



Atlas of archaeological itineraries

A Journey from Prehistory
to Roman Civilisation





Amphitheatre, Volterra

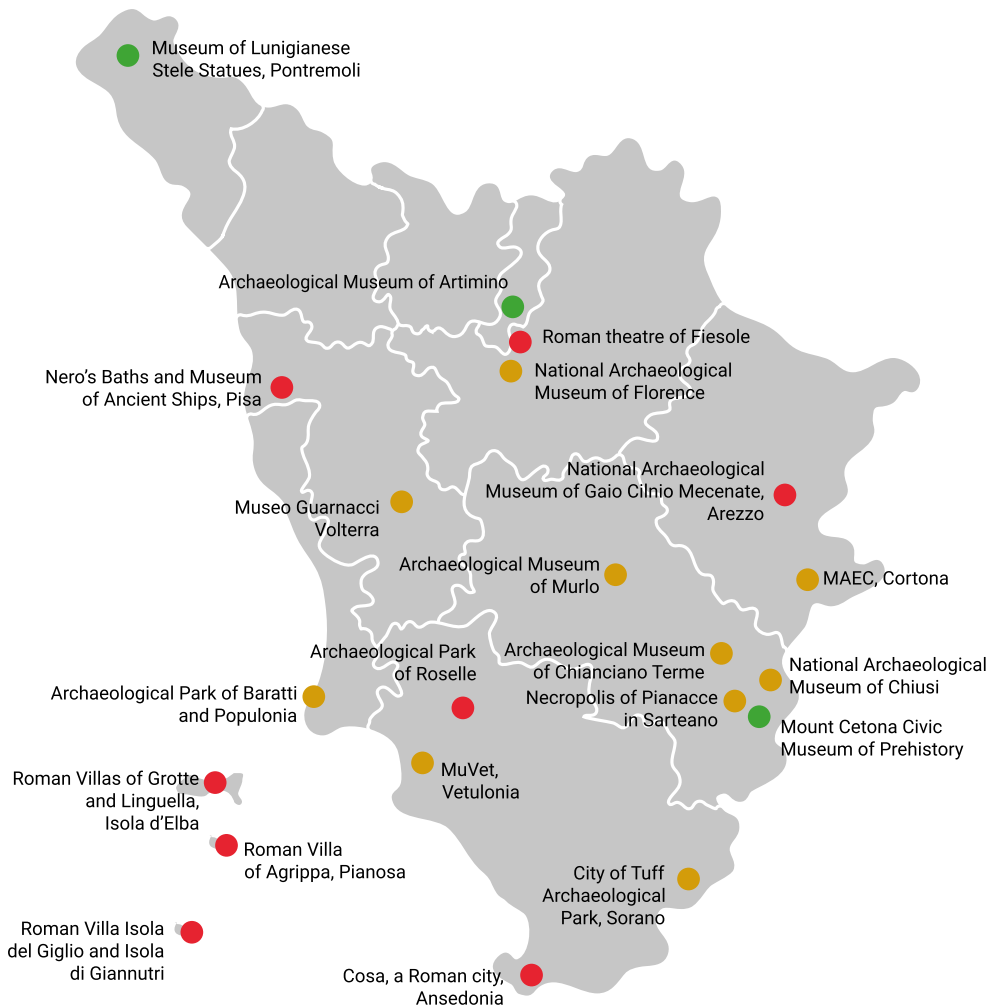
TUSCANY
NEVER-ENDING RENAISSANCE

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- Prehistory and Protohistory
- Etruscan Civilisation
- Roman Civilisation

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Atlas of Archaeology in Tuscany

Discovering the ancient civilisations that inhabited this land

Tuscany has been a flourishing cradle of extraordinary civilisations since prehistoric times, as a result of its climate and the morphological features of the land. The people of Etruria developed sea and land trade, organised themselves into articulate and functional social and political structures, and gave life to an elegant, sophisticated and cultured society. Only the Roman civilisation succeeded in curbing the expansionist thrust of the Etruscans by alternating moments of coexistence and subjugation, signs of which we find in the archaeological parks and museums of the region.

Photo: Archivio fotografico Toscana Promozione Turistica/ Alessandro Moggi, Enrico Caracciolo per Terre di Pisa, Dario Garofalo, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Firenze – Direzione regionale Musei Nazionali Toscana su concessione del Ministero della Cultura, Museo Archeologico Nazionale Gaio Cilnio Mecenate, cover Museo delle Statue Stele Lunigianesi

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National Archaeological Museum of Florence

Archaeological itineraries in Tuscany

A journey from Prehistory to Roman Civilisation

Tuscany is a land that has historically been the cradle of fascinating and future-oriented civilisations, whose settlement was favoured by the land's environmental features.

Remarkable findings date back to the **Middle Palaeolithic**. Their numbers increase further in the **Upper Palaeolithic**, but the culture that most left its mark on Tuscany was undoubtedly the Etruscan. The **Etruscans** established themselves in Ancient Italy between the 9th and 3rd centuries BC, precisely in **Etruria**, an area of central Italy corresponding to Tuscany, Umbria and northern Lazio.

In the 8th century BC, they were the first Italic civilisation with the resources to undertake an expansionist policy. Their enigmatic smile and traces of an **emancipated society**, which had adopted gender-equality, with women playing a leading role, have survived to date. Games, dances, sumptuous banquets and sexual emancipation were themes that scandalised the neighbouring Greeks and Romans, who did not appreciate the prominence of women and the freedom of customs of the Etruscans.

However, they did not only cultivate play and pleasure. They were profound connoisseurs of human anatomy, couturiers and superb cooks. They knew how to host a banquet and their artefacts were the most beautiful and sought-after in the Mediterranean. They were unsurpassed in ironwork, a skill they disseminated throughout the Mediterranean basin as a result of their keen commercial instincts.

Elegant and refined, they nurtured the mind but also the body with ointments and physical exercise. Their religious practices centred on superstition became a daily practice celebrated with obsessive attention to detail. After flourishing for years, the conflict between Etruscan cities and Rome became inevitable. Hence, the 5th century BC marked the **Romanisation process of Etruria**. Initially painless, with the spontaneous surrender of several cities that came under the influence of the powerful neighbour, the process later became more coercive when Rome broke even the resistance of the Gauls, allied to the Etruscans, in the 1st century BC. Rome imposed its dominion in Etruscan lands, but the same cannot be said for the culture, which intrinsically presented the previous Etruscan artistic substrata and models, which were deeply rooted in the population.



National Archaeological Museum of Chiusi



MAEC, Archaeological Museum of Cortona

Sites to visit

Our itinerary of sites to visit, starting with Prehistory and ending with Roman Civilisation

1 Museum of Lunigianese Stele Statues

In Pontremoli, the Museum of Lunigianese Stele Statues houses the largest collection of Stele Statues in the world. These sandstone human figures date back to the period between the 4th and 1st centuries BC. Placed vertically in the ground, they depict stylised male and female figures enhanced by typical items of their armoury or jewellery.

In very rare instances, inscriptions are found on the stelae. These megaliths bear witness to the spirituality and culture of the populations that inhabited this part of Tuscany. statuestele.org

2 Mount Cetona Civic Museum of Prehistory

The museum documents settlements developed in the Monte Cetona area from the Palaeolithic to the Bronze Age by displaying artefacts and reconstructions.

The **Belverde Archaeological Nature Park** is closely connected to the museum, and features caves formed in the travertine marble. Open for visits, they are suitably lit and equipped, such as the cave of St. Francis, the caverns of the Noce and the Poggetto. The **Belverde Archaeodrome**, located not far from the namesake archaeological area, is a educational itinerary that complements the visit to the Museum and Park. prehistorycetona.it



National Archaeological Museum of Florence

3 Archaeological Museum of Artimino

The Etruscan archaeological museum, which houses artefacts dating back to the 7th century BC, covers two floors of the old vat cellars of Artimino. The upper floor displays objects of daily life, while the lower floor presents sepulchral items. The museum collaborates with the surrounding archaeological sites, precisely the **Montefortini Tumulus**, the **Boschetti Tumulus**, the **Prato Rosello Necropolis** and the **Pietramarina archaeological area**. parcoarcheologicocarmignano.it

4 National Archaeological Museum of Florence

The museum was inaugurated as the Etruscan Museum in 1870 in the Cenacle of Fuligno. It housed an important collection of artefacts from the Medici and Lorraine collections of the Uffizi Gallery. In 1880 the museum was moved to its current location in **Palazzo della Crocetta**. Today it includes the Etruscan Section, the Roman Section, the Greek Section and the Egyptian Section, set up as early as 1855 and also known as the Egyptian Museum (it is the second largest collection in Italy after Turin). The most important Etruscan findings include the **Chimera**, a bronze statue found in Arezzo in 1533. museitoscana.cultura.gov.it

5 Volterra

Volterra, the Etruscan city par excellence, allows visitors to discover this civilisation in its sites and dedicated museum. The route starts from the walls, built in the 3rd century BC to defend the city. Initially, the walls stretched for 7 km, parts of which are still safe for walking today. The two main gates are the Porta all'Arco to the south and the Porta Diana to the north. The **Guarnacci Museum** houses its collection of funerary urns and the **evening shadow statue**.



6 MAEC

The Cortona Archaeological Museum was established in 1727 from the collection of Abbot Onofrio Baldelli. Grand Duke Giangastone de' Medici established the Accademia Etrusca, which is still housed in the museum today. In the 19th century, the collection was enlarged with findings of numerous archaeologists. Today it houses the Tabula Cortonenis, an example of Etruscan text written from right to left and among the longest Etruscan texts, as well as extraordinary artefacts such as the Etruscan chandelier. cortonamaec.org

7 Archaeological Museum of Chianciano Terme

The archaeological museum in Chianciano offers one of the most comprehensive exhibitions on Etruscan civilisation. It features the world's most important collection of **Etruscan canopic urns**, or cinerary vases in human form. Organised in four floors and divided into sections, the ground floor presents a reconstruction of the Morelli Necropolis. Moving up to the first floor, we find reproductions of two temples and a farm. On the second floor we pass through a banquet hall, the Roman baths and the temple of Fucoli. The basement hosts a writing room, a women's room and a room dedicated to mythology. museoetrusco.it

8 National Archaeological Museum of Chiusi

The Museum of Chiusi, opened in 1871, illustrates the history of the area from the Bronze Age to the Lombard period. Known for the nearby Necropolis, the most famous is the Tomb of the Monkey; discovered in 1846, it dates back to the 5th century BC. The frescoes on the walls depict festive moments with dancers and musicians, as well as chariot races and boxers. The Tomb of the Pilgrim and the Tomb of the Lion deserve a visit. musei.beniculturali.it

9 Archaeological Museum of Murlo

Located in the **Bishop's Palace**, it houses artefacts from the **Poggio Aguzzo necropolis** (dating back to the 6th century BC) and the nearby princely palace of **Poggio Civitate**, one of the most important Etruscan settlements in Europe. It was during excavations at the palace that terracotta roofing elements were found, revealing one of the main Etruscan manufacturing techniques.

10 Necropolis of Pianacce in Sarteano

The **Necropolis of Pianacce** is just over a kilometre from Sarteano. It was brought to light in 1954, along with two hypogeum structures, by archaeologist Guglielmo Maetzke. The main excavations began only in 2000, in partnership with the Archaeological Museum of Sarteano. A dozen tombs dated between the 6th and 2nd centuries BC were discovered. The **tomb of the Infernal Chariot**, with its frescoes, was discovered in 2003. museisenesi.org

11 City of Tuff Archaeological Park

In addition to the typical necropolises, the City of Tuff Park has particular routes carved into the rock: the **Vie Cave**, **hollow paths**. We have no idea about their purpose, perhaps they were communication routes or ceremonial paths. Their position is not accidental as tuff is easy to process. Hence the theory that the channels were not so deep initially, but became so with the continuous passage of people and pack animals. leviecave.it

12 Archaeological Park of Baratti and Populonia

Not far from the coast we find the sites of **Populonia and Baratti**, which bear witness to the Etruscan civilisation. The park features tombs, which can be traced back to the 6th and 4th centuries BC, a period when hematite (a type of iron extracted from the Island of Elba) workmanship developed. The area is divided into two main zones, the first, also called Little Petra, consists of two necropolises, while the second houses Roman buildings and roads. parchivaldicornia.it

13 MuVet, Vetulonia

The Isidoro Falchi Civic Archaeological Museum in Vetulonia, in the province of Grosseto, is named after the archaeologist who rediscovered the **Etruscan city of Vetulonia** in the late 19th century. The tour winds its way through seven rooms, where Etruscan artefacts are on display, including beautiful sepulchral items, weapons and jewellery, and objects from daily life in the Etruscan city, a refined and cultured metropolis. museoisidorofalchi.it

14 Roman theatre of Fiesole

A jewel from the Roman past can be found not far from Florence, namely the amphitheatre of Fiesole. Excavations, initiated in the 19th century, revealed a perfectly preserved Roman theatre dating back to the period between the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD. The hilly landscape makes this place quite picturesque, but in Roman times the view must have been breathtaking with columns and statues decorating it. Today they are preserved in the Archaeological Museum of Fiesole. museidifiesole.it

15 Nero's Baths and Museum of Ancient Ships, Pisa

In the heart of Pisa we find Nero's baths, a Roman spa of the 1st century AD with water from the 1st century Roman aqueduct of Caldaccoli. The name might bring to mind the famous **Roman emperor**, but construction works on the spa began around twenty years after his death. It derives from the legend of Saint Torpé, an official of Nero's court who, after converting to Christianity, was arrested and beheaded here. The naval museum, with its beautiful collection of Roman ships, is also interesting. navidipisa.it



Gaio Cilnio Mecenate National Archaeological Museum



Populonia and Gulf of Baratti

16 National Archaeological Museum of Gaio Cilnio Mecenate

The Archaeological Museum of Arezzo houses one of the most important Roman collections in Italy. The museum counts 26 rooms presenting the history of Arezzo, from its Etruscan origins to the Roman period. The Roman section houses the largest collection of sealed terracotta vases in the world. This type of vase was produced in the Arezzo area between the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD. museiarezzo.it

17 Roman Villas of Grotte and Linguella

Near Portoferraio, on the **Island of Elba**, stands the Monumental Complex of the Grotte (caves), which came to light during excavations conducted in the 1960s by Giorgio Monaco. The building, constructed in the early 1st century BC, was used for storing and distributing water. Opposite we find Villa Linguella, discovered in 1979. It was an aristocratic villa from the imperial age. The walls and some mosaic floors are all that have survived to date. museiarcipelago.it

18 Archaeological Park of Roselle

The city of Roselle, originally Etruscan, was conquered by the Romans in 294 BC. Roselle flourished and developed during Roman rule, but this ended in the Middle Ages. The remains of the Etruscan necropolis and Roman buildings can now be visited following excavations carried out in the 1960s by the Archaeological Superintendency of Tuscany. There are typical spas, domus buildings and the Roman forum, dating back to the 1st century BC. The church, built in the 6th century AD, can also be visited. museidimaremma.it

19 Roman Villa of Agrippa

After the death of Emperor Augustus in 14 AD, his nephew Agrippa and stepson Tiberius clashed over the ascension to the throne. Agrippa was accused by Tiberius' mother of homosexuality and was, therefore, exiled to Pianosa, where he was later murdered. Agrippa's villa, **Pianosa**, was brought to light in the 19th century, along with the theatre and adjoining spas. The floors are decorated with black and white mosaics depicting scenes of marine mythology. infoelba.it

20 Roman Villas of Isola del Giglio and Isola di Giannutri

In the 1st century AD, Emperor Nero's family owned the islands of the Tuscan archipelago. Two residential villas were built on the islands of Giglio and Giannutri. The first overlooked the port of Giglio. In the 4th century AD it was used as a necropolis. The second fell into disuse in the 3rd century AD and risked disappearing, but archaeological excavations carried out in the 19th century brought it to light. It was opened to the public in 2015. museiarcipelago.it



Gaio Cilnio Mecenate National Archaeological Museum

21 Cosa, a Roman city

The Roman colony of Cosa was established in 273 BC, after the Romans had defeated the Etruscans of Vulci and conquered the territory. The colony is divided into three sectors, precisely two public areas and a residential one. Visitors can still stroll along the ancient streets, admiring the remains of the houses and shops of the forum. The park contains remains of buildings constructed at a later date, which is why Cosa is thought to have been a Byzantine outpost against the advancing Lombards. museidimaremma.it



Roselle Archaeological Park