

Gran Fondo della Vernaccia

... a classic Tuscan riding experience



What is a Gran Fondo?

The Gran Fondo is a great tradition in Italy. Held throughout the year, Gran Fondo's attract thousands of riders from both Italy and around the world. Many participants belong to highly tuned teams, as there is enormous prestige for those that excel in these events. For amateurs it is the closest experience to what it might feel like to ride in a stage of the Giro.

Gran Fondo della Vernaccia Andrea Tafi (San Gimignano)

This is one of Italy's most prestigious Gran Fondo events. Starting inside the medieval walls of San Gimignano the 150km ride attracts over 1,200 participants – creating the most atmospheric occasion. The name Vernaccia is derived from the famous white wine of the area (with all riders receiving a complementary bottle!!) whilst Andrea Tafi is a famous former rider who has leant his name to the event – a commonality for many of Italy's Gran Fondo rides.

Gran Fondo della Vernaccia - May 1-11th, 2010

Join us on the perfect Italian cycling experience. This 11 day itinerary rolls over the regions unparalleled landscapes and finishes with our participation in an important staged Italian cycling event - Gran Fondo della Vernaccia Andrea Tafi (San Gimignano). Our trails lead us to discover a place steeped in history and nature, classic hilltop towns, ancient hamlets and castles, World Heritage listed landscapes and arguably Italy's best wines. It is Italian cycling and culture at its best.

Participants have the choice of 4 routes:

Granfondo	150km	Cicloturistica	50km
Mediofondo	122km	Slow bike	15km

Gran Fondo della Vernaccia Trip Itinerary

DAY 1: Arrival at Florence Hotel

Arrive independently at Florence accommodation. Upon arrival at hotel you will meet Darren your trip host. Florence is the great capital of Tuscany and arguably Italy's most beautiful city. Welcome to Tuscany dinner featuring local specialities and wines set in atmospheric

Meals: D

DAY 2: Group transfer to Siena Countryside

Transfer from Florence to Siena countryside and our accommodation. The estate is perfectly situated in one of the most beautiful parts of Tuscany, looking out over the World Heritage Val d'Orcia. This will be the base for the next 6 nights/7 days.

Our cycle tour guide will assist mechanical preparations of bikes for the first of the itinerary rides commencing Day 3. Welcome dinner of traditional/ seasonal food and Tuscan wine.

Meals: B, L, D



Trip Inclusions

- 10 nights B&B accommodation
- 8 dinners with wine
- 4 lunches
- 1 cooking lesson (non-riders)
- Wine and olive oil tastings (non-riders)
- Event entry
- 4-5 Guided rides + Gran Fondo ride
- Bike Support

Not included

- International airfares & taxes
- Arrival transfers (available on request)
- Travel insurance – compulsory
- Bike hire (quality bikes available for hire on request)

Price: \$3,995.00 pp twin-share; Single supplement: \$675.00
Bike Hire: \$300.00

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DAY 3: Floating through the Crete Ride: 55km

The first ride is a relaxing roll that introduces you to the territory of the Crete Senesi - sometimes referred to as the Tuscan desert in reference to the barrenness of its environment. The excursion route winds along the ridges and hills of its unique and atmospheric landscape, connecting to a series of wonderful Medieval towns and villages. The constant interplay of gentle ascending and descending on near perfect roads in classic Italian countryside makes for an unforgettable cycling experience.

Meals: B, D

DAY 4: The Val D'Orcia and land of the Brunello: 110km or 60km

Today's riding excursion is into the World Heritage listed landscape of the Val D'Orcia. Over the course of this long-days riding we visit the ancient thermal village of Bagno Vignoni; climb to the castle topped villages of Rocca D'Orcia and Castiglione; and wind through the territory of 'Brunello di Montalcino' - Italy's most famous wine. The day's itinerary includes a memorable lunch. Immersing within a small cellar of a local 'Brunello' producer, we enjoy local food products along with the legendary vino of Montalcino.

Meals: B, L

DAY 5: Siena Day Trip or Chianti Classico Ride: 130km

Option of long day's riding experiencing the famous Chianti Classico wine zone or visit to Tuscany's other great city - Siena. Both excursions offer much to the participant - The Chianti and its rustic territory of vineyards and medieval hill-town's; and Siena considered by many to be Italy's most beautiful city. Those visiting Siena will also be fortunate to encounter its busy and colourful market day.

Meals: B, D

DAY 6: Classic Tuscan hilltop towns of Montepulciano and Pienza Ride: 75km or 40km

The harmonious pathways of today's riding excursion lead us to the hilltop towns of Montepulciano and Pienza. Both are Renaissance towns and combine Tuscany's outstanding countryside and stunning architecture. From Montepulciano you are privileged to views over Umbria and Southern Tuscany and from Pienza you are treated with a breathtaking panorama of the Val D'Orcia.

The day's riding excursion includes a wonderful lunch in hilltop village Osteria overlooking Val d'Orcia.

Meals: B, L

DAY 7: Monte Oliveto Maggiore Ride: 30km

Our final ride in this area is a relaxing spin through the timeless area of the Crete to Monte Oliveto Maggiore. This beautiful Benedictine monastery is sited in one of the most outstanding tracts of Sienese countryside, undoubtedly one of Tuscany's finest images.

This area is also renowned for its white truffle's, an expensive delicacy food adored throughout Italy for its intensely likeable taste.

Meals: B,L,D

DAY 8: Transfer to San Gimignano

Transfer to the medieval hilltop town of San Gimignano - our base for the next 3 nights. This medieval hilltop town is one of the Italy's most memorable places with its 13 towers dominating the skyline. Just as memorable is the countryside surrounding the town that has joyfully benefited from its sharecropping civilization. No scheduled ride for the day as we reserve energy for tomorrow's much anticipated Gran Fondo ride.

Meals: B

DAY 9: Gran Fondo della Vernaccia

Day of the Gran Fondo della Vernaccia - San Gimignano. Starting and ending from the centre of this historic town, you pedal along with over 1,000 other amateur cyclists across the best of Tuscan landscapes whilst breathing in the atmosphere of this wonderful occasion. An annual ride, it is one of Italy's most important and festive Gran Fondo events appropriately named after the areas celebrated white wine 'Vernaccia'.

In the great tradition of Italian Gran Fondo rides the event is completed with a 'pasta party'.

Meals: B,L

DAY 10: A Walk in the Tuscan Countryside

The day is dedicated to rest and recovery following the events of the previous day. For those with a little more energy there is the possibility of a guided countryside 2 hour walk that offers outstanding viewings of San Gimignano's dominant towers. We complete the day with final nights dinner enjoyed within the historical walls and atmospheric walkways of San Gimignano.

Meals: B,D

Day 11: Departure transfer to Florence

Following breakfast is the departure transfer back to Florence station

Meals: B

BOOKINGS & ENQUIRIES

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