

## Tuscany, walking through a living work of art



**View of Verrazzano castle**

**Photo Città Metropolitana di Firenze**

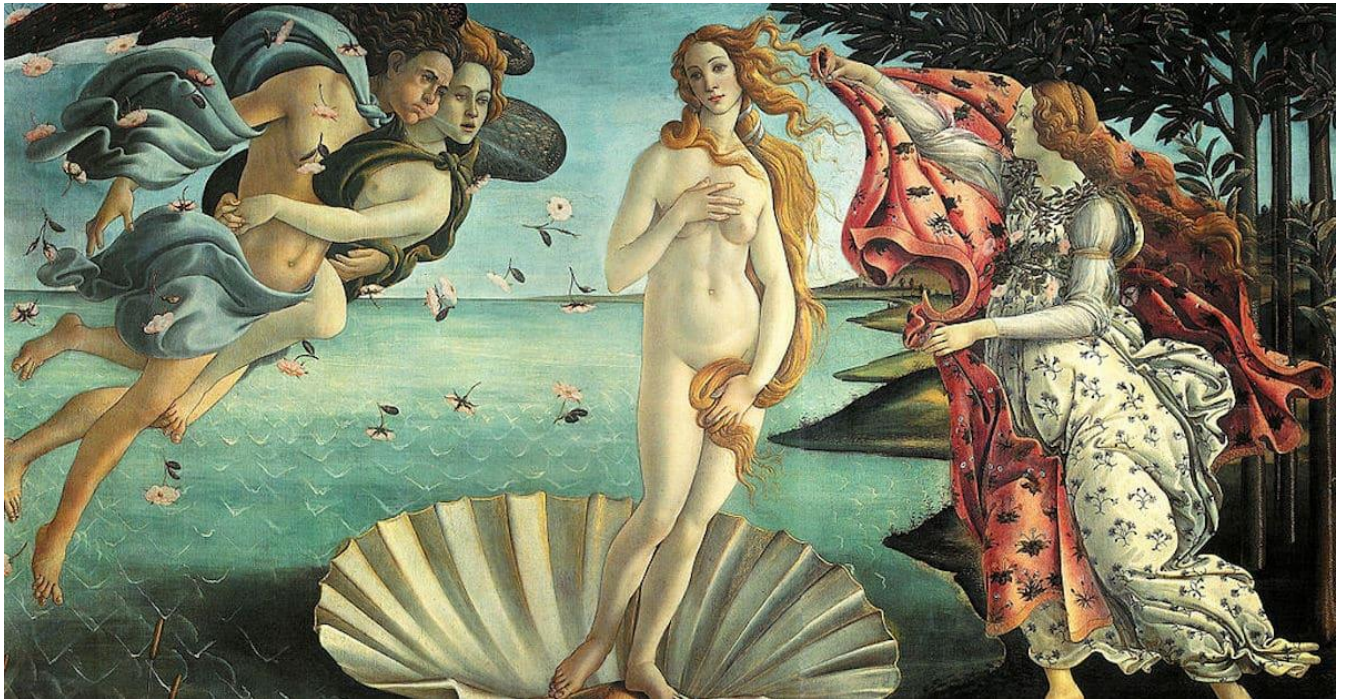
The landscape of Tuscany was largely designed and created by the cities of Siena and Florence. Aware.

In Italy, man had an early tendency to control nature. In ancient times, the Romans built aqueducts to provide agricultural land and cities with sufficient water. And they built roads that made nature more accessible to man and his means of transport. For Tuscany, the rich and enlightened bourgeoisie of Florence and Siena put a lot of energy and money into the development of the surrounding countryside. And that was - fortunately - not done in a way that was customary in the Netherlands for a long time with, for example, land consolidation and extraction. Or in the efforts of the nobility and industrial barons to improve their land ownership. Whereas efficiency, efficiency, economies of scale and profit maximisation were central to these land consolidations and noble involvements, it was the highly developed aesthetic standards that were decisive for the design of the landscape. A landscape where human intervention harmoniously coexisted with a hilly, curving nature. Where the driveways to the (wine) farms were accentuated with the planting of cypress trees. Where the size, the construction method and the choice of materials of these farms had to contribute to the beauty of the surroundings. Where the winegrower ruled the landscape in a farm built on a hill, but where he also managed to adapt to the natural environment. Compare that with cutting down the hedgerows in the Netherlands, like [Drenthe](#) or [Overijssel](#). Or channeling and straightening meandering streams. Or the exploitation of the heathlands and the transformations into rectangular mirror-smooth levelled agricultural plots.



In large parts of Tuscany you walk through a living work of art that was created by human hands and has been further developed.

Florence A highlight of the walking tour of Chianti, the region between Florence and Siena, is the city of Florence itself. The city gives every reason to spend at least a day there to see the many expressions of painting, sculpture, literature and architecture. A visit to the world-famous *Palazzo degli Uffizi museum* is a must. In the spring the best chance to be able to walk to the ticket seller without a queue. To the Rembrandts, the Botticelli's, the da Vinci's, the Rafael's, the Caravaggio's..  
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**Botticelli Birth of Venus Uffizi museum Florence**

### **Through Chianti**

To avoid the new housing estates of Florence, take bus 33 to Bagno a Ripoli-la Fonte the next morning. This is where your chianti walking tour begins. With a climb to Bigallo where the markings (red and white) start. With our warning: "*we are in Italy ..... Italians are not walkers and maintaining the markings is not their strong suit.*" A good hiking map is therefore really necessary. And frequently asking for directions may also be necessary. With beautiful views of the Arno river on the first day of hiking and later on the Apennines. You walk via San Donato in Collina to San Polo in Chianti. When trying to describe Chianti you think of plateaus, vegetation with broom, slopes with forests, vineyards and olive trees, old fortress-like farmhouses and medieval castles. Or to heat-sweltering hilltops with views of a palette of softly colored still lifes with here and there a brightly colored dissonance in the form of a blue swimming pool (!) at a tourist farm. Here, too, the aesthetics of the Enlightenment do not last forever. You walk through beautiful and seemingly less beautiful villages and towns where you constantly come into contact with the symbols of one of the most important activities in this area: viticulture. The temptation to raise a glass on the beautiful Piazza Matteotti in Greve in Chianti under a pergola is great. After Greve, the landscape becomes "classic", the "real Tuscany", in other words: the image that has become the calling card of the region over the years: the white avenues, the centuries-old farmhouses, the cypress trees.



**Panorama Chianti**

### **On trail**

to Castellina You continue the route to Castellina in Chianti with its medieval castle: la Rocca. Or the narrow, sometimes completely covered, streets. If you are interested in pre-Roman history, take a break from the route in Castellina for a visit to an Etruscan tomb. The Etruscans lived here until the first century BC. What was most striking about this people was a - for that time - very unusual equality between men and women. For example, Etruscan women ate alongside their husbands at the festive tables and participated in all expressions of public life. The down-to-earth, extremely conservative peasant soldiers of the Romans could not understand these refined mores of this ancient and high-minded people, so they defaced them as immoral. The Etruscans eventually died against Roman rule (from: *Wikikids*).

The years of feuds between Siena and Florence should not go unmentioned in this article. Because no matter how much beauty and harmony the region has to offer, the wars between Siena and Florence for power in the area were numerous. More wars per year than there are seasons. Do you notice anything along the way? If you have the time, visit a local museum. Great chance of memories of this period from the Middle Ages, in all kinds of forms. A nice anecdote about this period is the role of the *il gallo nero* (the black chicken) in a decisive battle between the two armies. The black chicken is the logo of Chianti wine in 2020. You see her everywhere. Google black *chicken* and *Chianti*. If you get to the municipal border of Siena, our advice is to take the bus here to the main bus station of Siena. The buildings are increasing and there is no shade on large areas in the heat.



## Siena

Also a very beautiful city with a medieval center and in that period also the great competitor of Florence. Even a day before pulling out? Piazza del Campo? Duomo Santa Maria? Oratorio di San Bernardino?



**Torre Mangia Siena** photos Municipality of Siena - by the Tourist Office"

### General route tips

There is a good train connection between Pisa and Florence. Five quarters of an hour on the train. Then with an early flight to Pisa airport you have plenty of time to see the beautiful, whether or not crooked, architectural wonders of Pisa before traveling to Florence.

- Good hiking map are Hiking map 2458 Firenze – Siena – Chianti | Compasses. Or Kompass no.660, Firenze Chianti. This last map does not mention the last stage, from Castellina to Siena. But, as written, you better take the bus halfway through the last stage.
- Keep in mind the watchdogs in the suburbs of the towns. They run around barking furiously behind steel fences, can't make you anything but it all looks rather aggressive. From both the dog and the owner.
- Difficulty: except for a few tough climbs after an easy route.
- Given the popularity of the region with tourists, it is advisable to arrange your accommodation in advance.
- Wild camping is not allowed. Sometimes it is tolerated. Ask about local opportunities.
- Total distance of the route: about 80 km. To be completed in 4 to 5 days.





**The farmer and his land**



**Between Greve in Chianti and Castellina in Chianti view of Montefioralle**

Foto's Metropolitan City of Florence





**Tuscany classic**