

EXPLORE!

Tour Notes



Family Tuscan Active Adventure (FTY 2015)



TOUR DURATION
8
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Comfort: Standard

Tour Type: Centre Based

tour Code: FTY

Tour Highlights - Family Tuscan Active Adventure

- ✓ Garfagnana - Seven nights at a traditional agriturismo with superb food
- ✓ Active Adventures - Kayaking, trekking, cycling and zip wires.
- ✓ Cultural Visits - Option to visit Lucca and Pisa
- ✓ Alpi Apuane - Canyoning in the Turrone Valley
- ✓ Cinque Terre - Walk the UNESCO World Heritage landscapes of the Tuscan Riviera

Tour Essentials

Accommodation: 7 nights Standard Agriturismo
Included Meals: 7 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 4 dinners
Start Point: Join tour: Pisa airport
End Point: Tour ends: Pisa airport
Transport: Train, Minibus
Countries: Italy
Minimum Age: From 11 years

Family Tuscan Active Adventure

This energetic trip explores one of Tuscany's hidden gem's, the Garfagnana Valley. We combine varied outdoor activities with time to relax by the pool at our beautifully restored Tuscan villa. Kayak on a mountain lake, walk the Cinque Terre coastal path and cycle on the ancient city walls of Lucca. At the end of each day we return to our homely farmhouse and enjoy home-cooked Tuscan cuisine.

Why Book this tour

This holiday is perfect for active families who enjoy the outdoors all set against the stunning backdrop of Tuscany. Our Tuscan farm accommodation has been specifically chosen as a base to offer a range of activities with a swimming pool and great views to lure you back after the day's adventures. We also get the opportunity to explore the historic cities of Pisa and Lucca which offers a good balance to kayaking, coastal walks, mountain biking and canyoning. Furthermore, with a number of included meals and activities, this adventure offers great value for money.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Tour Comfort: Standard

Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.



Your tour itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced Tour Leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your Tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Join tour Pisa airport. Transfer to Casine di Braccicorti

Arriving in Pisa today, we transfer to our farm stay accommodation in northern Tuscany's Garfagnana region. We will be based in the lovely setting of a family run farm, situated in the beautiful and lush Serchio River Valley. Retaining all the character of its Tuscan heritage, the farm is surrounded by the magnificent scenery of the Apennines and the Alpi Apuane. On arrival we will enjoy a traditional dinner and sample for ourselves some of the food and wine for which this region is justifiably famous. Indeed during the coming days ahead we can expect to sample a delicious array of local produce including freshly made breads and home-made jams, delicious honey and excellent wine.

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Overnight: **Standard Agriturismo**

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Dinner

DAY 2 Climbing in an adventure park in San Romano and kayaking on Lake Vagli

This morning we head by bus to San Romano and Buffardello Park where we spend the afternoon climbing trees. Set amongst two and a half hectares of forest in the heart of the Garfagnana, this unique adventure park affords children and adults alike the opportunity to enjoy this woodland setting from the air, with a range of activities suitable for all ages, including swinging beams, suspension bridges, nets, ropes and obstacles. On arrival, you will be kitted out with all the necessary safety equipment with trained instructors on hand to supervise your enjoyment. The park also has a number of walks and activities within the forest that do not require leaving the ground, so don't worry if you would prefer to keep on terra firma. This afternoon we take a short bus ride to the beautiful Lake Vagli where we take to the water in double seated kayaks and explore this lovely setting. The lake is home to an abundance of blue herons and other birdlife and our kayaking adventure (2 to 3 hours) affords us an ideal opportunity to take in this serene setting from the unique perspective of its tranquil waters. Our day over, we return back to the villa to enjoy some relaxing time around the pool.

Overnight: **Standard Agriturismo**

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 3 Exploring the Cinque Terre coast

We leave the Garfagnana and after a short transfer to the local station, join the train to the stunning coastline of the Cinque Terre region where tiny villages nestle amongst sheer cliffs to create one of the Riviera's most scenic delights. The area is a World Heritage Site and its five villages present the perfect picturesque setting for our day. We have time to explore the back streets of the old part of Monterosso, which is the largest of the five villages, before we walk along the famed coastal trail. Passing through olive groves and vineyards and with spectacular views all around, we arrive at Vernazza where we have time for a swim in the lovely waters as well as have lunch which could include some of the local seafood. From Vernazza, we then have the choice from to travel by boat (optional extra, and sea conditions permitting), catch a train to Riomaggiore or walk another section of the trail to Corniglia. The 20 minute boat trip to Riomaggiore is normally the best option as it allows more time for kids to swim and enjoy lunch in Vernazza plus gives the opportunity to view the other villages including Corniglia and Manarola. Arriving in Riomaggiore, there will be time to explore the town with another swim or ice cream here before we then meet up for our train back to the Garfagnana.

Overnight: **Standard Agriturismo**

Swimming Pool Available 


 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 4 Walking in the Orecchiella National Park

We depart the villa after breakfast to explore some of the breathtaking views in the Apennine mountain range. We drive by bus up into Orecchiella National Park, an area characterised by beech woods, grasslands and sheer rock faces hanging over narrow gorges, all of which are a natural habitat for birds of prey, wild boar, deer and many other animals. We begin our walk from the visitors centre up to refuge Isera (1200 m) with great views of the Pania del Corfino mountain along the way. We then ascend from Isera following the footpath to the Col of Campaiana at 1500m for around an hour which affords great views of the Apennines before a final short walk up to the peak and summit of the Pania del Corfino at 1600m. With probably one of the best views of the Garfagnana Valley where one is nearly able to see all of our locations that we will travel to during our stay this week, we have our lunch and then relax before descending back down using the same routing to the visitors centre which is close to a brown bear enclosure. And then it's time for an ice cream before we head back down to the farm where we can relax and enjoy the pool for the rest of the afternoon.

Overnight: **Standard Agriturismo**

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5 Free day; optional sightseeing of Lucca and Pisa

Today is free to spend as you wish. You may decide to explore something of the area's cultural highlights, with a trip to the cities of Lucca and Pisa. Travelling by bus or train you can head to the old Roman colony of Lucca which is set on the Lucchese Plain with a fascinating mixture of terracotta roofs, Romanesque churches, ancient Roman ruins and Renaissance architecture. Enclosed within its city walls is a delightful mix of narrow lanes and easy charm with the opportunity to hire bikes and explore it's captivating environs on two wheels. Alternatively, you may just wish to wander its streets and explore the local market and take to the city walls and relish something of the delightful ambience of this beautiful city. Alternatively, Pisa is close by - a city that is so much more than just its famous Leaning Tower. The Campo dei Miracoli (Field of Dreams), of which the Tower is but one part, also contains the Baptistery, Duomo and Camposanta, which between them make up a stunning collection of architectural delights. These, along with the churches and palazzi that make up the historic centre, all belong to a period from the 11th to 13th centuries when the city was one of the Mediterranean's major maritime powers.

Overnight: **Standard Agriturismo**

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

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DAY 6 Canyoning in the Turríte Valley

This morning we jump in a bus and head south to the Turríte valley where we will try our hands at the exciting activity of canyoning. Arriving in the pretty village of Fornolovasco, we get into our wet suits and helmets for an easy section of canyoning down the Rio Pinguino in the parco Battifero which allows us to try some small water jumps. Ending back at Fornolovasco we have lunch beside the river with time to relax here before the afternoon in Parco Battifero. We walk up initially to the dry canyon above the village where we change into our harnesses and helmets and take on some Via Ferrata. Clipping ourselves on and off the wire, we descend down the canyon with time to look at the amazing rock features and some small caves here. Arriving at the bottom, we end our time here on a zip wire and suspension bridge before an optional rock climbing wall activity or alternatively relax at the bar at fornolovasco with an ice cream before we all group up and return to the farm by bus.

Overnight: **Standard Agriturismo**

Swimming Pool Available 



Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 7 Cycle mountain descent in the Apennines; Afternoon free

Our final day sees us heading by bus up to San Pellegrino where we stop to see the mummified bodies of two saints before driving further up to Alpe de San Pellegrino (1600 m) with great views over the Garfagnana valley and across the whole chain of mountains. After getting our bikes, we get on our bikes and undertake a thrilling and beautiful descent back into the Garfagnana valley. Along the way we stop for photos and breaks via the Pass of Radici, in the heart of the Apennines. Returning to the villa by bike, the rest of the afternoon is free for you to enjoy at your leisure. The entire route today is on tarmac roads and involves about 25km of descent followed by 15km undulating roads along the valley. Only 10% of the ride is uphill. You may wish to stay by the pool before a final farewell dinner.

Overnight: **Standard Agriturismo**

Swimming Pool Available 



Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8 Tour ends Pisa Airport

Today we transfer to Pisa airport where the tour ends.



Included Meals: Breakfast

Ability to swim required

An ability to swim is essential for your safe enjoyment of the water based activities on this trip. If you wish to participate in these activities then we insist that you are able to swim.

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Rating

This tour stays at an agriturismo with accommodation either in small comfortable lodges within the grounds of the estate or in the main lodge adjacent to our communal dining area. With ready access to a swimming pool, this lovingly converted 18th century barn and outbuildings provides a charming traditional family atmosphere for your holiday. Furthermore, the location allows for a perfect setting for your adventure amidst the superb Tuscan countryside.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 7 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 4 dinners included in the price of this tour. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Italy

Lunch £: 8 - 10

Dinner £: 15.00 - 20.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Italy

Bottle of Beer £: 2.00

Water £: 1.00

Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Optional Excursions

Bike Hire - €20 adults, €15 childrens bikes

Day Trip to Lucca/Pisa - Train from €12 return, Leaning tower €15, Pisa cathedral €3.50, bike hire in Lucca €2.50 per hour.

Day Trip to Florence - €8 each way on train, 2.5hrs each way.

Boat Trip 8€ for adults 6€ for children under 12

Tipping - Tour Leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow £20 per adult for tipping

Foreign Exchange

Italy

ATM Availability: Major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance: Larger hotels and restaurants.

Travellers Cheques: Only in major towns. Please note, the exchange rate for cash and Travellers Cheques is poor.

Local Currency: Euro.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: GBP.

Where to Exchange: We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

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If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of joining any of our tours that you must have valid travel insurance. It must indicate that you have cover for (at least) medical expenses and emergency repatriation in the event of illness or injury. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling in England and Scotland. We also strongly recommend your policy includes curtailment, personal effects and cancellation protection as all deposits paid are non-refundable. You will also need to ensure your travel policy covers you for all activities you intend to do whilst on tour.

We are delighted to include FREE travel insurance **for all qualifying customers** who book an Explore trip from 01 January 2015.

For more information about Travel insurance and to check whether you are eligible to receive free cover, please visit www.explore.co.uk/insurance. Explore Worldwide Ltd are an Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited, who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. The registration number can be checked by visiting the the FCA's website www.fca.gov.uk or by contacting them on 0800 111 6768.

Visa Information

Italy: Visas are not required by UK, E.U Nationals, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

Lone Parents

Italy

Single parents or other adults travelling alone with children should be aware that some countries require documentation confirming that the individual has authority to travel with the minor. It is crucial that you contact the Italian embassy for further information on exactly what may be required.

Vaccinations & Protection

Italy

Nothing required. Tetanus recommended. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

Preparing for your Tour

Climate

Italy

April/May and October/November are pleasantly warm. June/September are the hottest months. Showers are common in Autumn.

Clothing

July and August are the hottest months, but early and late in the season go prepared with clothing to suit drops in temperature and the showers. You'll need your swimming gear, light rainwear may be needed at any time of year, and a warm fleece/jacket is recommended for cooler evenings and nights.

Equipment

A water bottle, sunhat and high factor sunscreen are all essential. You may also wish to bring cycle helmets with you for the mountain biking. A torch is useful in case of powercuts/ emergencies.

Footwear

Comfortable walking boots, trainers and sandals.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece and a daysac.

Luggage allowance on tour: 20kg

General Information

Country details

Italy

Population: 60,681,514

Size of Country: 301,338 Sq KM

Major Language: Italian

Religion: Roman Catholic

Time Difference to GMT: +1

Electric Supply & Plugs

Italy

2 Pin Round

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, elephant, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Our commitment to the environment

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures and traditions, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people), Dekamer (a turtle rescue centre in Turkey) and Kids Saving the Rainforest (a wildlife rescue centre in Costa Rica supported through the LATA foundation). We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation and Friends of Conservation.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

- [The Travel Foundation](#)

Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk

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- [Tourism Concern](#)

Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group www.tourismconcern.org.uk

- For further information on responsible travel go to <http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/>

Know before you go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at <http://www.explore.co.uk/essential-travel-information/travel-resources/travel-safety>

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2014 and 31st December 2015.

Tour Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2015 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2015. 2016/17 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2016.

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