



# Itineraries in the Valdarno and the Valdisieve



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## Itineraries in the Valdarno and the Valdisieve

The territory of the Valdarno and the Valdisieve includes the municipal districts of **Londa**, **Pelago**, **Pontassieve**, **Reggello**, **Rignano sull'Arno**, **Rufina** and **San Godenzo**. It is an unpolluted region that spreads towards the extreme southern part of the Sieve river valley and partly into the Upper Valdarno. Only a few kilometers from Florence, this area has great environmental value with its large green areas such as the National Park of the Casentino Forests - Mount Falterona and Campigna, the Biogenetic Nature Reserve of Vallombrosa, the Sant'Antonio Forest, Mount Giovi, the Consuma and the hills that gently slope down towards the Arno river that are covered with olive groves and vineyards. The municipal districts of Pelago, Pontassieve and Rufina span the Sieve basin as far as the confluence with the Arno river. Among these panoramas dotted with cypresses are antique parish churches, villas, castles and farms that reveal the Chianti Rufina and Pomino wine routes and important wine estates. The landscape becomes definitely mountain-like in the National Park of the Casentino Forests which includes Mount Falterona with the Arno headwaters and the highest peak of the territory, Mount Falco (1647 m). This area, part of the municipal districts of Londa and San Godenzo, has produced timber, charcoal and chestnuts (the famous *marroni*) for centuries. The municipalities of Reggello and Rignano sull'Arno are found at the beginning of the Upper Valdarno, lying on sun-bathed hills covered with olive groves which produce a top-quality oil. There are many artisanal and industrial activities here thanks to its proximity to Florence and the excellent motorways. The history of this region and its people is tightly linked to the town of Florence, for which it has always supplied vegetables and produce, wine and pure air. Ancient traces of human settlements are documented along the Sieve Valley and the Upper Valdarno where the first road were made by the Etruscans who also brought to the area the vine and olive cultivation later developed in Roman times. In the high Middle Ages the territory was reorganized based on *plebati* and *popoli*, that is,

## Pelago

Found on a precipice, going straight down into the Vicano torrent, **Pelago** has a striking historical centre enriched by the Collection of Sacred Art housed in the Parish Church of San Clemente. The surrounding landscape is of great beauty with gentle hills full of olive groves and vineyards and, higher up, some villages surrounded by thick woods which already show mountainous features like Raggioli and the Consuma whose pass of the same name is the gateway into the Casentino. Some of the most interesting monuments in the area are the Church of Santa Margherita a Tosina, housing a triptych by Mariotto di Nardo (1388), the castle of Ristonchi and the neo-Gothic one of Ferrano, the villa-castle of Altomena, the Villa of Grässina and especially the striking Nipozzano complex, consisting of a medieval castle, a villa and an antique rural village.

HISTORICAL CENTRE - CHURCH OF SAN CLEMENTE - MUSEUM OF SACRED ART - NIPOZZANO - CHURCH OF SANTA MARGHERITA A TOSINA - RAGGIOLI - MUSEUM OF THE RURAL CULTURE, HANDICRAFTS AND THE WOODS - CASTLE OF RISTONCHI - CASTLE OF FERRANO - CASTLE OF ALTOMENA



// CASTLE OF NIPOZZANO



// CHURCH OF SANTA MARGHERITA A TOSINA

## Rignano sull'Arno

The historical centre of **Rignano sull'Arno** rises from an old river crossing where today the historical 16<sup>th</sup>-century bridge is found. Just outside the town is located the Romanesque Parish Church of San Leolino while further to the south, along the river, rises the Pian dell'Isola Tower. The landscape unfolds along the hills that gently go up towards the ridge of Poggio di Firenze and is made up of agricultural land with vineyards, olive groves, meadows and woods surrounding the country villages. The main religious monument is the Rosano Benedictine Monastery, a medieval complex. Other important religious buildings include the Parish Church of Miransù and the Churches of San Pietro and San Cristoforo a Perticaia. From the Middle Ages there remain some ruins, the "Castelluccio" site where archeological excavations are in progress, and the castles of Volognano, Castiglionchio and Fontepetrini. Besides the numerous beautiful farmhouses, some of which still show the traces of the original medieval tower, the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Villa of Poggiofrancoli and the giant and spectacular one of Torre a Cona are noteworthy.

// VILLA OF TORRE A CONA  
// RIGNANO, PARISH CHURCH OF SAN LEOLINO



PARISH CHURCH OF SAN LEOLINO - MONASTERY OF ROSANO - PARISH CHURCH OF MIRANSÙ - CHURCH OF SAN PIERO AND CHURCH OF SAN CRISTOFORO IN PERTICAIA - TOWER OF PIAN DELL'ISOLA - VILLA OF TORRE A CONA - VILLA OF POGGIOFRANCOLI - CASTLE OF VOLOGNANO - VILLA OF CASTIGLIONCHIO - CASTLE OF FONTEPETRINI - EXCAVATIONS OF CASTELLUCCIO



// LANDSCAPE



simple churches and the more important parish churches which had the privilege of having a baptismal font. In this same period many castles were built by the main feudatories, the Guidi Counts, and their vassals. When communal power developed in Florence, the town gained control over the whole area and the main Florentine families started investing in the countryside. This area became dotted with farmhouses and manor houses first built as tower houses, then as estates and finally as large noble villas. Thus Florence's history is indissolubly linked to our countryside from where for centuries it took the best foodstuffs as well as the best men such as Lorenzo Ghiberti and Andrea del Castagno. The Union's territory coincides with the first 'Model Forest' in Italy, an international acknowledgment won after an accreditation board assessed the sustainability of the territory's forest management.

## Pontassieve

**Pontassieve** rises in proximity to the confluence of the Sieve river into the Arno river. The bridge over the Sieve river has antique origins - the present one dates back to the late 16<sup>th</sup> century - and has given the town its name. Pontassieve preserves three gates and segments of the walls from the fortified medieval town. The old Borgo, or borough, connecting the fortified town to the bridge is also interesting. The surroundings are rich in historical monuments: churches and castles, villas and farm estates and numerous farmhouses which preserve most of the original features. An important Nature Reserve surrounds the striking Sanctuary of the Madonna del Sasso - found high on the hill near Santa Brigida. The ridge continues to the East along Mount Giovi, with a Memorial Park dedicated to the Resistance Movement.



// PONTASSIEVE: TOWNHALL  
// MEDICI BRIDGE

## Rufina

The district of **Rufina** is famous worldwide for the excellence of its wines. It is crossed by the Chianti Rufina and Pomino wine route that runs along the vineyards following the peaks and valleys of the Val di Sieve hills. In the town of Rufina, surrounded by a beautiful park, we find the Renaissance villa of Poggio Reale, which houses the Vine and Wine Museum and the Mario Romoli Museum. The surrounding hills are covered by famous vineyards and medieval villages such as Turicchi, Agna, Cigliano, Falgano. To be pointed out are the Romanesque Parish Church of Castiglioni, the Oratory of Rugiano, the Castle of Castiglioni and the villas of Selvapiana, Busini, and Petrognano. The upper Pomino valley deserves a separate treatment with its landscape characterized by famous vineyards, the village of Pinzano, the Romanesque Parish Church of Pomino, the villas of Petrognano, Lame and Palagio. A little further up we reach the pleasant village of Castelnuovo.

VILLA OF POGGIO REALE AND VINE AND WINE MUSEUM - PARISH CHURCHES OF POMINO AND CASTIGLIONI - VILLA OF LE LAME - VILLA PALAGIO DI POMINO - VILLA OF SELVAPIANA - VILLA I BUSINI - VILLA OF PETROGNANO - CASTLE OF CASTIGLIONI - VILLAGES OF AGNA, PINZANO AND CASTELNUOVO



// VILLA OF POGGIOREALE



// PARISH CHURCH OF SAN BARTOLOMEO

## Londa

**Londa** is found in the small valley of the Moscia torrent and can be reached by driving along the SP 556 provincial road which runs from the Val di Sieve to Stia and the Casentino. This small town of medieval origins is squeezed between two torrents and still preserves some antique houses and a beautiful stone bridge over the Rincine torrent. A small artificial lake provides a pleasant attraction in summer and also the Visitor Centre of the *Parco Nazionale delle Foreste Casentinesi - Monte Falterona - Campigna* is found here. In the surrounding area, the Romanesque parish churches of San Leolino a Monti and Sant'Elena a Rincine are to be noted. The uppermost part of the municipal district is covered with woods and forests, mostly included in the Rincine State Property where an *Exhibition Centre on Renewable Energies* is found. A network of paths leads to the Falterona peaks, starting from Rincine, or more conveniently, from the Croce a Mori Pass. Among the territory's sources of pride is the *Regina di Londa* peach, a late white variety to which is dedicated a small but interesting gastronomic fair in September.



// LAKE OF LONDA  
// PARISH CHURCH OF SANT'ELENA A RINCINE

HISTORICAL CENTRE - LAKE - PARISH CHURCH OF SANT'ELENA A RINCINE - PARISH CHURCH OF SAN LEOLINO IN MONTI AND CASTLE RUINS - VICORATI

## Reggello

**Reggello** lies on the slopes of the Pratomagno massif and its territory includes the Vallombrosa Abbey that is surrounded by a splendid forest. The municipal district is dotted with Romanesque churches such as the Parish Church of Pitiana, the Church of San Donato in Fronzano, the Parish Church of Arfoli and the wonderful church of San Pietro in Cascia housing a triptych of Saint Juvenal, the first known work by Masaccio, and still in Cascia is the Masaccio Museum of Sacred Art. Among the important civic buildings let us mention the Torre del Castellano castle, the Villa Guicciardini in Pieve a Pitiana, the Villa Pitiana, the neo-Gothic Castle of Bonsi, the castle of Sammezzano, the Villa di Mandri and numerous early 20<sup>th</sup>-century buildings that make up the Saltino health resort. The mountains are covered with forests that are part of the Biogenetic Nature Reserve of Vallombrosa and the Sant' Antonio Forest Nature Reserve, both of which are traversed by marked paths. On a high ridge we find the Oratory of Ponticelli as well as the excavations of the medieval castle of Poggio alla Regina. In the area further downhill there is the Natural Protected Area of the Balze.

PARISH CHURCH OF CASCIA - MUSEUM OF SACRED ART - PARISH CHURCH OF SANTAGATA IN ARFOLI - PARISH CHURCH OF PITIANA - CHURCH OF SOCIANA - ORATORY OF PONTICELLI - ABBEY AND MUSEUM OF SACRED ART OF VALLOMBROSA - CASTLE OF SAMMEZZANO - TORRE DEL CASTELLANO CASTLE - POGGIO ALLA REGINA - VILLA DI MANDRI - CASTLE OF BONSI - VILLA PITIANA - PIEVE A PITIANA VILLA



// ABBEY OF VALLOMBROSA



// PARISH CHURCH OF SAN PIERO IN CASCIA,  
TRIPTYCH BY MASACCIO, DETAIL

## San Godenzo

**San Godenzo** derives its name from the Abbey of San Gaudenzio. Here there still remains the beautiful Romanesque church where, in 1302, a famous meeting between Florentine exiles - which Dante Alighieri attended - took place. Another important building is the Romanesque Parish Church of San Babila in San Bavello. The municipal district of San Godenzo is typically mountainous and it includes the Muraglione Pass - the gateway to Romagna - the valley of Acquacheta with its waterfalls and the Colla dei Tre Faggi Pass. The entire main ridge is part of the National Park of the Casentino Forests - Monte Falterona - Campigna which in Castagno d'Andrea has an entry gate with the Visitor Centre together with a virtual Museum dedicated to the Renaissance painter Andrea del Castagno, who was born here around 1421. Many paths start from Castagno and lead towards Mount Falterona and the Arno headwaters.

ABBAY CHURCH OF SAN GAUDENZIO - CHURCH OF SAN MARTINO A CASTAGNO - VIRTUAL MUSEUM OF ANDREA DEL CASTAGNO'S WORKS - PARISH CHURCH OF SAN BABILA IN SAN BAVELLO - MURAGLIONE PASS - ACQUACHETA WATERFALLS



// ACQUACHETA  
// BENEDICTINE ABBEY OF SAN GODENZO

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