

Tuscany Gravel



BikePlusTours

Immerse yourself in the magic of Tuscany on this 8 night tour where you will ride the quiet white gravel roads made famous by the L'Eroica and Strade Bianche races. We recently went to Tuscany ourselves to research this trip and the resulting itinerary provides for challenging and scenic cycling between the medieval villages, endless vineyards and rolling hills of this special part of Italy. All pictures in this brochure were taken on our research trip.

We have found wonderful hotels to stay in and will be staying multiple nights in each so you won't have to pack and unpack every day.

No trip to Tuscany is complete without experiencing

the farm to table food, fresh pasta and regional wines that our excellent hotels specialize in.

Our rest day will be in Siena, where we have arranged for a private guided walking tour in the morning to learn all about the rich history and culture of this impressive city.

We have gravel bikes available for rent if you don't have a suitable bike or prefer not to travel with a bike. Full details are in the final pages of this brochure.

For those who want to ride less or not at all we offer a program of activities accompanied by a dedicated English speaking guide. Contact us for details.



At a glance

Trip dates: July 11-19, 2020

Cycling distance / vertical: 283 miles / 29,100 ft

Small group: maximum 15 guests

Supported rides with vehicles and owners Carolyn and Pieter cycling with you

Hotel accommodation with all breakfasts and dinners included

Price: \$3,495 per person, single room surcharge: \$795

Castello di Brolio



Badia di Passignano

Itinerary and Elevation Profiles

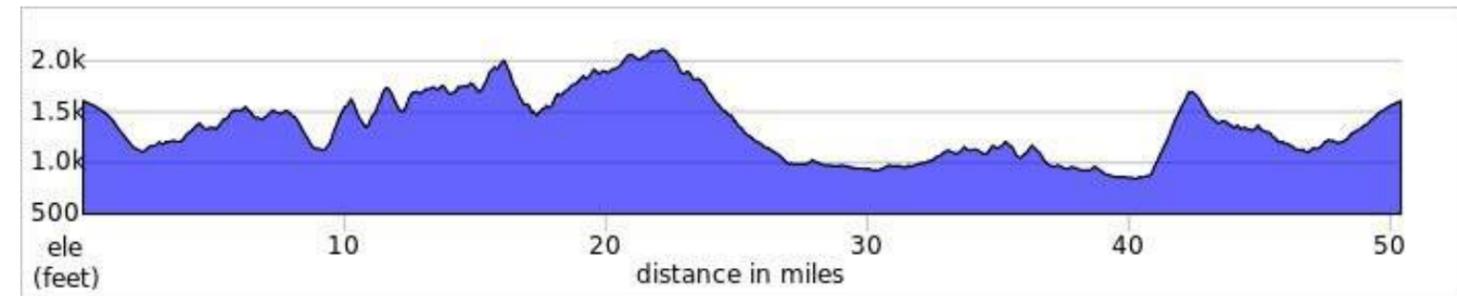
Friday July 10th: Overnight flight to Rome, Italy.

Saturday July 11th: Arrival in Rome and group transfer to our hotel in Pienza (3 hrs).

We'll be there to greet you at Rome airport. Our private bus will take you to our hotel in Pienza where we'll be staying for the first two nights. Assembly of bikes or pick-up of rental bike. We'll have time to explore the historic town center in the afternoon.

Sunday July 12th: **Val d'Orcia (distance: 51 mi, vertical: 5,000 ft, 17 miles gravel)**

After only three miles we'll hit the first gravel stretch on our first ride. Mid morning we can stop for a quick cappuccino in Montepulciano, one of the most famous Tuscan hill top towns. We continue our ride through Val d'Orcia, a place of exceptional beauty and UNESCO World Heritage site. We'll loop back to Pienza via some of the shooting locations of the movie 'Gladiator'.



Monday July 13th: **Pienza to Siena (55 mi, 5,000 ft, 28 miles gravel)**

A tough stage that includes long gravel stretches of the famous L'Eroica and Strade Bianche races. We'll be mostly in remote rural areas where we can enjoy the Tuscan countryside at its best. The pool at our hotel on the outskirts of Siena will be well appreciated after this epic day!



Chianti vineyards

Itinerary and Elevation Profiles (Continued)

Tuesday July 14th: L'Eroica Chianti Section (50 mi, 4,800 ft, 16 miles gravel)

More classic gravel roads today when we ride the section of L'Eroica through the hills of the Chianti region. We'll pass by famous vineyards around the towns of Radda and Gaiole. The last gravel stretch of the day is at the Castello di Brolio castle with spectacular views.



Wednesday July 15th: Rest Day

Time to recover! We have arranged for a guided walk in Siena in the morning. You can spend the rest of the day at the hotel's pool or enjoy this incredible medieval city.



Siena



San Gimignano

Itinerary and Elevation Profiles (Continued)

Thursday July 16th:

Siena to Vescine (53 mi, 5,400 ft, 23 miles gravel)

After three nights it is time to say goodbye to Siena. Hopefully the rest day has brought your climbing legs back in shape because you'll need them today. There are some steep gravel roads on the menu! After our first gravel sector of the day, we'll pass by the 13th century Monteriggioni castle which we can enter and explore. Shortly after we'll ride through Colle di Val d'Elsa, a great place for a coffee stop. Later we'll see the famous towers of San Gimignano from a distance. We can have lunch in the town of Poggibonsi before some more steep climbing on our way to hotel Borgo di Vescine, an entire medieval hamlet which has been restored and now is an upscale resort with an award-winning restaurant. It is in a peaceful setting with a great pool and its own winery.



Itinerary and Elevation Profiles (Continued)

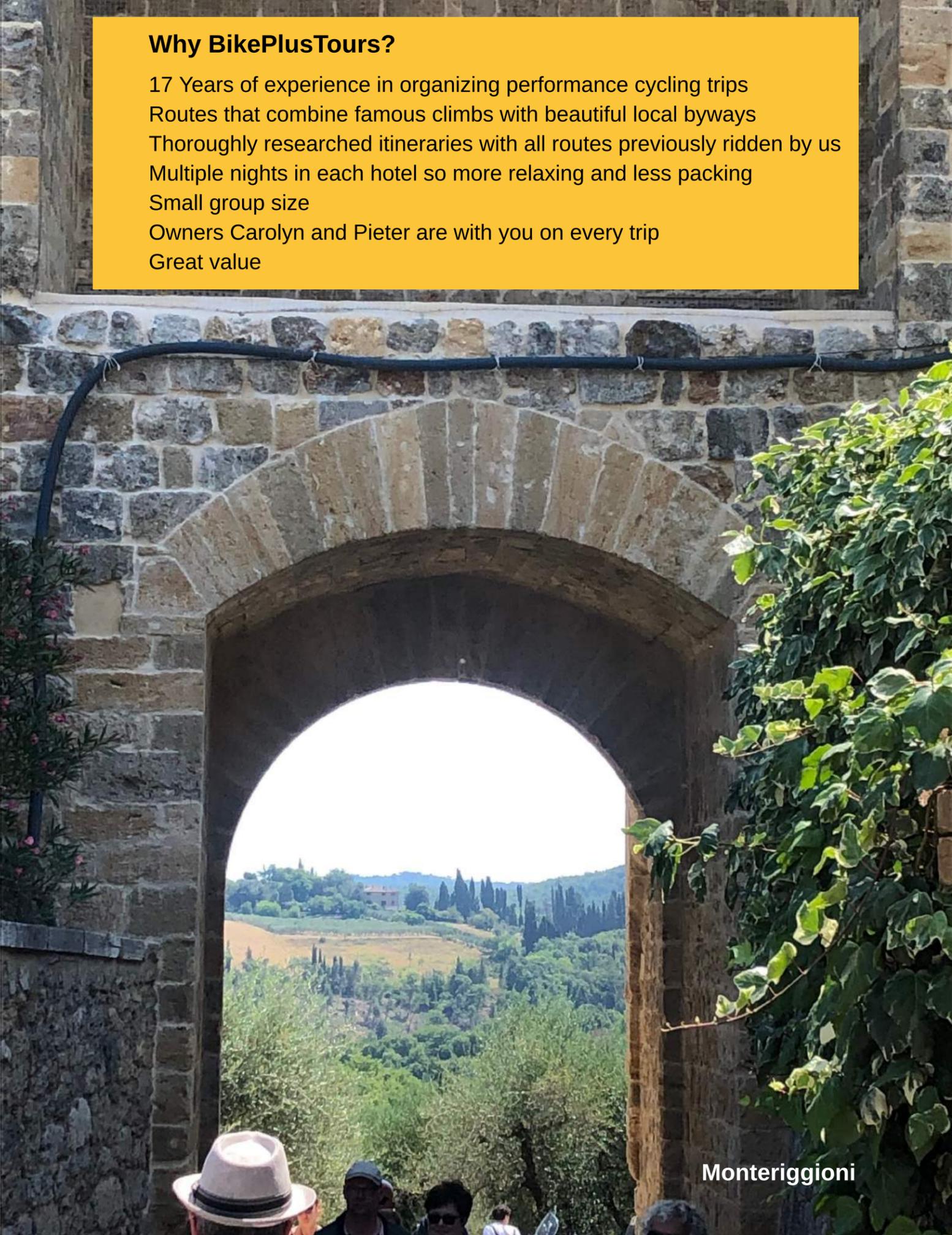
Friday July 17th: Chianti Loop (50 mi, 6,500 ft, 9 mi gravel)

Mostly paved roads today but that doesn't mean that it will be an easy ride. The longest gravel section comes early in the ride after the climb to Volpaia, renowned for its excellent wines. After a brief coffee stop at the main square of Greve, we have a steep climb on the way to the impressive Badia di Passignano Abbey. A short but steep gravel climb is just before our lunch in Tavarnelle. Then one more steep climb and some longer easier grades on our way back to Borgo di Vescine.



Why BikePlusTours?

- 17 Years of experience in organizing performance cycling trips
- Routes that combine famous climbs with beautiful local byways
- Thoroughly researched itineraries with all routes previously ridden by us
- Multiple nights in each hotel so more relaxing and less packing
- Small group size
- Owners Carolyn and Pieter are with you on every trip
- Great value



Monteriggioni



Itinerary and Elevation Profiles (Continued)

Saturday July 18th: Early ride and afternoon transfer (24 mi, 2,400 ft, 5 mi gravel)

We'll go for a beautiful short ride in the morning with two more gravel stretches. The second is a rough and steep four miles uphill section. Back at the hotel we'll shower, pack the bikes (if you brought your own) and have lunch. A private bus will take us to our hotel near Rome airport in the afternoon. We'll have a celebratory dinner tonight to mark the end of our trip.



Sunday July 19th: Flight home

The hotel shuttle will take you to the airport for your flight home.



Val d'Orcia



Partner Program

Our partner program has been designed for those who may not cycle or want to do less cycling and enjoy some of the other wonderful things Tuscany has to offer. Below are some suggested activities that our Italian speaking American guide or specialized guides will accompany you on. We want this to be a vacation of a lifetime and we will tailor activities to your individual specific requirements. If you prefer to be more active we will provide more guided hikes and outdoor activities. If you would like to spend time wandering through the medieval hilltop villages or learning to make Tuscan cuisine we can come up with a tour to ensure you experience the best of Tuscany. Contact us to design your dream Italian vacation.

- A guided walk through Pienza, which is considered la città ideale del Rinascimento (the perfect Renaissance city) with beautiful architecture and it's love themed streets such as Via dell'Amore (Love Street) and Via del Bacio (Kiss Street).
- Memorable hikes through the Val d'Orcia and Chianti region with their undulating and iconic landscapes, passing wineries, vineyards and olive groves. Lunch stops in medieval villages with a birds eye view of the famous rolling hills of Tuscany. (Distance and elevation can be adjusted to suit you.)
- A relaxing day visiting Terme di Chianciano thermal bath with its unique sensory spa or Bagno Vignoni natural hot springs, used since Roman times or Bagni San Filippo nestled in the woods with its spectacular white limestone formation.
- A morning exploring the ancient hilltop village of Montalcino, famous for Brunello wine. Afterwards a visit to Fattoria Dei Barbi where we will learn about their rich wine making history on a tour of their cellar followed by a wine tasting with local cheeses and meats.

- A truffle hunt with a professional guide and his trained dogs followed by a cooking class incorporating truffles into the recipes.
- Join the riders for a day (or part of a day!) on an ebike. Really don't want to pedal? What about a day touring to San Gimignano on a bright red Vespa. Matching lipstick optional.
- A horseback riding adventure through the Tuscan countryside along the ancient paths.
- Experience the best arias from Italian operas such as Tosca, Madame Butterfly, La Boheme and more in an intimate setting in an ancient church in Siena.
- Enjoy a day of culture exploring the many churches, museums and city gates of Siena.
- A guided tour of a working biodynamic farm where you will see daily life from the barn to the dairy. Learn more about the award winning cheeses and the aging process before sampling the raw milk cheeses with delicacies from the farm and vineyard.
- Delve into the Chianti Sculpture Park featuring works from artists representing 26 countries spread out across 17 acres.
- Combine history, art and wine on a tour of Brolio Castle with its impressive gardens.
- Connect with local artisans and producers at a market held in the quaint streets. Take home some culinary delights, ceramics, linens, handmade arts and gifts.
- Become a history buff and visit some of the many museums specialising in art, ceramics, religion or archaeology.
- Master European cultural manners in an "Etiquette of Wine" class. Learn correct posture, glass etiquette and how to select the appropriate wine for the occasion.
- Or just relax for a day at the great pool areas of our hotels in Siena and Vescine!



Renting a bike

We have gravel bikes available for rent. They have disc brakes, 35mm wide tires and small gears for the steep climbs.

The bikes will be delivered to our first hotel on Saturday afternoon and will be picked up on Saturday morning after our final ride in Castellina.

The price is \$300 for the whole trip. Please inform us when booking if you would like to rent a bike and let us know your size.

You will need to bring your own pedals and gps mount.



Our package includes:

- Group airport transfers to and from Rome airport for you, your luggage and your bike
- Support vehicle during the rides and Carolyn and Pieter guiding on bikes
- 8 nights of hotel accommodation in air conditioned rooms
- All breakfasts and dinners
- Water, snacks and fruit on the rides
- Laminated stage sheets with ride details and altitude profiles
- GPS files of all rides

Excluded items:

- Flights
- Rental bike (\$300 for the whole trip)
- Travel and medical insurance
- Lunches, drinks, guide gratuities and personal expenses

Price: \$3,495 per person in a shared double room, single room surcharge: \$795

Please e-mail Carolyn and Pieter for more information and booking:

info@bikeplustours.com



Bringing your own: What bike, tires and gears?

Although most mileage on our route will be on paved roads, you will spend more time on gravel roads. Not only is cycling speed lower on gravel, but most of the climbing and descending on route is on gravel.

We rode the route on our normal road bikes with 28mm tires and found it tricky, especially on the steep gravel descents. So, unless you are a very experienced and confident bike handler we would not recommend this. Wider tires will work much better, specifically low profile (not knobby) tires with a width of 32-38mm. For example Panaracer Gravel King or Schwalbe G-One. Wider tires will be more sluggish on paved roads whereas narrower tires decrease grip on gravel.

Obviously, a gravel bike would be ideal. Another great choice would be a cyclocross bike. Some road bikes will fit 32mm tires but check carefully for sufficient clearance.

Every ride includes short but very steep climbs (up to 20%), mostly on gravel so very small gears are in order. We recommend to get close to 1:1 gearing. For example a compact crankset with a 34 chainring and a cassette with a 32 or 34 largest sprocket.

We reserve the right to change this itinerary due to availability of accommodation, road closures, weather or other unexpected circumstances.

Our trips are catered to experienced cyclists with good bike handling skills.



About BikePlusTours

We are a small company owned and operated by Carolyn and Pieter Maessen.

BikePlusTours was born out of a desire to share our love for cycling on the great mountain roads of Europe with our guests. We have been organizing group cycling trips since 2002 and we feel very lucky that our hobby has become our profession.

Pieter has been a cyclist all his life. He has competed in junior and elite races in his native Netherlands as well as in Belgium, Germany and the USA. Although more of a classics rider than a climber, Pieter has had a passion for cycling in the mountains ever since riding up Passo dello Stelvio at age 16.

Carolyn has had a lot of success as a triathlete. She was a sponsored athlete for seven years and has won races in every distance from sprint to Ironman. She has competed in World Championships in Ironman in Kona (Hawaii), Ironman 70.3 in Las Vegas (Nevada) and Sprint Triathlon in London (UK).

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information about our trips.

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