

PRIME TRAVELER

Florence & Tuscany, Made by Hand

The dome, the workshops, and the countryside beyond, and how to actually experience craft, art, and wine country the way this region still makes them.



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CONTENTS

- 01** Two Trips in One

- 02** The Duomo and the Dome Climb

- 03** Uffizi and Accademia Without Wasting a Day

- 04** The Real Artisan Tradition

- 05** Eating Florence

- 06** Into Tuscany: Building Your Day Trips

- 07** Chianti, Siena, and San Gimignano

- 08** The Tells That Peg You As a Tourist

- 09** Quick Reference Cheat Sheet

Two Trips in One

Florence and the Tuscan countryside are usually done as a single trip, and for good reason, they complement each other almost perfectly. Florence gives you density, art, and centuries of craft packed into a walkable center. Tuscany gives you the opposite, open hills, slower mornings, and a different relationship with the same history. This guide treats them as one trip with two distinct halves, because that's how almost everyone actually experiences them.

Florence Rewards a Plan

Unlike a stroll-and-discover city, Florence's biggest draws genuinely require advance booking. This isn't bureaucracy for its own sake, it's simply demand outpacing capacity at a small handful of world famous sites. The next two chapters exist because skipping this planning step is the single most common regret first-time visitors report.

Tuscany Rewards Slowing Down

Once you leave the city, the entire logic flips. There's no line to skip in Chianti. The goal shifts from efficient planning to simply giving yourself enough unscheduled time to enjoy it.

The Duomo and the Dome Climb

The cathedral dominating Florence's skyline is free to enter for the main church, but the parts most visitors actually want, the dome climb and the bell tower, require planning.

The Dome Climb Is Its Own Ticket

Climbing up between the dome's two shells to the top requires a separate, timed reservation, and slots do sell out, especially in high season. Book this specifically and separately from general cathedral entry, ideally as soon as your dates are set.

This Is a Genuine Physical Climb

Several hundred narrow, occasionally tight stone steps stand between you and the view, with no elevator option and limited ability to turn back partway. Wear real shoes, not sandals, and know what you're signing up for before you book.

WORTH KNOWING

The bell tower next to the Duomo offers a view that includes the dome itself, which the dome climb obviously doesn't. If you only have time or stamina for one climb, deciding which view you actually want, the dome from outside, or the city from the very top, is worth thinking through first.

Best Timing for the View

An early morning slot, right at opening, gives you clearer light and a noticeably thinner crowd at the top than a midday booking.