

INFORMATION ON OUTINGS AND ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION

La Maremma National Park

La Maremma consists of a plain, which rises from sea level and extends into rolling hills further inland. The plain is interspersed with olive trees, vines and farmland. Along the coast are long, unspoilt sandy beaches, fringed with pine forests, namely 'Marine di Alberese' and 'Talamone'.

It is famous for its nature reserve, The Maremma National park about an hour's drive away. A variety of activities are provided there, such as Natural History treks and Night tours searching for wild boar, otter, fox, badger, porcupine, deer, water buffalo and bats as well as a wide variety of birds including herons and owls.

The centre for trekking, walking or just visiting the glorious beaches is situated in Alberese (situated off the N1), where tickets for all activities can be bought.

The Carapax European Center for the Protection of Tortoises and Stork Center

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How to get there: Take the State Highway (SS) Aurelia in the direction of Massa Marittima.

This is about 40 minutes drive away and is well worth a visit. It is the only place of its kind in Europe.

Tortoises large and small, Italian and exotic are collected here and studied, allowed to reproduce, taken back and reintroduced into their natural environment. It is possible to visit the tortoise hospital, egg incubation, birth of the babies and maternal care. In the "exotic" section, it is possible to see the giant tortoises from Sahel, snapping tortoises, alligator snapping tortoises and red legged Amazonian tortoises. The Stork Center is the largest aviary in Italy that houses a colony of white storks as part of a project for their protection. They may be observed close hand within a large aviary.

Beaches

The sand and sea along the Tyrrhenian coast are some of the cleanest in Italy, and the sea is at only half an hour's drive if you decide to enjoy a day at the beach.

The most local beach (about 30 mins drive) is at Castiglione della Pescaia, which possesses a marina, an old walled town, numerous bars and restaurants and a lively atmosphere. The more secluded beaches lie to the west of the town.

The Marina di Grosseto, with its clean long sandy beaches, is about 35 minutes by car. Parking is normally quite easy and the restaurants are friendly and reasonably priced.

The resort of Principina a Mare (about 45 mins) has a long white sandy beach, fringed with pine trees.

The promontory of Argentario (about 1hour's drive) is linked to the mainland by ancient sandspits and is well worth a visit. The interior is mountainous and the coastline is divided into headlands, fishing villages and shingle beaches. Porto Ecole has an attractive old quarter and a fishing-village atmosphere.

Thermal Spas

There are also some natural hot springs in the area including the spa at Saturnia.

Historic towns

The Renaissance town of Siena is about a 45 minute drive and well worthy of a day trip. Parking can be a problem in the season, so it is better to park outside the walls in the multi-storey underground car park on the edge of the town.

Massa Maritima (about 30 mins drive) is the second city of the Sienese Republic and is a fine historic town, complete with a castle and many Renaissance features.

Florence is about a two hour drive.

Rome is a 2 ½ hours by car or 1 ½ hours by train from Grosseto. Trains run fairly frequently.

Bike Tours

We strongly recommend you go on one of Ricardo's bike tours. You do not have to be especially fit as he does tours to suit everyone. It's a great way to explore the area and his tours are always good fun and very informative. They last for either a half or whole day depending your preferences. Ricardo does Wine Tours, Historical Tours, Spa Tours or a combination of all of these!! He even does Boat /Bike Tours involving a 2 or 5 day boat/bike trip along the coast. You will find him at 1 Via Delle Cortine - 0564 569660.

Alternatively, you can simply hire bikes from him and organise your own tour. A ride to the Restaurant and bar in Tatti is well worth the effort.

Lake Accessa

About 20 minutes drive away there is a lovely lake surrounded by undulating olive groves. You can swim safely here in the clear waters fed by an underground stream. Please note there are no public amenities here.

Hotel ‘La Molesa’

Hotel ‘La Molesa’ is about 10 minutes drive on the Roccastrada Road, on the right. When you get to a junction at the bottom of a hill, turn right to Roccastrada and you will see it on the right. It has a wonderful swimming pool in a lovely setting. You can swim and sunbathe here all day if you have lunch first. The lunch is about 10 euros.

Hotel Residence Sant’ Ulberto

This hotel is very good as it has a very good sized pool and they only charge 3.5 euros per person to use it. They also provide inexpensive meals for about 5 – 6 euros. It is about a 10 minutes drive away on the way to Roccastrada. When you get to a junction at the bottom of a hill you turn right signposted Siena, then go along for a few minutes and you will see the entrance to the hotel on the left. They also arrange other sporting activities (e.g. riding and canoeing) so make enquiries at reception.

Walks

There are numerous scenic walks in the area. You will find details in the house or the Tourist Office (when open). One of the most spectacular is the walk to Sassaforte, an old Roman fortification, commanding spectacular views. To access this walk, drive to Sassafortino (about 5mins) and it is signposted.

Restaurants

1. ‘Garum’ (at the bottom of the road)-excellent pizzas and pastas at a good price. Small area for outdoor seating. Very friendly owners.
2. ‘Il Corso’ (on the street leading into village. Very traditional. No English menu and only Italian spoken. Nevertheless, one can understand and the food is excellent. Italian and friendly.
3. ‘De Nadas’ (on street leaving village), complete with games room and bar. English menu. Rather small portions but good food and a lively atmosphere. Popular with the English and young people as it has an games room. Limited outside seating.
4. ‘La Conchilia’ (signposted down steps next to the bar on main street). More sophisticated and up market. Interesting, varied menu with lovely views. Outside seating.

5. 'Ronato's Pizzeria' in Sassofortino (5 mins drive, first on right when entering Sassofortino). Family run restaurant. Lively atmosphere and excellent pizzas.No outdoor seating.
6. Momo's Restaurant in Sassofortina. (5 mins drive, second on right when entering Sassofortino, behind the bar). Cheap, basic family restaurant. Very good Italian food. No outdoor seating
7. Tatti (15 mins drive, at base of old village). Beautiful drive. Lovely setting. Good, varied menu with large covered terrace for outside seating.
8. Montemassi (10 mins drive). A large modern restaurant with good outside seating overlooking hills. Not aesthetic but popular with the locals. Good food.
9. Montemassi.Good family restaurant just off the road with easy parking. Just past the turning into MM. Good food – pleasant atmosphere.

Internet and Fax

You can pick up your emails and send and receive faxes from Ricardo's shop.