

Epworth Via Francigena: Best of Tuscany



Trip Highlights

Raise funds to support vital Epworth Medical Foundation trials

Walking through the spectacular landscapes of the Tuscan countryside full of vineyards and picturesque rolling hills

Exploring the round walls of the historical fortified village of Monteriggioni

Discovering the charming UNESCO towns of San Gimignano and Siena

Staying in specially selected hotels and tasting the delicious Tuscan culinary specialities

Tour and tastings at a traditional family run farm producing wine, olive oil and pigs raised in the forest

Unique wine tasting experiences



Trip Duration 8 days

Trip Code: EVF

Grade moderate

Summary 7 nights in selected 3-4 star hotels

Supporting Your Cause

Epworth Medical Foundation (EMF) opened in 1982 to raise much-needed funds to ensure patients at Epworth HealthCare receive the best possible care. Our work is vital, because Epworth is a charitable, not-for-profit hospital. We rely on your generosity to enable us to stay at the forefront of advancements in medical technology, for our patients. Epworth is a private, not-for-profit organisation. We receive very limited funding from government. Instead, we rely on funds raised by Epworth Medical Foundation to continue to provide our patients with the best possible facilities, equipment, surgical expertise and access to research.

By taking part in the EMF Via Francigena: Best of Tuscany, you will not only enjoy the adventure of a lifetime: you will also be helping to give vital support to hundreds of our patients.

Your Huma Challenge

Thank you for your interest in our Epworth Via Francigena: Best of Tuscany. Huma Charity Challenge is a division of the worldwide adventure travel company World Expeditions. When joining a Huma Charity Challenge you embark on a remarkable journey to discover your inner philanthropist as you raise money for a Charity that is important to you. At the same time you take on the challenge of fundraising and partake in an adventure to discover new worlds, new landscapes and new cultures ... perhaps you'll even discover how far your personal boundaries stretch as you take on a physical challenge like a cycling, trekking or a mountaineering adventure. We are passionate about off-the-beaten track travel experiences as they provide travellers with the thrill of coming face to face with untouched cultures as well as wilderness regions of great natural beauty. Our itineraries are well researched, affordable and tailored for the enjoyment of small groups. Our itineraries provide the very best travel experience, designed by people with vast local knowledge who share our vision of authentic exchange and real exploration with a responsible travel approach at the core.

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Charity Challenge Payments

Joining San Miniato Alt from:	\$5980
Non Refundable Registration Fee:	\$200
Fundraising/Donation:	\$10000

All prices are per person

As the trip price is based on twinshare, a single supplement is payable if you are not sharing with a friend / family member - or a single traveller supplement if you are travelling solo*. Please refer to the price options for costs or ask our office for details. Note regarding single rooms - The single supplement guarantees the privacy of your own room, however, rooms can at times be small and in some places may not enjoy the same facilities as double/twin rooms.

*The single traveller surcharge is only available on trips deemed suitable for solo travellers. It is usually more expensive than the single supplement due to the extra cost for luggage transfers and organisation.

Trip Dates

2024 09 Sep - 16 Sep

important notes

RF - Registration Fee

RF - Fundraising/Donation

What Impact Will My Fundraising Have?

Epworth Medical Foundation - The difference you make

When you donate to the Foundation, your generosity is used to directly benefit our patients. For example, more than half of all medical equipment at Epworth HealthCare is funded by the Foundation, and 80 percent of our medical research.

Charitable funds are used to support:

- *state-of-the-art medical equipment that ensures our patients receive the very best
- *world-class facilities that maximise patient outcomes, safety and comfort
- *groundbreaking medical research projects and trials, shared with our patients
- *staff education and training opportunities to pass best-practice on to our patients
- *support programs to care for our patients' emotional and financial needs

Your Adventure

On this section of the Camino trail to Rome, combine well-known towns including Siena and San Gimignano, with charming hamlets such as San Miniato, to discover the very best of the Tuscan Via Francigena in a single week. Starting in San Miniato, one of the hidden pearls of the Via Francigena, this itinerary takes you through a region of extraordinary beauty. From the thousand year old Pieve di Chianni, to the crenellated towers of Monteriggioni, to finally reach spectacular Siena, this walk will continue to amaze you. With achievable daily distances ranging from 9 to 21km, enjoy wonderful views as you walk and discover fortified hamlets where time seems to have stopped. The landscape is not the only highlight. At meal times, savour the local cuisine including the precious white truffle of San Miniato, the pici of Siena and the saffron of San Gimignano, while at night stay in quality, handpicked hotels and agriturismo, the perfect blend of comfort on this stunning Italian hiking challenge.

Fundraising Options

There are a number of ways you can approach your fundraising:

1. Simply pay for it yourself, as you would any other holiday (although this will be a LOT more memorable than any other holiday!). If you do so, \$10,000 of this cost will be tax deductible.
2. Fundraise some or all of the amount. When you do so, any donations that others make towards your challenge will be tax deductible. If you'd like to fundraise for your trip but don't know where to start, our professional fundraisers will provide you with the support and resources to make it easy and stress-free.

Online Fundraising Portal

When fundraising for the charity donation component of this challenge you must seek permission of your charity before beginning to fundraise in their name.

The team at Epworth will be in touch with you upon registration to give you the details of the online fundraising page and permission to fundraise.

The minimum fundraising target is \$10,000 per person. You can do it!



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Fast Facts

Countries Visited:

Italy

Visas:

There are plans to introduce an ETIAS to visit the Schengen area. Please refer to these potential new visa requirements at https://travel-europe.europa.eu/etias_en

Until the ETIAS is introduced the following is applicable –

Visas not required for citizens of Australia, Canada, USA and New Zealand for up to 90 days in a period of 180 days for all Schengen countries (see https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/schengen-borders-and-visa/visa-policy_en . Please ensure your passport is stamped on arrival in the Schengen area. For all other nationalities and for longer stays in countries covered by the Schengen Agreement (Australian New Zealand, Canadian and US passport holders), please contact the relevant embassy. Stays of longer than 90 days in the Schengen area require a long stay visa for the country you are spending most time in. However long stay visas are unlikely to be issued unless there is a valid reason (eg. studying in country). Unfortunately we cannot assist in obtaining visas for long stays due to individual country visa requirements.

Group Size Min:

10

Group Size Max:

16

Advice for people with limited mobility

This trip is not suitable for people with limited mobility.

Brochure Reference:

Active Europe

Itinerary at a Glance

DAY 1	9 SEPTEMBER: ARRIVE SAN MINIATO ALTO
DAY 2	10 SEPTEMBER: WALK FROM GAMBASSI TERME TO THE MEDIEVAL TOWN OF SAN GIMIGNANO
DAY 3	11 SEPTEMBER: WALK TO COLLE VAL D'ELSA. AFTERNOON TOUR & TASTINGS AT AN OLIVE OIL FARM
DAY 4	12 SEPTEMBER: WALK TO STROVE
DAY 5	13 SEPTEMBER: WALK FROM STROVE TO LA VILLA, TRANSFER TO SIENA
DAY 6	14 SEPTEMBER: WALK SIENA TO LUCIGNANO D'ARBIA
DAY 7	15 SEPTEMBER: WALK TO BUONCONVENTO. WINE TASTING AT CASATO PRIME DONNE
DAY 8	16 SEPTEMBER: TRIP CONCLUDES

What's Included

- 7 nights accommodation on bed & breakfast basis
- 4 dinners at specially selected restaurants
- 7 nights in 3-4 star hotels with ensuite facilities
- Private transfers as per itinerary (airport transfers not included)
- Walking tours of San Gimignano, Colle Val d'Elsa & Montalcino
- Entrance fee to the medieval town of San Gimignano
- Wine masterclass and tasting in San Gimignano
- Visits to the exclusive Etruscan temple at Torraccia di Chiusi near San Gimignano
- Locally guided tour of Siena, including entrance fee to a Contrada Museum and the Duomo di Siena complex
- Wine tasting at Casato Prime Donne near Montalcino
- Wine and olive oil tastings at a traditional family run farm
- 24 hour emergency hotline and SMS alert
- English speaking tour leader
- City taxes and carbon comensation

What's Not Included

- Travel to San Miniato Alto and from Siena
- Airport transfers
- Meals not listed as included, drinks
- Travel insurance
- Entrance fees
- Items of a personal nature
- Tips and gratuities

Detailed Itinerary

DAY 1 9 September: Arrive San Miniato Alto

Make your own way to San Miniato Alto. Set between Pisa and Florence, the medieval town of San Miniato is a splendid jewel of the Via Francigena. Sitting on the top of three hills, it dominates the Arno Valley. After checking in to your hotel, be sure to stroll the old town streets and visit the Episcopal Seminary, the Duomo and the church of San Domenico. San Miniato is known for its white truffles. Tonight we will sample these tasty delights at our welcome dinner in the hotel restaurant.

Accommodation: Hotel Miravalle

meals: D



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Responsible Travel

The natural environments that you'll travel through are fragile; the cultures and traditions precious and often the communities we pass through are reliant on tourism. It is our responsibility as visitors to minimise the impact of our presence, protect what is precious and where we can leave a positive impact. Learn how you can do this by downloading the Thoughtful Traveller booklet from our website.

Trip grading moderate

This is a moderate grade walk along paths that are well defined. The walking is mostly on paths and gravel roads (strade bianche), with some sections on asphalt roads. The towns are often on hilltops. You should be able to walk for up to 7 hours a day in hot sun (at times). A good level of fitness is required.

As with all of our trips it is important that you are well prepared. We suggest that you undertake regular exercise – swimming, cycling, and jogging, two to three times a week for three months prior to your departure.

Note: the walking time and distance are calculated from city centre to city centre and may vary depending on the accommodations booked, to a maximum of 2km.

Adventure Travel

By its very nature Charity Challenges involve an element of the unexpected. In remote and developing countries do not expect standards you are used to at home. Remote areas are sometimes unpredictable and itineraries may be altered. To get the most out of your adventure it is important that you are suitably fit, flexible, positive and eager to take on all the challenges that arise. If you are uncertain about your suitability for this trip we recommend that you speak with your charity representative or one of our team.

DAY 2 10 September: Walk from Gambassi Terme to the medieval town of San Gimignano

After breakfast transfer from San Miniato to Gambassi Terme in the heart of Tuscany. Our spectacular walk begins today as we meander through the wonderful landscapes of the Via Francigena. Visit the tiny villages of Collemuccoli and Pieve di Celliole, as well as the Sanctuary in Pancole, where you will learn about its legend. On arrival in San Gimignano, we'll explore the town on foot and visit one of the towers to fully appreciate its medieval charm.

Later, wine tasting at the Vernaccia Wine Experience – Museum of Wine.

Get to know the local wines and the history behind the families who produce them. The 'queen' is the Vernaccia, first white wine to be labelled DOCG, in 1993.

The Vernaccia Wine Experience is run by the local collective of wine producers. They gather wines from the surrounding countryside and host the Museum of Wine.

Located in the medieval fortress Montestaffoli, the experience is heightened by the panoramic views over the valley below.

Tonight enjoy dinner in a local restaurant, San Martino 26.

Accommodation: Hotel Antico Pozzo, San Gimignano

Walk: 12km, approx 5 hours

meals: B,D

DAY 3 11 September: Walk to Colle Val d'Elsa. Afternoon tour & tastings at an olive oil farm

Today the Via Francigena will lead you over the Tuscan hills, across vineyards and olive groves to the Agriturismo Torracchia di Chiusi. Visit the Etruscan Temple, home to a wonderful votive bronze statue of a teenage bidder, dating back to the 3rd Century BC. Continue to Colle Val d'Elsa where we will have a walking tour of the town.

Later this afternoon, visit Tenuta di Mensanello, a beautiful family run farm which produces wine, olive oil and beer. After a guided tour with one of the family, enjoy a tasting of oil and "bruschetta" and a glass of wine.

Return to Colle Val d'Elsa for overnight and own arrangements for dinner in one of the local restaurants.

Accommodation: Hotel Palazzo San Lorenzo, Colle Val d'Elsa

Walk: 12km, approx 5 hours

meals: B

DAY 4 12 September: Walk to Strove

Today you will pass the Pieve a Elsa, which was once a large, ancient parish frequented by pilgrims. You can also visit the ancient Etruscan Thermae (hot pools) of Caldane. We reach Strove with its beautiful Romanesque church, in time for lunch. The afternoon is free to enjoy this beautiful hotel, to relax by the pool or even enjoy one of their famous spa treatments.

Accommodation: Relais Castel Bigozzi, Strove

Walk: 9km, approx 4 hours

meals: B,D

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Important Note

These trip notes represent the most current information for this itinerary, and may supersede any other supplied information, including but not limited to the itinerary and price. The itinerary should be seen as a guide only. This itinerary may change at any time due to inclement weather, forces of nature and other circumstances beyond our control.

DAY 5 13 September: Walk from Strove to La Villa, transfer to Siena

From Strove we continue past the medieval village of Abbazia a Isola, built around the Cistercian Abbey of San Salvatore, before reaching Monteriggioni with its famed crown of towers.

Continue along ancient pilgrim routes and dirt roads of the hilly Montagnola Senese district, before arriving in La Villa where you will be met and transferred to the beautiful town of Siena, your base for the next three nights.

We arrive in Siena in time for lunch and a rest. At 4pm we'll head out on a guided city tour including a visit of Palio Contrada and a famous local bakery.

Own arrangements dinner.

Accommodation: Palazzo Ravizza, Siena

Walk: 13.5km, approx 5 hours

meals: B

DAY 6 14 September: Walk Siena to Lucignano d'Arbia

After leaving Siena we continue our walk along typical Tuscan dirt roads towards the fortified village of Lucignano d'Arbia, with its fine church and spectacular views. At the gates of Monteroni d'Arbia you can admire the impressive Grancia di Cuna, a fortified farm which held the reserves of wheat destined for the republic of Siena. Transfer back to Siena for overnight.

Own arrangements for dinner.

Accommodation: Palazzo Ravizza, Siena

Walk: 21km, approx 7 hours

meals: B

DAY 7 15 September: Walk to Buonconvento. Wine Tasting at Casato Prime Donne

Transfer back to Lucignano to continue your journey through the Valle dell'Ombrone to Buonconvento. On arrival, walk through the gate and find yourself in the old town, whose name translates to "happy, fortunate place". We'll stroll through the picturesque streets where the rhythm of life is slow and typical of a provincial village. Art lovers can admire the works of some of the most famous Sienese painters in the Museum of Sacred Art of the Val d'Arbia.

Transfer to Montalcino for lunch.

This afternoon we visit the Casato Prime Donne, a local renowned women-led winery for wine tasting. Here the wine pairing is done with selected music, creating an experience which involves all the senses.

Evening transfer back to Siena for our farewell dinner to celebrate the end of a truly special Tuscan experience!

Accommodation: Palazzo Ravizza, Siena

Walk: 13.8km, approx 5.5 hours

meals: B,D

DAY 8 16 September: Trip concludes

Trip concludes after breakfast in Siena

meals: B

This itinerary is subject to change with any modifications in Community regulations as well as Governmental changes and natural circumstances beyond our control.



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Climate

Italian summers can be hot. From late June to September, highs of 35 degrees Celsius do occur. If you decide to walk over the summer months you will need to be prepared to start early, and carry plenty of water. Summer is also a time where afternoon thunderstorms can occur. You should expect average daytime highs of around 20-25 degrees Celsius.

Dietary Requirements

Provided we are advised in advance of your departure we are able to cater for vegetarian diets and can assist with medically recommended diets (allergies and intolerances). Please ensure you discuss your requirements with us well in advance (at least 1 month prior to your trip) to determine whether we can cater to such dietary requirements on your chosen adventure. Please note that options are likely to be limited in very remote locations or alternatives may be more expensive or unavailable. There may be times when those with special requirements may need to provide their own food. We are unable to guarantee a peanut-free or allergen-free trip, and therefore, we strongly encourage that travellers with life-threatening or severe allergies take all necessary medical precautions to prepare for the possibility of exposure. Passengers must travel with all necessary medications for food allergies and be capable of self-administering these medications.

What You Carry

As the walks are fully supported you only need to carry a daypack with your daily requirements including wet weather gear, water bottle, lunch supplies, mobile phone and sun protection etc.

Equipment Required

Daypack, wet weather gear, good walking boots / shoes, water bottle and sun protection. A comprehensive gear list is included in the pre-departure information provided on booking.

How To Book

To register on this Charity Challenge please complete the registration form and return to Huma Charity Challenge, Attention Scott Pinnegar

Email: scott@worldexpeditions.com.au

Post: Huma Charity Challenge, Level 1 - 393 Little Bourke Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000

Otherwise you can make your booking online by using the REGISTER NOW button found at the bottom of the relevant Charity Challenge page on our website www.humacharitychallenge.com.au

The Epworth Medical Foundation staff are able to answer any questions you may have as well as provide you with all the support you need as you fundraise for your challenge. Please contact Kathryn Johnston on telephone 03 9426 6359 or email kathryn.johnston@epworth.org.au who will be happy to talk with you.

