

EXPERIENCES
IN FLORENCE AND TUSCANY



WELCOME TO FLORENCE

Set on a wooded hillside just outside the city, Belmond Villa San Michele offers the best of all worlds. In just minutes our complimentary shuttle delivers you to the heart of Florence to discover Renaissance masterpieces, world-famous gelato or cutting-edge street art. It is equally easy to explore Chianti's lush landscapes—perhaps by Ferrari or hot-air balloon—or venture further afield to explore enchanting Lucca and Siena. Enticing activities closer to home include our world-renowned Cooking School. Just ask Reception for further details.

CONTENTS

WITHIN OUR WALLS AND AROUND FIESOLE	5
FALL IN LOVE WITH FLORENCE	11
GO CRAZY FOR CHIANTI	33
DISCOVER TREASURES OF TUSCANY	43
CALENDAR OF EVENTS	53

CATEGORIES

-  ACTIVE
-  CELEBRATION
-  CHILD FRIENDLY
-  CULTURE
-  FOOD AND WINE
-  NATURE
-  SHOPPING



Within our walls
and around Fiesole



COOKING CLASSES

Learn the secrets of Tuscan cuisine at our reputed cooking school, where Executive Chef Attilio Di Fabrizio teaches hands-on lessons, where you prepare, taste and cook alongside him. Small classes ensure that each student enjoys individual attention.

A range of culinary themes embracing all ages includes:

A morning with the Chef

Short but comprehensive, this course fully immerses you in Tuscan gastronomy. The cookery course is held on Monday, Thursday and Saturdays from 10am to 12.30pm and is followed by lunch based on the dishes prepared at our Loggia Restaurant. Please book by 6pm the day before.

Young Chef's Academy

A fun 2.5-hour lesson on Italian food for children aged 6-14. Available on request. Children under 8 years old must always be accompanied by an adult.

Food Design: Fairytale Dishes

Learn how to create enchanted worlds and fairytale scenes on a plate. Available on request.

Seasons of Taste

Discover recipes featuring the best seasonal ingredients. These classes are specially tailored to guests who have already visited our cookery school or who wish to expand their culinary knowledge.

April - May: Seasonal and vegetarian

June - July: Tuscan fish

September: Discover mushrooms

October: Truffle secrets



The Cookery School is not available during the month of August.



MOUNTAIN BIKING

Cycling is the best way to discover the hidden details, colours and aromas of the lush landscapes surrounding the hotel. We recommend pedaling towards Florence from Fiesole, admiring the hills dotted with villas. This is an easy route on mostly flat or downhill roads.



The Concierge can recommend a range of routes and arrange mountain bike hire and, if wished, one-way transfer. The activity can be enjoyed at any time of the season.

VILLAS, GARDENS & TREASURES OF FIESOLE

Accompanied by a private guide, visit the stunning gardens and beautifully preserved historic buildings of Fiesole, including Villa Medici, Villa Gamberaia, the Roman Theatre, the Etruscan Museum and Castello di Vincigliata.



The tour can be tailored to your particular interests.



Fall in love
with Florence



STREET ART TOUR

Florence is renowned for its Renaissance art, but a quite different artistic movement is taking hold in the city. Explore fun and fascinating street art adorning the smaller streets and back alleys on a walking or cycling tour led by a renowned Florentine street artist. Discover amazing artworks in astonishing places and peek inside the makers' studios.

This exclusive tour complements the Street Art Exhibition being staged at Belmond Villa San Michele in 2017, where prominent artists have been commissioned to create site-specific installations and artworks around the hotel and gardens.



The tour is designed to engage and entertain adults and older children alike.

GRAFFITI CLASSES

Learn how to draw your own graffiti tag, make stencils and discover the basic skills of freehand painting in the studio of the street artist Hopnn. At the end of the workshop you'll visit the Cure Underpass, a space dedicated to the street artists by the city of Florence to exhibit their own graffiti, where you will also be able to leave your own mark.



The halfday tour includes lunch in a typical pasta laboratory, near the artist's studio.



PRIVATE VIEW OF THE DUOMO TERRACES

The iconic dome of Santa Maria del Fiore Cathedral was created by Brunelleschi in the 15th century.

Today, the striking landmark dominates the city skyline. Enjoy an exclusive guided tour of the monumental church and private access to its roof terraces. Gain a close-up view of the famous cupola while absorbing one of the city's best panoramas.



The tour can be arranged at any time of the season.



RIVER RAFTING ON THE ARNO

Glide along the Arno River, admiring the architectural beauties of Florence from a unique perspective.

Expert rafters will guide you down the San Niccolò Weir, beneath the celebrated Ponte Vecchio, leaving you free to soak up the sights. Join the daytime tour or go by night to enjoy happy hour cocktails or a glass of bubbles.

For added exhilaration, embark on a full-day excursion to the Sieve River for an adrenaline-fuelled ride down the rapids.



Join the classic tour or go by night and enjoy a cocktail.



MUSEUM TREASURE HUNT

See your children transformed into young detectives on this intriguing treasure hunt within the walls of Palazzo Vecchio, the first official Medici residence and the city's town hall. Guided by friendly historian Alessandra, the adventure will lead youngsters through hidden parts of the museum to unearth the secrets of Florence.



This unique experience is perfect for families with inquisitive children.

THE OLDEST ICE CREAM PARLOUR IN FLORENCE

Founded in 1929, the Vivoli ice cream parlour is famous for its smooth, creamy gelato. Exclusively for guests of Belmond Villa San Michele, Vivoli welcomes you inside for an engaging ice cream making session, including the chance to meet the family and sample some mouth-watering masterpieces.



Take the whole family for an unforgettable experience.





PRIVATE VIEWS: GALLERIA DELL'ACCADEMIA & UFFIZI

Seize the chance to visit two of the most famous art galleries in Florence without the queues or the crowds. A private evening tour gives you ample time to admire Michelangelo's famous sculptures at Galleria Dell' Accademia, including his iconic statue of David, and the exceptional artworks in the Uffizi, including masterpieces by Giotto, Simone Martini, Piero della Francesca and Raphael.



An expert guide will ensure you catch all the highlights.

MEET THE ARTISANS

Take a behind-the-scenes look at artisans in their place of work. Visit the city's traditional "botteghe"—small artisan workshops—which are currently undergoing a revival in the Oltrarno District, south of the River Arno. Stroll through the narrow streets and visit the studios where artists are busy creating modern treasures in silver, gold and leather, or blending exquisite perfumes.



The half-day guided tour lasts 3 hours, or you can enjoy a full-day excursion lasting around 6 hours with a stop for lunch.





FOOD LOVER'S MARKET TOUR

Created with gourmets in mind, this is an engaging way to explore authentic local cuisine, targeting the hotspots frequented by Florentines.

Visit the hustle and bustle of the colourful central market in San Lorenzo and browse products such as artichokes, fresh pasta, wine and olive oil. You then embark on four separate tastings, including coffee, milk rolls and truffle creams, and Tuscan cheeses and mustard paired with wines.

Round it all off with sumptuous homemade gelato.



An expert guide will ensure you catch all the highlights.



“SCULPT LIKE MICHELANGELO” WORKSHOP

Where else to learn sculpting but in Florence? In the Romanelli Studio, where artists have been creating masterpieces for generations, you find yourself surrounded by monumental marble and bronze statuary. Take inspiration and join a class in clay modelling, plaster casting or marble carving, all personally tutored by Raffaello Romanelli.



Join a group class or enjoy one-to-one tuition.
Please ask for details.

FRESCO CLASSES

Professional artisans will teach you the original techniques of fresco painting in a beautiful bottega, located in the centre of Florence. Their work is inspired by the ideals of the Florentine Renaissance workshops. You will then keep your artwork to take home, or they will ship it for you.



Please ask our Concierge to arrange this activity.





INFERNO TOUR

Plunge into your own riveting thriller as you follow in the footsteps of Robert Langdon and Sienna Brooks, the characters played by Tom Hanks and Felicity Jones in the 2016 film *Inferno*. Unravel mysteries and interpret works of art to unearth hidden passageways and discover further clues to solve the mystery. The tour takes you through palazzi, galleries and incredible Florentine architecture and includes landmarks featured in Dan Brown's novel, such as the Badia Fiorentina, Palazzo Vecchio and the Boboli Gardens. The hunt ends at the Baptistry of Saint John, where you can access the secret spaces revealed in the story.



Perfect for guests who enjoy a challenge,
any time of the season.

THE MEDICIS: KISSES OF INTRIGUE

Discover the passionate side of Florence on this exclusive tour that follows the love stories, liaisons and intrigues of the Medici family. Trace the love affair of Cosimo De' Medici and Eleonora of Toledo by visiting the duchess's wonderful apartments in Palazzo Vecchio and her famous private chapel with frescoes by Bronzino. Follow the tumultuous relationship of Francesco De Medici and great beauty Bianca Cappello, who both died in the Medici Villa of Poggio a Caiano, allegedly from poisoning.



The guided tour lasts half a day.



APE CALESSINO TOUR

Hop into an Ape Calessino, the three-wheeled electric car that conjures up La Dolce Vita of the 1950s and 60s. Accessing areas that are normally out of bounds to motorists you can visit the most famous sights of central Florence with ease in this bijou classic.



Opt for the classic tour or enhance your itinerary with a picnic stop.

URBAN TREKKING & GREGORIAN CHANTS

Discover a serene side of the bustling city with this guided trek through the winding and hilly streets away from the centre. Pass the romantic Garden of Roses to reach the beautiful Abbey of San Miniato al Monte, Michelangelo's favourite church, where you can enjoy magnificent panoramas of Florence. Listen as the monks gather to sing uplifting Gregorian chants, daily at 5.30pm.



Ask the Concierge to recommend other urban treks taking you off the beaten track in Florence.



CREATE YOUR OWN PERFUME

Step inside historic Florentine perfume shop, Aquaflor, and gaze on hundreds of bottles lining the antique wooden shelves.

Incense from Oman, sandalwood from Mysore, Florentine Iris... sublime scents that may conjure up distant memories or powerful emotions. Let Master Perfumer, Sileno Cheloni, after a guided tour, conversation and perhaps a cup of tea, craft your perfect, totally personalised fragrance, presented as a 100ml bottle of eau de parfum.



The 4-hour experience is available Monday-Friday.
Reservations required.



Go crazy
for Chianti



HOT AIR BALLOON OVER CHIANTI

Admire the breathtaking landscape of Chianti from a bird's-eye perspective. Lift off in a hot-air balloon for a magical flight over Florence or the Chianti hills.

To capture this unforgettable sightseeing adventure on film, why not go with a professional photographer who will advise you how to take the most captivating shots.



On request and weather permitting, you can also fly above the city of Florence.



FERRARI OR FIAT 500 EXPERIENCE

Make your dream a reality: take the wheel of a red convertible Ferrari and course along Tuscany's breathtaking roads, gliding round the curves as you feel the wind in your hair and the sun on your face. The experience begins with a quick lesson on the Ferrari's controls, correct handling and safety procedures from an English-speaking instructor.

Then strap in, start the engine and hit the road. Wind alongside vineyards and olive groves as you head into the heart of the Chianti Classico wine region. Stop in a medieval village to take photos, then enjoy a guided tour of an ancient winery to learn about wine and olive oil production. At the end of the exciting drive, a traditional Tuscan lunch is served and a wine tasting given at a boutique winery.



For a more sedate journey, you can opt to drive a Fiat 500 instead. The experience starts a short drive from the hotel.



TRUFFLE HUNT

Join a lively excursion through one of the most abundant truffle regions. You will be escorted by a truffle expert and truffle snuffling dog, who will help you discover how and where the precious tubers grow, how the dogs are carefully trained and the truffles unearthed. A fascinating experience for all.



Available in September and October.

CHIANTI CASHMERE GOAT FARM

Gather the family and escape to a picturesque farm hidden among the rolling Chianti hills, where you can revel in a simpler way of life. Meet the friendly little goats and learn how their fleece is used to fashion the coveted cashmere by traditional methods including spinning, weaving and separating by hand. Visit the shop to discover sumptuously soft, 100% sustainable cashmere shawls, hats and gloves.



To enhance the experience, combine your farm visit with a tasting of local Chianti wine.





TRADITIONAL FARM VISIT

The historic Palagiaccio farm, so old that it is referenced in Dante Alighieri's Divine Comedy, is a shining example of traditional cattle breeding and milk production in Tuscany. Enjoy an early morning visit, from 7am, when nature wakes up and hundreds of activities must be carried out. Learn about the animals and how to feed them, discover how cheese is made to traditional methods, and more.



The farm is located in heart of Chianti. Tours available Tuesday and Friday, May to September. Ideal for families.

RIDE WITH STYLE

Saddle up and explore the glorious Chianti countryside on horseback, led by expert equestrians. The full day tour includes a two hour horse ride, including lunch in a historical restaurant in Bagno a Ripoli.

Afterwards, indulge in some retail therapy at The Mall, a luxury outlet centre just outside Leccio, offering a wealth of designer brands ranging from Armani to Versace.



The ride begins an hour's drive from the hotel. Casual/sports wear is recommended.



Discover treasures
of Tuscany



SEE SIENA

Only 90 minutes' drive from Florence lies the medieval city of Siena. Let a private guide escort you to the most fascinating attractions, including the Museo Civico with its richly frescoed rooms, the Pinacoteca Nazionale with its fine collection of gothic masterpieces from the Sienese school, and the Piazza del Campo, the large sloping square famous for the breathtaking Palio horse races every July 2 and August 16. Foodies will also find excellent Tuscan trattorias to satisfy their tastes.



Extend the experience by continuing to the beautiful town of San Gimignano, 30 minutes from Siena.

EXPLORE SAN GIMIGNANO

One of the most beautiful towns in Tuscany, 30 minutes' drive from Siena, San Gimignano is remarkable for its 14 towers and its wealth of medieval churches, enchanting squares and rich works of art. Explore the walled hill town on foot, visiting important sites such as the Museum of Sacred Art, the Etruscan Museum and the Ornithology Museum, a must for avian enthusiasts.



Enjoy private transportation and your own personal guide.





FIND GOLD IN AREZZO

Embark on a precious journey to medieval Arezzo, a former Tuscan trading post whose charming central square played a starring role in Roberto Benigni's classic, *Life is Beautiful*. Explore magnificent churches, art and archaeological museums and lose yourself in around 500 stalls at the celebrated antiques market, held on the first weekend of every month, which specialises, among other gems, in gold.



Arezzo is an hour's drive from the hotel.

VISIT THE LEANING TOWER

The question "Will this building ever fall?" perennially springs to mind when admiring Pisa's architectural curiosity. Why not decide for yourself by taking a short drive with a private guide to unearth the facts.



EXPLORE LUCCA

Lying in a green valley not far from Florence, the walled medieval town of Lucca has a rich history embracing the Romans, the Middle Ages, the Napoleonic era and the Risorgimento. The area is famed for its sumptuous, historic villas once occupied by noble families. Enjoy a private tour discovering spectacular examples such as Villas Grabau, Mansi, Reale and Torrigiani to gain a deeper understanding of Tuscan heritage.



Lucca is 90 minutes' drive from the hotel. To expand your tour, continue to the compelling city of Pisa, 30 minutes' drive away.



TOUR TUSCANY BY VESPA

See the sights aboard Italy's favourite mode of transport, the Vespa.

No need to worry about where to go and what to see because your guide will lead the way as you scoot along picturesque country roads and across ancient bridges, exploring Tuscany's medieval villages and Romanesque churches.



A delightful tour to be enjoyed at any time of the season.



THRILLSEEKERS' RIVER TREK

Away from the throngs, the Garfagnana, a vast stretch of valley and mountain north of Lucca and Pisa, is a place where time seems to stand still. Within it, the wild Lima Valley and its beautiful pristine river await exploration. Join a river trek, walking, swimming and climbing among the crystal-clear waters and smooth boulders. Cross an immense canyon surrounded by high cliffs and pure springs and spot wildlife including trout and waterbirds.

After the trekking, enjoy a lunch based on typical products, inside a picturesque medieval village. The experience requires an average level of fitness, all equipment is provided onside.



Available June to September,
suitable for kids 6 years and older.
Please bring a swimwear and a change of clothes.



WORLD OF CARRARA MARBLE

Settle into a 4x4 and hold onto your hats as your tour guide takes you on an exhilarating ride through the three marble valleys of Carrara, including a visit to Michelangelo's cave. You will reach a height of 1200 metres and be able to gaze at breathtaking scenery stretching as far as the ocean and, on a clear day, the island of Corsica.

The tour pauses for a gastronomic diversion to experience the local Lardo di Colonnata IGP, a much-prized pork fat delicacy. See how it is made and aged to traditional methods before enjoying a tasting.



This experience is fun for all the family.



Calendar of Events 2017

Summer Events at Belmond Villa San Michele

Thursday, 1 June,
July 6, August 3

Sparkling Women

A night where the ladies are always first

Thursday, June 8,
July 13, August 10,
September 28

Poolside Seafood

Accompanied by DJ set and the most beautiful view of Florence

Thursday June 15th,
July 20th, August 17th,
September 14th

Sunset Picnic

Relax with a barefoot luxury picnic in our gardens

Thursday June 29,
July 27, August 24

Be Street

Street art, street music, street food for an urban chic aperitivo

July 21

Dinner with the star

A four hand dinner in the Loggia Restaurant, in cooperation with Michelin-star Chef Sergio Mei, with a Menu inspired from the island of Sardinia.

September 26

Blind dinner

A charity dinner in the darkness of the Cenacolo room, where the members of the Italian union of the blind and partially sighted will guide you on a journey of taste and scents.

Events in Florence and Tuscany

September 24

Corri La Vita Marathon | *Florence*

A manifestation of sport, culture and solidarity, organized by the florentine section of the Italian breast cancer association.

June 24

Feast of San Giovanni | *Florence*

The patron saint of the city gets celebrated with different events on June 24th, including parades, the historical florentine soccer played with the traditional costumes, a night marathon and fireworks on the Arno river.

June 13-16

Pitti immagine uomo | *Florence*

The world's most important platform for men's clothing and accessory collections and for launching new projects in men's fashion.

July 2 and August 16

Palio horse race | *Siena*

One of the most famous horse-races in the world, the Palio is an incredible show that takes over the entire city of Siena twice a year, with historical parades and shows. Ten horses and riders, bareback and dressed in the appropriate colours, represent ten of the seventeen contrade, or city wards.

Calendar of Events 2017

Events in Florence and Tuscany continued

July

Lucca Summer Festival

At its 20th edition, it takes place in Piazza Napoleone, in Lucca's historical centre. On stage, some of the most influential international artists of the current musical panorama. In 2017 performances include the Rolling Stones, Ennio Morricone and Robbie Williams.

July

Pistoia Blues Festival

Since 1980, the Pistoia Blues Festival has been bringing sweet sounds to the hills of Tuscany. Set in the beautiful Piazza del Duomo in Pistoia, this festival has filled the scene with classic blues, true to its name, along with pop, rock, indie folk, and a number of other genres and cross-genres.

July

Medieval Festival of Monteriggioni

A long-standing festival that includes shows and performances in the old town and castle of Monteriggioni, recreating activities from the 13th-14th century AD.

July & August

Festival Torre Del Lago Puccini

In over seventy years of the Festival, the stage of Torre del Lago has hosted the most famous and acclaimed names of world opera.

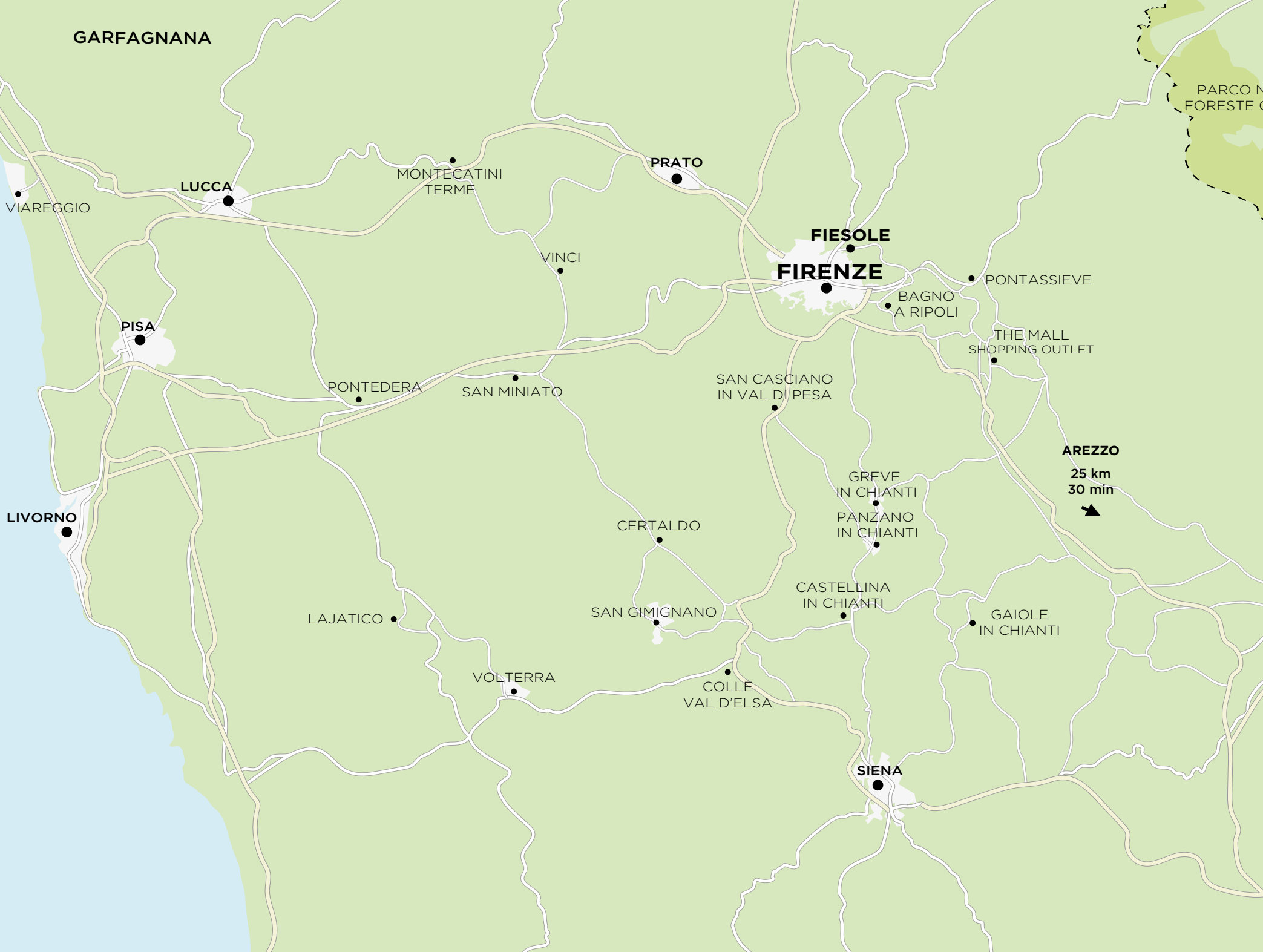
July 8

Ingorgo Sonoro | *San Piero a Sieve*

The all city of San Piero a Sieve becomes for one day and one night a huge, open-air stage, with DJ live musci and an artisans's fair .

Arezzo Antique Trade Fair

Held the first Saturday and Sunday of each month, this fair is the oldest in Italy, and a must visit for collectors and lovers of all things from the past.



GARFAGNANA

PARCO N
FORESTE C

PRATO

LUCCA

MONTECATINI
TERME

VIAREGGIO

FIESOLE
FIRENZE

VINCI

PONTASSIEVE

BAGNO
A RIPOLI

THE MALL
SHOPPING OUTLET

PISA

PONTEDERA

SAN MINIATO

SAN CASCIANO
IN VAL DI PESA

AREZZO
25 km
30 min

LIVORNO

GREVE
IN CHIANTI

PANZANO
IN CHIANTI

CERTALDO

LAJATICO

SAN GIMIGNANO

CASTELLINA
IN CHIANTI

GAIOLE
IN CHIANTI

VOLTERRA

COLLE
VAL D'ELSA

SIENA



BELMOND

VILLA SAN MICHELE

FLORENCE