



17 JANUARY 2014



CATERINA POMINI



7147

AN ALTERNATIVE TOUR OF TUSCANY

Tuscany's most visited cities are still Florence with its David and Brunelleschi's Dome, followed by Siena with its Piazza del Campo and Gothic cathedral; however, there is also another Tuscany, maybe less popular but full of charm and character all the same... if you want to discover it, all you need is a car and a couple of days off!

This 2-day [Tuscany tour](#) departs from Florence and takes you to:

- **Pisa** – mainly known for its Tower that has been leaning for 840 years
- **Lucca** – still surrounded by its ancient walls with huge gates and ramparts

- **Vinci** – the birthplace of Leonardo da Vinci and
- **Montecatini Terme** – one of the most important spa towns in Italy.

DAY ONE

Pisa - approximately 1 hour from Florence – stands at the junction of the River Arno and the River Serchio and is one of the most significant art cities of our Peninsula; besides its **Leaning Tower** and the **Piazza dei Miracoli** – a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1987 – it has a lot to offer. Visit **Piazza dei Cavalieri** (Knights' Square) that was rebuilt in the Renaissance style by **Giorgio Vasari**, take a stroll beneath the **Borgo Stretto** Medieval arcades and look for the **Church of San Michele in Borgo** and two other less visited leaning towers: the first one is situated at the southern end of Via Santa Maria, the other halfway through the Piagge riverside promenade. Last but not least, don't forget to check the **Palazzo Blu exhibition schedule**: besides the permanent collection, the museum houses fantastic temporary exhibits all year round.

From Pisa you can easily reach **Lucca** via SS12 (approximately 25 minutes drive). Particularly famous for its **16th century intact walls**, Lucca is also known as the “**City of 100 Churches**” due to the large number of religious buildings.

After having climbed all the steps up to the top of the **Guinigi Tower**, look for **Piazza dell'Anfiteatro** that was built on the remains of a Roman amphitheater from the 2nd century AD; later, you can walk on the walls (now a pedestrian promenade) and admire the city from a different perspective. We recommend you grab some dinner at **Cantine Bernardini** (Via del Suffragio, 7), the food is delicious and the atmosphere is wonderful; after dinner, you can ask the owner to tell you about the ghost who inhabits the cellars, a centuries-old entity who was probably imprisoned there a long, long time ago...

DAY TWO

On the way back to **Florence** (via A11) take a detour to **Vinci**: here you can visit the **Museo Leonardiano**, the **Biblioteca Leonardiana**, the **Museo Ideale Leonardo da Vinci** and the **Farmhouse** where the Italian Renaissance Master was probably born. In the afternoon, we suggest you leave for **Montecatini Terme** (half an hour drive from Vinci) and spend an afternoon pampering yourself in one of its modern [thermal establishments](#).

At the end of the day, you can look for a restaurant in **Montecatini Alto** or **Serravalle Pistoiese**, quite well known for its **Longobard Tower** which is visible from the toll road.

We hope you will enjoy this unconventional [tour in Tuscany](#), always remember to take your time and never simply check things off your must-see list!