

28 SEPTEMBER 2012 CATERINA POMINI 12382

MONTERIGGIONI, ONE OF TUSCANY'S MOST FAMOUS WALLED VILLAGES

Entirely surrounded by an elliptical stone wall of 570 meters, the Castle of Monteriggioni was built by the Republic of Siena in the XIII century to defend the city from the Florentine troops; today, only 11 of the original 15 towers remain, 4 were trimmed down over the centuries. Monteriggioni's walls embrace only 42 inhabitants, 2 restaurants, some guest-houses, 2 bars, a hotel and a few nice shops.

Have you booked a San Gimignano tour? If your answer is yes then you cannot miss the beautiful village of **Monteriggioni** which lies only 34 kilometers away; built between 1213 and 1219 with the

aim of defending **Siena** from the **Florentine troops**, it was erected on a small hillock overlooking the **Francigena**, so that it could guard the valleys of the rivers Staggia and Elsa.

The Village is surrounded by an **elliptical stone wall** of 570 meters and has been identified as **the typical village fortress** or rather "*a small village with very few inhabitants surrounded by walls*"; the walls embrace today only some private houses, two restaurants, two bars, a hotel and some nice shops.

Visit the **Church** dedicated to S. Maria Assunta, erected in 1219 in the main square of the Village; if you like churches you can visit many of them also in the surroundings, for example the **Abbey** in **Abbadia a Isola**, the **Church of Santa Maria a Castello**, the **Villa** and the **Church of Santa Colomba**, the **Hermitage of San Leonardo al Lago** and the **Church of San Lorenzo a Colle Ciupi**.

Rumour has it that the Castle also has **secret tunnels** connecting Monteriggioni to the nearby forts and the city of Siena; another legend tells that **the Ghost of Captain Bernardino Zeti** continues to haunt the Village on cold winter nights... But who's Bernardino Zeti? For about 3 centuries, the Florentines and the Sienese strove very hard to gain Monteriggioni until - on April 27, 1554 - **Captain Bernardino Zeti** betrayed Siena and handed the keys of the Village over to the **Marquis of Marignano**, who brought the ancient **Sienese Republic** to its knees... The old inhabitants of Monteriggioni say that the Ghost of the Captain cannot find peace after betrayal...

Does this story catch your attention? Tuscany is literally filled with ancient medieval villages and has many stories and ghost stories to tell... all you have to do is book a Tuscany tour and leave for adventure!