EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Tuscan Active Adventure (FTY 2014)

MULTI-ACTIVITY

TOUR DURATION **8** DAYS

Tour Style: Classic
Tour Comfort: Standard
Tour Type: Centre Based
Tour Code: FTY

Tour Highlights - 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 Turrite 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

Tuscan Active Adventure

This energetic trip explores Tuscany's hidden gem – 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.

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.

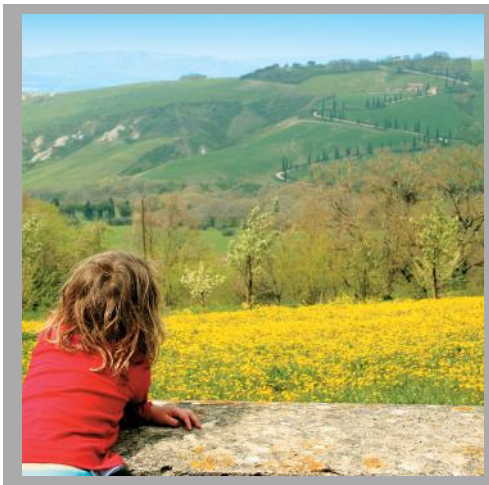
Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

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 and our accommodation will be 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 that creates the perfect setting for our adventures amidst the superb Tuscan countryside. 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.

Overnight: **Standard Agriturismo**

DAY 2

Climbing in a Adventure Park in San Romano and Kayaking on Lake Vagli

This morning we head by bus to San Romano and Buffardello Park, to 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 and instructed in its use by trained instructors who will be 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, to explore the lovely setting. The lake is home to an abundance of blue herons and other birdlife and our kayaking adventure (2/3hrs) 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**

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 5 villages present the perfect picturesque setting for our day. Arriving in Rio Maggiore the rest of the day will be very much determined by the wishes of the group, with some self-guided options explained by clearly by the tour leader. Initially we will follow scenic paths, traversing a truly stunning landscape, with the turquoise waters of the Mediterranean glistening below us. Arriving in Manarola after an easy and rewarding half hour walk, we can enjoy a coffee and some focaccia, and jump on a passing train for a few minutes before reaching Corniglia from here we can walk (2hrs) or travel by boat (optional, sea conditions permitting), to Vernazza where we will stop for lunch. After lunch you can choose to stay in Vernazza where you can relax on the beach, swim in the warm, clear waters and enjoy the ambience of this small port or take a walk through the olive groves and lemon orchards of the surrounding area. Alternatively, you may opt to take a 40-minute boat ride to nearby Monterosso - the last of the 5 villages. Later in the afternoon we regroup on the return train ride back to Garfagnana that passes through Monterosso and Vernazza, followed by a short drive to our farm where we enjoy a traditional meal tonight such as pizza.

Overnight: **Standard Agriturismo**

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. It is a natural habitat for birds of prey, squirrels, wild boar, deer, moufflons and many other animals. We begin our walk to refuge Isera (1200m) from the visitors centre (1350m). Along the way we enjoy great views of the Pania del Corfino mountain. After a break we continue from Isera descending along a scenic trail to the small shepard's huts at Pruno (1000m) from here we walk around the side of the mountain to a viewpoint before descending to the town of Corfino (870m). From here we return back to our Lodge where the fun and games can continue.

Overnight: **Standard Agriturismo**

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, set on the Lucchese Plain and today a fascinating mixture of terracotta roofs, Romanesque churches, ancient Roman ruins and Renaissance architecture. Enclosed within city walls it is a delightful mix of narrow lanes and easy charm and there is the opportunity to hire bikes this morning to explore it's captivating environs on two wheels. Alternatively you may just wish to wander its streets and explore the local market, take to the city walls and relish something of the delightful ambience of this beautiful city. You may also decide to visit nearby Pisa, 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 Baptistry, 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, 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**

DAY 6 Canyoning in the Turrite Valley

This morning we jump in a bus and head south to the Turrite valley where we will try our hands at canyoning, an exciting and adventurous activity. Arriving in the pretty village of Fornolovasco, we get into our wet suites and helmets for an easy section of canyoning down the Rio Pinguino in the parco Battifero allowing us to try some small water jumps. Ending back at Fornolovasco we have lunch beside the river before we then move a little way down the river valley to the Levigliese Park for a harder section of canyoning, that will see us slip, slide and swim our way through waterfalls and rivers.

Overnight: **Standard Agriturismo**

DAY 7 Cycle mountain descent in the Apennines; PM free

Our final day sees us heading by bus up to San Pelllegrino where we stop to see the mummified bodies of two saints before driving further up to Alpe de San Pellegrino (1600m). We get great views over the Garfagnana valley and across the whole chain of mountains. After getting our equipment and a briefing 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. After 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 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**

DAY 8 Tour ends Pisa Airport

Today we transfer to Pisa airport where the tour ends.

Ability to swim required

Please note: Participation in canoeing, kayaking, or rafting (including white-water) requires that you are able to swim 25 metres unaided.

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Rating

Depending on group size and configuration of families, it may happen on occasion that there will be 1 bathroom per family rather than per room.

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.

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 adullts 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: Banks or 'Forex' offices in main towns/cities.

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

For passengers making their own travel arrangements, please ensure you join the group as described on day one of the tour itinerary. If you are considering purchasing your own airline tickets, you can book these through any travel agent, directly with an airline or through an online flight consolidator. In all cases, we would be happy to arrange transfers to and from the joining point of your tour if required.

Joining Tour Abroad

Clients booked on **'Land Only'** arrangements should make their own way to the joining point. Please refer to separate **'Joining Instructions'** for time and place of rendezvous with tour leader

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.

If you require travel insurance for your tour, Explore Worldwide is an appointed representative of Campbell Irvine Limited, who is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services authority. Our travel insurance policy is specially tailored to the needs of the adventure traveller and will cover you for any included activity on any Explore trip. You can either purchase this at the time of booking or call us on 0844 499 0903 after you have booked.

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

Food

The prices for meals and 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. 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 £: 23.00

Dinner £: 32.00

Drink

Italy

Bottle of Beer £: 4.00

Water £: 2.20

Country details

Italy

Population: 60,681,514

Size of Country: 301,338

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.

EXPLORE! The Adventure Travel Experts available online 24/7

- With over 30 years experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures & tailormade holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one 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 traditional, 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: The Sunshine Orphanage (which cares for abandoned children in Luxor, Egypt), Education for All (sponsoring children through their secondary education in Morocco), The Hope Foundation (helping an Indian Village to recover from the 2004 Tsunami) and the Mufindi Orphanage, which support AIDS orphans in Tanzania.

We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation, Travel Operators for Tigers (helping save the Bengal Tiger from extinction) and Friends for Conservation. We have also adopted a beautiful Sri Lankan Elephant called 'Serendip'.

We are delighted to have received a Five Star sustainable tourism status from the Association of Independent Tour Operators in recognition of our on-going commitment to sustainable tourism.

Cool Earth

Explore are delighted to support Cool Earth to reduce carbon emissions through preventing the illegal deforestation of the South America rainforest. One of the top sources of global carbon emissions, rainforest deforestation equivalent to the USA's annual emissions, it also destroys flora and fauna, sometimes to the point of extinction. It also degrades the lives and communities of the 350 million residents of the rainforest.

Cool Earth prevents the deforestation through its support of local communities as forest guardians and by focussing on areas in immediate danger of deforestation. It has so far protected over 350,000 acres of rainforest, with each acre saving an emission of 260 tons of CO2, as well as protecting rare animals and plants. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year. In addition to mitigating emissions, when you travel with Explore, you are helping to protect the source of 20% of the world's fresh water and oxygen, as well as the livelihoods of the 1.6 billion people who are reliant on the rainforest. www.coolearth.org

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
- 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.

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 2013 and 31st December 2014.

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: 2014 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2014. 2015/16 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2015.

These tour notes were printed on 17/03/2014 02:22:07