is a true hymn to romance, a popular destination for both celebrities and ordinary couples soon to wed, who come here from all over the world to swear eternal love in fairytale places. The Val d'Orcia has also been the scene of many love stories related to famous couples. Let us tell you about some of them.

Romeo and Juliet

We are not in Verona but in Pienza, where in 1968, Franco Zeffirelli set the film *Romeo and Juliet*, an adaptation of William Shakespeare's play of the same name, which is among the most famous and often-performed of plays, as well as one of the most popular and archetypal love stories in the world. The Palazzo Piccolomini was chosen not only for its monumental appearance, but also for its authentic preservation as a Renaissance dwelling like the house of the Capulets, where Romeo and Juliet meet for the first time at a dance. The song "What is a youth?" was written for the occasion, with music by Nino Rota and lyrics by Elsa Morante, and in the reconstruction of the Shakespearean tragedy, it resounds inside the courtyard of Palazzo Piccolomini during the dance. In addition to being one of the most faithful interpretations of the written text, the film won Academy Awards for both cinematography and costume design.

*Left: Villa La Foce, the Italian garden
Below: A scene from the film *Romeo and Juliet* by Franco Zeffirelli, shot in 1968*

Isabella and Odoardo

Odoardo Luchini must have really been in love with his wife. It was he who, in Radicofani, at the end of the 1800s, created the **Bosco Isabella (the Isabella Forest)**, a romantic and esoteric garden which his wife, Isabella Andreucci, desired and he dedicated to her. Odoardo had a great passion for English gardens, an interest he deepened on his many trips abroad. He wanted to create a garden in harmony with nature, a nature free and unshackled from any manmade bond. Paths were created, dry stone walls erected, and small bridges built, all from stones collected on site. The design drew attention to basalt boulders, variations in the terrain, and natural springs. In the centre of the garden, a stone pyramid was built on a triangular base, which evokes the Masonic symbolism of a sort of initiatory-esoteric path to be discovered in its many symbolic elements. Today the **Bosco Isabella** is a public park owned by the municipality, a romantic place to walk and attend special events.



László and Katharine

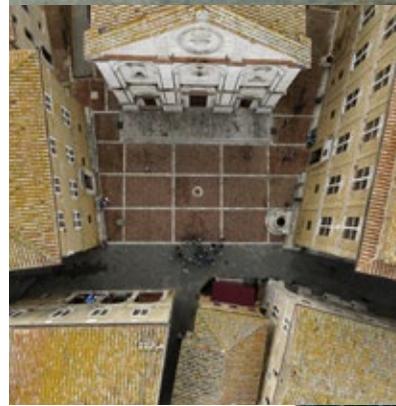
During World War II, a stranger, badly burned and with no memory, known only as "the English patient," is cared for by Hana, a young Canadian Army nurse in a monastery turned hospital. All the English patient possesses is a worn copy of *The Histories* by Herodotus, which Hana reads aloud to him, slowly allowing him to remember and reveal his past. His name is László Almásy, and he is a Hungarian count and desert explorer. The film *The English Patient* traces his sad and tormented love affair with Katharine Clifton, a married English woman that László, driven by love and hope, faced a thousand obstacles to return to, even knowing he would find her dead. Other characters are also housed in the monastery, and László's story is intertwined with the story of Hana's new love for the bomb-disposal expert Kip. One highly romantic scene has Hana twirling high in a church admiring beautiful frescoes. The monastery chosen by director Anthony Minghella as the setting for the love story that earned him nine Academy Awards is that of Sant'Anna in Camprena near Pienza.



Iris and Antonio

In 1924, Iris Cutting, an Anglo-American writer, and her husband, the Marquis Antonio Origo, "a man blessed with good looks and a lot of charm," moved together to the estate of La Foce in the Val d'Orcia. The place was in a state of great abandonment, without even an access road, but through a great deal of hard work, care, and attention, they managed not only to transform the villa but also to give a solid organization to the farm, which had 3,500 acres of farmland and 57 farms entrusted to tenant farmers. During the Second World War, the Origos remained at La Foce and worked to assist the refugee children who were housed there. "Every day, at sunset, when the daily chores at La Foce were over and new ones already planned, Antonio and Iris Origo left the house and strolled under an arch of wisteria, called *voltabotte*, richly purple in this season, up to a stone bench that faced southwest, towards the Val d'Orcia. On the left, the rugged summit where Radicofani stands, and the village of the bandit Ghino di Tacco; in the middle, in the background, the majestic Mount Amiata; and on the right, a rifle shot away, that curving avenue of cypress trees that seemed to have come out of a painting by Ambrogio Lorenzetti. In moments of pause in their conversation, Antonio and Iris's gazes rested with particular satisfaction on the dusty road that led to the San Bernardino farm, one of the many interventions by the English architect Cecil Pinsent, who was inspired by Sieneese painters of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to redesign the hill in front of the new garden and new home of the two young spouses." *

***Messina Dino,**
Alla Foce, Italian gardens designed by an English architect
Corriere della Sera - May 1, 2011



Getting married in the Val d'Orcia

The Val d'Orcia has an elegant soul, of a reserved yet undeniable beauty, and the unique atmosphere that many pairs of lovers dream of for their wedding. Beautiful historic palaces, villas with large gardens, and charming farmhouses are settings for unforgettable celebrations, whether for an event with just a few intimates or one involving many friends and relatives.

For those who want to celebrate the civil rite in a special place, the Val d'Orcia offers a wide range of suggestions:

CASTIGLIONE D'ORCIA

A historic site, the Palazzo Comunale:

The building overlooks the delightful Piazza Vecchietta, in the heart of the village. The hall for civil marriage ceremonies provides secluded and intimate surroundings.

Torre di Tentennano: A place for the defense and control of the via Francigena that affords a panoramic view of the Val d'Orcia. An open space surrounding a tower that seems to touch the sky.

MONTALCINO

A historic site, the Palazzo Comunale Montalcino:

Framed by a hall in the Palazzo Comunale of Montalcino, also called the Palazzo dei Priori, in a building that goes back to the end of the 13th century.

The former Palazzo Comunale San Giovanni d'Asso:

In a part of the ancient castle, now dedicated to weddings, is the romantic Hall of the Fireplace, with a large fireplace.

PIENZA

A historic site, the Palazzo Comunale:

Overlooking the Piazza Pio II, in the planned "ideal city," a UNESCO World Heritage site, there is no place more suitable to plan to get married.

Largo Mario Luzi, in Via del Casello, Via dell'Amore, via Santa Caterina: These places all have a common denominator: a stage set within the splendid landscape of the Val d'Orcia.

RADICOFANI

A historic site, the Palazzo Comunale:

Whether in the elegant Hall of the Mayor or in the Hall of the Council, both are places full of history for celebrating a very beautiful day.

Fortezza di Radicofani:

Its location offers an excellent panorama of the surrounding valleys, the Medici bastions, and a tower that touches the sky, this is truly the scene for weddings.

SAN QUIRICO D'ORCIA

Palazzo Chigi: The beautiful rooms of the 17th century Palazzo Chigi provide a unique setting.

Horti Leonini: Framed by the sixteenth-century Michelangesque gardens, where art and nature also marry, it's the ideal place to crown a dream of love amidst the flower beds of boxwood and centuries-old holm oaks.

For information, reservations, rates
info@parcodellavaldoria.com

Romantic places for unforgettable photos and memories

Walking through the alleyways of small villages, crossing gardens, perfect squares, and spots with harmonious views, it is easy to fall in love, declare yourself, or renew promises. Here are the most beautiful places to experience unforgettable moments and immortalize them in photos, perfect even for inexperienced photographers!

The Streets of Pienza

Exciting sunsets, breathtaking vantage points, glimpses of beauty, and locales and streets with romantic names. One such example is the via Santa Caterina in Pienza, and just around the corner of Piazza Pio II, streets with curious names open up: via della Fortuna (Luck Street), via dell'Amore (Love Street), and via del Bacio (the Street of Kisses). In that city born from a "thought of love and a dream of beauty," as Giovanni Pascoli wrote, it was decided that the streets that led to the bastions of the fort, a symbol of war, should be given names of love to honor the "thought" that Pope Pius II had for his city and for its territory.

The Bridge of Lovers

An enchanting place surrounded by verdant vegetation is located in Vivo d'Orcia, where, at the end of the village, you come upon a small group of houses: l'Eremo (the Hermitage), guarded by the "contea," an imposing and elegant building designed by Antonio da Sangallo for Cardinal Marcello Cervini, of the family that still owns the property today. To reach the village, you pass a small, romantic stone bridge called in fact "lovers' bridge", where local boys used to go to ask for the hand of the girl they loved.



Lucignano d'Asso, a fragment of the Tuscan Middle Ages

There is a unique atmosphere in Lucignano d'Asso in the municipality of Montalcino. It's a village that was already inhabited in Roman times, under the name of *Lucignanum Longassum*, and took its definitive form in the Middle Ages: two streets and two churches, a few houses, the noble house with its garden and fountain; and all around, olive groves and hills crowned with cypresses of the Crete Senesi as far as the eye can see. It's a place from another time, a fragment of the Tuscan Middle Ages surrounded by rough expanses of pale clay soil, and, in front, the great bastions of Mount Amiata.

Piazza delle sorgenti Bagno Vignoni

A truly unique, extraordinary, and charming village, with a heart of ... water. The main square, the centre of the village, is a large pool of water that flows from a hot spring coming from an aquifer of volcanic origins: this is the Piazza delle Sorgenti. If you get there at dusk, when the outside temperature is cool and warm vapors rise from the waters inhabited by Naiads, you will find yourself immersed in a rarefied atmosphere that unmistakably brings to mind the images of scenes in the film *Nostalghia* by Andrey Tarkovsky, when the hero crosses the pool holding a lit candle.

A small chapel lost among the fields

But as for landscapes that stir the imagination, nothing recalls the Val d'Orcia as unmistakably as the Chapel of Vitaleta. This small chapel, framed by two rows of cypress trees, however small and lost among the fields, has become among the best known and most iconographic landscapes in the world. Located near San Quirico d'Orcia, the chapel was built on an extension of an older house of worship. For many years, it was the place of worship for a statue of the Virgin of Consolation, until, in 1553, a famous statue of the Virgin, attributed to Andrea della Robbia, was placed inside it. The statue, now preserved in the Church of the Madonna in the centre of San Quirico d'Orcia, brings with it a very interesting story: it is said, in fact, that it was the Virgin herself, appearing to a shepherdess, who suggested to the faithful that they go to a workshop in Florence where they would find the statue to be placed in the Chapel of Vitaleta. The name of the place is also very evocative and would call for a "vita laeta", that is, a happy and quiet life. Walking in this place cannot help but make you think of something unique, beautiful, and special, sensations that thoughts of love often bring with them.

Bottom: Bagno Vignoni, the pool that is located in the centre of the village

Left top: San Quirico d'Orcia, the Chapel of Vitaleta

In the centre: Pienza, a walk along the via del Casello and the via dell'Amore

Bottom: Vivo d'Orcia, "the lovers' bridge"



NATURAL

The landscape and its natural elements

From the famous cypresses that dot the hills to the nature reserves and parks, where art and nature blend with the world heritage site, the ultimate icon of Tuscany in the world.

The countryside and the hills are the icons of the Val d'Orcia landscape, characterized by elements and environments that witness the interactions between mankind and nature. The result of the fusion of these elements is a charming panorama where agriculture, with its cultivated fields, grazing land and multicoloured vineyards, embraces quiet rural houses through unpaved roads, rows of cypresses and natural areas with particular geological shapes. The ancient marks of marine landscapes and volcanos are still visible in the surroundings, while the park designs are evidence of human endeavours, creating breath-taking panoramas.

Cypresses, between art and legend

The cypress is a very old tree that takes its name from the myth of **Cyparissus, a young man loved by Apollo**. The cypress is not originally from Tuscany, but it's particularly **loved by the Etruscans and the Renaissance painters**, who have immortalized it in unforgettable works of art. The small cypresses near San Quirico d'Orcia have prompted **all sorts of legends and rumours**: what on earth is the meaning of a small stand of cypresses in the midst of completely bare hills? It was a "roccolo di caccia" (hunting net), that is a little thick forest created by hunters to catch birds more easily.

*Left: Castiglione d'Orcia
The cypress avenue of Poggio Covili.
Below: San Quirico d'Orcia
the cypress stand, one of the icons
of the Val d'Orcia landscape.*

The prehistorical seas of the Val d'Orcia

During the Pliocene Epoch, the Val d'Orcia was covered by sea as witnessed by the **wild and moon-like landscape** and ancient sea fossils. Brunella, which is named after the famous wine, is the whale found near Montalcino. In the Nature Reserve of Lucciolabella, a dolphin was even found. The soil of these areas is rich in salt and only allows the growth of herbaceous plants, which do not require much care, such as Artemisia Cretacea, Helichrysum and some graminaceous plants. The **calanchi (cliffs)** and the **biancane (bare hills)** are the result of the slow but constant wind, sun, rain erosion and of other weather elements that have shaped the clay soils. The **calanchi** have the shape of a fan and are subdivided into small valleys separated by more or less sharp ridges, giving the landscape a **harsh and wild aspect**. The **biancane**, instead, are wrinkled domes, gathered in groups with a bare and grey southern side: which suggest an **almost moon-like setting**.





Waters

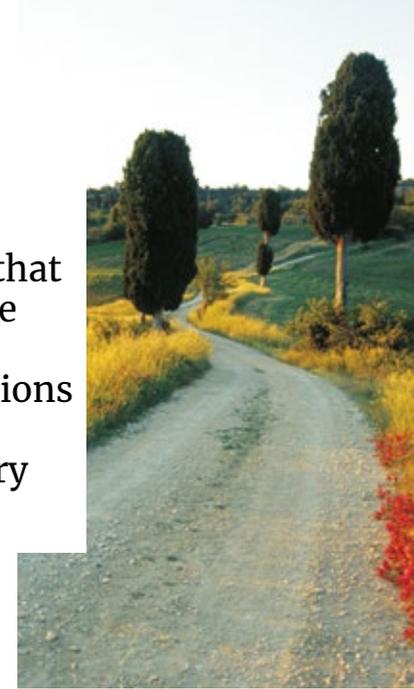
The development of the Val d'Orcia, which had already started in the Middle Ages, is closely related to the abundance of water and the capacity of native people to fully exploit its potential. The first civilizations settled down along the **river Vivo**, building houses and infrastructures - ironworks, mills, working sites - and even a real power station in the 1920s. Traces of these ancient buildings are still visible today, giving the landscape a mysterious and compelling charm. In the picturesque hamlet of **Ermicciole**, you can find Vivo spring waters which come out of rocks of volcanic origin. At **Bagni San Filippo**, the waters springing out of the travertine cracks create white waterfalls that seem unreal: a natural spectacle of incredible charm. Coming down from a steep hill, the water leaves a great quantity of calcium carbonate on its path covering the fields, plants and stones with a white dust. What is known as the **"fosso bianco"** (white ditch), instead, is a hot spring river that through little waterfalls of limestone, flows away into the green forest and reaches the **"white whale"**. There is no link with the well-known *Moby Dick* by Melville, except for the fact that this huge limestone boulder, thanks to its round shape and the white colour typical of calcium rocks, is very similar to the typical illustration of the animal which was so hated by Captain Achab.

The patriarchs of nature

In this particular place, even nature manifestations are unusual, such as the **monumental trees, silent witnesses of the passage of those who have lived or visited these lands**, of the changes occurred over the centuries and of the stories that have unfolded. Among these, the **"Quercia delle Checche"** (an oak tree) deserves special mention and is acknowledged as the first green monument of Italy which has been protected by the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities. In the **wooded area of Vivo d'Orcia**, among the chestnut or beech groves, it is also easy to find other "special" trees, which are the typical vegetation of the ancient volcano of Mount Amiata. As stated by Pius II in his *Commentari*, the latter "is dressed with forests up to its summit".

Natural places
Natural formations that tell about the genesis and transformations of this extraordinary territory

Right: Pienza, the cypresses of the film "The Gladiator".
Left: Bagni San Filippo, the "white whale".



The remains of the ancient volcano at Radicofani

A million years of history are condensed in the volcanic rocks of Radicofani. Behind the village there is a basalt rock, a **volcanic cone** that reaches 896 metres and dominates the Orcia and Paglia river valleys found below that form the Catchment area of Radicofani. The volcanic chimney, formed of trachyte-basalt rocks, has collapsed more than once creating large areas of boulders at its feet. Today, **the rock is what is left** of the central conduit: over the time the weather elements have gradually eroded the outside layer, while **the summit** has a flat shape because in the Middle Ages **it was flattened in order to build the famous fortress of Radicofani**. From a geological point of view, Radicofani rocks have many special features; in fact, in 1887 G. Mercalli wrote a famous article about them entitled **"Le Lave di Radicofani"**, published in a scientific magazine of the time.

The little cypresses of San Quirico

The "circle of cypresses" stands on a small hill that dominates a section of the Road SS 2 Cassia, in the hamlet of "I Triboli", in the municipality of San Quirico d'Orcia, near the junction for Montalcino.

The cypresses of "The Gladiator"

The cypresses as an ornamental element to embellish villas and rural houses such as that which is shown in the famous film "The Gladiator", which is located on the road SP 146. Going out of San Quirico d'Orcia, in the direction of Pienza, on the left, near the church of the Rosary, there is a small lay-by where you can stop and admire the famous avenue of cypresses.

Biancane

Strada della Foce from Val d'Orcia in the direction of Chianciano Terme at the end of a series of bends, in the highest point, on the right, stop at the parking space opposite the restaurant from where you can see a great view from the **biancane** of the nature reserve of Lucciolabella to Mount Amiata.

Cliffs

An interesting spot along the Stream Formone, can be reached from SS 2 Cassia, after Loc. Gallina, take the detour for Chianciano Terme on the Traversa Amiata/Val d'Orcia.

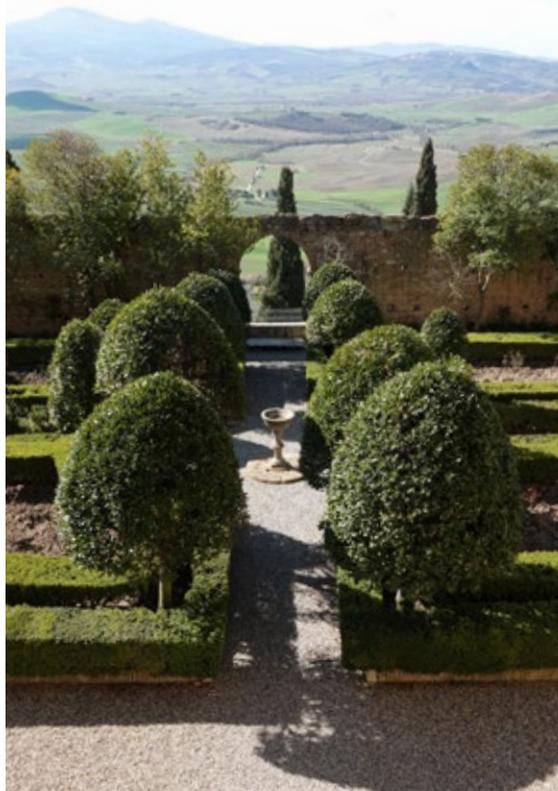
Next:
Pienza, hanging garden of
Palazzo Piccolomini.

Right:
Villa la Foce, view of the Italian
garden and on the background
the Val d'Orcia

Art gardens and mysteries

The Horti Leonini: an exemplary garden at San Quirico d'Orcia

A triangular garden inside the ancient walls of the fortress of San Quirico d'Orcia is a geometrical problem that requires an original solution, suitable to the place. Between 1567 and 1568, Diomedea Leoni started to think about how to solve it and he found the best solution for a balance between geometry and space. In that period, Leoni wrote letters, contracts and was in charge of the relationships between the Vatican and... Michelangelo. In exchange for his help, Michelangelo might have designed an initial sketch of the garden, because he was a generous artist with friends, and it wasn't unusual for him to give this sort of gifts. It is legitimate to wonder how much Michelangelo may have taken part in the project and we find an answer when we look at the Piazza del Campidoglio in Rome, which, among the masterpieces of the artist, is the one that mostly looks like the garden of San Quirico. In fact, the two places have some features in common: the bordering walls of the central spaces that open up towards the landscape in the background, as well as the oval of the Campidoglio that has almost the same sizes as the oval/hexagon of the garden. In 1590, after having fulfilled the dream of creating a public park along the Via Francigena in order to welcome and restore visitors and wayfarers, Diomedea Leoni chose the name for the garden: "Horti Leonini" so that his name would be remembered for ever.



A hanging garden in the Renaissance style

The garden located on the southern side of Palazzo Piccolomini at Pienza, looking over the Val d'Orcia and the Mount Amiata, consists of four flowerbeds limited by double hedges of boxwood and laurel trees, the foliage of which is pruned in the shape of a dome and has a central fountain. According to the humanistic school of thought, of which Pope Pius II was an undisputed protagonist in the second half of 1400, the garden expresses a perfect combination of art and nature.

Events not to be missed

JULY/SEPTEMBER
San Quirico d'Orcia
Forme nel Verde

MAY
Pienza
Pienza and the Flowers

The garden of Val d'Orcia: La Foce

Antonio and Iris Origo, two very important figures for the development of Val d'Orcia, commissioned the English architect Cecil Pinsent to design the road with the cypresses of Lucciola-bella, the **Villa and garden of La Foce** defined "the garden of Val d'Orcia". The garden was created between 1927 and 1939 and is divided into three sectors on three different levels. The travertine-paved lanes are lined with boxwood hedges and near the building of the villa there is a beautiful **pergola of wisteria and the rose garden**. The most spectacular part is probably the big **travertine staircase that comes down towards the lower level**. This is the last part that was built and the one in which a wing of cypresses encloses the formal Italian garden with flowerbeds bordered by boxwood hedges. The villa and garden look over the stunning Val d'Orcia, with views of Mount Amiata in the background. The garden grew in parallel with the intense reclamation work of the agricultural land. For the Origo family, it was supposed to be a place for welcoming friends, enjoying the shade of the holm-oaks and the scent of flowers, as

well as finding shelter from the summer heat of the valley. Built on the side of a hill, its terraces follow one another seemingly effortlessly, **adopting the humanistic ideal of the Renaissance gardens**, geometrical and neat around the villa, and more natural when approaching the forest.

The woods of Ragnaia at San Giovanni d'Asso

"The woods of Ragnaia" is a wooded park and garden with a striking atmosphere created by the American artist Sheppard Craige; **it is a contemporary art work** which was started in 1996 and still grows today. The garden is formal, without any flowers, and under its big trees, **there are foot-paths, fountains, gongs, columns of wood and steel, ancient and modern quotations, an oracle**. There is no set route for the visit: every time you stop you are invited to free contemplation as it is meant **to stimulate the curiosity of the visitors**, who can offer their own interpretation whilst roaming around amidst nets to catch birds and ragnaia (densely planted trees) of various shapes, and scented with different essences, but always typical of the spectacular hills of the Val d'Orcia.



FLAVOURFUL

A journey between the forms and colours of taste

Below: Montalcino, the vineyards of the very well known Brunello.
Right: Montalcino, inside the fortress a concert of the "Jazz & Wine" festival.



Travelling while 'eating in' the territory. This can be possible in Val d'Orcia and the experience is always deep, authentic and multisensory

The Val d'Orcia is a perfect fusion between the work of man and nature; this binomial is reflected in the folds and shapes of the landscape, which boasts excellent agricultural productions that show a great attention and care of people towards their territory. The traditional dishes and recipes are the underlying theme of a journey through the events, culture, traditions, customs of the people of this land, which symbolises the awareness of the dependence on the surrounding natural resources and their non-destructive use.

Wine. Password...red!

Their majesties, Brunello D.O.C.G. and Red D.O.C. tell us about a deep connection between Montalcino and its wine, witnessed by documents dating back to the 13th century with a series of municipal statutes to prove how important wine already was for the economy of Montalcino. In fact, in 1262 the Republic of Siena, in order to calm down the rebel souls of the locals, threatened to set fire to all the existing vineyards of the territory. The wine bottle dating back to 1888 of the winery Biondi Santi remains the oldest proof of the Brunello "phenomenon". In 1966, Brunello wine received the D.O.C. appellation (Controlled Origin Designation) by Presidential Decree and in 1967, twenty five wine growers set up the Consortium of the Vino Brunello di Montalcino. On April 28, 1969, at the Italian Embassy in London, on the occasion of a gala dinner in honour of Queen Elizabeth and the Italian President Giuseppe Saragat, a 1955 Brunello Riserva was served. This wine went a long way and in 1980 Brunello was the first Italian wine to be promoted from D.O.C. to D.O.C.G. The world of show business and culture "loves" Brunello. A wine that is a real main character in events and stories, in fact, it was even the **protagonist of an Agatha Christie's detective novel**, where the main suspect declares that at the time of the crime he was tasting a bottle of Brunello from 19... together with friends. However, the alibi did not work, because in that vintage year Brunello wasn't produced, just like all the years not deemed good for Brunello wine production. It is still the "Blood of Jupiter" (hence 'sangiovese') the protagonist of the excellent **Orcia DOC wine, the best wine in the world**. Produced in the five municipalities of the Val d'Orcia, and not only, the designation was created on Saint Valentine's day in 2000, thanks to the stubbornness of some founding producers of the Consortium of Orcia Wine. On a tour around the wine cellars or during promotional events you will be able to taste excellent wines included in the designation as Orcia rosato, Orcia bianco, Orcia vin santo.



For wine Lovers

Events not to be missed throughout the year

FEBRUARY

Montalcino
Welcome Brunello
The Consortium of the Brunello di Montalcino reveals the new vintage to the sector's stakeholders in advance

APRIL

San Quirico d'Orcia
Orcia Wine Festival
The trade fair of Val d'Orcia wines that takes place in the wonderful 17th century rooms of Palazzo Chigi

JULY

Montalcino
Jazz & Wine
La fortezza di Montalcino fortress becomes a splendid backdrop for this splendid tribute to jazz music and to the one and only Brunello di Montalcino

AUGUST

Castiglione d'Orcia
Calici di stelle
In the magic night of Saint Lorenzo, art, culture, music and tradition marry with the most delicious wines of the world



Next: Pienza, in Piazza Pio II, the game of the "cacio al fuso"
Right: the pici, a traditional type of pasta made by hand with flour and water.
Below: sheep grazing in the countryside of Val d'Orcia

Honey and cheese: a winning combination

In the spring many colours enliven Val d'Orcia, plants and flowers the varieties of which can create a unique heritage of nectar-like essences that produce **honey with different characteristics**: heather, strawberry-tree, 'millefiori', clover, chestnut are only a few of the varieties of the area. **Honey is an excellent pairing for "Cacio" pecorino (pecorino cheese)**. During the 1960s, dozens of Sardinian shepherds arrived here with their herds, promoting the evolution of the pecorino cheese which remains a longstanding tradition. In the pastures of Val d'Orcia, in fact, there is a mix of wild herbs such as summer savory, thyme (thymus serpyllum), helichrysum and absinth that give pecorino cheese and other dairy products the original and unmistakable flavour of these lands.

Honey and cheese to be tasted

SEPTEMBER
 Montalcino

Honey week
Inside the 14th century fortress there is the national trade fair of honey and beehive products, beehive equipment, bee cosmetics, honey plants and the related publications.

SEPTEMBER
 Pienza

Fiera del cacio
The fair celebrates one of the most renowned products of the area: cheese. For a whole week Pienza dresses up for the festival and offers a wide range of interesting activities not to be missed.



The traditional dishes: cinta senese and ancient grains

There are many dishes that can be tasted in this valley: chicken liver crostini, panzanella (bread salad), pici with garlic or breadcrumbs, pappardelle with wildboar sauce, ravioli, bread soup, tripes, game, charcoal grilled meat and salamis. These are dishes that have a long history, such as those with **the "cinta senese", a pork breed that has a black coating** with a white-pinkish belt around its thorax, dating back to the early Middle Ages through to the period that ended sharecropping. The Cinta Senesi pigs have been regularly bred to process their tasty meat thanks to their feed made of the typical essences of these woods and pastures. Today the breeders have gathered into the Consortium for the Protection of the Cinta Senese, and have obtained the Designation of Protected Origin (DOP). These dishes are enriched with the flavour, taste and harmony of the land where wise farmers are still working with the **traditional techniques of old times, sowing and redescoving ancient grains**, such as Verna and Senator Cappelli. The care for the land is found in the many productions and organic farms, as well as in the establishment of artisanal pasta manufacturers that you can visit when you travel through the area. To conclude the journey into a year of tastes, you can't miss the traditional panforte: a unique cake from Siena that in the Val d'Orcia countryside became an object for competitions, tournaments and merry-making with the 'panforte game' that ended with the collective tasting of the delicious spiced "disk".

Not to be missed

Fortified farms or grance

Spedaletto Castle

An imposing structure built in the 12th century near the bridge that crossed the Orcia river: it was a hospital, that is a shelter for wayfarers and pilgrims who walked along the Via Francigena.

Mills of Bagno Vignoni

The milling centre consisted of four underground mills, which with a system of canals directly caught the water from the tank of Piazza delle Sorgenti that had a constant flow rate.

Festivals and traditions

AUGUST
 Castiglione d'Orcia
Festival of crostino and hand-made pici

AUGUST
 Contignano
Festival of the raviolo

OCTOBER
 Camigliano
Sagra del Galletto

DECEMBER
 Pienza
Tournament of the Panforte game

The golden spice: saffron

The particular purple flowers that in the Autumn are found in Val d'Orcia, in the language of flowers, represent the symbol of wealth, both material and spiritual, of well-being and happiness. This flower is the *Crocus sativus*; from its stigma is derived the perfumed spice that has an intense flavour: saffron. Its colour recalls the sun beams, and it is also considered to be aphrodisiac. The flowers are harvested in October entirely by hand in the early hours of the morning. Since the Middle Ages, there is wide evidence of the production of saffron in the Val d'Orcia, which thanks to its clay soil and its particular climate, seems to be a perfect place to reintroduce the growing of this rare and precious spice in Tuscan lands.

Autumnal jewels: mushrooms and chestnuts

Autumn carries colours and flavours and at the borders of Mount Amiata, where the stream of lava from the ancient Amiata volcano ends, chestnut trees thrive. At Vivo d'Orcia and Campiglia d'Orcia the I.G.P chestnut is the queen of feasts and festivals, and was once the key ingredient of local families, just like mushrooms that were taken to the city to be sold, providing such a century-old trading activity for locals. Besides porcini mushrooms, dozens of other small and tasty mushrooms are picked to make an exquisite mushroom soup.

Autumn events

OCTOBER

Vivo d'Orcia
Festival of
mushrooms
and chestnuts

OCTOBER

Campiglia d'Orcia
Chestnut
festival



The prince of the table: the truffle

The white truffle (*Tuber Magnatum Pico*) from the Crete Senesi is considered as one of the most precious truffles in Italy. Its excellent quality depends on the particular environment of the Crete Senesi with its clay soil. The lack of big industrial settlements, the distance from the great communication routes, the presence of woods and the wild and almost untouched landscape, make up an ideal setting for the growth of white truffle, that is also an actual ecological sentinel.

Celebrating Truffle

An absolute protagonist of the two events is the precious "tuber" of the Crete, with guided tasting sessions, art and cultural events.

MARCH

San Giovanni d'Asso
Marzuolo
Truffle

NOVEMBER

San Giovanni d'Asso
Trade
exhibition of
white truffle

A landscape 'juice': extra-virgin olive oil

Over the centuries no tree has been so celebrated as the olive tree: the Koran, the Bible, the most famous myths and texts from ancient times are rich with words devoted to this plant. Today it is further valued thanks to the IGP and DOP Terre di Siena designations. Its production is widespread here in Val d'Orcia in memory of the Etruscan DNA of this land. The main variety that are grown are Moraiolo, Frantoio, Leccino and Correggiolo (an ancient Tuscan cultivar), which give the oil its fruity and spicy flavour, on top of the great quality.

For serious tasters

NOVEMBER

Montisi
Prim'Olio
An event to taste
freshly pressed oil.

DECEMBER

San Quirico d'Orcia
Oil festival
Presentation of the
new local extra-
virgin olive oil.

Val d'Orcia

Val d'Orcia is an exceptional example of how the landscape was redesigned during the Renaissance, and illustrates the ideals of the good governance and the aesthetic research that guided its conception. Celebrated by the painters of the Sieneese School, the Val d'Orcia has become an icon of the landscape which deeply influenced the development of the landscaping thought. Pienza is the first application of the humanistic-Renaissance conception of town planning, and occupies a determining place in the development of the project concept of "ideal city", which played a significant role in the later urban development in Italy and elsewhere. The application of this principle to Pienza, and in particular, the group of buildings around the central square, is a masterpiece of the creative human genius.

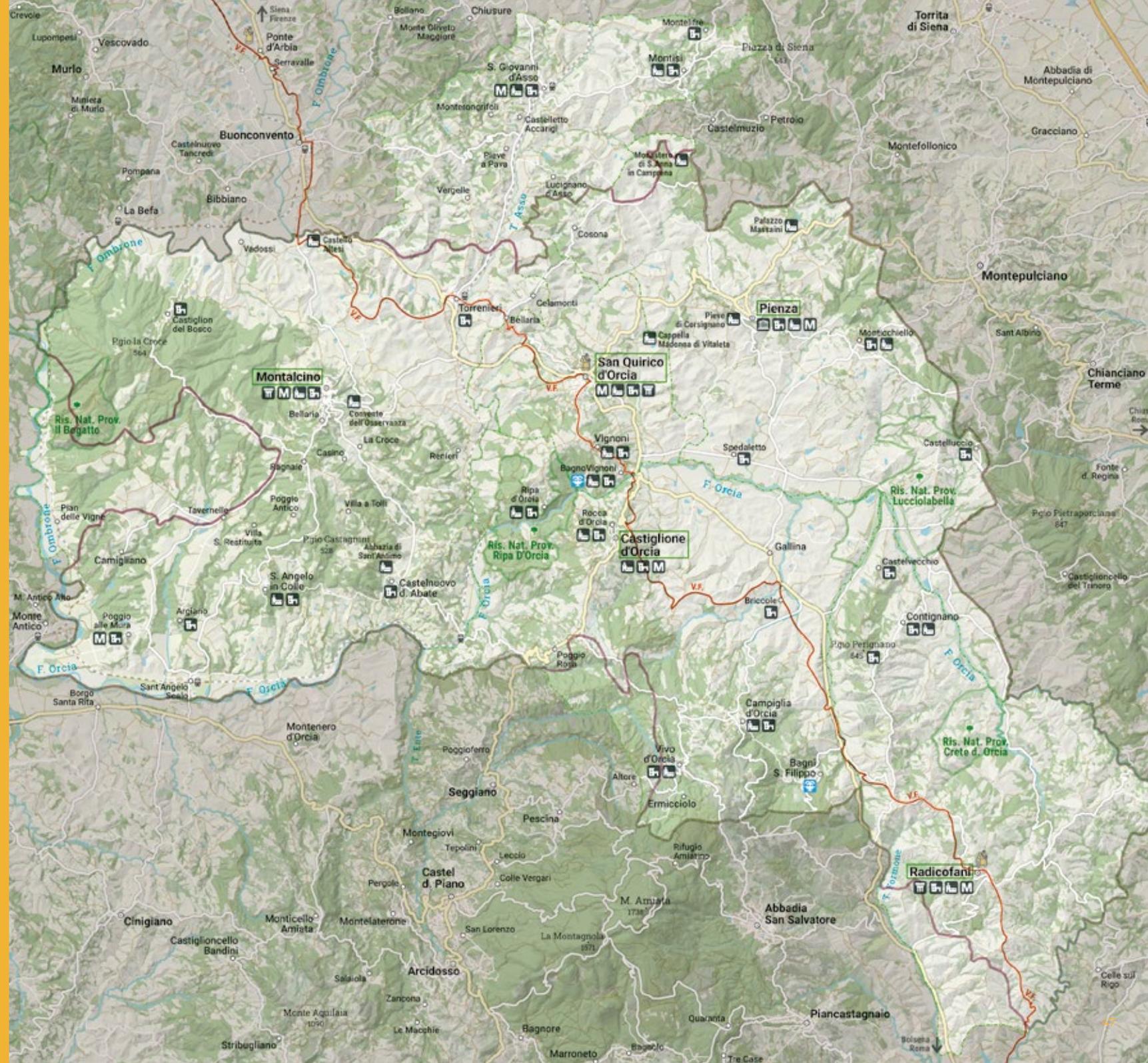
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Key to symbols

- Historical buildings / Monuments
- Religious places
- Museums
- Archaeological sites
- Natural elements
- Tourist Offices
- Tourist railway station
- Unesco World Heritage Site





Castiglione d'Orcia

www.visitvaldorcia.it

A small village immersed in the landscape of Val d'Orcia

Situated on a hilltop, in a splendid panoramic viewpoint, Castiglione d'Orcia, as its name points out, is an ancient castle that developed thanks to its strategic location on the **Via Francigena**. A stronghold of the Aldobrandeschi family for centuries, the **Rocca Aldobrandesca** stands out over the town, where you can visit the imposing castle ruins, their walls and other rooms. The ancient municipal palace overlooks the striking Piazza Vecchietta which is named after the painter Lorenzo di Pietro known as "il Vecchietta" and believed to have been a native of the area for a long time. A few steps away from the square, there is **the Church of Saints Stefano and Degna**, which hosts a precious table of the painter from Siena, Pietro Lorenzetti. A 'comune' since 1252, it annexed the surrounding towns to its territory over different periods until it took the current characteristics in 1867. This is why it boasts a wealth and a variety of settings and places: **Campiglia d'Orcia, Gallina, Vivo d'Orcia and the spa area of Bagni San Filippo**. Just opposite Castiglione, in the shadow of **Torre di Tentennano**, is situated the medieval town of **Rocca d'Orcia**.

Figures

ALTITUDE

540 m a.s.l.

SURFACE AREA

141,6 km²

PATRON SAINT

Santo Stefano
26 Dicembre

POPULATION

2.227

DENSITY

15,7 p/km²

Tourist information

ufficioturistico@castiglionedorcia.si.it
www.comune.castiglionedorcia.siena.it





Montalcino



www.visitvaldorcia.it

The town of Brunello: an art and history jewel immersed in the Val d'Orcia

Situated in a dominant position, between the valleys of Ombrone, Orcia and Asso, Montalcino is a town of late medieval architecture. Its name derives from Latin "**Mons Illicinus**", mount of holm-oaks. It was inhabited during Etruscan and Roman times (as witnessed by the findings of Poggio della Civitella). Contended between Florence and Siena, it surrendered to Siena, which built a castle there in 1361 making it one of the defensive strongholds of the Republic. In the centre of the town you can find Piazza del Popolo, dominated by the towered Palazzo dei Priori and the Gothic arcades of the Logge. Scattered through the surroundings of Montalcino, are villages, castles and abbeys. At the foot of Castelnuovo dell'Abate, **Sant'Antimo Abbey**, founded by Charlemagne according to the legend, is one of the most precious examples of monastic architecture of the 12th century. **Then there are the villages of Sant'Angelo in Colle** with the Romanesque church in the middle; **Camigliano**, a typical village embracing the castle of the same name, and **Torrenieri, on the Via Francigena**, which played an important strategic role. In the heart of the Crete Senesi, and the hometown of truffles, **San Giovanni d'Asso with its castle and village of Montisi**, the name of which is assumed to derive from "Monte" and "Iside", due to the presence of an Etruscan temple devoted to the Goddess Isis.

Figures

ALTITUDE

564 m a.s.l.

SURFACE AREA

310,3 km²

PATRON SAINT

Madonna del Soccorso

8 Maggio

POPULATION

5.728

DENSITY

18,4 p/km²

Tourist information

Via Ricasoli, 31
Montalcino
0577 846014
orodimontalcino@operalaboratori.com
www.comunedimontalcino.gov.it





Pienza

www.visitvaldorcia.it

A city born from a unitary idea of beauty

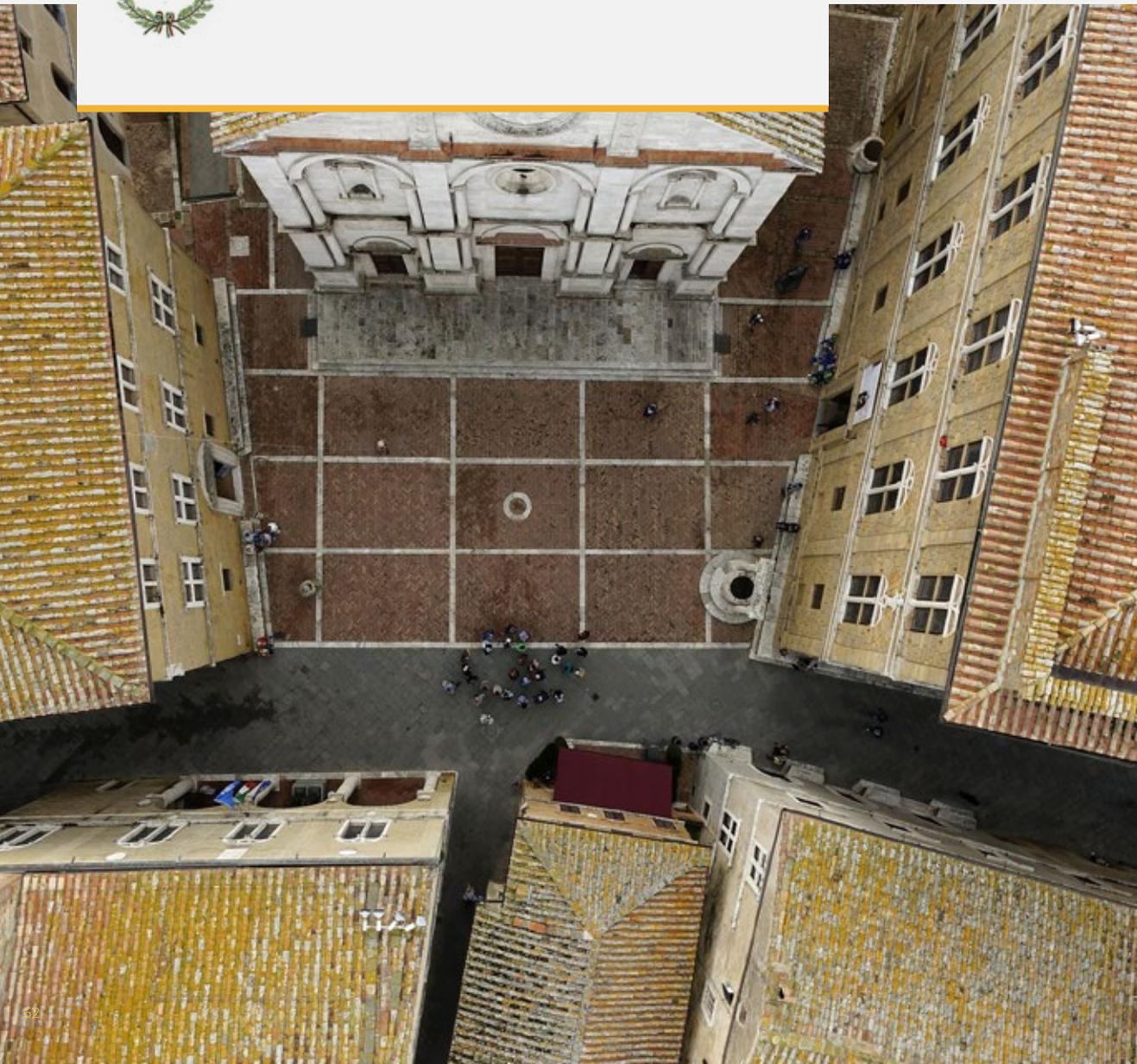
Squatting on a hill, **the ideal city of the Renaissance takes its name after Pius II**, who wanted it built. Enea Silvio Piccolomini, who became pope with the name of Pius II, decided to transform his native land, the medieval walled village of Corsignano, into a large residence. In 1459 he commissioned the project to the Florentine architect **Bernardo Gambarelli, also known as "il Rossellino"**, a follower of the great architect **Leon Battista Alberti**. That is how a rare example of urban planning came to light, focusing on the monumental scale of the main square around which were erected **the Cathedral, the Piccolomini Palace, the Borgia Palace, and the Townhall Palace**. Today the town still has its original stylistic unity, representing one of the most significant architectural achievements of the humanistic ideals of the 15th century; for this reason, **in 1996 the historic centre of Pienza was included in the World Heritage Sites list**. At the bottom of **the valley, the fortified castle of Spedaletto** was erected near the bridge that crossed the Orcia river as a shelter for wayfarers and pilgrims who travelled along the Via Francigena. On the opposite hill, the village of **Monticchiello can be found** where every summer the Teatro Povero (Poor theatre) performs a theatre play written and directed by the population, who have chosen the theatre as a tool to overcome the risk of isolation and fragmentation of its social fabric. To the north of Pienza there is the **Monastery of Sant'Anna in Camprena**.

Figures

ALTITUDE	SURFACE AREA	PATRON SAINT
491 m a.s.l.	122,9 km ²	Sant'Andrea 30 Novembre
POPULATION	DENSITY	
2.056	16,7 p/km ²	

Tourist information

Corso Il Rossellino, 30
 Pienza
 0578 749905
info.turismo@comune.pienza.si.it
www.comune.pienza.si.it





Radicofani



www.visitvaldorcia.it

From the top of one of the most spectacular fortresses of Tuscany

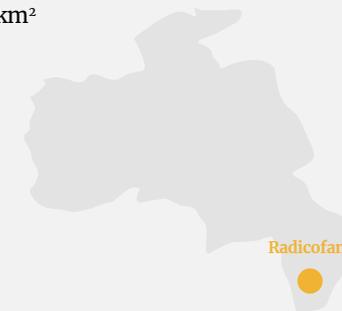
Radicofani is located at the foot of an important basalt rock of volcanic origin, crowned by an ancient fortress which was built in 1154 by pope Adrian IV, on top of Longobard fortifications that in their turn had replaced an ancient religious temple dating back to the bronze age. There are various hypotheses on **the toponym of Radicofani** and one of them states it derives from **Radix Fanum (the roots of the temple)**. It was an inaccessible shelter of the famous leader **Ghino di Tacco**, who used it to accomplish undertakings that were celebrated by Dante Alighieri and Boccaccio. The village stretches along a road system that climbs up to the castle and still keeps its important medieval characteristics, **with the two churches of San Pietro and Sant'Agata** where you can admire art works by **Andrea della Robbia** and his school. Near the village you can find the Bosco Isabella, a romantic-esoteric park. Along the **Via Francigena** there is the old Post Office, which was extended thanks to the project by Bernardo Buontalenti, and which Ferdinand I turned into a hotel-customs office between the Grand Duchy and the Church State at the service of travellers before going across the border. Situated on a hill near the left bank of the river Orcia, **Contignano, the ancient elliptical village**, still keeps the remains of ancient fortifications that surround the castle and the tower.

Figures

ALTITUDE	SURFACE AREA	PATRON SAINT
814 m a.s.l.	118,1 km ²	Sant'Agata 5 Febbraio
POPULATION	DENSITY	
1.085	9,1 p/km ²	

Tourist information

Via Fonte Antese, 2
Radicofani
0578 55684
uffturadicofani@virgilio.it
www.comune.radicofani.siena.it





San Quirico d'Orcia

www.visitvaldorcia.it

A historic village crossed by the Via Francigena

San Quirico, which has Etruscan origins, lies in the heart of the Val d'Orcia and is crossed by the **Via Francigena**. The village developed in the Middle Ages around the Church of Osenna. The historic centre is surrounded by walls that still have most of the 14 towers, and inside there are some of the most valuable architectural monuments: **the Collegiata dedicated to the Saints Quirico and Giulitta**. The imposing **Palazzo Chigi**, later called Zondadari, which was commissioned by Cardinal Flavio Chigi on the project of the architect Carlo Fontana and the **Horti Leonini created in the 16th century** by Diomedede Leoni in the place where there used to be a hill in the old times, are a precious example of Italian-style gardens. From there you can access the **Rose Garden** next to which the charming church of **Santa Maria Assunta** was built. It is immersed in a landscape that has some of the icons that represent Tuscany and Italy in the world, such as a little stand of cypresses, the **Vitaleta Chapel** and the hill of the **Belvedere** estate. South of San Quirico the village of **Bagno Vignoni can be found**, a charming and renowned medieval spa village, with healing water properties that were already known to the Romans. Not too far from Bagno Vignoni, the small village of **Vignoni** is dominated by the tower of the castle and has a striking view over the last section of the Tuscan Via Francigena.

Figures

ALTITUDE	SURFACE AREA	PATRON SAINT
424 m a.s.l.	42,12 km ²	San Quirico 16 Giugno
POPULATION	DENSITY	
2.623	62,2 p/km ²	

Tourist information

Via D. Alighieri, 33
San Quirico d'Orcia
0577 899728
ufficioturistico@comune.sanquiricodorciasi.it
www.comunesanquirico.it



Events

APRIL

Il Maggio – Castiglione d’Orcia

A hymn to nature and to the nice season echoes through the countryside of Castiglione d’Orcia thanks to the maggaioli who, with their songs, revive the oldest and most genuine traditions.

Rituals of the Holy Week

Radicofani

These ancient and almost unique rituals start on Palm Sunday, when in the Church of Sant’Agata “the Calvary” is built, a sort of big wing made of boxwood.

Orcia Wine Festival

San Quirico d’Orcia

A trade fair to get to know the excellence of the Orcia DOC wine in a weekend rich with events and performances in the wonderful 17th century rooms of Palazzo Chigi.

MAY

Flower festival – Pienza

Pienza in full blossom to celebrate the arrival of the warm season. Flower arrangements, events and shows will accompany you in this enchanting promenade.

Caffeina – Literary

Emporium of Pienza – Pienza

A melting pot of ideas and relationships, trends, opinions, stories and emotions that give value to a land which was already magic and charming, and turn Pienza into a proper town.

Valdorcia in Fiera

Gallina – Castiglione d’Orcia

This event is structured in different areas: mechanical tools, gardening equipment, typical products from the Val d’Orcia, and the traditional artisanal production.

Sant’Angelo in festa – Maggiolata

Sant’Angelo Scalo – Montalcino

The Nature Train gets into Sant’Angelo Scalo for “the Maggiolata” to spend a very pleasant day in the name of tradition with music and good food.

Torrenieri in festa

Torrenieri – Montalcino

Torrenieri is dressed for a party to pay tribute to what was, historically, a great opportunity for development and cultural as well as commercial exchange. Arrival of the Nature Train.

JUNE

Barbarossa Festival

San Quirico d’Orcia

The historical commemoration makes you experience the Emperor Barbarossa and the cardinals, the civil and religious authorities of San Quirico of that time, the nobles, the people, the armies and archery as well as flag-tossing competitions.

Festival of the arts and ancient crafts – Radicofani

These days are fully devoted to the celebration of the traditions of Radicofani, through performances, tastings, exhibitions to immerse yourself completely in a remote time.

JULY

A beer bath

Bagno Vignoni – San Quirico d’Orcia

A weekend at Bagno Vignoni to taste Tuscan beer, of great value, in a trade fair that shows the result of the passion and research of local producers.

Forme nel Verde

San Quirico d’Orcia

Forme nel Verde is an event that has found the key to propose major representatives of contemporary art in the backdrop of the 16th century Horti Leonini.

Jazz & Wine – Montalcino

Montalcino fortress becomes a splendid backdrop for this splendid tribute to jazz music and to the one and only Brunello di Montalcino.

Teatro povero

Monticchiello – Pienza

A social and cultural project started in the 1960s; a theatre performance conceived, written and directed by the people of Monticchiello. “A self-drama” as it was defined by Giorgio Strehler.

Medieval festival

Contignano – Radicofani

Historical, cultural and gastronomic commemoration of the expulsion of the Salimbeni in 1409. In the splendid backdrop of Piazza del Castello, a medieval dinner takes place.

AUGUST

Calici di stelle

Castiglione d’Orcia

The village of Castiglione d’Orcia lights up for a night, raising towards the stars the wine glasses of the precious DOC Orcia wines with the tasting stalls set up by local producers.

Festival of Crostino

Castiglione d’Orcia

A gastronomic event with numerous kinds of crostini and local specialties such as the pici, which has the aim of keeping alive the local culinary tradition and spread it around.

Charta libertatis

Rocca d’Orcia – Castiglione d’Orcia

Historical-theatrical re-enactment of a document dating back to 1207 with which the Lord of the Castle granted some “liberties” to the population of the surrounding village.

Giostra di Simone

Montisi – Montalcino

Medieval re-enactment where the four quarters of the village take the challenge in a horse tournament to win the “panno” (cloth) devoted to the Madonna delle Nevi.

Festival of the raviolo

Contignano – Radicofani

The best and oldest culinary traditions of the small village of Contignano are revived during the festival of the raviolo, one of the most typical and renowned of the area.

The days of Ghino

Radicofani

History, culture, music and theatre, among the squares and monuments of Radicofani and Contignano.

Tuscan musical landscapes

San Quirico d’Orcia

A classical music festival with the participation of great international artists, concerts of very high quality in the places of Val d’Orcia, defined as the most beautiful in the world.

SEPTEMBER

Fair of cheese and festival of Cacio al fuso

Pienza

The fair celebrates one of the most renowned products of the area: cheese. For a whole week Pienza dresses up for the festival and offers a wide range of interesting activities not to be missed.

Corsa di Pio

Pienza

A foot race to reenact the inaugural celebrations of the town of Pienza, when a competition for young people was first organised and the winner was awarded a live goose.

Palio del bigonzo

Radicofani

The race of the Palio of the neighbourhoods sees the carriers of the barellini (stretchers) with the “bigonzi” (vats) compete along the winding roads of the village as far as Piazza San Pietro where the winner is proclaimed.

I colori del libro

Bagno Vignoni – San Quirico d’Orcia

A weekend in the name of literature, meetings with authors and presentations, made more precious by ancient, rare and special books coming from all over Italy.

OCTOBER

Festival of mushrooms and Chestnut and Palio of Woodcutters

Vivo d’Orcia – Castiglione d’Orcia

You can taste mushrooms and the renowned and famous chestnuts of Mount Amiata in the various dishes. A rich agenda that ends with the Palio of Woodcutters.

Sagra del Galletto

Camigliano – Montalcino

The festival offers a menu which is the result of ancient farmers’ recipes. The roosters are the main ingredient for the preparation of these dishes. Re-enactment of the very old game of the Druzzola.

Festa del marrone

Campiglia d’Orcia

Castiglione d’Orcia

The aim is to celebrate a typical local product and spread the knowledge of Campiglia and its traditions also thanks to the staging and themes chosen by the three Rioni (neighbourhoods).

Sagra del Tordo

Montalcino

Tradition, historic processions, tasting, singing, dancing and an unmissable competition of archery. A real must for Montalcino and its people.

Opera singing competition Città di Pienza

Pienza

The wonderful town of Pienza is the ideal place for the staging of opera with the aim

of giving the opportunity to new talents to perform and be noticed at a national level.

NOVEMBER

Trade fair of white truffle

San Giovanni d’Asso – Montalcino

An absolute protagonist is the precious “tuber” of the Crete Senesi, with guided tasting sessions, art and cultural events, food, agricultural and artisanal products.

The first Oil... and even

Montisi – Montalcino

An event in the name of gastronomic culture to taste freshly pressed oil. The festival is enriched with mini tasting courses, guided tours to oil mills, music and performances.

DECEMBER

Tournament of the Panforte game panforte

Pienza

Under the loggias of the townhall, the players, divided into teams, launch the panforte on the table in turn, trying to get as close as possible to the opposite edge in order to score a point.

Living nativity

Contignano – Radicofani

A magic atmosphere accompanies an event strongly felt by all inhabitants who wear costumes of shepherds, ironsmiths and farmers to revive the crafts of the Nativity time.

Oil festival

San Quirico d’Orcia

The popular event accompanies the presentation of the new extra-virgin olive oil with a range of initiatives and musical performances, street games and tasting of bruschette.

Information

Tourist Offices

Tourist Office

Castiglione d'Orcia

ufficioturistico@castiglionedorcia.si.it
www.comune.castiglionedorcia.siena.it

Tourist Office

Montalcino

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Tourist Office

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Tourist Office

Radicofani

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Tourist Office

San Quirico d'Orcia

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sanquiricodorcia.si.it
www.comunesanquirico.it

Info

Park of Val d'Orcia

www.parcodellavaldorcia.com
info@parcodellavaldorcia.com

How to get here



By car

A car is certainly the best means of transport to visit the Val d'Orcia. Arriving by car allows you to fully enjoy the landscape which is one with the small towns.

From the south >A1 exit Chiusi-Chianciano or Valdichiana. Alternatively, follow the Cassia (Via Francigena), towards Viterbo, then Bolsena until you get to Val d'Orcia.

From the north >superstrada Firenze-Siena, then Cassia towards Rome, until you get to Val d'Orcia or A1 exit Valdichiana.



Trains

There are no direct railway connections with Val d'Orcia: the closest stations are Siena, Buonconvento, Chiusi-Chianciano Terme. Please, refer to the website:
www.trenitalia.com



Bus

Lines from and to Florence and connections within the Province:
Train > www.trainspa.it
Tiemme > www.tiemmespa.it



By air

> Florence Airport "Amerigo Vespucci" (2 hours by car) www.aeroporto.firenze.it

> Pisa Airport "Galileo Galilei" (2 hours by car) www.pisa-airport.com

> Perugia International Airport of Umbria (1.30 hour by car) www.airport.umbria.it

> Rome Airport "Leonardo da Vinci" in Fiumicino and Airport "Giovanni Battista Pastine" in Ciampino (2.30 hours by car)

