

# LUCCA TREK

Routes through the nature and landscapes in the Lucca area

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# LUCCA TREK

Key Map



Routes through the nature and landscapes in the Lucca area.

From the ramparts of the Walls of Lucca, you can admire the surrounding flat or hilly landscape and some of the heights of Monte Pisano. There are several routes that allow you to immerse yourself in this magnificent rural area and enjoy walking through the villages and countryside around Lucca, from the CAI (Italian Mountaineering Club) network to the great ways, the waterways between the Notolini aqueduct and the Serchio river area and the ancient routes promoted by the **Itinera Romanica** project. **Lucca Trek** invites you to discover the great cultural and natural heritage of the local hills and countryside in a slow, sustainable and authentic way.

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The suggested routes were monitored during autumn and winter 2023. The practicability of individual routes may change due to weather events of particular impact on the area and possible interruptions due to the closure of local roads.



Credits: General Coordination: Comune di Lucca - Ufficio Turismo e Sport / Route plotting: Pietrapiana di Sesti Guido Armando / Graphic design, editing and translations: Cicca s.r.l. / Map: Webmapp.it - Autor: Marco Barbieri / Cartographic data: © OpenStreetMap Contributors, © Regione Toscana, © Istituto Geografico Militare.

## Legend

- Main roads
- Secondary road
- Path
- Marked routes
- Unmarked routes
- Railway
- Tracks
- Nature Reserve boundary
- Via Francigena (and variant)
- The Aqueduct Way
- Way of Saint Giulia
- Way of Saint Jacopo
- Via Matildica del Volto Santo
- Itinera Romanica
- Bike paths
- Sport climbing gym
- Iron Path
- Romanesque church
- Church
- Monastery
- Castle / fortress
- Tower
- Historic villa
- Ruins
- Cave entrance
- Railway station
- Museum
- Thermal baths
- Information point
- Garden
- Olive grove

Scale - 1:25.000 (4 cm = 1 km)  
 Reference System: WGS84 / UTM zone 32N / EPSG:32632  
 Equidistance between contour lines: 25 metri





## Oltreserchio

*A pleasant hilly countryside with villages and ancient buildings*

Nestled between the city of Lucca and the province of Pisa, Oltreserchio (literally 'beyond Serchio') is a prelude to the neighbouring Media Valle del Serchio ('mid-valley' of the Serchio), an area rich in **nature and biodiversity** and dotted with unexpected **historical and religious treasures**. It sits to the (downstream) right of the Serchio, the third longest river in Tuscany, and is home to castles, Carthusian monasteries and buildings of particular value, and offers **pleasant walks** in the countryside and panoramic hikes during which you can also see the peaks of the Apuan Alps and the Ligurian Sea. **Nozzano** with its perfectly preserved castle; **Chiatri**, a small and evocative village nestled in the hills, much loved by the great Italian composer Giacomo Puccini; **Certosa di Farneta**, an immense monastery set in front of lush woodland; these are just a few of the unmissable attractions to be visited in a day trip or as part of a longer tour of the Lucca area.

San Pietro bridge over the Serchio



## Monte Pisano

*A small mountain range rich in biodiversity with breathtaking views*

Monte Pisano alternates lush green woodland and barren, wild landscapes, standing like a natural sentinel between the coastal plain and the hinterland. This small mountain system, **steeped in history and of uncontaminated beauty**, is a unique opportunity for visitors to experience the wonderful countryside just a few miles from Lucca. The Monte Pisano mountain range (also known in the plural 'Monti Pisani') is part of the Tuscan sub-Appennines. It has a **widespread and dense network of trails** that allow you to enjoy natural panoramas stretching as far as the sea, ideal for **hiking and mountain biking**. It includes Monte Serra, which reaches just over **900 metres** above sea level, a modest but perfect altitude for short but exciting hiking or cycling adventures. The attractions include **Passo Dante**, a pass with a bust of famous poet Dante Alighieri, and the rock carvings of Monte Cotrozzi. In addition to nature, the Monte Pisano area is also home to **ancient villages** from the Compito area to the villas of Vorno and the **stately homes** in Gattaiola and Vicopelago.

View of the snow-covered slopes of Monte Pisano



## The Aqueduct Way

*Along the ancient waterways that fed the city of Lucca and surrounding plain*

This charming hiking route around Lucca, just over 20 km long is a **journey through the hundreds of years of history** of this walled city and majestic engineering works from the late 16th to the early 19th century. This unique route winds through enchanting landscapes such as **Le Parole d'Oro** (The Golden Words), for an unforgettable experience combining **architecture, history and natural beauty**. The route follows the **Nottolini Aqueduct** in Lucca, named after engineer Lorenzo Nottolini who was commissioned by the Duchess Marie Louise of Bourbon, and the older **Medici Aqueduct** of Pisa, thus connecting the territories of the two cities. Perfectly preserved, the Lucca aqueduct was fed with water from the springs in the nearby hills of Serra Vespaia and the Rio San Quirico and Rio della Valle. These **spectacular water systems** from different periods are no longer in use but still offer you the opportunity to walk through history while discovering the beautiful landscapes of the Tuscan countryside.

The area known as 'Le Parole d'Oro' and the arches of the Nottolini aqueduct



## Castles and Fortifications

*Evidence of ancient rivalries between the Republics of Lucca and Pisa*

In the stunning countryside just outside Lucca, on the border between two historic cities, the land of age-old rivalries, ancient fortifications stand among the hills or amidst the vegetation, bearing witness to thousands of years of history and forming **majestic architectural icons** embraced by the beauty of the surrounding landscape. The hills are scattered with numerous towers and fortresses that were built to control the area **in defence** of the respective and historical republics. Among the best preserved buildings is the impressive **Castle of Nozzano**, an outpost built on the south-western border to counter attacks from the Pisa area and in particular from Ripafratra, a fortified medieval village on the banks of the Serchio. In the woods and on the slopes of Monte Pisano, you can see the fascinating **ruins of Castelpasserino**, a stronghold destroyed during the Middle Ages, and the Torre dell'aquila or **Torre segata**.

The village and castle of Nozzano



## Itinera Romanica +



## Via Francigena and Southern Variant



*Where the main road of Europe meets the city: a crossroad of travellers and routes*

Lucca, the city of the Holy Face, is a pilgrims' crossroads and has always been an unmissable stage in the journeys of pilgrims and wayfarers along the **Via Francigena** over the centuries. The ancient route goes from Versilia to the Apuan Alps, crossing the Freddana Valley and approaching Lucca as far as the San Pietro bridge over the Serchio, just a short distance from the ancient Porta San Donato - the gateway to the 'city of a hundred churches'. The old city centre of Lucca, enclosed within 16th-century walls, is a historical treasure trove: the cathedral of San Martino houses the precious **Volto Santo** (Holy Face), an ancient wooden crucifix which according to tradition was carved by Nicodemus based on the real face of Jesus. The Via Francigena continues eastwards through the outlying villages of the Piana di Lucca. There is also the enjoyable **Variante Sud** (Southern Variant) which winds along more than 30 kilometres of imposing arches and fountains, the arches of the **monumental aqueduct** designed by Lorenzo Nottolini in 1822, and then branches off towards Monte Pisano.

STAGES  
Camaioere > Lucca **24 km**  
Lucca > Altopascio **19 km**  
Southern Variant > **30 km**

## Way of Saint Giulia



*The lands of Lucca: a passage to the northern plains*

History, spirituality and nature come together in this **evocative route** that marks the journey of the relics of St Julia during the time of the Lombards. As many as 25 stages cross three regions including the most beautiful countryside around Lucca, full of sites of **historical and religious interest**. Walking along the roads and paths of Cammino di Santa Giulia, you can admire ancient churches, monasteries and Romanesque parish churches of great beauty, all devoted to the martyr. Starting in the Livorno area, the way crosses the countryside of Lucca and the **slopes of Monte Pisano**, along the banks of the Rio San Quirico, crosses the fabulous site of **Le Parole d'Oro** (**The Golden Words**), so called by local peasants due to the gold-coloured inscription on one of the characteristic little bridges, and then runs alongside the majestic Nottolini Aqueduct. Having passed the **city of Lucca** and its many attractions and travelled through the green of the Serchio river park, the route heads towards the **Apennine ridge** with more challenging trails, following ancient routes that connected the Lucca area with the north of the peninsula.

STAGES  
Buti > Lucca **24 km**  
Lucca > Altopiano delle Pizzorne **21 km**

## Way of Saint Jacopo



*A pilgrims' way through the gates of Lucca and along ancient Roman roads*

The Cammino di San Jacopo goes from Florence to Lucca following the **ancient Roman roads** of Via Cassia and Via Aemilia Scauri. The mid-point is the city of Pistoia, also known as 'Santiago minor' because of the relic of the James the Great that has been preserved here since 1145 AD; before reaching Lucca, the route passes the 8th-century **Church of San Cassiano a Vico**, renovated several times to its current elegant 18th-century design. The route continues to Acquafredda, where it runs alongside the canal that in the late 19th century fed local industry, traces of which still remain today. The canal crosses the old city centre of Lucca in **Via del Fosso**, and as early as in the Middle Ages it supplied energy to the city's manufacturers. The route then joins the cycle-pedestrian path along the banks of the Serchio until it reaches the city walls at **Porta San Jacopo**, a gateway which preserves evidence of the worship of the Saint Apostle. From Lucca, the way continued on to the sea, where pilgrims could embark for Spain and Santiago de Compostela.

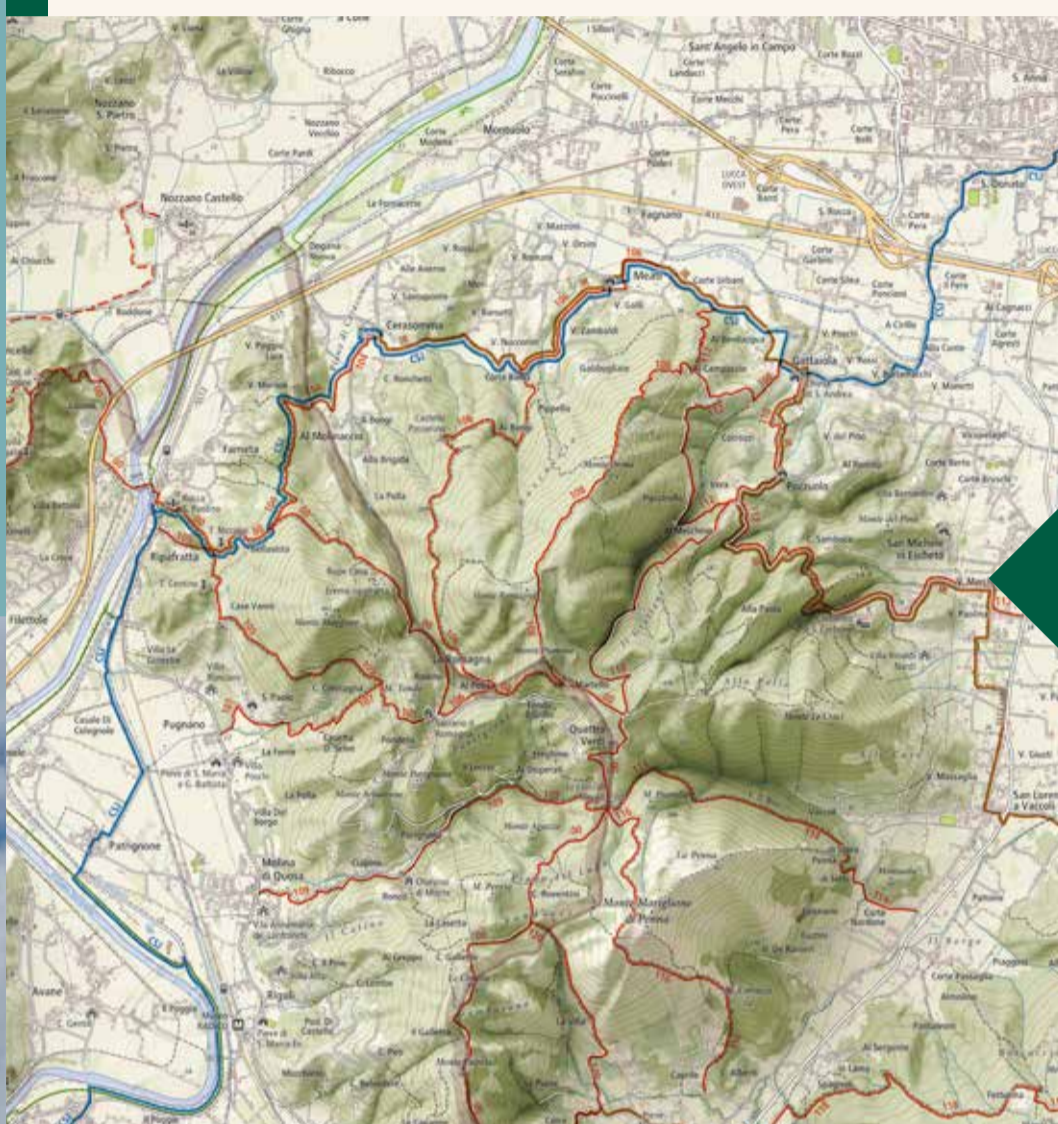
STAGES  
Pescia > Lucca **25 km**  
Lucca > Pisa **29 km**

## Sites of architectural interest in Oltreserchio

*Walking through Maggiano, Farneta and Chiatri*

On the right bank of the Serchio, there are three places not to be missed, each with its own particular charm, each with an architectural gem to be explored by travelling the network of connecting paths. Maggiano houses the **former mental asylum** of the same name, in the buildings of the former Monastery of the Canons Regular of the Lateran of Santa Maria di Fregionai. It was closed in 1999, leaving behind a suspenseful and fascinating atmosphere; it is one of the few old mental asylums that can still be visited. Farneta is renowned for **Certosa di Farneta**, a vast monastery dating back to the 14th century. It was expanded in the early 20th century to accommodate the monks of Grande Chartreuse, who were expelled from France, and was an important motherhouse of the Carthusian order. Finally, the hilly village of Chiatri hosts **Villa Puccini**, a splendid residence in Tuscan Neo-Gothic style that belonged to great master Giacomo Puccini, where he used to find peace and inspiration.

Path	Departure	Arrival	Length	Elevation	Level
Maggiano / Chiatri	Maggiano	Monti di Chiatri	2.600	+320	E
Farneta / Chiatri 1	Farneta	Chiatri	4.500	+250	E
Farneta / Chiatri 2	Farneta	Chiatri	1.600	+150	E
Via di Chiatri/ Monti di Chiatri	Via di Chiatri	Monti di Chiatri	1.400	+150-50	E
Variante Monti di Chiatri	Via di Chiatri	Monti di Chiatri	1.400	+150-50	E

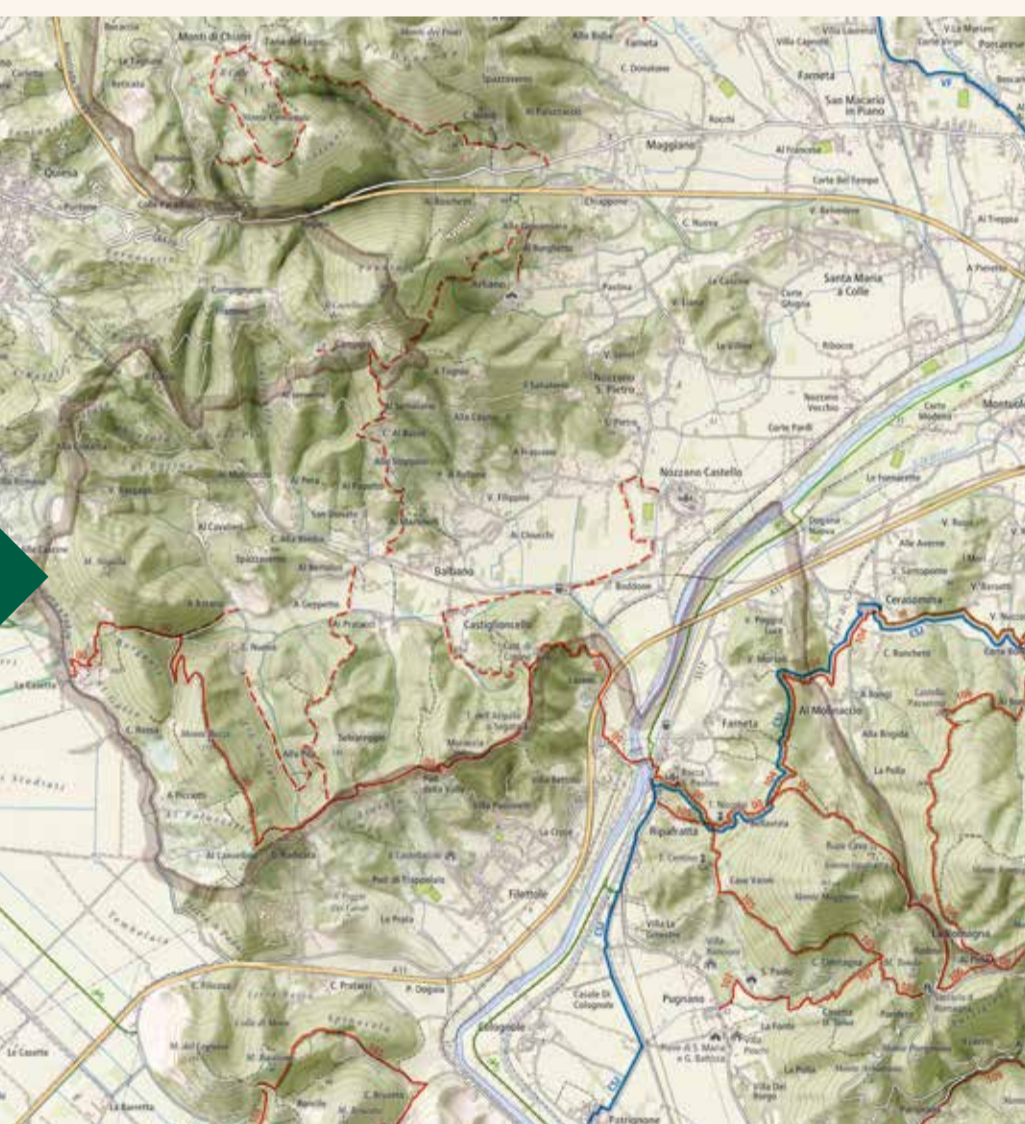


*On the ridge amidst history and breathtaking landscapes*

*Discovering the areas of Cerasomma, Meati and Montuolo*

From the village of Meati, there are trails that lead to **Monte Orma** and **Monte Romagna**, and continue through the beautiful landscapes of the hills of Pisa, up to the **ridge**, from where, albeit at modest altitude, you can admire ample views of the surrounding area. Coming back down, you can travel in a ring route, visiting the fascinating **ruins of Castelpasserino**, an ancient fortress built in the 13th century on the hill opposite Montuolo, a village that still preserves its ancient origins. The route then continues towards the **medieval village** of Cerasomma, then travels back to Meati along a pleasant asphalt road that runs past the **Church of San Michele Arcangelo**, a striking building with a Romanesque façade, documented before the year 1000 and of Lombard origin just like Meati.

Path	Departure	Arrival	Length	Elevation	Level
104	Cerasomma	Sentiero 00	2.200	+130	E
106	Meati	Valico della Romagna	5.500	+350	E
108	Gattaiola	Sentiero 00	4.200	+450	E
110	Gattaiola	Quattro Venti	3.600	+370	E
112	Gattaiola	Massa Pisana	6.000	+170-200	E

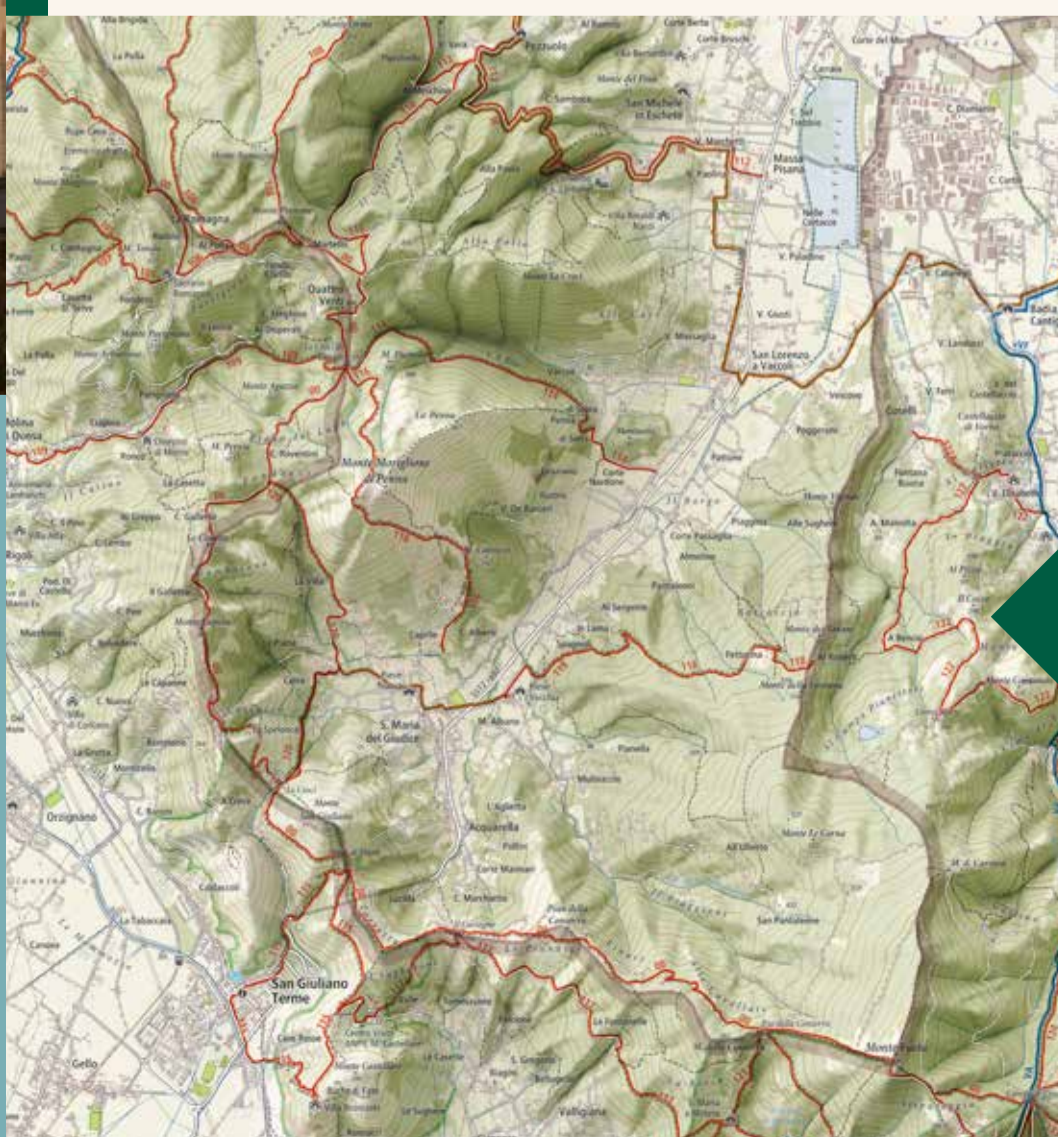


## On the slopes of Monte Quiesa

*Nature and history in Nozzano, Arliano and Balbano*

The surroundings of Monte Quiesa, a mount dividing the plain of Lucca from Versilia, are dotted with places of great natural, historical and architectural interest. From Nozzano and its **imposing castle**, you can enjoy the surrounding countryside following paths that lead up to the ridge. A short distance away is the hamlet of **Arliano**, which is home to the **abandoned Arliano sanatorium**, a fascist complex with the characteristic elongated shape of one of its buildings that recalls the prow of a ship and a popular 'mecca' for photographers. From Arliano, along paths through hills and natural landscapes, you reach Compignano, a village set in stunning surroundings and home to the famous **Villa Paolina di Compignano**, a historic residence where Pauline Bonaparte stayed. Finally, from Balbano you can reach **Lake Massaciuccoli**, an oasis frequented by numerous bird species: a paradise for birdwatchers.

Path	Departure	Arrival	Length	Elevation	Level
Nozzano Castello / Innesio 00	Nozzano Castello	Sentiero 00	3.500	+120	E
Balbano / Innesio 00_1	Balbano	Sentiero 00	2.000	+100	E
Balbano / Padule di Massaciuccoli	Balbano	Padule di Massaciuccoli	1.700	+80-100	E
Balbano / Compignano	Balbano	Compignano	2.000	+230	E
Balbano / Innesio 00_2	Balbano	Sentiero 00	1.700	+70	E
Arliano/ Compignano	Arliano	Compignano	2.500	+210	E



*Ancient parish churches and poetic panoramas*

*Exploring the surroundings of Santa Maria del Giudice, Gattaiola and Pozzuolo*

Santa Maria del Giudice is a town nestled in Monti Pisani, on the border with the province of Pisa, and has **very ancient roots**, as evidenced by the Romanesque **Parish Church of San Giovanni Battista**. Part of its mountainous territory falls within the Protected Natural Area of Local Interest ('ANPIL') of Monte Castellare and is the departure point for beautiful hikes to discover **Morigion di Penna**, a peak of modest altitude but with incredible views, and **Passo di Dante**, another suggestive panoramic viewpoint linked to supreme poet Dante Alighieri. From the pleasant, nearby hamlet of Gattaiola, with the **Church of Sant'Andrea** and the bell tower in which medieval time seems to have stood still, paths set off on ring routes passing ancient parish churches and Renaissance villas. Other splendid residences can be admired in the area around Pozzuolo, where a **path connecting** to the ridge also takes you to Cerasomma and Meati.

Path	Departure	Arrival	Length	Elevation	Level
114	S. Lorenzo a Vaccoli	Croci di Vaccoli	2.800	+300	E
116	S. Maria del Giudice	Morigion di Penna	3.200	+450-190	E
118 Nord	S. Lorenzo a Vaccoli	Monte Cotrozzo	1.600	+180	E
120 Sud	Catro	Valico Le Croci	1.100	+100	E
00	Passo di Dante	Monte Faeta	4.900	+660	E