



# HEDONISTIC HIKING

FOOD • WINE • WALKING

All-inclusive  
guided gourmet  
walking holidays  
in Italy and  
beyond ...



# 2016





**A**t Hedonistic Hiking we are passionate about three things: food, wine and walking. We have an unusual lifestyle, living half the year close to Bright in north east Victoria and the other half close to Siena in Tuscany. Between us we have been involved in the travel industry for over 35 years and Hedonistic Hiking, since its debut in 2007, has happily gone from strength to strength.

We feel very fortunate to be able to call both Australia and Italy home and are uniquely placed to be able to research and deliver the best possible walking holidays on both sides of the world. Whilst the main focus of our business is in Europe we offer a fun selection of taster weekends in Australia. If you haven't walked with us before these are a great way to whet your appetite for our trips overseas and, if you have, they are very sociable weekends giving the chance to catch up with hiking friends made on previous trips.

Our walking groups are small, a maximum of 16 people, and made up of friendly, interesting, like-minded travellers from all corners of the world. Whilst the walks range from gentle to more challenging, we always have our support vehicle on hand so that guests can walk as much or as little as they please. The tours are not in any way competitive and everyone is free to walk at their own pace.

We are committed to sustainability and take our relationship with the natural environment very seriously. We also believe wholeheartedly in supporting small, local and family-run businesses in the areas where we operate.

Hedonistic Hiking tours are genuinely all-inclusive and the tour price covers absolutely everything with the exception of your flight: accommodation, lunches and dinners including fabulous wines, all local transportation, entry fees to museums, cookery classes, wine tastings, truffle hunts and visits to cheese-makers or chocolatiers. Our guests tell us that our tours represent excellent value and a huge number return time and again.

A mixture of fine dining experiences in a variety of local restaurants and gourmet picnic lunches ensures that we taste the very best food and wine the regions have to offer, with the emphasis always on top quality, locally-sourced produce. Along with the beautiful landscapes we explore we like to think that our tours are a true feast for all the senses.

Finally, we design, research and lead all the walks ourselves and we are assisted in Europe by a small team of dedicated colleagues who help to make the tours both enjoyable and memorable. Together we try our utmost to take the best possible care of our guests and believe this is the reason so many people come back to Hedonistic Hiking and walk with us year after year.

We hope to welcome you on a tour soon!

*Jackie & Mick Parsons*



Visit our website for full details of all tours and for information to help you plan your holiday.



**I**n 2016 we are offering four taster weekends in Australia to give people who have not travelled with us overseas a chance to sample our style of holidays and our signature blend of food, wine and walking. These are all based in the High Country and could form part of a longer visit to explore other parts of beautiful Victoria. We are also offering our iconic Great Ocean Walk as a bespoke tour for private groups of 8 or more - why not get together a group of friends and hike these 100 kms of unforgettable coastline?

In Italy we have two new tours for 2016. The first is Medieval Umbria which starts and ends in Florence, birthplace of the Italian Renaissance, and takes in the beautiful towns of Sansepolcro and Gubbio. We taste organic olive oils, follow evocative pilgrim trails once trodden by St Francis of Assisi, and explore the ancient history and stunning art of this remarkable region.

The second is a brand new walk from Provence to Piedmont, starting in Nice on the Cote d'Azur and finishing in Turin, the gastronomic capital of northern Italy. The tour explores the stunning Mercantour National Park before we cross the border between France and Italy and hike in the Maritime Alps, staying in the small ski resort of Limone Piemonte at 1,000m and finishing in the historic city of Cuneo.

**NEW  
FOR 2016**

# AUSTRALIA

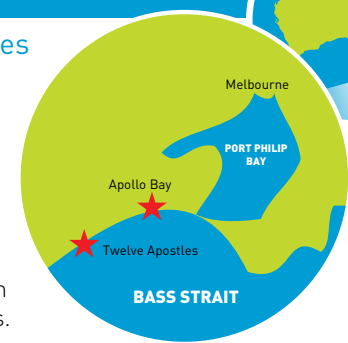


## GREAT OCEAN WALK - BESPOKE TOUR

100km from Apollo Bay to the Twelve Apostles

**START:** Melbourne **FINISH:** Melbourne

**PRICE:** On request **SING. SUPP:** NIL



The Great Ocean Walk is 100 km of continuous trail which connects the Great Otway and Port Campbell National Parks. The walk begins at Apollo Bay, 180 km west of Melbourne, and finishes at the Twelve Apostles. The landscape is surprisingly varied encompassing rain forest, fertile grazing land, towering gum trees and deserted beaches and this famous route has become one of Australia's truly iconic walks. Along the way we meet koalas, wallabies and echidnas but just as fascinating is the history of this Shipwreck Coast and its lighthouse at Cape Otway, the oldest surviving on mainland Australia. Completing this walk from start to finish produces a very real sense of achievement and many unforgettable memories of Victoria's striking coastline. For 2015/2016 we are offering this as a bespoke tour for private groups (minimum 8 people) so please contact us to discuss dates, costings and availability. Our standard route takes 7 days but a shorter version is possible.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- One of Australia's greatest walks
- Mick Parsons as your personal chef
- Dine in Chris's - Chef Hat restaurant near Apollo Bay

### WALKING

**Terrain:** Well-graded and well-maintained trail through coastal scrub, along beaches and in ancient forests. Lots of up and down most days

**Shortest/ Longest Day:** 10.7km/6.8miles:19.9km/12.5miles

### ACCOMMODATION

**Chris's Villas:** Beautiful cottages overlooking the coast above Apollo Bay

**Johanna Seaside:** Cottage accommodation on rolling farmland. Some ocean views.

**Waves:** Comfortable motel accommodation in Port Campbell



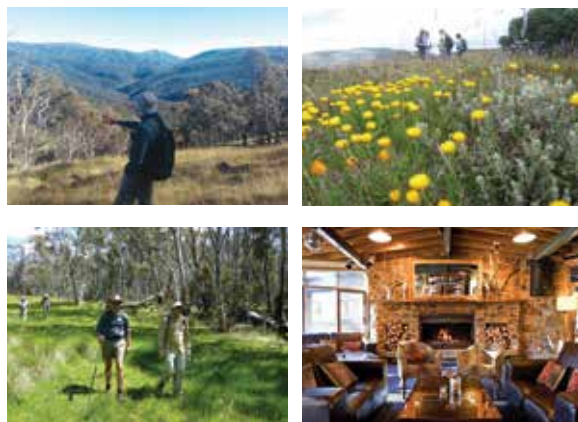
## WEEKEND IN THE HIGH COUNTRY

Exploring Dinner Plain and classic mountain trails

<b>3 DAYS</b>	27 - 29 November 2015	
<b>START:</b>	Dinner Plain, Victoria	
<b>FINISH:</b>	Dinner Plain, Victoria	
<b>PRICE:</b>	<b>\$725*pp</b>	<b>SING. SUPP: NIL</b>

\* Price does not include accommodation

A high-country weekend in the picturesque alpine village of Dinner Plain at 1570m in the Alpine National Park, reached by driving the stunning Great Alpine Road from Bright or Bairnsdale. The architecture reflects the heritage of the early pioneers, with the buildings of stone, timber and corrugated iron blending beautifully with the surrounding snow gums and high plains landscape. Each day we hike out from the village to some of the area's most scenic spots including Mount Tabletop and Precipice Plain, and we prepare a delicious picnic which we hike or drive in for you. In the evenings we dine in two of the best restaurants in the village and enjoy fabulous regional produce matched with excellent local wines.



### HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore historic Dinner Plain village
- Climb Mount Tabletop
- Excellent local restaurants

### WALKING

**Terrain:** Dirt roads, bush tracks and rocky mountain trails  
**Shortest/Longest Day:**  
 Approx 16 km each day

## HIGHLIGHTS OF MOUNT BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK

Beautiful Bright, Mount Buffalo and boutique wineries

<b>4 DAYS</b>	4 - 7 March 2016	
<b>START:</b>	Bright, Victoria	
<b>FINISH:</b>	Bright, Victoria	
<b>PRICE:</b>	<b>\$845*pp</b>	<b>SING. SUPP: NIL</b>

\* Price does not include accommodation

This fabulous weekend of food, wine and walking in Victoria's High Country is based in the beautiful town of Bright, which is an easy drive from Albury airport and around three and a half hours from Melbourne. We have three fantastic days of hiking including trails in the stunning Mount Buffalo National Park and through the vineyards of the Ovens Valley, with dinners in two of Bright's best restaurants. Choose where to stay in and around Bright from the great selection of local accommodation listed on our website and savour an unmissable sunset dinner on the highest point of Mount Buffalo. This long weekend could form part of an extended visit exploring our beautiful corner of Victoria.



### HIGHLIGHTS

- Sunset dinner on Mount Buffalo
- Meet local winemakers
- Mountain lakes and waterfalls

### WALKING

**Terrain:** Good trails, some short climbs and descents  
**Shortest/Longest Day:**  
 5-15km

## EASTER AT FALLS CREEK

A weekend of fun hikes and fabulous food

<b>3 DAYS</b>	25 -27 March 2016	
<b>START:</b>	Falls Creek, Victoria	
<b>FINISH:</b>	Falls Creek, Victoria	
<b>PRICE:</b>	<b>\$725* pp</b>	<b>SING. SUPP:</b> <b>NIL</b>

\* Price does not include accommodation

This is an Easter celebration in the beautiful mountain resort of Falls Creek in Victoria's high country. Better known as one of Australia's premier ski resorts, the area is equally stunning outside the snow season and has great opportunities for cycling and kayaking as well as hiking. Arrive on Friday evening and enjoy two fabulous hikes on Saturday and Sunday on the Bogong High Plains, exploring the unique history and geography of this remote and evocative landscape. Choose where to stay from the selection of Falls Creek accommodation listed on our website, and enjoy our delicious signature picnic lunches on each of the hikes. Dinner on Friday and Saturday evenings will be prepared by Mick and showcase the best high country produce matched with wonderful wines from the region.



### HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore the mountain landscape
- Celebrate the High Country's best local produce
- Mick Parsons as your personal chef

### WALKING

**Terrain:** Well-graded trails on open alpine plains, with some ascents and descents

**Shortest/Longest Day:** Approx 14 km each day

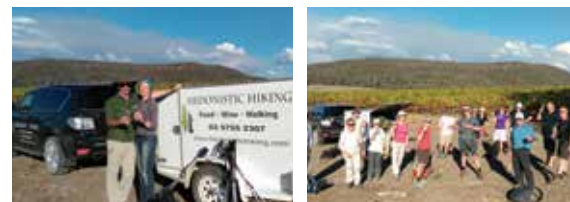
## VICTORIAN ALPS AND VINEYARDS

Hike through Outlaw country and enjoy Italian hospitality

<b>3 DAYS</b>	8 - 10 April 2016	
<b>START:</b>	Whitfield/Myrree, Victoria	
<b>FINISH:</b>	Whitfield/Myrree, Victoria	
<b>PRICE:</b>	<b>\$725* pp</b>	<b>SING. SUPP:</b> <b>NIL</b>

\* Price does not include accommodation

This is a fantastic weekend of hiking in Victoria's Alpine National Park and its renowned King Valley wine-growing area - an easy reach from Albury or Melbourne airports and close to the Hume Highway. This two-day gourmet hike through the land of Ned Kelly and his outlaws could easily form part of a longer stay exploring North East Victoria. Choose where to stay from the charming selection of local accommodation listed on our website and enjoy great walks, fabulous lunches and Italian-style dinners. Get to know the delightful Dal Zottos, one of many Italian families in the area producing top quality Italian varietal wines and the very first to plant the famous Prosecco grape in Australia.



### HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience Italian hospitality at its best
- Climb Mount Cobbler
- Italian style dinner at Casa Luna

### WALKING

**Terrain:** 500m climb up Mount Cobbler on mostly gentle track. Good amount of shade

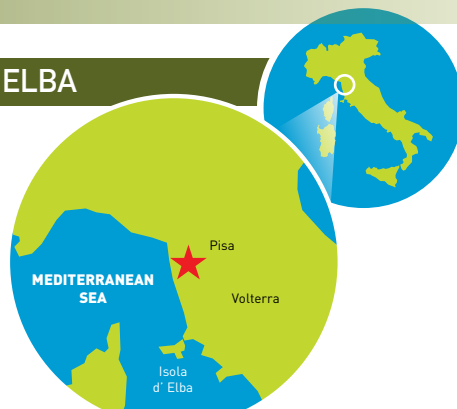
**Shortest/Longest Day:** Approx 15km each day on well-maintained trails.

## LUCCA, VOLTERRA AND THE ISLAND OF ELBA

Hiking through Tuscan History

<b>9 DAYS</b>	6 - 14 May 2016		
<b>START:</b>	Pisa	<b>FINISH:</b>	Pisa
<b>PRICE:</b>	€ 2,825 pp	<b>SING. SUPP:</b>	€ 275

This classic Tuscan tour starts in the artistic gem of Lucca - a beautifully preserved city encircled by its Renaissance walls lying just south of the stunning marble mountains of Carrara. We visit Volterra, a timeless hilltop town with Etruscan and Roman history and hike to San Gimignano with its unmistakable skyline of medieval towers. On our way to the beautiful island of Elba we stop in Bolgheri - now one of the most exciting and innovative wine regions in all of Italy. We finish on Elba, hiking to its highest point and exploring its capital city and the villa which was home to its most famous exile - Napoleon Bonaparte.



### HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore a jewel of the Tuscan Archipelago with island hiking
- Learn about the rich culture and history of the towns we visit
- Discover lesser-known but impressive Tuscan wines

### WALKING

**Terrain:** Strade bianche (gravel roads), woodland tracks and quiet lanes, although Day 3 has more mountainous terrain. The rest of this area of Tuscany is relatively hilly, with some significant ups and downs, but not mountainous

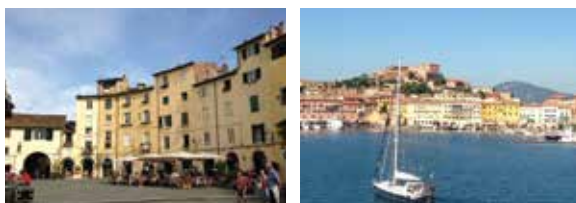
**Shortest/Longest Day:**  
6km/3.7 miles: 18km/11.2 miles

### ACCOMMODATION

**San Luca Palace/Palazzo Alexander:** Two 4-star converted palazzi just inside the magnificent walls of Lucca

**Park Hotel Le Fonti:** Situated on the edge of Volterra with pool and stunning views of the Tuscan landscape

**Hotel Hermitage:** A spectacularly located hotel with private beach, gardens and pools on the gorgeous bay of Biodola



## THE ITALIAN LAKES

Lakes, Gardens and Majestic Mountains

<b>8 DAYS</b>	18 - 25 May 2016		
<b>START:</b>	Milan	<b>FINISH:</b>	Milan
<b>PRICE:</b>	€ 2,895 pp	<b>SING. SUPP:</b>	€ 275

Explore three of northern Italy's famous lakes: Como, Maggiore and the lesser-known Lake Orta. All three have magnificent views of the snow-capped peaks of the Italian Alps, making the scenery on this trip particularly spectacular. Two of our hotels are located right on the lake shore with private jetties, so we make the most of exploring the lakes and islands by boat, as well as using cable cars and funiculars to transport us to different areas for walking. We cross into Switzerland to hike near Locarno and see the stunning gardens of Isola Bella and Villa Taranto. A guided visit on the first day to Leonardo Da Vinci's "Last Supper" in Milan completes a sensational itinerary for this tour.



### HIGHLIGHTS

- See Leonardo Da Vinci's painting of The Last Supper
- Private boat trips on Lakes Como, Maggiore and Orta
- Visits to the gardens of Isola Bella and Villa Taranto

### WALKING

**Terrain:** Cobbled mule tracks, woodland trails and rugged mountain trails. Significant ascents and descents (up to 800m) on days 3 and 6

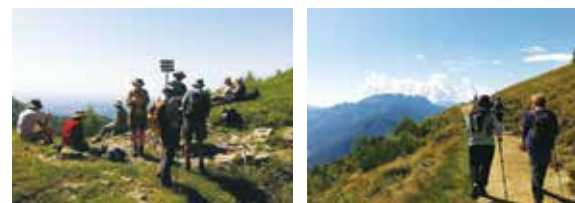
**Shortest/Longest Day:**  
7km/4.4 miles: 18km/10 miles

### ACCOMMODATION

**Hotel Bellavista:** Family-run Liberty-style villa above Lake Como

**Grand Hotel Majestic:** Historic lakeside hotel with a pool in the quiet town of Pallanza on Lake Maggiore

**Hotel San Rocco:** 4-star lakeside hotel in Orta San Giulio with excellent restaurant



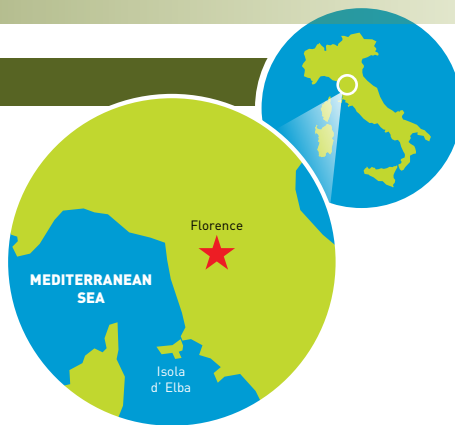
**NEW FOR 2016**

## MEDIEVAL UMBRIA

Abbeys and Art in the Apennines

<b>8 DAYS</b>	27 May - 3 June, 2016		
<b>START:</b>	Florence	<b>FINISH:</b>	Florence
<b>PRICE:</b>	€ 2,625 pp	<b>SING. SUPP:</b>	€ 200

This tour begins with a leisurely olive oil tasting at an organic farm in the charming town of Anghiari before arriving in the historic market town of Sansepolcro, birthplace of the Renaissance artist Piero della Francesca. Cross the border from Tuscany to Umbria in the Apennine mountains with beautiful views of both regions. Follow evocative pilgrim trails, once trodden by St Francis of Assisi, to remote churches and a dramatic fortress. Walk along pretty woodland paths and enjoy an exclusive guided tour of a 13th century Benedictine monastery. Stay in a beautifully restored abbey and finish the holiday with three nights in the heart of the lovely town of Gubbio.



### HIGHLIGHTS

- Outstanding hiking in lesser-known corners of Tuscany and Umbria
- Lunch at an organic olive oil farm
- See world-famous Piero della Francesca painting

### WALKING

**Terrain:** Hilly terrain, most walking on dirt roads and woodland tracks. Challenging (optional) final walk on mountain trails

**Shortest/Longest Day:**  
6km/3.8miles: 18km/11.3miles

### ACCOMMODATION

**Palazzo Magi:** 4-star Renaissance palace in centre of Sansepolcro

**Abbazia San Faustino:** Luxurious country hotel with swimming pool converted from a 13th century abbey

**Relais Ducale:** 4-star hotel in heart of Gubbio. Formerly the Ducal Palace



## SLOVENIA AND FRIULI

Lakes and Mountains, Waterfalls and Wine

<b>9 DAYS</b>	7 - 15 June, 2016		
<b>9 DAYS</b>	26 September - 4 October, 2016		
<b>START:</b>	Ljubljana	<b>FINISH:</b>	Venice
<b>PRICE:</b>	€ 2,825 pp	<b>SING. SUPP:</b>	€ 200

Slovenia, often referred to as "The Sunny Side of the Alps", is a tiny, beautiful, green country on Italy's north eastern border. After meeting in its capital city we travel to tranquil Lake Bohinj and hike in the stunning Julian Alps. We visit Kobarid on the dazzling turquoise Soca river, a town of great significance during World War 1 and immortalised by Ernest Hemingway in his novel "A Farewell to Arms." Today it is the culinary capital of Slovenia and we dine in two of its finest restaurants. We make the border crossing between Slovenia and Italy on foot to arrive in the Italian region of Friuli, where we explore the excellent vineyards of the Collio hills and the Unesco World Heritage sites of Cividale and Aquileia.



### HIGHLIGHTS

- Crystal clear lakes and turquoise rivers
- Climb Mount Matajur to cross Italian-Slovene border on foot
- Walk to the Franja Partisan Hospital in the Pasica Gorge

### WALKING

**Terrain:** Farm tracks and mountain trails. Ascend/descend 300-400m on most days, with an 800m ascent on Day 6. The mountain trails are rocky in places with short sections of exposed terrain on Day 3

**Shortest/Longest Day:**  
6.5km/4.1miles: 10.5km/6.6miles

### ACCOMMODATION

**Hotel Jezero:** Comfortable lakeside hotel with wonderful views of Lake Bohinj

**Hotel Hvala:** Family run hotel with outstanding restaurant in Kobarid (Caporetto)

**Grand Hotel Entourage:** Four-star hotel in historical centre of Gorizia located in a former palace

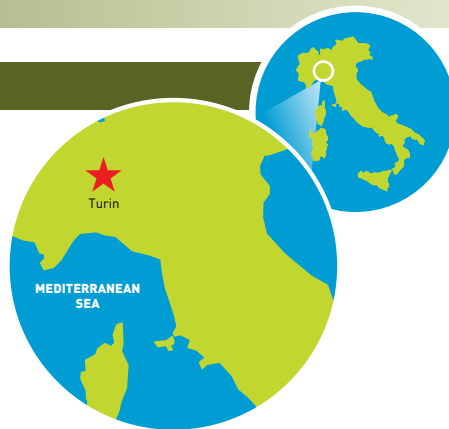


## THE JEWELS OF PIEDMONT

A Celebration of Slow Food

<b>8 DAYS</b>	17 - 24 June 2016		
<b>8 DAYS</b>	7 - 14 October 2016		
<b>START:</b>	Turin	<b>FINISH:</b>	Turin
<b>PRICE:</b>	€ 2,695 pp	<b>SING. SUPP:</b>	€ 200

Piedmont is the birthplace of the global "Slow Food" movement and our tour here celebrates much of this region's world-class produce. We taste the superlative wines of Barolo and Barbaresco, hunt for the legendary white truffle of Alba in the autumn, enjoy creamy risottos and hand made pasta and learn about artisan cheeses. The walking takes us through the immaculate vineyards of the area as well as on more mountainous tracks past glassy alpine lakes and tiny hamlets suspended in time. We visit palaces, castles and monasteries and explore the pivotal history of this prosperous region. Piedmont is recognised throughout Europe for its culinary expertise and we have the chance to dine in some of its most prestigious restaurants.



### HIGHLIGHTS

- Outstanding food and world-class wine
- Truffle hunting in the autumn
- Stunning hikes with backdrop of snow-capped mountains

### WALKING

**Terrain:** Rolling hills, farm tracks through woods and vineyards. Rugged mountain trail on day 3  
**Shortest/Longest Day:**  
 6.5km/4.1miles:12km/7.6miles

### ACCOMMODATION

**Antico Podere Propano:** Very comfortable hotel in a former farm on the edge of the medieval town of Saluzzo, rooms set around a peaceful courtyard  
**Corte Gondina:** Delightful boutique hotel in village of La Morra with pretty garden and pool



NEW FOR 2016

## FRANCE AND ITALY

From Provence to Piedmont

<b>9 DAYS</b>	26 June - 4 July 2016		
<b>9 DAYS</b>	5 - 13 September 2016		
<b>START:</b>	Nice	<b>FINISH:</b>	Turin
<b>PRICE:</b>	€ 2,795 pp	<b>SING. SUPP:</b>	€ 200

This is a brand new tour for 2016 which takes us from Provence to Piedmont. The tour explores the stunning Mercantour National Park, a short distance from Nice on the Cote d'Azur, before we cross the border between France and Italy to hike in the Maritime Alps. We stay in the small ski resort of Limone Piemonte at 1,000m and finish in the elegant Piedmontese city of Cuneo. The mountain hiking has dramatic and spectacular views of snow-capped peaks, lakes and streams, and carpets of wild flowers in spring. We discover the rich history of this region on foot, with its nineteenth century forts built along the border, attractive historic villages and a delightful remote church with 15th century frescoes.



### HIGHLIGHTS

- Spectacular mountain scenery
- See Vicoforte, one of Piedmont's architectural masterpieces
- Fascinating cross-border culture

### WALKING

**Terrain:** Mountain hiking on well-graded alpine trails, rocky in places. Although daily distances are short there is a significant amount of ascent and descent on most days (500m to 800m) so a good level of fitness is required.  
**Shortest/Longest Day:**  
 6km/12km

### ACCOMMODATION

**La Bonne Auberge:** A simple, cosy, family-run hotel in the Mercantour National Park  
**Grand Palais Excelsior:** A former summer residence of the Princes of Monaco, this hotel has an excellent restaurant and luxury spa facilities  
**Palazzo Lovera:** A four star Renaissance palazzo in the historic centre of Cuneo.





## THE BEST OF THE ITALIAN ALPS

Hiking in the Shadow of Europe's Highest Mountains

<b>9 DAYS</b>	6 - 14 July 2016		
<b>START:</b>	Turin	<b>FINISH:</b>	Turin
<b>PRICE:</b>	€ 2,825 pp	<b>SING. SUPP:</b>	€ 275

Visiting the Italian Alps in July is to see them in their very best season. We hike surrounded by spectacular views of the Gran Paradiso, Monte Rosa and Mont Blanc mountain ranges and, although the Val d'Aosta is the smallest region of Italy, it is big on hospitality and delicious French-influenced cuisine. We have a three night stay in exquisite Courmayeur, which sits on the border with France, from where we take a cable car to the "rooftop of Europe" at 3466m for unbeatable views of Mont Blanc. We hike a section of the Tour of Mont Blanc, visit ancient castles and follow in the footsteps of Roman armies, medieval pilgrims and Napoleon Bonaparte. The Gran Paradiso National Park, where we finish, is home to some unique wildlife and, at this time of year, stunning flower-filled alpine meadows.



### HIGHLIGHTS

- The Eighth Wonder of the World - a cable car journey from Courmayeur to the heart of the Mont Blanc Massif at 3466m from where the peak seems to be just an arm's length away
- Abundant alpine flowers
- Breathtaking views

### WALKING

**Terrain:** Mountain hiking on well-graded alpine trails. Although many of the distances are short there is a significant amount (up to 800m) of ascent and descent, notably on days 3,6 and 8

**Shortest/Longest Day:**  
6km/3.8miles: 11km/6.7miles

### ACCOMMODATION

**Ad Gallias:** Delightful four star hotel in the medieval town of Bard. Excellent restaurant and spa

**Cresta del Duc:** Four star hotel in wonderful alpine village of Courmayeur. Spa facilities

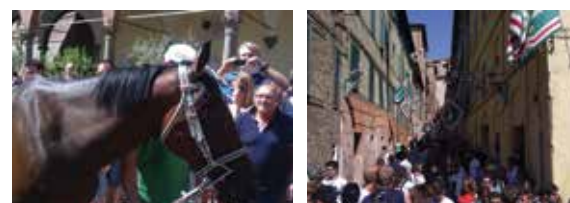
**Hotel Bellevue:** Luxurious hotel in the heart of the Gran Paradiso National Park in Cogne. Michelin starred restaurant and outstanding spa and indoor pool

## THE PALIO OF SIENA

Italy's Greatest Spectacle

<b>7 DAYS</b>	12-18 August 2016		
<b>START:</b>	Pisa	<b>FINISH:</b>	Pisa
<b>PRICE:</b>	€ 2,625 pp	<b>SING. SUPP:</b>	€ 275

The Palio horse race in Siena is one of the most spectacular festivals in Italy. It is the culmination of months of preparation in the city and the Palio itself is a 4-day event. To watch it on TV, read about it in the paper or even stand in the square and watch the race itself is only to scratch the surface of this fabulous tradition. We stay for the whole tour in the very centre of Siena and immerse ourselves in the history, rituals and folklore of this unique event. We witness the horses being selected, visit the private art collection of the city's oldest bank and dine in the streets the night before the race alongside thousands of excited Sienese residents. It is a once-in-a-lifetime experience and truly unforgettable.



### HIGHLIGHTS

- Grandstand seats for the race
- Pre-race *Contrada* dinner in the streets of Siena
- Private visit to a *Contrada* museum

### WALKING

**Terrain:** Three half-day hikes in rolling countryside outside the city. A lot of city walking

**Shortest/Longest Day:**  
6km/3.8miles: 9km/5.7miles

### ACCOMMODATION

**Palazzo Ravizza:** A charming historic hotel in the heart of the city with fabulous views across the Sienese countryside

## PARMA, TUSCANY AND THE CINQUE TERRE

Prosciutto and Parmesan, Pilgrims and Poets

**8 DAYS** 16 - 23 September 2016

**START:** Parma **FINISH:** Pisa

**PRICE:** € 2,625 pp **SING. SUPP:** € 200

This tour starts in Parma, the undisputed gastronomic capital of Emilia-Romagna, and home to some of Italy's most iconic gourmet specialities. We also visit the Slow Food town of Borgotaro as it celebrates its annual porcini mushroom fair and tour a local parmesan cheese factory. We hike one of the most beautiful sections of the ancient pilgrim route to Rome, known as the Via Francigena, and discover Tuscany's untouched Lunigiana region. We continue towards the crystal clear waters of the blue Ligurian Sea and the famous "Gulf of Poets" which was immortalised by Lord Byron and the Romantic poets. The final day is free to explore the quaint coastal town of Lerici or take a boat trip across the bay to Portovenere and the charming villages of the Cinque Terre.



### HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit a parmesan cheese producer and learn what it takes to make a wheel of the famous cheese
- Make tracks on one of the prettiest sections of the Via Francigena pilgrim trail, complete with medieval stone bridges
- Lazy day on the coast with boat trip to Portovenere and the Cinque Terre

### WALKING

**Terrain:** Hilly terrain with some long days interspersed with easier days. Paved pilgrim trails, woodland and farm tracks

**Shortest/Longest Day:** 5.4km/3.4miles: 20.5km/12.9miles

### ACCOMMODATION

**Borgo Casale:** Boutique hotel nestled in the Romagna hills, tastefully converted from a 15th century village

**Costa d'Orsola Agriturismo:** Cosy country hotel near Pontremoli with breathtaking views of the Apennines and the Apuan Alps. Swimming pool

**Locanda del Lido:** Spectacular four star hotel situated on its own private beach in the lovely town of Lerici



## SOUTHERN ITALY

Basilicata: The land where time stood still

**9 DAYS** 8 - 16 October 2016

**9 DAYS** 18 - 26 October 2016

**START:** Naples **FINISH:** Naples

**PRICE:** € 2,795 pp **SING. SUPP:** € 275

This tour explores the undiscovered region of Basilicata in the instep of the foot of Italy. Much of the region is completely untouched by the modern world and time seemingly stands still. We start in the pretty town of Maratea on the west coast before heading inland to the pristine Pollino National Park. Here we stay in a mountain refuge at 1350m for three nights, surrounded by magnificent scenery and nothing but the sights and sounds of the natural world. The final stop of the tour is the unique Unesco World Heritage city of Matera. We stay in an Albergo Diffuso, or "scattered hotel", with rooms carefully converted from the town's original cave dwellings, each with its own individual features and atmosphere. Our final walk explores the compelling history of this matchless city and the surrounding countryside.



### HIGHLIGHTS

- Sleep in a cave in the Unesco World Heritage city of Matera
- Hike in the spectacular and untouched Pollino National Park
- Discover spellbinding wonders of this ancient land

### WALKING

**Terrain:** We walk on mule tracks, forest paths and rugged mountain trails as well as hiking in open pastures. There are some significant ascents and descents on this tour, with some up to 700m.

**Shortest/Longest Day:** 8km/4.9 miles: 16.5km/10.2 miles

### ACCOMMODATION

**Locanda delle Donne Monache:** 4-star hotel in former convent in old town of Maratea with a swimming pool

**Rifugio Fasanelli:** Comfortable mountain lodge at 1350m with excellent restaurant serving Lucanian specialities such as the "cruschi"

**Le Grotte della Cività:** Sister hotel to the stunning Sextantio hotel where we stay on our Abruzzo tour, this hotel's rooms are converted from Matera's original cave dwellings

## THE WILDS OF ABRUZZO

Stunning Peaks and Silent Valleys

<b>9 DAYS</b>	18 - 26 October 2016		
<b>START:</b>	Rome	<b>FINISH:</b>	Rome
<b>PRICE:</b>	€ 2,825 pp	<b>SING. SUPP:</b>	€ 250

Abruzzo remains the only region in Italy to boast three National Parks and our tour in this area explores them all. Lying just a short distance to the east of Rome Abruzzo is wild, unspoilt and hauntingly beautiful. Medieval villages perch on hilltops surrounded by the majestic peaks of the Apennine mountains. The parks abound with wild flowers, chamois, deer, wolves and the rarely seen Marsican bear. Much of the region feels untouched by modern life, not least the unexpected Baroque masterpiece of Pescocostanzo. The Abruzzese people are warm, hospitable and justly proud of their stunning land and ancient heritage, which helps to make hiking in Abruzzo an awe-inspiring and unforgettable experience.



### HIGHLIGHTS

- Staying in the unique environment of Sextantio Albergo Diffuso
- Hiking in a region where time has stood still
- Cooking class of traditional Abruzzese specialities

### WALKING

**Terrain:** Hiking at altitudes between 1100m and 1800m. Mountain trails, woodland and farm tracks. Significant ascents/descents, especially on days 5 and 8

**Shortest/Longest Day:** 6.5km/4.1miles:17.5km/11miles

### ACCOMMODATION

**Sextantio:** Amazing concept hotel with rooms scattered through the unspoilt medieval village of Santo Stefano

**Hotel San Rocco:** Comfortable family-run hotel in the delightful Baroque village of Pescocostanzo

**Villa Quintilliani:** Liberty-style villa on the edge of the lively town of Pescasseroli



## A TUSCAN HARVEST

Chianti, Castles and Tuscan Cooking

<b>8 DAYS</b>	28 October - 4 November 2016		
<b>START:</b>	Pisa	<b>FINISH:</b>	Pisa
<b>PRICE:</b>	€ 2,795 pp	<b>SING. SUPP:</b>	€ 295

This is classic Tuscany with the tour celebrating the region's unmistakable landscape, abundant vineyards and strong culinary heritage. The hikes take us off the beaten track to remote castles, formal gardens and the vineyards of Chianti where we meet local winemakers to taste their wines and olive oils. A free day in Siena offers the chance to explore this medieval jewel and see the Piazza del Campo where the world-famous Palio horse-race is run twice each year. We have fun with a local chef making our own pasta in the sixteenth century kitchen of a private country villa and enjoy a variety of fabulous restaurants along the way which showcase the very best of Tuscan cooking and the region's world-famous wines.



### HIGHLIGHTS

- Cooking class with delightful local chef
- Beautiful hiking in classic Tuscan countryside
- Visit to Siena with private guided tour

### WALKING

**Terrain:** Mostly gentle walking on gravel roads and farm trails. Rolling hills so lots of up and down but no major climbs.

**Shortest/Longest Day:** 9km/5.7miles: 16km/10.1miles

### ACCOMMODATION

**La Suvera:** A luxurious five star hotel converted from a former Papal villa with beautiful gardens and pool

**Palazzo Leopoldo:** Four star hotel, formerly a noble residence, in the heart of the delightful village of Radda-in-Chianti



## Which hike to choose?

The individual tour pages on our website give a detailed description of each itinerary and information about the walking. Below we have attempted to rate the tours in terms of difficulty, taking into account the amount of ascent/descent each day, the type of terrain and the length of each day in time and distance. The weather will also have an effect on the ease/difficulty of the hikes. If you have any concerns about the hiking please do get in touch – we lead the tours ourselves so know the trails first-hand and can give individual advice about which tour we think would suit you best. We like to include some challenging hikes on all the tours but you will find these are balanced with more leisurely days. On all tours we have a support vehicle which meets us at lunch (there are a few exceptions in the mountains when there is no vehicle access and we carry a hike-in picnic) so there is the opportunity to walk a shorter day if required.

### France and Italy The Best of the Italian Alps Southern Italy

- Several ascents/descents in excess of 800m
- Some steep gradients
- Alpine regions where many hikes are at altitudes in excess of 1000m (sometimes significantly so)
- Rugged terrain – rocky mountain trails

### The Italian Lakes Wilds of Abruzzo Slovenia and Friuli

- A lot of ascent/descent, including one hike in excess of 800m
- Occasionally at altitudes in excess of 1000m
- Some rugged terrain – rocky mountain trails and/or cobbled mule paths

### Medieval Umbria Parma, Tuscany and the Cinque Terre Lucca, Volterra and the Island of Elba Great Ocean Walk

- Distances in excess of 14km most days
- Rugged terrain/beach walking/steps
- Significant amount of up and down each day

### The Jewels of Piedmont The Australian Walking Weekends

- Occasionally at altitudes over 1000m
- Well graded trails
- Many short ups and downs during the day
- At least one very challenging day

### A Tuscan Harvest

- Well graded trails, generally easy underfoot
- Rolling hills
- Some days over 15km, punctuated by shorter days

### The Palio of Siena

- Ascents/descents up to 250m
- Terrain not challenging
- Half-day hikes (6km-9km)

“There is no bad weather, just inappropriate clothing”.  
Sir Ranulph Fiennes.

## Footwear

The most important thing is your footwear. We recommend a strong pair of waterproof walking boots with good ankle support, and these could be leather or a more modern lightweight waterproof fabric boot. It is essential to “wear in” your boots before embarking on the full week’s walking holiday.

## Clothing

The best advice for clothing is to wear layers. Modern high-tec fabrics for shirts and walking trousers are windproof but also very quick drying and two walking shirts in this fabric should be sufficient for a week. On top of the shirt a fleece will keep you warm - especially as temperatures can change swiftly according to altitude and wind chill factors. For hikes in the mountains we recommend a long-sleeved thermal vest/shirt. Walking trousers with zip-off bottoms which become shorts are extremely useful. A good quality waterproof jacket eg Gore-Tex with a hood is essential - the fabric is breathable as well as being watertight. Waterproof over-trousers might also be considered.

## Hats and Sunglasses

A broad brimmed hat to shade your face from hot sun is very important and, if you are walking in mountains, you need to bring a fleece or wool hat and gloves. Sunglasses to protect your eyes from the glare are another essential. We have our own range of branded hats and head bands which you can find on our website and buy from us on tour.

## Walking Poles

Two strong lightweight poles can greatly improve your stability and reduce wear and tear on your muscles and joints. The best ones are made of carbon fibre but all poles should have comfortable cork handles with adjustable wrist straps. Poles are essential for the mountain hiking days in Abruzzo, Slovenia, Piedmont, Italian Alps, Southern Italy and the Italian Lakes - as well as on Australian tours. It is worth noting that Leki makes a compact version of poles to fit the smallest of suitcases.

## Day Pack

We recommend a lightweight back pack, with capacity of approximately 20 litres, to hold your water bottle, extra layers of clothing, a camera and sunscreen and insect repellent. The most comfortable ones sit away from your back to allow a flow of air between you and the pack. In all cases it is a good idea to carry a large plastic bag to line the day pack and help to waterproof it, unless your back pack has a built-in waterproof cover.

## Water Bottle

We offer you water bottles on the Italian tours, as this helps to reduce the needless waste of plastic. Other people like to use platypus water carriers worn in the back pack with the drinking tube. If you are joining a tour in Australia you will need to bring your own water bottle.

The Kit List page on our website gives further details.

# 2016 TOUR DATES

All-inclusive guided gourmet walking holidays in Italy and beyond ...

## NOVEMBER 2015

27 - 29	Weekend in the High Country
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## MARCH

4 - 7	The Highlights of Mount Buffalo National Park
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25 - 27	Easter at Falls Creek
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## APRIL

8 - 10	Victorian Alps and Vineyards
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## MAY

6 - 14	Lucca, Volterra and the Island of Elba
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18 - 25	The Italian Lakes
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27 May - 3 June	Medieval Umbria
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## JUNE

7 - 15	Slovenia and Friuli
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17 - 24	The Jewels of Piedmont
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26 June - 4 July	France and Italy
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## JULY

6 - 14	The Best of the Italian Alps
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## AUGUST

12 - 18	The Palio of Siena
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## SEPTEMBER

5 - 13	France and Italy
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16 - 23	Parma, Tuscany and the Cinque Terre
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26 Sept - 4 Oct	Slovenia and Friuli
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## OCTOBER

7 - 14	The Jewels of Piedmont
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8 - 16	Southern Italy
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18 - 26	Southern Italy
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18 - 26	The Wilds of Abruzzo
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28 - 4 Nov	A Tuscan Harvest
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