



# HEDONISTIC HIKING

FOOD • WINE • WALKING

# 2018



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



# Food. Wine. Walks.



**I**n 2007, our enthusiasm for delicious food, fine wine and great walking gave rise to Hedonistic Hiking and, for ten years, we have shared these passions with our guests. Our small group, guided hiking holidays travel across a growing number of Italy's most striking landscapes, crossing its borders into France, Slovenia and Austria.

Alongside some spectacular hiking, we set out to give our guests an insight into the region's gastronomy, its wine and its cultural heritage. We meet with food and wine experts, test and taste local produce, enjoy al fresco picnics and stay in boutique, family-run accommodation.

We are always thrilled when our guests come back to experience another tour – and well over half of our guests do. If this is your first introduction to Hedonistic Hiking, we hope the following information addresses some of your queries.



## How long are the walks?

Each of the individual tour pages features the distances for the shortest and longest days, ranging from 6 km up to 20.5 km. Our tour grading system takes into account the terrain, altitude and levels of ascent or descent on a given day. There is also a support vehicle on hand so that guests can choose to walk as much or as little as they please.

## What is the average age of the hikers?

Most of our guests are in the 50-70 age range, although we have welcomed hikers in their 80s and in their 30s. Hedonistic Hikers come from English-speaking countries all over the world, so the groups are an interesting mix of friendly, like-minded travellers.

## What if I am travelling on my own?

Our tours are made up of solo travellers, couples and small groups of friends. Mealtimes are relaxed, convivial affairs and are ideal for anyone who enjoys sharing wonderful meals and sparkling conversation! All solo travellers are allocated their own rooms, subject to a nominal single supplement.

# alking

## How fit do I need to be?

If you are active and enjoy walking, you can choose from a wide range of tours. Our grading system will give you a better idea of the most appropriate tour for your fitness level and clearly indicates the most challenging hikes. To help raise fitness levels before your holiday, visit our website for tips on building strength and useful stretches in addition to choosing the right clothing and equipment.

## Who leads the groups?

We are an Anglo-Australian Italian-speaking husband and wife team, and one of us leads every tour. Living much of the year in Italy means we design and research the finite details of every tour ourselves, which ensures that our guests get the best possible experience. We are supported by a small team of dedicated and extremely knowledgeable colleagues who help with logistics.



## What is included?

- Accommodation in atmospheric hand-picked hotels
- Support and local knowledge of two experienced guides
- All meals matched with fine local wines
- Gourmet picnic lunches
- Dinners at superb local restaurants
- A support vehicle at all times (except one or two high mountain days)
- Transport to/from the start and end of the holiday
- Comprehensive pre-trip information
- Luggage transported so all you need to carry is a small backpack
- Museum visits, cooking classes and wine tastings as per each individual itinerary

Our tours are genuinely all-inclusive, excluding the flight. Our customer feedback rates us excellent in terms of value for money.

## What's new for 2018?

Be the first to try the latest addition to our collection! Our new tour starts and finishes in Bologna and explores the beautiful Mugello valley in northern Tuscany, a landscape which inspired many great Renaissance artists. We follow sections of the important WWII Gothic Line and finish in Ravenna, once a Roman capital and home to some of the world's most dazzling Byzantine mosaics.

If you share our passion for food, wine and walking then we hope to welcome you on a tour very soon!

*Jackie & Mick Parsons*



Visit [www.hedonistichiking.com](http://www.hedonistichiking.com) for full details of all tours and for information to help you plan your holiday.





## THE ITALIAN LAKES

### Lakes, Gardens and Majestic Mountains

**8 DAYS** 3 - 10 May 2018 | **START:** Milan **FINISH:** Milan | **PRICE:** € 3,095 pp | **SING. SUPP:** € 275

**8 DAYS** 13 - 20 Sept 2018 | **START:** Milan **FINISH:** Milan | **PRICE:** € 3,095 pp | **SING. SUPP:** € 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 some of Milan's hidden artistic gems completes a sensational itinerary for this tour.



#### HIGHLIGHTS:

- Private tour of some of Milan's hidden artistic gems
- Private boat trips on Lakes Como, Maggiore and Orta
- Visits to the gardens of Isola Bella and Villa Taranto



#### WALKING (LEVEL 4):

**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/11.4 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





## LUCCA, VOLTERRA AND THE ISLAND OF ELBA

### Hiking through Tuscan history

**9 DAYS** 4 - 12 May 2018 | **START:** Pisa **FINISH:** Pisa | **PRICE:** € 3,025 pp | **SING. SUPP:** € 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 (LEVEL 3):

**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/11.4 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



NEW  
TOUR

## NORTHERN TUSCANY AND RAVENNA

### The Mugello, Medieval Villages and Mosaics

**7 DAYS** 13 - 20 May 2018 | **START:** Bologna **FINISH:** Bologna | **PRICE:** € 2,895pp | **SING. SUPP:** € 250

**7 DAYS** 10 - 17 Oct 2018 | **START:** Bologna **FINISH:** Bologna | **PRICE:** € 2,895pp | **SING. SUPP:** € 250

This brand new 7 night itinerary for 2018 starts and finishes in Bologna, the culinary capital of Emilia-Romagna. We drop down to the northern part of Tuscany to explore the unknown territory of the Mugello: a wide, green valley criss-crossed by the Sieve river, shaping a landscape filled with vines, chestnut woods and beech forests. Our hikes take us over lands which inspired great Renaissance artists and poets and we follow sections of the Gothic Line, the last major German defensive line in the Italian campaign of World War II. We travel towards the Adriatic coast to finish in the unrivalled city of Ravenna, once the capital of the Western Roman Empire, but still home to some of the world's most dazzling Byzantine mosaics.



#### HIGHLIGHTS:

- Private guided tour of UNESCO World Heritage sites in Ravenna
- Fabulous tastings at wine and olive oil estates, and the October chestnut festival
- Outstanding hiking in a lesser-known part of Tuscany



#### WALKING (LEVEL 3):

**Terrain:** Relatively hilly, with some significant ups and downs, but not mountainous. Gravel roads and woodland tracks.

#### Shortest/Longest Day:

7km/4.4 miles: 17km/10.7 miles



#### ACCOMMODATION:

**Villa Campestri:** Family owned olive-oil resort, with pool and excellent restaurant

**Locanda sul Senio:** Albergo diffuso, scattered hotel in beautiful Mugello village on the Senio river

**Palazzo Bezzi:** Four star hotel close to the historic centre of Ravenna





## THE WILDS OF ABRUZZO

### Stunning Peaks and Silent Valleys

**9 DAYS** 22 - 30 May 2018 | **START:** Rome **FINISH:** Rome | **PRICE:** € 3,025 pp | **SING. SUPP:** € 250

Lying just a short distance east of Rome the region of Abruzzo is wild, unspoilt and hauntingly beautiful. Our tour here explores all three of its national parks, which abound with wild flowers, chamois, deer, wolves and the rarely seen Marsican bear. We stay in remote villages, perched high on hilltops, surrounded by the majestic peaks of the Apennine mountains. Much of the region feels untouched by modern life and we explore some of its oldest culinary traditions. In Spring it is carpeted with wild flowers before autumn paints the landscape red and gold and the ancient beech forests are at their most stunning. The Abruzzese are extremely warm and hospitable which makes hiking in this part of Italy a truly 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 (LEVEL 4):

**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





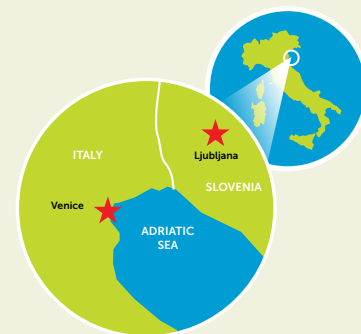
## SLOVENIA AND FRIULI

### Lakes and Mountains, Waterfalls and Wine

**9 DAYS** 1 - 9 June 2018 | **START:** Ljubljana **FINISH:** Venice | **PRICE:** € 3,025 pp | **SING. SUPP:** € 200

**9 DAYS** 30 Sept - 8 Oct 2018 | **START:** Ljubljana **FINISH:** Venice | **PRICE:** € 3,025 pp | **SING. SUPP:** € 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 (LEVEL 4):

**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





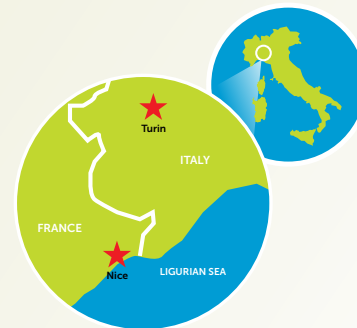


## FRANCE AND ITALY

# Over the Alps from Provence to Piedmont

**9 DAYS** 12 - 20 June 2018 | **START:** Nice **FINISH:** Turin | **PRICE:** € 2,995 pp | **SING. SUPP:** € 200

This fabulous itinerary takes us from the South of France to the North of Italy. 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, where we learn to cook local specialities. 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:

- Fascinating cross-border culture
- Visit Vicoforte, one of Piedmont's architectural masterpieces
- Fun cooking class in Cuneo



### WALKING (LEVEL 5):

**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/3.7 miles: 12km/7.6 miles



### ACCOMMODATION:

**La Bonne Auberge:** A simple, cosy, family-run hotel in the Mercantour National Park

**Grand Hotel Principe:** A four star hotel nestled high in the ski resort of Limone, with an outdoor pool.

**Palazzo Lovera:** A four star Renaissance palazzo in the historic centre of Cuneo.





## THE JEWELS OF PIEDMONT

### A Celebration of Slow Food

**8 DAYS** 22 - 29 June 2018 | **START:** Turin **FINISH:** Turin | **PRICE:** €2,895 pp | **SING. SUPP:** €200

**8 DAYS** 19 - 26 Oct 2018 | **START:** Turin **FINISH:** Turin | **PRICE:** €2,895 pp | **SING. SUPP:** €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 (LEVEL 2):

**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





## SOUTHERN ITALY

### Basilicata: The land where time stood still

**9 DAYS** 22 - 30 June 2018 | **START:** Naples **FINISH:** Naples | **PRICE:** € 2,995 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 the charming small town of Rotonda for three nights, surrounded by its magnificent scenery and fascinating history. The final stop of the tour is the unique UNESCO World Heritage city of Matera which, in 2019, will be the European Capital of Culture. 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 (LEVEL 4):

**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/5 miles: 16.5km/10.4 miles



#### ACCOMMODATION:

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

**Il Borgo Ospitale:** A "scattered hotel" spread across different buildings in Rotonda, in the heart of the Pollino National Park

**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 BEST OF THE ITALIAN ALPS

### Hiking in the Shadow of Europe's Highest Mountains

**9 DAYS** 3 - 11 July 2018 | **START:** Turin **FINISH:** Turin | **PRICE:** € 3,025 pp | **SING. SUPP:** € 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 "roof 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
- Abundant alpine flowers
- Breathtaking views



#### WALKING (LEVEL 5):

**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/3.7 miles: 11km/7 miles



#### 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



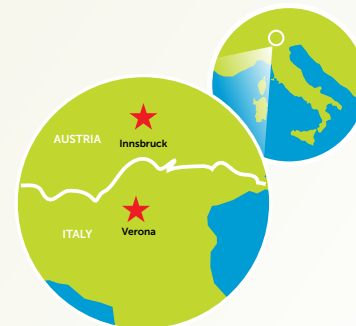


## AUSTRIA AND THE DOLOMITES

### Splendours of the Austrian and Italian Tyrol

**9 DAYS** 14 - 22 July 2018 | **START:** Innsbruck **FINISH:** Verona | **PRICE:** € 3,025 pp | **SING. SUPP:** € 275

This tour starts in Innsbruck and explores the delightful Tyrol landscape of Austria and Italy. We hike in the beautiful Deferegggen valley in the Hohe Tauern National Park with spectacular views of Austria's highest peak, the Grossglockner (3798m). We cross the border from Austria into Italy on foot to hike in the UNESCO World Heritage mountain scenery of the Dolomites and discover the region's captivating Tyrolean hospitality and culture. We have a guided tour of the fascinating museum in Bolzano, which is dedicated to the 5,300 year old Otzi frozen man, before finishing in Verona with its impressive Roman arena and world-famous opera festival.



#### HIGHLIGHTS:

- UNESCO World Heritage landscape of the Dolomites
- Spectacular alpine hiking
- Fascinating Tyrolean culture in Italy and Austria



#### WALKING (LEVEL 5):

Mountain hiking on well-graded alpine trails, rocky in places. Significant ascents and descents every day, from 500m-800m, and 1000m on the final day. A sound level of fitness is required.

#### Shortest/Longest Day:

11km/7 miles: 19.5km/12.3 miles



#### ACCOMMODATION:

**Gasthof Traube:** Typical family-run Tyrolean guesthouse with a traditional "stube" restaurant

**Macher's Landhotel:** Comfortable family owned hotel with excellent restaurant in the Hohe Tauern National Park. Sauna and steam room

**Bad Moos:** Four star hotel with pool, extensive spa facilities and stunning mountain views of the Dolomites





## THE PALIO OF SIENA

### Italy's Greatest Spectacle

**7 DAYS** 12 - 18 Aug 2018 | **START:** Pisa **FINISH:** Pisa | **PRICE:** € 2,995 pp | **SING. SUPP:** € 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 Siense 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 (LEVEL 1):

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

**Shortest/Longest Day:**  
6km/3.7 miles: 9km/5.7 miles



#### ACCOMMODATION:

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





## A TUSCAN HARVEST

### Chianti, Castles and Tuscan Cooking

**8 DAYS** 2 - 9 Sept 2018 | **START:** Pisa **FINISH:** Pisa | **PRICE:** € 2,995 pp | **SING. SUPP:** € 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 wonderful wines.



#### HIGHLIGHTS:

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



#### WALKING (LEVEL 1):

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

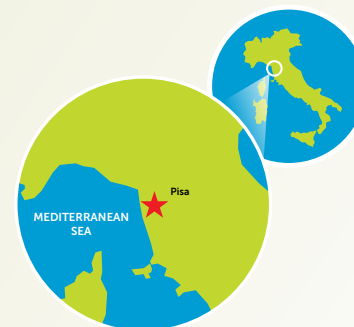
**Shortest/Longest Day:**  
9km/5.7miles: 16km/10.1miles



#### 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





## PARMA, TUSCANY AND THE LIGURIAN SEA

### Prosciutto and Parmesan, Pilgrims and Poets

**8 DAYS** 21 - 28 Sept 2018 | **START:** Parma **FINISH:** Pisa | **PRICE:** € 2,895 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 or the Cinque Terre



#### WALKING (LEVEL 3):

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

**Shortest/Longest Day:**  
5.5km/3.5 miles: 20.5km/13 miles



#### 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



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## HEDONISTIC HIKING IN AUSTRALIA

### Taster weekends in Victoria

We usually spend the months of November to April in Australia and like to offer a couple of taster hiking weekends in Victoria. These are designed to give those who have not travelled with us before a chance to sample our style of holidays and our signature blend of food, wine and walking. They are based in the High Country and could easily form part of a longer visit to explore other parts of our beautiful region.

In addition we offer bespoke gourmet tours for private groups of 8 or more on the Great Ocean Walk. This 100 km trail from Apollo Bay to the Twelve Apostles has become one of Australia's iconic walks and guests who complete the hike finish with a true sense of achievement. Our fully-guided standard route takes seven days but we can tailor the walk to make a shorter version if required. Contact us early for summer 2018/2019 availability.



#### The Highlights of Mount Buffalo

**23 - 26 February 2018**

Three fantastic days of hiking on trails in Mount Buffalo National Park and through the vineyards of the Ovens Valley. Evenings include dinner with famous local chef Patrizia Simone, an unforgettable sunset picnic on the highest point of Mount Buffalo and a hands-on pizza-making class in nearby Wandiligong.

#### Hiking around Beechworth

**23 - 25 March 2018**

Beechworth is North East Victoria's best-preserved gold rush town and our two hikes take us to the Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park and through the area's prestigious Nebbiolo vineyards. We dine in two of the town's most popular restaurants, including the award-winning "Provenance", and taste some of the finest wines of the region.



# 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, from **Level 5** being the most challenging, down to **Level 1** being the least. We have taken 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 and altitude 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.

## LEVEL 5: Austria and the Dolomites France and Italy The Best of the Italian Alps

- Several ascents/descents over 800m (and up to 1,000m)
- Some steep gradients
- Alpine regions with hikes often at altitudes over 1500m
- Rugged terrain – rocky mountain trails

## LEVEL 4: Southern Italy The Italian Lakes Slovenia and Friuli The Wilds of Abruzzo

- 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



## LEVEL 3: Northern Tuscany and Ravenna Lucca, Volterra and the Island of Elba Parma, Tuscany and the Ligurian Sea Great Ocean Walk

- Distances in excess of 14km some days interspersed with shorter days
- Some rugged terrain/beach walking/steps
- One hike with ascent/descent close to 700m
- Significant amount of up and down each day

## LEVEL 2: The Jewels of Piedmont The Australian Walking Weekends

- Occasionally at altitudes over 1500m
- Well graded trails
- Many short ups and downs during the day
- At least one challenging day

## LEVEL 1: 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)

# What will you need to bring?

## 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, the Italian Lakes, France and Italy and Austria and the Dolomites - 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 give you BPA-free 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.

*"there is no bad weather, just inappropriate clothing"*

Sir Ranulph Fiennes



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

MAY 2018	<b>3 - 10</b> The Italian Lakes	<b>4 - 12</b> Lucca, Volterra and the Island of Elba	<b>13 - 20</b> Northern Tuscany and Ravenna <b>NEW TOUR</b>	<b>22 - 30</b> The Wilds of Abruzzo	JUNE 2018	<b>1 - 9</b> Slovenia and Friuli	<b>12 - 20</b> France and Italy	<b>22 - 29</b> The Jewels of Piedmont	
	<b>22 - 30</b> Southern Italy	JULY 2018	<b>3 - 11</b> The Best of the Italian Alps	<b>14 - 22</b> Austria and the Dolomites		AUGUST 2018	<b>12 - 18</b> The Palio of Siena	SEPTEMBER 2018	<b>2 - 9</b> A Tuscan Harvest
<b>30 - 8</b> Oct Slovenia and Friuli	OCTOBER 2018	<b>10 - 17</b> Northern Tuscany and Ravenna <b>NEW TOUR</b>	<b>19 - 26</b> The Jewels of Piedmont	See website for details of our annual Australian Taster Weekends in February and March					



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