

Visiting Valdinievole's hamlets and villages

Give yourselves the joy of an authentic experience, discover the **Valdinievole**, an area rich in history, culture and tradition.

An area of a thousand different aspects, **reinvigorating** like the water of its famous springs, **unpolluted** like its luxuriant nature, **genuine** as its cooking, **intriguing** as the world's most famous puppet and **inspired** like the celebrities who have loved it.

The **Vallis Nebulae**, the *fog-filled valley*, in the very heart of Tuscany, nestles in the gently sloping hills which lie between Pistoia and Lucca. You will be surprised by the **beauty of hidden gems**, found in a **little museum** or in a **country parish church**, to be reached on foot along paths winding through olive groves.

Enjoy the cobbled alleys in **small hamlets**, lying between flowering gardens and majestic villas, and reach the peak dominating the whole valley. The **citadels** and the **towers** of its original **castles** will evoke memories of their history, made up of battles between the cities of Pistoia, Lucca and Florence, of high class craftsmanship and of thriving trade.

The **Valdinievole** will amaze you with the authenticity of its hamlets and the true beauty of the nature surrounding them.

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Tuscany



Valdinievole

Valdinievole Tourism is the association of:



Comune di Buggiano



Comune di Chiesina Uzzanese



Comune di Lamporecchio



Comune di Larciano



Comune di Massa e Cozzile



Comune di Monsummano Terme



Comune di Montecatini Terme



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Comune di Ponte Buggianese



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Tourist Information and Welcome Service

Tourist Office of Montecatini Terme

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TV/CANY, FROM LEONARDO TO PINOCCHIO

Hamlets and Castles

Medieval hamlets, castles overlooking valleys, ideal destinations mixing together history, traditions and genuine excitement.

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Buggiano Castello

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VISITTUSCANY

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IDEAS
HAMLETS AND CASTLES



Castelvecchio (Pescia)

Visiting Valdinievole's hamlets and villages

Close to Florence, Pisa and Lucca, the **Valdinievole** is the ideal place from where to start to look for hidden treasures, romantic nooks and crannies and genuine gems which time has conserved intact, so that you will be able to embrace that wonderful splendour which makes our country the most beautiful place in the world.

Montecatini Alto, near the thermal town of the same name, is a small and charming village with cobbled streets, a medieval fortress, the 'Palazzo del Podestà' and the piazzetta Giusti where you can stop to taste some delicious specialities. If you take the funicular railway to get there, it will make your journey even more delightful.

This is the beginning of a fascinating journey on the lookout for small and ancient hamlets, each of them with a tale to be told. By car, by bike or on foot, along numerous paths and trails... any way is the right way to explore the



MONTECATINI ALTO

One of the most loved villages of this area is Montecatini Alto, an ideal place for relaxation, thanks to all that takes place in its 'salon', Piazza Giusti, and to its wonderful sunsets with panoramic views over the valley. This hamlet has two 'hearts': its medieval one with its 'Palazzo del Podestà' and Ugolino Simoni's tower; and its Art Nouveau one with its 'Teatro dei Risorti'.

Valdinievole. Find the time to visit – but not in a hurry – the area around Pescia, a unique and fascinating place, worthy of its name “**the Swiss Pesciatina**”, as it is known locally. Gently sloping hills and small villages, a picture postcard countryside, authentic as the **ten medieval Castella** (country villages) which, one after the other, will appear before your eyes.

The small and fortified hamlet of **Massa** is well worth a visit – once surrounded by its own walls of which only a few parts remain today – with its towers and imposing gates; as is **Cozzile**, too, with its narrow alleys, its 'piazzetta', the majestic Palazzo De Gubernatis and its picturesque areas. If you go along the steep little road between olive groves, right up to the 19th century 'palazzo', you will find yourself in the midst of total silence surrounded by the peacefulness of nature.

Medieval hamlets and castles overlooking the valley below are perfect places to go to on the way to discovering our history, our ancient traditions, our authentic feelings.

It is also well worth going to the medieval hamlet of **Uzzano Castello**, an antique little centre where pilgrims and wayfarers once used to pass through; it stands on top of a hill from where you can see all the Valdinievole area. A romantic place, especially at night, thanks to the way it is lit and illuminated which makes it recognizable from anywhere down in the valley.

In spring, treat yourself to an intoxicating walk through the lanes of **Buggiano Castello**, known as the citrus hamlet, due to its abundance of splendid, private gardens, and go on to reach the panoramic terrace from where – on a clear day – you can even catch sight of San Gimignano and Volterra. A short distance away, in a countryside rich in olives, you can find the picturesque hamlet of **Colle di Buggiano**.

The 'Road of Olive Oil of the Hamlets and Castles of Valdinievole' passes through the villages of



LEONARDO AT MONTEVETOLINI

Many art historians and academics have speculated about the possibility that **Leonardo da Vinci's** painting, of 1473, depicting the countryside around the lower stretch of the River Arno would have had as his point of reference the hamlet of Montevettolini from where, still today, you can enjoy a spectacular vista over all the valley.



THE FUNICULAR RAILWAY

On 4th June 1898, in the presence of Giuseppe Verdi and other important guests, the funicular running between “Bagni di Montecatini” and “Castello” was inaugurated. Along 1077 metres, Gigio and Gigia – the names of the two historic, red cable cars, restored and still in use – take 8 minutes and 30 seconds to complete their journey.

Uzzano, Buggiano and Massa e Cozzile, in an area rich in olive groves; along this road, you can stop to taste olive oil and other typical local products, in farms, holiday farms and restaurants which you will come across along the way.

A few miles away from Monsummano Terme, stands **Monsummano Alto** which will take you back in time with its impressive remains of ancient strongholds and its old lookout tower: you must be sure to

climb up to its very top so that you can enjoy a breathtaking and panoramic view over all the surrounding countryside.

Don't forget to stop at **Montevettolini**, a tiny hamlet, originally an ancient medieval fortress, much loved by the Medici family who built a splendid villa there.

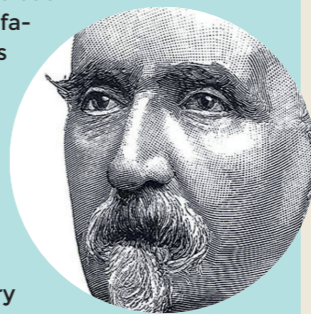
On the slopes of Montalbano, near Larciano, two villages are well worth visiting: **Cecina**, a medieval hamlet, probably of Etruscan origin, with its ring of stone walls and its ancient entrance gates; and **Larciano Castello** with its typically medieval features, surrounded by a 13th century ring of walls. By going through one of its three, still visible gates, you can reach its highest spot where a fortress towers above the village, and from where you can admire a wonderful panoramic view over the Valdinievole.



CARLO LORENZINI AND COLLODI

When the moment came to choose a pseudonym for himself, **Carlo Lorenzini** thought of the village where he had grown up – Collodi – a small Tuscan village with a grandiose and aristocratic villa. So this is why, when **'The Adventures of Pinocchio'** came out in 1881, they were signed by a certain Carlo Collodi.

Even today, the **Villa Garzoni** dominates the surrounding countryside and enchants visitors as soon as they see its facade, with its two terraced ramps creating an impressive scenographic effect, while the garden – a fine example of 18th century taste – abounds in picturesque and romantic niches. The atmosphere of Carlo Collodi's masterpiece lives on in **'The Park of Pinocchio'**: a path winds through it, and is adorned with sculptures which famous artists have dedicated to the adventures of the world's most famous puppet. This experience is further enriched by games and adventure trails for kids.



WE SUGGEST YOU
HAMLETS AND CASTLES

The ten 'Castella' (country villages) and the Swiss Pesciatina area

North of Pescia, in the luxuriant **Swiss Pesciatina** area – so named by a man from Geneva, Charles Léonard Simonde de Sismondi at the end of the 18th century, as it looked so much like where he was born in Switzerland – stand a group of small villages called the **ten 'Castella'**. Totally built in pietra serena – macigno stone – they still conserve the culture and the rich traditions of this part of Tuscany. For lovers of nature and of walking, the trail of the **ten Castella** is rich in historic and artistic attractions, as well as in culinary ones.

A natural starting point is that of **Pietrabuona**, known for its paper industry. By taking the Val di Torbola road which follows the river and then climbs towards the mountain, you can reach the village called **Medicina** and if you go further on, you will reach **Fibbiella**. Thick chestnut forests and pines surround you as you enjoy a splendid panoramic view. On the right, high up, almost isolated, stands the castle of **Aramo**. Soon you arrive at **S. Quirico**, one of the loveliest castles of the Valleriana area which offers you views over all the valleys. On the way down, you reach **Castelvecchio**, of medieval origins, and then you go on to **Stiappia**, and then further down to the Mulino del Fontanone, a trekking trail called the Via dei Mulini – the Path of the Windmills. This itinerary continues towards the castle of **Pontito**. Going back along the main road, you will reach **Sorana**, famous for its PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) beans and a destination for gourmets. After a series of hairpin bends, and having almost reached the highest point, you get to **Vellano**, the last leg of this route.

For adventure lovers, you can explore the area by means of the **10 Castella GeoTour**, a trail of various stages with challenges, questions... and a passport at the end.



San Quirico



Aramo



Castelvecchio