

Rail holidays of Italy

Expressions



Rail holiday to southern Tuscany



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01392 441275

Rail holiday to southern Tuscany

8 NIGHTS / 9 DAYS

Simplon Pass or Gotthard Pass

Florence

Chianti

Cortona



Castel Monastero, Chianti

Travelling to by train to Tuscany is an attractive option with a number of different routes from the UK to Florence and back. The most direct train route involves an overnight sleeper from Paris to Milan, allowing the entire journey to be made with just two changes. However, a popular alternative for your rail holiday is to take in the beautiful scenery along the way and use daytime trains. One route in particular takes in the Gotthard Pass after a night in Zurich and another goes via the Simplon Pass, after an overnight stay in Lausanne on Lake Geneva. Once in Italy, you start acclimatising to Tuscany by staying in the regional capital, Florence. Then, in order to explore the region in depth, you collect a hire-car. Driving distances are always manageable; allowing you to explore the beauty of Tuscany's rolling hills, villages and vineyards at a suitable leisurely pace, with two stops in Tuscany, one in the southern Chianti region and the second further south near the ancient Etruscan town of Cortona. Finally, you return to the Florence area for one night nearby so that you are within easy reach of Florence for the train to Milan, and then the sleeper service to Paris.

PRICES

From £2,530 per person

Price based on two sharing a double or twin room.

1st class rail travel can be added for a supplement.

DATES

This rail holiday can be arranged throughout the year. Timings can vary depending on the month and day of the week. For more information regarding rail services to and within Italy, view our train guide.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Accommodation on bed and breakfast as below

- 1 night in a Standard room at the Hotel Angleterre et Residence in Lausanne
- 1 night in a Standard room at the Hotel Helvetia and Bristol in Florence
- 2 nights in a Standard room at the Castel Monastero in Chianti
- 2 nights in a Standard room at the Relais Il Falconiere near Cortona
- 1 night in a Standard room at the Villa la Massa in Candeli, near Florence
- Train travel on all trains including the Eurostar (first class can be booked at a supplement)
- Double sleeper compartment on the Thello sleeper train on the return journey
- Category B hire-car for the duration of your stay in Tuscany

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- Optional extra nights
- Meals other than breakfast at the hotels
- Transfers in Lausanne and Paris
- Early check in or late check out at hotels - though we can arrange this on request
- Supplements for alternative route options
- Any services not mentioned

Via Simplon Pass and Lausanne

DAY ONE: London to Lausanne by rail

Start your rail holiday by departing London at midday on the Eurostar to Paris. Following a change of station in Paris, you then continue to Lausanne by TGV train which reaches 198 mph. Arrive in Lausanne at about 7.30pm and spend one night here at the Hotel Angleterre et Residence.

DAY TWO: Lausanne to Florence by rail

Spend the morning looking around Lausanne before boarding the Eurocity train to Milan about 2pm. The train follows the course of the Rhone before passing through the stunning Simplon Pass and along the coast of Lake Maggiore on its way to Milan. You change trains and continue to Florence by high-speed train arriving just before 8pm. On arrival in Florence you will be met at the station and transferred to your hotel. Spend one night in Florence at the Hotel Helvetia and Bristol.

Via Gotthard Pass and Zurich

DAY ONE: London to Zurich by rail

Start your rail holiday by departing London at about 7.00am on the Eurostar to Paris. Following a change of station in Paris, you then continue to Zurich on the high speed TGV train which reaches 198 mph. You arrive in Zurich at about 4.30pm and spend one night here at the Hotel Ambassador a l'Opera.

DAY TWO: Zurich to Florence by rail

Leave Zurich at about 11.30am and travel by Eurocity train through the Alps along the Gotthard pass. After passing through the Gotthard tunnel, you descend towards Italy and on to Milan Centrale station. Make a simple platform change in Milan and continue to Florence by high-speed train arriving just before 6pm. On arrival in Florence you will be met at the station by a car and driver and taken to your hotel. Spend one night in Florence at the Hotel Helvetia and Bristol.

DAY THREE: Drive to Chianti

Collect your hire car and drive out of Florence through the Chianti countryside to Castel Monastero near Castelnuovo Berardenga. The drive is about 55 miles and takes around an hour and a half. Spend two nights at Castel Monastero enjoying the surroundings of vineyards, gently rolling hills and the turrets of Siena in the distance.



Il Falconiere, near Cortona

DAY FOUR: Chianti

Enjoy a day at leisure at your hotel to explore with your hire car. The hotel is well placed to explore the local area, home of the Chianti Classico wine.

DAY FIVE: Drive to Cortona

Drive south towards Cortona and your second country stay in Tuscany. It takes a little over an hour to cover the 42 miles. Spend two nights here.

DAY SIX: Cortona

At leisure at Relais Il Falconiere to explore with your hire car. A highlight of any stay at this hotel is the exceptional cuisine at the elegant restaurant. The hotel also has its own vineyard and wine tasting tours are available.

DAY SEVEN: Drive to Candeli

Drive to Villa la Massa, set on the banks of the River Arno, just outside the city of Florence. For your final night in Italy. The hotel is set in beautiful grounds full of lemon trees and olive groves.

DAY EIGHT: Travel to Milan by rail

You have most of the day free, until you need to depart for the return to Florence, about thirty minutes away to return your hire car. Board the train from Florence to Milan at 9pm and then change onto the Thello sleeper service to Paris.

DAY NINE: Return to London via Paris

You arrive into Paris Gare de Lyon just after 10am and after an easy change of stations in Paris, complete your rail journey by travelling on the Eurostar back to the UK, arriving at lunchtime.

OPTIONAL

It is possible to add extra nights in any of these locations.

HOTELS

Details of the hotels in Switzerland and Italy can be found below.

LAUSANNE

Hotel Angleterre et Residence 4 star

On the shores of Lake Geneva with stunning view of the Alps, this hotel comprises of five different buildings surrounding the main Reception. The hotel offers contemporary style in a historic setting with parts of the buildings dating back to the 18th century. The 75 bedrooms and Junior Suites are scattered between four buildings, each with their own distinct styles, but all guests will benefit from the same high standards of care from the friendly, professional staff.

ZURICH

Hotel Ambassador a l'Opera 4 star

As a member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World group, the Hotel Ambassador a l'Opera prides itself on the high quality of its service, its seasonal and locally-sourced food, and the very particular, serene style of the rooms. It is well-placed for enjoying Lake Zurich, the Limmat River, and the small marina at the end of the street.

FLORENCE

Helvetia and Bristol 5 star

A small deluxe hotel with plenty of charm, character and high levels of personal service. Its central location on the Palazzo Strozzi makes it extremely convenient for sight-seeing, within easy reach of the Duomo, Ponte Vecchio, Uffizi gallery and exclusive shopping streets. The Hotel Helvetia and Bristol offers an authentic dining experience in the Hostaria Bibendum where guests can choose from a table in the intimate dining room or outside on the glamorous patio-lounge in the Piazza.

CHIANTI

Castel Monastero 5 star

Surrounded by rolling hills and vineyards the Castel Monastero in Chianti offers an authentic Tuscan experience in the elegant surroundings of a converted monastery. Now a hotel with 74 rooms and suites the hotel has not lost its sense of tranquillity or rustic charm. With a wide range of spa facilities and also cookery courses and wine tasting the hotel truly appeals to those looking for a traditional Tuscan experience.



Villa la Massa with the River Arno in front

CORTONA

Relais Il Falconiere 4 star

Once the home of the poet Antonio Guadagnoli, Il Falconiere is now a jewel of hospitality in the midst of the Tuscan countryside, surrounded by horse-chestnut and cypress trees. There are many well preserved features in this former 17th century palazzo, which offers up 22 individually decorated rooms alongside a Michelin star restaurant, wine resort and exclusive Spa. A testament to the love and hard work of the owners Silvia and Riccardo, this hotel is an enchanting property of rustic simplicity.

landscape. These period furnishings continue in the main building which has an impressive central atrium and elegant archways. In the evening guests may enjoy the refined ambience of the hotel restaurant, Il Verrocchio, which offers traditional Tuscan cuisine. As a member of The Leading Hotels of the World, and within easy reach of the Chianti region and Florence, Villa la Massa offers the very best of Tuscan living.

CANDELI

Villa la Massa 5 star

Set in idyllic grounds Villa la Massa claims striking views over the River Arno and across the Tuscan countryside. The hotel consists of 3 buildings which are located near the swimming pool and its leafy terraces. The rooms and suites, all individually decorated with antique furnishings and a Renaissance style, are divided in to these 3 buildings and all boast splendid views over the surrounding



Castel Monastero



Hotel Angleterre et Residence, Lausanne



Hotel Helvetia and Bristol, Florence



Il Falconiere, Cortona

MAP OF TOUR EXPLORING SOUTHERN TUSCANY BY TRAIN



The map below illustrates the route outlined in this touring itinerary, with overnight stops and places of interest highlighted.



GENERAL INFORMATION

This tailor-made touring holiday is one of several suggested touring holidays we can offer you exactly as it is but also with any alterations you might want including extra nights in one or more places or adding in extra places. All our tours can be extended so that you can include a longer stay in one mountain or lake resort too, perhaps at the end of the itinerary. Do call to discuss the options with our travel consultants.

OUR TOURS

Our rail tours are for individuals travelling on their own or in their own family group. You do not join a group and you are not escorted.

FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENTS

Our arrangements are very flexible in that you choose to travel on any day you want, subject to availability of trains and hotels. As mentioned above, additional nights can be added at any point.

EUROSTAR

A rail holiday to Italy starts with a journey by Eurostar from London St Pancras, Ebbsfleet or Ashford stations in the UK to either Paris Gare du Nord or Lille Europe. In summer months there are direct trains on Saturdays from London St Pancras to Avignon with no change required.

Eurostar offers almost hourly departures every day, allowing you to travel from the centre of London to the centre of Paris on the same train in three hours. Not all trains stop at the Ebbsfleet and Ashford stations in Kent, but parking is plentiful at both stations and it allows you to avoid London.

Check-in is 30 minutes prior to departure, customs formalities are completed before boarding and there is no limit to the amount of baggage that can be taken on board. The Eurostar trains themselves have 8 coaches which are split into Standard Class, Standard Premier and Business Premier as well as 2 cafeterias. Standard Premier customers are served a light cold meal and enjoy a more spacious environment than Standard Class, while Business Premier customers receive a hot meal and unlimited beverages as well as lounge access.

TRAIN TIMES

We have planned our itineraries based on train times that work day by day at the time of planning which can be up to a year before you travel. Usually train times stay more or less the same every day, season by season. The times we have planned will be discussed with you at the time you enquire about the holiday and they are detailed to you in your written holiday quotation. It may be that the timetable changes between the planning of the itinerary and when you come to book but we can always adjust the itinerary to suit the actual train times and any requirements you have for particular times of travel.

FIRST OR SECOND CLASS

We will automatically include travel in second class but lots of our clients do upgrade to first class service. On Eurostar this is called Premier Standard for leisure travellers as it gives you an upgraded on-board service and more spacious seating but without paying for the fully-flexible business tickets. On the Inter-city trains, upgrading to first class gives you more spacious seating with increased legroom. The price of upgrading varies from route to route but is something that is not always proportionately a lot more on the price of the overall holiday, so well-worth considering.

TRANSFERS

Transfers in Paris between stations and from the station to each hotel are not automatically included in the price of the holiday. In Paris most clients choose to take a taxi between the stations rather than go on the Metro but we can arrange a private car with driver to take you in between. This is quite useful if you are a family group that can't fit into one Paris taxi.

PRICE INFORMATION

This tailor-made touring holiday is one of several suggested touring holidays we can offer you exactly as it is but also with any alterations you might want including extra nights in one or more places or adding in extra places. All our tours can be extended so that you can include a longer stay in one mountain or lake resort too, perhaps at the end of the itinerary. Do call to discuss the options with our travel consultants.

OUR PRICES

The sample prices mentioned in this leaflet are generally a 'from' price based on the cheapest season of travel. However, train fares and hotel rates can change (up and down depending on offers), so we give you an accurate price for your holiday when we provide you with a quotation. Our sample prices should be used as an indication of how much a particular combination will cost and to show the differences on average between the hotel categories on offer.

PRICE INFORMATION IN MORE DETAIL

From £2,930 per person for first class rail travel.

From £2,530 per person for second class rail travel.

Prices based on two sharing a double or twin room.

What's included?

First or second class travel (as above) on all trains including Eurostar
Double sleeper compartment on Thello sleeper train

At the hotels:

1 night's bed and breakfast in a Standard Double at Hotel Angleterre et Residence in Lausanne

1 night's bed and breakfast in a Standard Double at Hotel Helvetia and Bristol in Florence

2 nights' bed and breakfast in a Standard Double at Castel Monastero in Chianti

2 nights' bed and breakfast in a Standard Double at Relais Il Falconiere near Cortona

1 night's bed and breakfast in a Standard Double at Villa la Massa near Florence
Category B car hire for the duration of your stay in Tuscany.

What's not included?

Meals other than breakfast at the hotels
Transfers in Lausanne and Paris.
Early check in or late check outs at hotels – though we can arrange this on request.
Supplements for alternative route options
Any services not mentioned above

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BOOKING CONDITIONS

Our booking conditions apply to all holidays. A copy can be found on our website and a copy is also sent to you with a written quotation and when you make a booking.

FINANCIAL PROTECTION

Expressions Holidays offers full financial protection for all holidays you book with us. If your holiday includes a flight, the ATOL (3076) covers the costs of the holiday. If the holiday does not include a flight, it is the ABTOT bond that protects the cost of the holiday. We are also members of AITO (the Association of Independent Tour Operators) and ABTA.



Expressions Holidays
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HOW TO BOOK

To make a booking, just phone us on

01392 441275

and we can take you through the details we need and start the booking process. A deposit is required to confirm the arrangements and this can be paid by debit or credit card over the phone. The level of the deposit will be confirmed at the point of booking and will depend on the ticketing deadlines of the rail tickets involved in your booking.