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“IL TAU“ is an association exclusively composed by Tourist Guides and Tour Leaders possessing all the necessary authorizations according to the Italian law.

We wish to share with tourists the love we feel for our land, a multiform region, rich in history and art, typical products, and unexpected views, offering not just cold information, but knowledge and enthusiasm.

Come with us and discover the world of Carrara and its marble, from Michelangelo’s quarries to the sculpture studios and the historical centre of Carrara, unexpected and unrivalled in its own kind.

Enjoy Eastern Liguria, from the Cinque Terre to Portovenere and Lerici, and discover the Lunigiana territory, along the ancient pilgrimage trails among Romanesque parish-churches, medieval villages, castles and thousand-year old woods.
We wish to let you know a different and fascinating reality, a combination of fatigue and brilliance, ancient sweat and modern technology. The world of marble is not just the excavation or processing of a stone, but the history of a territory and its population, that have been synonyms of marble itself for ages. The quarries, the techniques and the history, as well as the quarrymen’s villages, their thousand-year habits and customs, their language, their food and everyday life. Our guided tours to the marble quarries, sculpture studios and marble workshops will allow you, in absolute safety, to get in touch directly with the people, places, instruments, machineries and daily gestures of ancient knowledge. Come and visit the quarrymen’s villages and taste their typical traditional dishes or stroll along Carrara’s historical centre, unexpected and unique in its kind, find out where Michelangelo’s and Canova’s sculptures were born.

Meet the Guide at Carrara motorway exit (A12).
Transfer to the world’s largest marble basins.
Visit an active marble quarry to know both ancient and modern methods of extraction and satisfy all your technical and geological curiosities.
At the end of the visit, we descend again towards Cararra through the old marble railway tunnels. During the transfer all the historical, social, cultural and artistic information concerning the district will be given.

lardo di Colonnata
Let’s visit a larderia to see “how” and understand “why” we make and age the renowned “lardo di Colonnata IGP” for a long time (and with no hurry).
Discover the “miracle” that has made it famous. A free tasting of it will be offered.

The sculpture
“but…how could Michelangelo do that…?” Here sculptors still use the same methods Nicola Pisano and Canova did.
The marble powder and chips heap up at the feet of the marble block that takes form due to “the art of removing”. The raw material and the techniques are still the same.

The marble made town
Medieval craftsmen’s workshops, the Duomo and the Malaspina castle (11th cent.), the baroque palaces, the houses, the fountains, the streets and the city walls, all of them built with the only available material: marble. Shape and matter, luxury and necessity, this is the side of Carrara that you have not known so far.

building and architecture
discover how and where we produce the floors for buildings and luxury hotel, as well as for the Taj Mahal or Le Grand Arc.
Thanks to big gang-saws the stone is transformed into thin slabs, and then the polishing-machines make them brilliant and precious.

The standard program (at the centre) cab be integrated with one (only one 🌟) of the options in the coloured for the half day excursions. The full day excursions (instead 🎉) include all the 4 options.

Additional costs: sculpture’s studio € 2.00/pax - marble saw mill € 2.00/pax
The Cinque Terre (FD)

With a passionate and endless work, lasted for centuries, man has succeeded in demonstrating how it may be possible to improve the work of Nature, transforming an extreme and wild region into an authentic corner of heaven whose fascination and harmony are hardly comparable: the Cinque Terre. The sea is just the frame of the incredible beauty of the steep slopes, of the daring and unexpected vineyards, of the romantic villages which suddenly appear, plunged into a still uncontaminated nature. Walk through the innumerable footpaths, bordered with dry-stone-walls, climbing up steep hills facing the sea; it is a unique experience to realize how man's genius and work have succeeded in subduing also the most hostile environment.

If art must be the imitation of Nature, those who visits the Cinque Terre will not be surprised to find out so many artistic and architectural treasures of absolute value; you will realize why famous poets drew from this territory their inspiration and why gastronomy and wines are in harmony with the excellence of this freestanding world, still holding out against modernity.

The Cinque Terre, identified by the Unesco as “World Humanity Heritage”, are nowadays a Natural Park and Protected Marine Area whose aim is to protect this huge cultural heritage and, mainly, for the perfect and magic balance between man and environment.

Programme #1 - The Cinque Terre and Portovenere (about 10 hrs.)
At 8,15 am meet your Guide at Carrara’s motorway exit and, discover from the panoramic road leading to Manarola, the town of La Spezia, with its Navy Arsenal and enjoy the spectacular overview of the Gulf of Poets. Just breathe and soon the Cinque Terre will welcome you and make our eyes open wide. In Manarola our Guide will show you the characteristic “carugi” (alleys in local dialect) of the Village. It would be a sacrilege not to walk along the “Via dell’Amore” before walking towards Riomaggiore. From there, at 11,23 you will catch the train to Vernazza, the pearl of the Cinque Terre, where you will visit the church dedicated to S. Margherita di Antiochia (patron saint of the pregnants.)
After about an hour, at 12,20 departure to Monterosso to enjoy a well deserved meal. After visiting Monterosso, at 16,00 you will catch the motorboat, and comfortably seated, enjoy the Cinque Terre from another point of view up to Portovenere (arrival 16,50). After visiting, you will taste an ice cream before embarking on the ferry back to La Spezia (arrival 18,30) The coach will be waiting there.

Price for full day guided service: € 200,00/group until 50 persons

Programma #2 - The Cinque Terre and Portovenere (about 9 hrs.)
The program is like the previous one as far as Riomaggiore. From there, at 11,23 you will catch the train to Monterosso, where you will visit the striking oratory “Mortis et orationis” before enjoying a local wines tasting and……finally the lunch.
After lunch & shopping time, at 15,00 you will teke the motorboat, and comfortably seated, enjoy the Cinque Terre from another point of view up to Portovenere (arrival 15,50).
After visiting, you will taste an ice cream before embarking on the ferry back to La Spezia (arrival 17,30) The coach will be waiting there.

Price for full day guided service: € 190,00/group until 50 persons

Programma 3 - Le Cinque Terre (ca. 9 ore)
The program is like the #1 as far as Monterosso.
After visiting Monterosso, at 16,00 you will catch the motorboat, and comfortably seated, enjoy the Cinque Terre from another point of view up to Portovenere (arrival 16,50) where you will continue to La Spezia (arrival 17,30) The coach will be waiting there.

Price for full day guided service: € 185,00/group until 50 persons

Additional costs: via dell’amore tickets € 5,00/pax; train tickets € 1,50/pax; boat tickets € 12,00/pax
N.B.: the prices can change according the number of the customers.

what can I eat today?

Anchovies of Monterosso
Croxetti or Trofie whit Pesto
Fresh grilled fishes

the wines

Cinque Terre DOC
Sciacchetrà
ART & CULTURE

The only necessity and ability which characterizes and differs the human being in the animal Reign is to aspire in producing art, as imitation of nature or in competition with it. Realizing palaces and churches, graffiti or magnificent frescoes, primitive simulacrums or artistic marble monuments, everything corresponds to the intellectual need which springs, overflowing, when the biological necessities are fulfilled. Tuscany is, undeniably, considered the cradle of modern culture but Lunigiana has always been the forced access gate of it, the real, and still nowadays, touchable meeting point of the innumerable artistic expressions which animated Europe and the Mediterranean area at the 2nd millennium dawn.

Come with us to discover the modern age roots, the unexpected art treasures which are conserved untouched on our territory, follow the traces of Dante Alighieri and Michelangelo, of the medieval master-builders and of the booksellers from Montereggio, we are sure you will thank us.

Carrara’s Academy of Fine Arts (HD)

In 1757 Maria Teresa d’Este, duchess of Massa and princess of Carrara, already planned the construction of the Academy in order to promote the teaching of the three arts: painting, sculpting and architecture. Carrara’s Academy of Fine Arts has been officially established on September 26th 1769, in order to continue the artistic tradition and to support marble’s industry and commerce (this is why has been established only sculpting and architecture courses).

One of Europe’s oldest Academies settled (since 1810) into the prestigious complex formed by the Castle and by Cybo-Malaspina Palace (11th-17th cent.).

A rare alchemy perfectly combines the splendid container and its own contents, a visit in constant and perfect balance between the magnificence of the Prince’s residence and the artist’s creative bent who, from St. Petersburg to Rome, have perpetuated our marble.

Walk with us through the rooms visited by Canova and Thorwaldsen, seat of the lessons held by Cybei, by Desmarais, by the poet Labindo or by the sculptor Lorenzo Bartolini and on whose desks have studied, among the others, Carlo Finelli¹, Pietro Tenerani², Luigi Bienaimé³, Benedetto Cacciatori⁴, Carlo Chelli⁵, Giovanni Tacca, etc. etc.

1) Works into the Palazzo del Quirinale (Rome), Superga’s staircase (Turin), Urbino etc.
2) Pio’s the VIII monument (Vatican, Rome), statue into S. Giovanni al Laterano church (Rome), Simon Bolivar’s statue (Caracas, Venezuela) etc.
3) Several statues into St. Petersburg’s Winter Palace, St. John the Baptist, Metropolitan Museum of New York, Venus and Mercury Corsini’s palace (Roma) etc.
4) Sculptural decoration of the Hautecombe Abey (France), 14 statues into the Duomo di Milano, Amedeo’s the VIII monument fot the Chapel of the Sindone a Torin etc.
5) Statues of Faith and Religion at Torino

Programme

The first part of the visit will allow to understand the Malaspina castle’s architectonic evolution (from medieval Fortress into Renaissance residence) and of its contents (the Anatomical Theatre in the Renaissance courtyard, the archaeological collection and the Fantiscritti bas-relief).

Proceed with the adjacent Cybo-Malaspina Palace (Library, Marbles room, Aula Magna) and finish our visit with the small, but precious, picture-gallery and plaster casts gallery, which keeps original Canova’s plaster casts.
Massa cybea, the princes’ town (FD)
The name Massa, like other towns having the same name, draws its own origin from the agricultural organization of the economy widespread all over the medieval Europe.
The village of Massa (once called Borgo della Rocca) developed itself around the original 10th century medieval fortress and has lived its maximum splendour during Malaspina dynasty’s government (15th – 19th cent.). The reigning family, although owning a small princedom (it only included Massa’s and Carrara’s territories), succeeded to make it become an economical, cultural and artistic centre of remarkable importance.
The itinerary schedules the visit of the impressive Malaspina castle which overlooks all the urban territory, of the Renaissance town’s access gates, of the Ducal Palace and of the St. Francis and St. Peter Cathedral.

Programme
At 9.00 the Guide leads us, among Baroque churches and noble palaces until the viewpoint (with breathtaking view all over Versilia’s coastal plain and the Apuan Alps) and there, we decide to “to assault” Malaspina castle. Around 11.30 we descend along the medieval city walls until Martana Gate and, from here, until Piazza Aranci in order to visit the Ducal Palace. Perhaps we let ourselves be tempted by some pasta and beans or some polenta (local dishes) and allow ourselves a deserved meal.

Additional costs: castle entrance ticket ADULTS € 5.00; FREE under 18 and over 65 years; REDUCED € 3.00 (between 18 and 25 years).

The stone Bible
The St. Andrew’s Duomo of Carrara (HD)
Around the 1000 A.C., among different and significant events, the great cathedrals begin to raise all over the Europe, cities religious and social hearths, God’s and men’s houses.

In times characterized by terrible poverties (but also by remarkable intellectual, spiritual, artistic achievements) a widespread sentiment of hope in the supernatural mitigated the everyday life precariousness.
The Duomo, the home par excellence and definition, with its symbols and sculpting decorations, allowed all the poor and illiterate people to receive and reinforce their religious education; its marble words were the only fixed points in people’s everyday life and were above struggles among different members of the society and the relating injustices. The Duomo was the core of a story to live day by day, the concretization of an urban identity, the city’s or a territory’s sign of independence.

Monstrous and fearful figures (the bestiaries) oppose to the reassuring Evangelists’ and Profets’ images, stylized leaves and shoots refer to sin which human being struggle in, but praise the human ability dominating the stone and turn it into words.

Drakes, lions and griffins attack and terrorize man, but art cancels the imaginary anguishes, describes the suffered pain of the great cathedrals begin to raise all over the Europe, cities religious and social hearths, God’s and men’s houses.
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evolution and the medieval caravansaries.
At 11.00 we are at the Guelph castle of Piagnaro and remain fascinated by the Lunigiana Stele Statues’s mystery. At the end of the visit let’s descend towards Guelpgh Square, visit the cathedral and arrive into the Ghibelline Square. Let’s enjoy a drink at the historical “Caffè degli Svizzeri” and go for lunch. In the afternoon, before moving by bus towards Ponticello, we visit with St. Francis church.

Additional costs: castle’s entrance ticket FULL € 4,00; REDUCED (from 6 until 16 years) € 2,00; GROUPS (more than 10 pax) € 2,00

The Stele Statues
Castello di Pontremoli, Sorano e Selva di Filetto, Castello della Spezia (FD)
Mysterious and magic monuments, realized in the late prehistoric period, which meaning is still unknown. Anthropomorphosis figures carved in the sandstone using primitive tools, but still clearly expressing the will to immortalize these primordial symbols. Perhaps divinities, warriors or heroes, decoration elements linked to the cult of the Civet Gods or inhabitants of other worlds?!
The meaning, the aim, the origin, the chronology of the making the Stele Staues are still questions without any answer, since the discovery has always happened out of its archaeological contest.
First and authentic artistic expression of a civilization (or a population maybe) which from the Caspian Sea until the Iberia peninsula left similar sculptural representation (as well as in Romania, Switzerland, France, Sardinia, Apulia, and other Italian regions), but only the ones found in Lunigiana are considered Europe’s most uniform and revealing group.
Our tour will let you discover these works of art (nowadays, not well preserved and on display just in this museum) that marked the passage from the Megalithic art up to the sculpture, through the knowledge of a population and the territory that generated them.

Programme
At 9,00 am meet the Guide at Pontremoli’s motorway exit and journey towards Creusa Bridge to start walking uphill until the Guelph castle of Piagnaro, site of the Stele Staeus Museum. At 11,00, before proceeding for St. Stephen of Sorano, let’s enjoy a drink at the historical Cafè degli Svizzeri. After the visit at the very old church (and of the Stele Staeus displayed in), we enter into the Filetto forest: holy place and (from 6 until 16 years) € 2,00; GROUPS (more than 10 pax) € 2,00

Additional costs: entrance ticket FULL € 8,00; REDUCED (from 6 until 16 years) € 4,00; GROUPS (more than 10 pax) € 5,00

LUNI: splendida civitas
Natural landing by the ancient Magra river’s mouth, very probably used by the Etruscans and controlled by the Ligurians, earlier became roman military port and later colony in the 180 B.C., after the defeat and deportation of a great number of Apuan Ligurians.
The “splendida civitas” lived its maximum splendour period across the half of the 1st century B.C. and the end of the 2nd century A.C. thanks to the excavation of the marble coming from Apuan Alps.
Into the Museum’s complex and in the facing archaeological area, there are sections dedicated to holy architecture and private buildings where are displayed several finds like statues, portraits, vases, glasses, coins).

Programme
At 9,30 meet the Guide and start the visit at the archaeological area (entrance ticket for non students) to know more about the rise and fall of one of the Roman Empire’s most important colonies. Into the archaeological zone we will visit the area of the domus, of the temples, the amphitheatre, the forum.

Sarzana: the unexpected beauty
Artistic treasures across middle age and Baroque. (HD)
Flourishing market-village Sarzana developed in the middle age under the control of Luni’s bishops, taking advantage of its strategic location along the Francigena route. Still nowadays Sarzana maintains its ancient vocation to business and commerce. Due to its economical importance it has been dominated by Pisa, Lucca, Florence and in the end by Genua which made Sarzana its military stronghold in eastern Liguria until the unification of Italy.

Inside the village, still almost entirely surrounded by its ancient walls, rich and unexpected churches, one of the La Spezia province’s oldest parish church, and, again, “carruggi” (narrow alleys) with antiques shops and restorer workshops, old and noble palaces.

Programme
At 9,30 am meet our Guide at Sarzana’s motorway exit and reach Sarzanello fortress. After the visit, walking along a paved pathway arrive into the historical centre; we visit S. Maria cathedral and are astonished about the incredible variety of 12nd, 15th and 17th century works of art; visit continues along the Francigena route (Mazzini street) in order to reach Bonaparte house (ancient residence of napoleone’s ancestors) and finally the Town hall square.

Additional costs: entrance to the castle FULL € 3,00; REDUCED (from 6 to 16 years) € 2,00; GROUPS (more than 10 pax) € 2,00

La Spezia: the museums town
Lia Museum, Dioecesan Museum + Ethnographic Museum (HD)
Atypical and “surly” town, perhaps developed too fast since 1861 (date of the unification of Italy and of the construction of the Naval Arsenal), La Spezia preserves a few or nothing of the original medieval village. Town buildings are splendid examples of Regime, Art Decó and Futurist style but museums are the places where are preserved surprising and unexpected art treasures.
The choice of the town administration has been to establish itself as a cultural pole through the realization of eight museums in few years which are able to satisfy each single tourist’s curiosity.

Programme
At 9,00 meet our Guide and start the visit from Marina Gate, walking along Prione street until Amedeo Lia Museum. At 11,15 (after a proper coffee break) we visit the town section of the Dioecesan Museum.

A. Lia Museum
Established on 1995 and opened to the public on December 1996, thanks to A. Lia’s donation of works of art to the town of La Spezia.
The collection includes about 1150 works of art, from 13th century paintings (Pietro Lorenzetti, Lippo Memmi, Il Sassetta), until 17th century paintings (from Pontormo, Tiziano, Tintoretto, until Giovanni bellini and Canalletto), Italian and foreign miniatures, modern and ancient sculptures. Among these stand out medieval processional crosses, glasses and crystals, Limongs enamels, gothic ivories, and a wide selection of bronzes.

Dioecesan Museum and Ethnographic Museum “Giovanni Podenzana”
Both museums are hosted into the restored S. Bernadino’s Oratory (15th century). The Dioecesan Museum tells the story of the local diocese, offering to the visitor a journey through the works of art which accompanied the birth of the diocese. Among all, particularly remarkable are: “The coronation od S. Nicolas from Tolentino” (1539) and “The Virgin Mary with the baby”. The Ethnographic Museum offers an exhaustive synthesis of Lunigiana’s ancient traditions.

As an alternative:
“U. Formentini” Archaeological Museum / St. George castle
The Museum is located inside St. George castle, existing since the half of 1200, nowadays presents itself with the appearance took after the 1600 restorations. Established around the end of 1800 with the naturalistic collection donated by Cesare Podenzana, in the 1900 has enriched by several roman finds and, above all, by the Fabbricotti’s collection: marble archaeological finds, funerary art, and other objects coming from Luni. The Museum is an irreplaceable track in order to know Lunigiana territory’s culture, from the prehistory until the middle age.
The Naval Museum
The Naval Museum of La Spezia, is Italy’s most important Naval Museum. Located inside the naval Arsenal, it is divided among two floors and the outside area, where are exhibited several very important objects. Ideal place for who is interested to know more about Italian navy’s history, the exhibiting area offers a precious figurehead collection, and the scale models of most of the Italian Navy’s ships, launched since 1860 and 1960.

The Seal Museum
Established thanks to Mrs. Lilian and Mr. Cappellini donation to La Spezia town hall, the Museum offers to visitors the most complete seal collection of the world: more than 1500 seals of different ages, since the 4th millennium B.C. until nowadays. Particularly interesting the seals created by Lalique and Fabergé.

The National Transportation Museum
Established on 1986, realizes its activity in finding, restoring and preserving particularly representative vehicles in the history of Italian public transportation (buses, trams, locomotives, and railway carriages) some of them dating back to the end of 1800.

Modern and Contemporary Art Centre
Officially opened in 2004, into the earth of the town, founded with the aim to preserve, exhibit and promote the art collections acquired thanks to the Gulf Award (between 1949 and 1965) and increased by Cozzani’s and Bartolini’s rich donations. For its specific nature, the Museum commits itself in the organization of temporary exhibitions in order to express new multimedia and artistic languages.

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**Fivizzano: the small Florence**
Fivizzano, village and Verrucola castle, Vendaso parish church (FD)

Fivizzano is the true cultural capital of our territory, Florentine outpost towards the Francigena Route, here Jacopo da Fivizzano printed the first book in Tuscany (1470), thanks to which the number of graduated people shoot up, since then Fivizzano deserved the nickname of “Lunigiana’s small Florence”. Still nowadays into the Press Museum are visible the old incunabula and mobile letters.

Travelling uphill towards Cerreto Pass, we meet one of the most significant and beautiful castle of the region, the Verrucola castle, which has been – on 1400 – scene of Lunigiana’s most tragic crime. The castle has been founded in order to control the salt and pilgrim route, which were coming from north east.

The religious and the accommodation needs of the pilgrims justified the construction of an Hospital (sort of hostel) nearby the pass and of the Vendaso parish church. This is one of Luni’s diocese oldest parish (already mentioned on 1149), it exhibits beautiful sculpted capitals: animals, leaves, symbols of the four Evangelists and a snake which holds in his mouth a man’s hand.

**Programme**
At 9,00 meet the Guide at Aulla’s motorway exit and depart towards cerreto Pass.
At 9,45 we visit the village and the Verrucola castle owned by Bosi family, and proceed with the visit of the Vendaso parish church.
At 12,30, before moving towards Fivizzano, let’s enjoy a surprising meal, and then let’s discover the Agostinian Convent, St. Anton church and the Press Museum.
Population of our territory, due to geographical and historical reasons, have maintained for centuries uses and costumes remained untouched. Our foods, bounded at the work in the quarries or at the slow flowing of every day life in the Lunigiana’s villages, are the last evidence of a vanished world by now.

The itineraries on our territory include the visit of historical sites in order to highlight the strong connection between food and territory.

The quarrymen’s foods (FD)
During a thousand year, quarrymen carried out a tough and backbreaking job, that needed large energetic reserves: working twelve hours a day with heavy beetles, moving tons of marble only with levers and ropes. Everything, moreover, in working places where for a long period there are hard climatic conditions.

To do all this, were needed energetic, easy transportable and economic foods. That is how the “lardo di Colonnata” and all the other traditional foods grow out; a robust and genuine cuisine, bogeyman of low-calorie diets.

Programme
Meet the Guide at Carrara’s motorway exit at 9.00 a.m. and depart towards Carrara marble basins. After visiting an active marble quarry we will go up to Colonnata, to visit a larderia and see “how” and understand “why” we make and age the renowned “lardo di Colonnata IGP” for a long time (and with no hurry). Discover the “miracle” that has made it famous. A free tasting of it will be offered. 1,00 p.m. lunch time

In the afternoon, you will stroll through the alleys of Carrara with a stop to taste “the farinata” and visit a cantina (in our dialect an osteria is a kind of inn).

The chef recommends
- The lard of Colonnata – Farinata (cheekpees flan) - Paniza
- Pasta and beans - Ravioli - I Topeti
- Marinated cod - Polenta ’ncat-nata - Cazalà
- Lilled mussels – Tripe carrarina style
- Lumachedi – fried cod pancakes – Calzinedi
- Turnips from Bergiola – Rice cake

The wine list
- Candia DOC
- Vermentino Nero
- Vermentino dei Colli Apuani
- Massaretta
- Candia amabile
**Flavours of Lunigiana**

*Filattiera, Mocrone, Iera e Villafranca (FD)*

A full day discovering true, rich, and unexpected flavours, cooked or produced with ancient unchanged methods and enjoyed in the right atmosphere, far from the noise and troubles of modern life, in the true world of slow food and slow life.

Rich and unexpected foods, cooked or produced with ancient and untouched methods, tasted in the place that originated them.

**Programme**

Meet the Guide at 9,00 a.m. at Pontremoli motorway exit and depart towards Filattiera, to visit a 16th century water-mill still producing the chestnut flour with the same old methods and machineries. A brief, but not to be missed, stop to visit Sorano parish-church and then continue towards Mocrone: here you will see Graziella’s home, the last, heroic craftswoman who still goes on producing, using the old cast-iron “testi”, the best food of this territory, his majesty the “testarolo”. After an indulgent taste we will move to Bagnone, beautiful and romantic market village. Lunch will be based on the “bastard lasagne” (home-made pasta), torte d’erbi (vegetable tart), the lamb from Zeri and much more. In the afternoon you will visit the Ethnographic Museum of Villafranca, discovering the people’s tools and habits before tasting local wines and cheeses.

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**The chef recommends**

- Cold cuts from Lunigiana – vegetable tarts
- herbs omelette - small focaccia
- i Testaroli - bastard lasagne
- lamb from Zeri - porcini mushrooms
- beans from Bigliolo – onions from Treschietto
- Marocca di Casola - bread (di Vinca, di Po, di Agnino)
- la Spongata - la Pattona - gli “Amor”
- chestnut flour – honey

**The wine list**

- Durella
- Pollera
- Vermentino dei Colli di Luni
- Passito di Pollera
- Amaro Clementi

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**The flavours of Cinque Terre** (FD)

Cinque Terre’s soul and fascination are enjoyable and understandable only travelling from inland towards the sea, trip which have taken the first residents to settle on this magnificent part of coast. Here legumes and chestnuts always substituted cereals and small size fish characterizes everyday cooking. Simple foods smelling salty and basil, accompanied by the true and unquestioned protagonist of this paradise corner: Cinque Terre wine, the sun into bottle. Our personal tourist Guide will lead you discovering the Cinque Terre villages, their everyday life, with the possibility to arrange food & wine tasting.

**Programme**

At 9.00 your personal tourist guide will lead you until Manarola through La Spezia’s Gulf and unthinkable vineyards. A stroll through the old hoses of the village downhill to the marina, and then proceed until Riomaggiore along the Via dell’Amore. A visit of the village and then, with your mortar and pestle you will prepare the pesto sauce in order to dress the croxetti or the troffie (some kind of local pasta). In the afternoon we will take the train for Monterosso from where, after a wine tasting and free time for shopping, we will depart by motorboat to return to Portovenere and La Spezia.

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**The chef recommends**

- Filled mussels - Anchovies of Monterosso
- Mes’ciua - Croxetti - Gattafin - Trofe al pesto - Spaghetti with sea food
- Mixed fried fish – Scabecchio – Mixed grilled fish - Tian Vernazza - Moscardini in umido
- Rice tart of Soviore
- Lemon (of Monterosso) sorbet

**The wine list**

- Cinque Terre DOC
- Colline di Levanto
- Sciacchetrà (late harvest wine)
- Limoncino
HOMO VIATOR

Since the Palaeolithic, Lunigiana located at the northernmost of Tuscany has been linking territory between the Padana Plain, the summer pastures in the mountains and the Tuscan Maremme; the herds of ungulates and their predators (man included) or, later, the first prehistoric breeders have crossed and characterized our territory.

The presence of several and easy mountain passes, has always given to this territory a remarkable military and economic importance; but the need of re-evangelization after the barbaric invasions, the organization of the parish-churches system and the consolidation of the great pilgrimage trails, made Lunigiana the primary and unavoidable crossroads for the Middle-age's devotional trails.

It's here, along the roads and the pathways of these valleys (with the blooming of commerce favoured by pilgrims, the construction of merchant villages and castles) that begins the road which will lead us to the Renaissance and the modern age.

We wish to show you the everyday life of these places, in a trip (spatial and temporal) through that age's places, structures, uses and costumes, making you discover beautiful and unexpected realities.

From Parish to Parish
Parishes of Urceola and Sorano, St. Caprasio of Aulla, Parishes of Codiponte and Vendaso (FD)

The Parish (from the Latin word plebs which means folks), that is, the mass of scattered people that have no name. The uniting and identifying symbol, politic al and religious protection that often, unfairly, refers only to the simple religious building which testifies it. The pilgrims and wayfarers searched for them (the parishes), at the end of an exhausting day of walk, at the most important road crossings and there they found comfort and rest.

Where it was not possible to built a new Parish, rose up sanctuaries and monasteries which preserved important relics in order to supply another kind of comfort, re-enforcing the will to emulate the martyr Saints along the way to Rome or to St. Jago (St. James). Here then the Parishes of Urceola, Popetto and Sorano along Magra river's valley, the ones of Vendaso, Offiano, and Codiponte in the Aulella's river valley and St. Caprasio's Abbey in the place where the two great valleys meet each other.

The disenchanted and frenetic world of today seems to have no power in these places, where architectonical structures and the capital or façade ornaments return to an immediate simplicity which induces suggestion and recalls to the most secret and purest spirituality. Archaic symbols, mix of different religiosities realized by simple craftsmen, far from great town dogmas and stylistic elements.

To know and understand the world and the people who created the modern age is a trip at the discovery of themselves, of the personal need of spirituality and communal life, far from imposed conditioning.

Programme
Meet our Guide at 9,00 at Pontremoli’s motorway exit in order to visit, soon, one of the first 4 parishes testified by the Bishop of Luni, Urceola. Then we move to Sorano, to understand the permanence of holy places of different people and cultures. Morning ends with the visit at St. Caprasio in Aulla: not well known Saint, lived in the 5th century A.C. whose story and relics could inspire more than one novel.

After the necessary lunch pause, we proceed by motor coach towards Codiponte, where we will visit the SS. Cornelio and Cipriano very old parish (8th century A.C.), outpost of Christianity in Lunigiana along the Roman Via Regia, adorned by mysterious medieval sculptures, it take us back with the fantasy at 2nd millennium’s dawn. If our hunger of archaic spirituality was not yet satisfied, let’s conclude the guided visit with St. Paul of Vendaso parish.
The Santiago de Compostela trail
Codiponte, Gragnola, Filizzano (FD)

“The many roads but only one is the road to salvation”. It exists, that is, a unity of the of the pilgrimage culture and civilization, articulated in major pilgrimages. A world and a civilization in which St. James’ name did not mean only the destination of a pilgrimage, but a way to live and imagine it, as the confraternities, the hospitals and the accommodation structures remind to us, they were erected under his name (like the monks of St. James Order who ran the St. James hospital of Altopascio) as protector par excellence of the pilgrims and with strong political connotations (his iconography represents him like Soldier of Jesus, patron of the recapture, defender of the Faith or even like killer of the Moors).

From Pistoia and Lucca pilgrims crossed Tea Pass in order to reach the Ligurian coasts and proceed towards Galizia (western Spain) stimulating the construction of villages, bridges, sanctuaries and parishes still today evidences of the ancient routes.

Programme
Meet our Guide at 9,00 at Aulla’s motorway exit and depart towards Codiponte.
The parish of SS. Cornelius and Cyprians – very old parish (8th cent. A.C.) outpost of the Christianity in Lunigiana along the Via Regia, decorated by mysterious medieval sculptures – and the village (erected thanks to the bridge) take us back with the fantasy to 2nd millennium’s dawn.
Around 12.00 we move to Gragnola and visit the village, developed in the 12th century as cereals and grain market and overlooked by the imposing Eagle’s castle.
After a necessary and surprising lunch break, we proceed by motor coach until Filizzano in order to visit the 15th century Augustinian convent and St Antony’s church, in search of Tau knights.

The Francigena trail in Lunigiana
SS. Annunziata, Filattiera, S. Caprasio, Sarzana (FD)

The road has got its own rules, the road is the true travelling companion, the road is Homo viator (wayfarer) life, is the practical sign of the existential itinerary, place of mystery, symbol of the unknown, attractive and terrible at the same time. But the road is not just the instrument, the road itself is the destination of the “Crazy of God”. The Francigena trail, the road par excellence which vivified and made sacred all the places that crossed, passed through la narrow valley that from the Cisa Pass reached Pontremoli and Luni. Parishes, abbeys and monasteries were erected to host wayfarers, miraculous apparitions of Mary stimulated the construction of sanctuaries and villages, commerce and translation of the relics favoured new devotions and cults, and everyone walked because walking is redemption and translation of the relics favoured new devotions and cults, and everyone walked because walking is redemption and destination: the labyrinth of life wraps and makes itself easy only passing along it.

Follow us along the itinerary of Canterbury Archbishop, of Icelandic abbot Niklaus, of Philip Augustus of France and of all the other anonym travellers who made possible the modern age.

Programme
Meet our Guide at 9.30 at Pontremoli’s motorway exit and reach the near SS. Annunziata complex: inside it admire, incredulous, the imposing chapel (made by Sansovino to preserve the miraculous fresco) and the splendid sacristy. Visit Augustinian convent’s double cloister and depart towards Filattiera.
The ruined St. gorge castle still preserves the territory’s oldest tablet: the Leodga’s epigraph (7th century A.C.) which reminds us the efforts made for the re-evangelization of the territory in the high middle age, while the St. James of Altopascio hospital testifies the will and the commitment to protect pilgrims along their walk.
At 11.45 we reach Sarzana to allow ourselves a drink a enjoy a good meal. In the afternoon we discover the workshops and the merchant’s palaces and inside the unexpected cathedral we admire the paintings of Fiasella and Solimena, Master William’s painted cross and Riccomanni’s altars.

Byzantine and Jews
Filetto, Bagnone, Vilafranca, Sorano (FD)

The warfare which opposed Longobards and Byzantines at the beginning of the middle age went to an end in these territories: the breaching of the defensive line will be the first step of the barbarian civilization and the prelude to the feudal age. New fortified settlements rose in order to control an incredibly strategic territory but sadly lacking of agricultural resources.

During 13th century Franceschino Malaspinia decided to found a village whose trades and settlement of shops were free of taxes; this determinate the fortune of the villages along the Bagnone river valley and of the merchants who, settling themselves there, built up around the already existing castles flourishing markets: Bagnone, Malgrate, Filetto.
Holy places of the Ligurians and Byzantine’s lands, salt and spices trails, immersed in uncontaminated thousand-years forests, everything enriched by a real and untouched gastronomic culture: a dive into the historical past and into the quite.

Programme
At 9.00 meet our Guide at Pontremoli’s motorway exit and depart towards Filetto, very old and suggestive Byzantine village. Then proceed to Bagnone to understand the evolution of the double village (Ghibelline and market) before have lunch with local specialties.
In the afternoon we reach Vilafranca, where we visit the Ethnographic Museum before transfer at the Sorano parish church.

Vara valley round villages
Brugnato, Varese Ligure (FD)

Vara valley takes name from the river that passes through it and since the prehistory local populations have cleverly exploited the strategic location of these territories, fixed course for commerce across Lunigiana, Padana Plain and the Mediterranean sea. During the Byzantine domination (6th century A.C.) and, so on through the Longobards and Franks ones, rose and developed along the main routes castles, fortified villages and convents. The research in combining housing and defensive needs of the local populations took at the construction of interesting urban structures unusual in a rural territory: the round villages.

Maybe capital of Ligurians Briniati in pre-roman age, around the half of the 7th century Bugnato had been chosen by St. Colombano monks, coming from Bobbio (northern Italy), in order to found a monastery which, became very powerful during the centuries thanks to the protection of Carolingian emperors. Nearby SS. Peter Lawrence and Colombano cathedral had been built the abbey and the Bishop’s palace (11th cent.), around which developed the village itself with the typical tenaille shape that still toady characterizes it.
The first news about Varese Ligure, date back to the Byzantine period: the Grexino village (means of the Greeks) was part of the fortifications created in order to stop the access to the Longobards at the coasts.

For better exploiting its strategic position along the routes which link the Tigullio’s Gulf to Lunigiana and to the Padana Plain, by the end of 13th century Fieschi family promoted a remarkable enlargement of the urban structure founding the round village.
The inhabited area is defended at north by the noble palace, later transformed into a castle, and contains in the inside the buildings built between 13th and 15th century, between ‘600 and ‘700 took place a further expansion ended with the construction of St. John the Baptist church.

Programme
At 9.00 meet our Guide at Brugnato’s motorway exit (A 12) in order to discover and compare two similar urban kinds.
but developed during the centuries with different reasons: Brugnato rural village and forced stage of the pilgrims, and Varese Ligure Ghibellin market-village.

In Brugnato we visit St. Bernard oratory, the village and the cathedral. There is the possibility to visit the Bishop’s palace, seat of the Diocesan Museum which illustrate its own double function: private residence and representation building.

At 11.00 we proceed towards Varese Ligure and along the way, we allow ourselves a stop in order to visit Vara Valley organic dairy. The lunch will permit to experience some of local specialities linked to local organic cultures and farming. In the afternoon we visit Grexino village linked to the rest of the inhabited by the homonym bridge, the round village and St. John the Baptist church, one of Ligurian baroque most beautiful examples.

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**The Taverne valley**

Comano, Tavernelle e Crespiano (FD)

Lunigiana is characterized by a big number of small valleys, nowadays almost forgotten, in the past witnesses and protagonists of the great historical Italian and European events.

The Taverone valley (left side-stream of Magra river) little frequented by the big tourist flows, permits to tell how a trip happened eight centuries ago.

Whatever was the aim of the trip (war, prayer or money), villages parish-churches and castles that we will meet are still evidences of it and still today are telling you about people who lived, rested or have been killed there, painting a magnificent fresco of Lunigiana in the moment of its maximum splendour.

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**Programme**

At 9.30 meet our Guide at Aulla’s motorway exit in order to journey towards Taverone valley with the villages of Panicale, Ponte Bosio and Varano. A stop by Venelia parish (11th cent.) and here we are at Tavernelle, built in the 1300 along the “salt route”. We reach Comano for lunch break and a suggestive visit to the village. In the afternoon we descend again until Crespiano, to end the day inside Terrarossa castle with a tasting of typical foods.
Nature & culture

The imposing mountain range of the Apuan Alps, with its thick and variegated vegetation, the thermal springs, the crystal-clear water streams, and several natural caves, has comforted and sheltered these lands’ first inhabitants.

Follow with us Neanderthal man’s and bear of the caverns’ traces, among botanical surprises and curative waters: one day into Lunigiana’s pure and uncontaminated nature.

Strolling through the Prehistory

EQUI TERME CAVES CULTURAL PARK

NATURALISTIC ITINERARY

Territory’s geological and environmental features.

Meet our Guide at Aulla’s motorway exit; durante the trip to Equi Terme (about 40 min.) we will discover eastern Lunigiana’s geographical, climatic and historical evolution.

We journey along Lucido’s river valley to reach Equi terme, where we visit the caves, one of Europe’s vastest hypogeal systems.

We proceed strolling along the “Equi’s track”, impressive natural canyon excavated by Catenella stream, in order to see from the distance the “fox’s lair” and “fern’s cave” (important places of Palaeolithic and Neolithic findings), watching the unexpected peculiar local flora.

Possibility to participate in geologic and botanic seminars (about 3 hrs.).

CAVES ARE CLOSED UNTIL JUNE

HISTORICAL ITINERARY

Different kinds of human settlements during the centuries.

Meet our Guide at Aulla’s motorway exit; during the trip to Equi Terme (about 40 min.) we will discover eastern Lunigiana’s geographical, climatic and historical evolution.

We visit Equi Terme’s caves, one of Europe’s vastest hypogeal systems and prehistoric man’s hunting area.

The Museum of the Caves, thanks to natural size reproductions and to the teaching panels, will make us know Neolithic man’s settlements and everyday life.

At the end, we visit the medieval village of Equi Terme and the thermal springs.

Possibility to participate in anthropologic seminars (about 3 hrs.).

CAVES ARE CLOSED UNTIL JUNE

WATERS ITINERARY

The complex and articulated Apuan Alps’ water system

Meet our Guide at Aulla’s motorway exit; during the trip to Equi Terme (about 40 min.) we will discover eastern Lunigiana’s geographical, climatic and historical evolution.

We depart from Lucido river’s springs and visit Equi Terme’s thermal complex and village, with sulphurous and fresh waters tasting; an easy stroll along Lunigiana Trekking pathway will take us to Santa Lucia of Monzone, with a stop along the walk to quench our thirst at Bozzetti’s water spring.

At Monzone we visit Black and White water’s springs and taste both of them.

We hope that someone has brought some wine!!!

CAVES ARE CLOSED UNTIL JUNE

The tree of the bread

Willing to search a synonym of Lunigiana we certainly could say “chestnut civilization”, the customs and uses the traditions and regulations refer to this tree termed by Giovanni Pascoli (Italian poet) “the tree of the bread”.

From the chestnut-tree we get chestnut for the flour - the Poor’s bread – but also firewood, poles for fencings, beams for houses and planks for furniture. Either leaves were used for animals’ litter or for wrapping up bread or cheese.

Chestnut husks and pruning were buried to fertilize the trees themselves. Well, a sort of “vegetal pig”.

Programme

The excursion in every part of the territory, prevents a stroll into a chestnut wood, the visit at a kiln and a water-mill.
The organic food valley
Vara Valley
Between Cinque Terre and the Apennine’s passes opens the widest and deepest valley of Liguria: the Vara Valley. A green track, totally lacking in industries, where converge small secondary valleys dotted by small villages hidden into the woods. A small world where nature and its inhabitants have preserved homogeneous features and that still emits such a pure and uncontaminated charm; a valley rich of pathways suitable for hikers, horse-riders and mountain-bikers, where villages seem to be merged, through the time, with the land products themselves: the wood of the forests, the slate slabs of the roofs, the stones of the quarries.
Today the whole area is characterized by the quality of the environment and by its more than 100 farms that produce milk, vegetables, cheese and organic meats thanks to wind and photovoltaic energy installations.

Programme
A day in Vara Valley, from Varese Ligure first village in Europe with – ISO 14001 – certification for the environment quality, to Brugnato and Lagorara Valley, discovering typical products** and the refreshing beauty of the nature.

** we remind: le "sciuette" (from the word suorette – tiny nuns) = cakes with almonds paste, so called because once where made by local nuns.;
le "croxeti" o "corzetti" = home made pasta (with hand made wooden seals)
le "tomaselle" = roulades of meat;
vegetable tarts, chestnut flour, pigs and chicken still growing in a wild state.

Botanical gardens
(!!!.. work in progress.. !!!)

The narcissus blooming
(!!!.. work in progress.. !!!)
The valley of 200 castles

Name and concept evocative of cape and sword novels, magic and mysterious structure the castle. The cinematography has confused its name and function with the ones of other structures (the palace, the fortress, the fortified residence), anyway preserving unchanged the image of power and dominion.

Lunigiana is everywhere characterized by the imposing presence of the castles which lean on the valleys and is literally impossible remain insensitive at their view: inhabited by ghosts (maybe) by noble men (sometimes) or by warriors (always), the castle exerts a charm from which none is able to elude.

From Montignoso to Fivizzano, from Pontremoli to Gragnola, until Calice al Cornoviglio, Vara Valley and Cinque Terre the Europe’s richest collection of fortresses, castles, tower-houses, walled villages, watch-towers stretches itself.

Some of them are ruins, austere and mysterious, some others fully preserve, due to laudable and expensive restoration work made either by privates or by local Administrations, the splendour and the arrogant beauty willed by medieval lords.

Fosdinovo (HD)
The origins and fortune of Fosdinovo are tied to the new road track (fauce nuova=the new pass), across the coast and the inside valleys of eastern Lunigana, willed by the Bishop of Luni in the 11th century. In the 1340 Spinetta Malaspina “The Great”, took possession of Fosdinovo giving rise to the dynasty which will dominate the village and the castle until 1797.

The very favourable geographic position made Fosdinovo one of the obligatory routes for pilgrims and merchants until the end of 1600, giving strong impulse to the local economy, as testified by the presence of two beautiful oratories and the rich church.

The present castle is the result of continuous enlargements and restorations made during centuries and looks as one of the whole territory’s most significant and best preserved castles and, as many others, people’s tradition tells of a ghost who lives in it.

It’s the marquise Bianca Maria Aloisia Malaspina who, fallen in love with a young stable-boy, would have been bricked up alive with her dog (symbol of faithfulness towards the beloved guy) and with a wild-boar (symbol of rebellion towards her parents’ will), for had not accepted the imposed groom. People’s tradition will that Dante who, for a long time lived on this territory, stayed into the castle, although the present castle has been realized after the Poet’s death.

Programme
Meet the Guide a depart towards Fosdinovo, visit the beautiful village and, from high on top of medieval walls, we enjoy a magnificent view of the coastline and of Magra Valley. We discover the Bianchi Oratory (16th cent.), St. Remigio church with attached Rossi oratory. Let’s gather our strength and…….storm the Malaspina castle (ticket entrance) one of territory’s most beautiful fortified residences.

N.B.: Possibility to visit (under reservation) the not far Resistance Museum.
The grain, the great lady and the knight.

Gragnola e Castel dell’Aquila (HD)

Located in the alluvial plain between the Apennine valley of Aulella and the Lucido one which, viceversa descends from the Apuan Alps, Gragnola has ancient origins linked to trading and grinding of the grain. The medieval name (forum gragnolarum) and the archaeological finds of a late Roman age mill made even supposing that Gragnola could be the ancient “Forum Clodii” indicated in the Tabula peutingeriana (a early medieval map), located along the Clodia road which linked Piacenza, Lucca, Luni and Parma. Do not to omit, furthermore, the atypical structure of the village, which has not developed around the castle that overlooks the valley (Eagle castle) but around the SS Ippolito and Cassiano church (3rd century martyrs), where it was possible the edification of workshops, palaces and caravanserais.

Eagle Castle, after centuries of neglect, has been completely restored and returned to ancient splendours due to present owner’s will (the Grat Lady Gabriella). Just during the phases of Eagle Castle restoration, in the late afternoon of February 19th 2004, workers casually found, underneath the floor of a piggery, fragments of human bones. The following morning the anthropologist Stefano Ricci (University of Siena) recognized those fragments as belonging to a 35 years old man lived in 1300 (fact confirmed by the analysis done with Carbon-14).

Under the base of the skull has been found an iron dart of a crossbow, which allowed to solve a 700 years old case of homicide. The crossbow shot hit the unfortunate knight in the mouth, provoking the fracture of the teeth and lodging itself into the 2nd cervical vertebra: instant death and quick burial in order to hide the crime.

The last humanist

Castiglion del Terziere (HD)

(!!!... work in progress.. 😞 ...!!)
Very Interested Persons

Special itineraries for individuals or small groups, suitable by who is searching for something unique and exclusive and wishes to know more about our territory with the support of a customized guided service.

Allow yourself a micro vacancy entirely with a personal driving Guide, to experience unique emotions far from everyday life. A long lasting emotional short break.

The marble quarries by off road 4x4 vehicle
(HD approx. 3 ½ hrs. - max 8 persons)

Who visits Carrara marble basins remains astonished by the winding and steep roads which drive up to the highest peaks.

To see from a distance trucks which incessantly challenge technical and human limits, make us rise the wish to try the same thrill.

Thanks to special off road 4x4 vehicles and to highly skilled drivers, your private tourist Guide will take you up to 900 mt. altitude, in a magnificent and unique scenery, where extremely detailed information about both ancient and modern methods of marble extraction, will be given.

A short break to experience an antique and unique food, the “lardo di Colonnata”, the only one of its kind in the world.

A free tasting of it will be offered.

Once refreshed, we decide to dare more travelling up, up to more than 1200 mt. altitude where, in front of an amazing panoramic view, it’s not difficult to meet the angels. Strong emotions and 2000 years of history and culture.

The marble quarries by off road 4x4 vehicles
(FD approx. 7 hrs. - max 8 persons)

It is possible to extend the excursion visiting, in the afternoon, a spectacular underground marble quarry and, later, a marble saw-mill and a sculpture atelier.

Price of the excursion (from 1 until 8 pax)

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<th>zona Versilia</th>
<th>La Spezia</th>
<th>5 Terre / Lunigiana</th>
<th>Montecatini</th>
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<tr>
<td>½ day</td>
<td>€ 270,00</td>
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<td>Full day</td>
<td>€ 390,00</td>
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<td>€ 430,00</td>
<td>€ 600,00</td>
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Price includes:
off road vehicle, tourist Guide service, lardo tasting, all entrance tickets.

Tel.: +39 0585 857 288 - Fax: +39 0585 600 040 - info@iltau.it
Adventures by helicopter  
(FD - max 3 persons)
The quarries by off road vehicle were not enough???
No problem!! Just a brief pause to taste a unique and antique food, the lard of Colonnata, and the adventure starts again: let’s get into the helicopter to take you discovering every hidden corner of the Apuan Alps and, in a sort of a trip through the time, you will go back to the middle age landing inside the Eagle Castle (14th century). Gabriella, the owner, will welcome you, with grandma Mary, and with your help will prepare all local traditional dishes: (testaroli, bastard lasagne, sgabei and vegetable tarts), simple, and tasty. After lunch we will visit the castle and then, by minivan, we begin the back trip along the Francigena route, among Romanesque parish churches, medieval villages and castles.

Price of the excursion € 2.000,00 (from 1 until 3 pax)
Price includes: transfer by minivan from Versilia, FD tourist Guide service, lard tasting, hiring of helicopter, lunch

Michelangelo and the sculpture  
(HD - max 8 persons)
An exhaustive and spectacular visit of Michelangelo’s sites, to retrace and understand how it has been possible the realization of Renaissance’s masterpieces.
Your personal tour Guide will lead you, though the three Carrara’s marble valleys, up to inside Michelangelo’s quarry, where the great sculptor used to go looking for his favourite kind of marble: the statuary marble. In Colonnata you will taste one of the most unique gastronomic Italian specialities: the lard of Colonnata, to finish, visiting a workshop of art, you will know more about the old a modern techniques “…in the art of removing…”. Complete and clear explanations, breathtaking views, art, work and nature will make your day unforgettable.

Price of the excursion € 240,00 (from 1 until 7 persons)
Price includes: transfer by minivan from Versilia, HD tourist Guide service, entrance tickets, lard tasting.

N.B.: We would be very glad to set up, on demand, a lecture (with slides) on Michelangelo’s sculpture. Price € 130,00 (about 45 min.) + IVA + eventual room rental.

Cinque Terre by Leudo (old fishermen boat)  
(FD - max 12 persone)
Cinque Terre region includes also a protected marine area, offering amazing over and under the sea views; a trip on a typical fish boat will make your holiday unforgettable.
Your personal Guide will let you explore the whole coastline, hidden caves, romantic and quite beaches of the cleanest sea of Italy and, with the tender, you will have the possibility to approach and visit the enchanted villages of the Cinque Terre.
The boat chef will cook exclusively for you the old fishermen recipes, served with local wines.
The excursion will end in Portovenere for a pleasant stroll through the village before the departure to the hotel.

Price of the excursion € 2.000,00 (from 1 until 12 pax)
Price includes: transfer by minivan from Versilia, FD tourist Guide service, Leudo charter fee with skipper, lunch on board.

Terme & shopping time  
(HD - max 7 persons)
(!!!.. work in progress.. !!!)
The National Park of the 5 Terre, has the peculiarity to be the only one in Italy aimed at the preservation of a settled landscape: among its aims there is the preservation of the terraces and of the dry stone-walls. The Park protects an area where man has created a stable life and a reciprocal living together between himself and the nature in a typical Mediterranean coastal environment. The several microclimates, often different from each other, allow the development of an enormous botanic variety; maritime pine trees and pines form Aleppo alternate with cork oaks and chestnut trees; sea fennels, marine cineraria and helicrysum are mixed at bushes of heather, rosemary, wild lavender, as well as opuntia, and agaves alternate with euphorbia bushes. Also several kinds of animals find in these locations favourable environments: royal seagull, pilgrim hawk, and moreover dormouse, badgers, stone martens, and foxes.

Botanic surprises and rural civilization

Cinque Terre
Itinerary mostly (or exclusively) directed to the local rural and environmental aspect: vineyards, lemon houses, olive groves, etc. but also mastic tree (chewing-gum and glues), cineraria (washing products), broom (binding of the vineyards) etc.

Apuan Alps
From Canevara to Antona and Pian della Fioba
The small village of Canevara is located 2 km away from Massa, along the way to Forno. After have visited the water-mill for the production of the chestnut flour (the unique and true bread of the territory), we begin to walk the pathway through a chestnut wood which will lead us to Antona. Along the way are still visible the "maestà" (place where used to stop the religious processions and, once, shelters for shepherds, farmers), a dry house and a mill (diff. in height 270 mt - 1 hr.)
At Antona, before leaving towards Pian della Fioba, we visit a dry house for chestnuts.
Walking uphill the landscape and the vegetation change, appear new kind of trees, but the botanic garden P. Pellegrini is the true surprise. Thanks to its location on the fault plane across calcareous and siliceous soil, at 900 metres altitude but facing the Tyrrhenian sea, allows to admire side by side botanical species belonging to habitat and climates totally different from each others: black pine (Pinus nigra nigra) and Douglas (Pseudotsuga menziesii) beside the Maritime Pine (Pinus pinaster) and Atlantic cedar (Cedrus atlantica) or common juniper (Juniperus communis) beside the Phoenician juniper (Juniperus phoenicea).
And even orchids and lilies, aquatic mushrooms and herbs, in an uncontaminated environment with breathtaking views.
(diff. in height 450 mt. - 4,00 hrs.)
Max Altitude: 970 above sea level

FROM PARK TO PARK

The Regional Park of the Apuan Alps boasts an extraordinary natural patrimony rich of landscapes, environments and naturalistic emergences. Not only flora and fauna, abundant anyway, but even the stones, the minerals, the fossils, the tectonic structures, supply unexpected elements, varied and diffused of environmental value.
The Apuan Alps offer magnificent scenic fascination and a very rough morphology, with deep canyons, deep gorges and large caves under the karst subsoil.
Varied and contrasting environments, where the animal vegetal populating exalt itself, characterized by an elevated biodiversity result of a complex biological evolution, that expressed itself in a very different geological context..

The National Park of the Tuscan Emilian Apennines.
The excursion starts above Comano from Camporaghena fields (1000 mt. altit.), small karst highland that overlooks the Rosaro valley. The presence of grassland and a lake make easy meeting wild ungulates and mammals which populate the Appennine's Park, or many kinds of migratory birds.
Let’s climb up again along the moraine land slide until Ospedalaccio Pass (1250 mt. altit.) and, after have enjoined a magnificent view of the Park, we descend to Padule lake and from here to Sassalbo (860 mt.); along the walk we learn the ancient art of the ice-makers (to be sold to the hospitals or to the retailers), of the coal-makers or of the vegetal mattress-makers.
For who believes, it could be the right moment to catch sight of UFO.
After have known the descendants of the Roman slaves escaped from Luni, we depart again crossing the streams Acqua Torbida and Rosaro and climb up again the ancient salt trail called Strada Vecchia or Torbida and Rosie and the side of the mountain made of the territory’s oldest rocks: the Triassic Gypsiums giving name to the village Sassalbo (white stone).
Fauna and unexpected geological relics, ancient pathways and trades into a silent oasis two steps away from the sea.
(diff. in height 410 mt. – 5,00 hrs.)
Max altitude: 1250 mt. above sea level
Once arrived at La Spezia meet our local Guide and proceed (by motor coach) along the panoramic road of the Cinque Terre until Manarola. We visit the village surrounded by an amphitheatre of terraces with vineyards and walk along a part of the ancient “Santiago di Compostella Trail” until Riomaggiore. The charm of the village, its tall and coloured houses and the picturesque marina have been celebrated by Telemaco Signorini’s paintings. The churches, the oratories, and the ancient devotions, the market’s loggia and the castle, make us live the Middle Age’s atmosphere, among knights and pilgrims, saints, merchants and brigands. Lunch on your own by one of the equipped areas of the Park.

In the afternoon, a short train ride will take us at Vernazza, protected by its ancient defensive system and gathered around its port with its church dedicated to St. Margaret of Antioch. Again by train we reach Monterosso (favourite residence of the great poet Eugenio Montale) in order to admire the typical lemon houses, protected by dry-stone walls, and visit the characteristic historical centre. At the end go back by train to La Spezia and transfer to the hotel.

Let’s depart towards Carrara, “the world’s marble capital”, and our Guide tekes us towards Colonnata telling us about the historical, social and artistic aspects of this region located across the sea and the Apennine. Drive uphill along winding roads used for marble transportation and to smuggle salt, until arrive at an active quarry. Technical explanations about excavation and transportation methods (ancient and modern), geological information and the incredible view make us know 2000 year of fatigue and art.

To understand what the quarrymen and the smugglers used to eat, we visit a larderia, in order to find out the preparation and aging methods of the famous lardo di Colonnata IGP and, naturally, we make us offer a free tasting of it.

From Colonnata begins the pathway, that, through century-old chestnut woods, leads to Vinca and, from there, to Lucca and Parma, along “The Francigena trail” and “The Holy Face trail”. Lunch at your leisure in the “ghost village” of Verghetto.

In the afternoon we descend again towards Carrara through the ancient marble railway’s track and visit the “marble made town”, the historical centre of Carrara, unexpected and unique in its kind.

Since the Palaeolithic, Lunigiana located at the northermost of Tuscany has been linking territory between the Padana Plain, the summer pastures in the mountains and the Tuscan Maremme; the herds of ungulates and their predators (man included) or, later, the first prehistoric breeders have crossed and characterized our territory. The imposing mountain range of the Apuan Alps, with its thick and variegated vegetation, the thermal springs, the crystal-clear water streams, and several natural caves, has comforted and sheltered these lands’ first inhabitants. The innumerable small valleys have been, in the past, witnesses and protagonists of the Italian’s and European’s great historical events, and still today allow to tell how one thousand years ago a journey took place. The devotional and accommodation needs of the pilgrims justified the construction of hospitals (sort of hostel) and monasteries, but whatever was the aim of the trip (war, prayer or money), villages parish-churches and castles that we will meet are still evidences of it and still today are telling you about people who lived, rested or have been killed there, painting a magnificent fresco of Lunigiana in the moment of its maximum splendour. Holy places for the Apuan Ligurians and Byzantines lands, salt and spices trails, immersed into one-thousand years uncontaminated woods, all enriched by true gastronomic culture: that’s the place where we will take you to, in the land of 200 castles. A dive into the historical past and into the quietness.
A pretty mixed salad

Enjoy yourselves combining the half day excursions to create a full day program, full of discoveries and mutual relationships.

In this sheet we suggest you some of the possible combinations, based on vicinity criteria and, clearly, on unity of themes.

In the several excursions, according with the season and the exigencies of the participants, visits at mills, olive-mills, dry-houses, workshops, etc. can be included, in order to supply an exhaustive description of the territory.

[Diagram showing connections between various locations such as Lerici, Carrara, Fosdinovo, Sarzana, Viareggio, Lucca, Castello Malaspina Massa, Camaiore, Fosdinovo, Portovenere, Sarzana, La Spezia, Filattiera, Bagnone, Pontremoli, Filletto e Malgrate, and Lerici.]
In addition to previous pages’ detailed excursions, we offer guided visits at:

**Half day excursions:**

**Province of Massa e Carrara**
- Aulla and Brunella fortress
- Bagnone, Filetto and Malgrate
- Caprigliola
- Casola
- Comano
- Filattiera and Sorano’s parish
- Licciana
- Lusuolo e Groppofosco
- Montignoso and Aghinolfi castle
  - Mulazzo e Castevoli
  - Podenzana
  - Soliera
- Tresana e Novegigola
- Tresana e Pietrasalta
- Villafranca and Ethnographic Museum
- Zeri

**Province of La Spezia**
- Calice al Cornoviglio
- Futurism at La Spezia
- La Spezia between Liberty and Decò
- Levanto
- Pignone
- Lagorara valley
- Vezzano Ligure
- Roman domus of the Varignano

**Province of Lucca**
- Altopascio
- Barga and the middle valley
- Castelvecchio Pascoli
- Castelnuovo e Castiglione Garfagnana
- The Liberty at Viareggio
- The high Versilia e Camaiore
- The noble mansions of Lucca
- Massaciuccoli
- Torre del Lago
- Pietrasanta
- Diecimo’s parish
- Brancoli’s parish
- S.Gennaro’s parish at Capannori
- S.Maria’s del Giudice parish
- Viareggio and the carnival

**Full day excursions:**

**Province of Massa e Carrara**
- Carrara and the villages up the mountains
- Castelpoggio e Campoeccina
  - Form Massa to Antona
  - The hemp cycle
  - The chestnut cycle
  - The olive cycle
  - The grapes cycle
- The Romanesque in Lunigiana
- The Gothic in Lunigiana
- The Renaissance in Lunigiana
- Baroque and Neoclassicism in Lunigiana
- The book in Lunigiana
- The coastline from the Roman age until 1900
- The Pontremoli’s churches
- The fortresses of Byzantine Limes (fortification)
- Massa and the Frigido valley
- Taverone’s and Caprio valley
- Lucido valley
- Aulella and Rosaro valley

**Province of La Spezia**
- The parishes of La Spezia’s Gulf
- Lerici and Portovenere
- Portovenere and the islands

**Province of Lucca**
- Giacomo Puccini

Guided visits at all the Museums, Castles, Botanical Gardens, villas and parks in the provinces of Lucca, Massa e Carrara, La Spezia.
The rediscover and preservation of the products and/or the typical dishes of the Italian culture, in Lunigiana does not exist. It is not necessary to invest resources o to appeal to patriotic feelings, seeing that, during the centuries, our cuisine has never undergone any modifications and has never undergone international mixtures but, vice versa, it continues to propose the usual ingredients and preparations without give in to global market flatteries.

In case of a snack even a of a banquet, hundreds restaurants, taverns and agriturismi of our territory will offer you taste ecstasy moments, we are ready to bet with you.

Even if on our territory there is a homogeneous diffusion of typical dishes native to some particular areas, we advise you to experience the cooking into cast iron testi (sort of flat pan) and we recommend to require only local specialities:

at Pontremoli: his majesty the Testarolo
at Malgrate, Bagnone, Iera e Villafranca: the onion of Treschietto
at Podenzana: the Panigaccio
from Bagnone to Mulazzo: old and surprising, the bastard Lasagne (made of chestnut flour)) at Comano, Tavernelle and Crespiano: humble and nutritious, the Bean of Bigliolo in the Magra Valley: food and symbol, the Lamb of Zeri
in eastern Lunigiana: Focaccette with cheeses and Filet of Lunigiana
everywhere: the “food” par excellence, the Bread = of Vinca, of Po, of Agnino, La Marocca di Casola