



17 JANUARY 2014



CATERINA POMINI



6639

## ***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!