

The pleasure of enjoying nature

For curious travellers, for those who love to be outdoors, for those who wish to restore their energy and for those who want to find something new every day, Valdinievole is the ideal destination in the very heart of Tuscany.

A land of generous waters and of thousand-year old grottos, the **Vallis Nebulae**, the *fog-filled valley*, is a green paradise, nestling in the gently sloping hills between Pistoia and Lucca. Far from the busy cities and from mass tourism destinations, it is the perfect place for an experience which brings you into contact with nature, as a couple, as a family or as friends.

Walking and **cycling** will beat out the rhythm of your days spent in Valdinievole, along paths cutting through woods, across century-old olive groves or climbing up hills to arrive at picturesque and sheltered hamlets with wonderful panoramic views all around.

You will be amazed by the extraordinary natural richness of the **Fucecchio Marshland**, by the beauty of the hills around **Montalbano** and the **'Svizzera Pesciatina'** - the area around Pescia which is reminiscent of Switzerland - and you will be fascinated by the atmosphere found in the underground grottos and in the paths running through the rocks.

To breathe fresh air, to taste genuine dishes and to recuperate your physical and mental balance: a holiday in the heart of nature is the best choice if you wish to improve your own wellbeing, if you wish to leave everyday stress behind you and if you wish to really look after yourself, immersed in utter peace and quiet. A silence only broken up by the sounds and noises of nature.

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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



Comune di Pescia



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Tourist Information and Welcome Service

Tourist Office of Montecatini Terme

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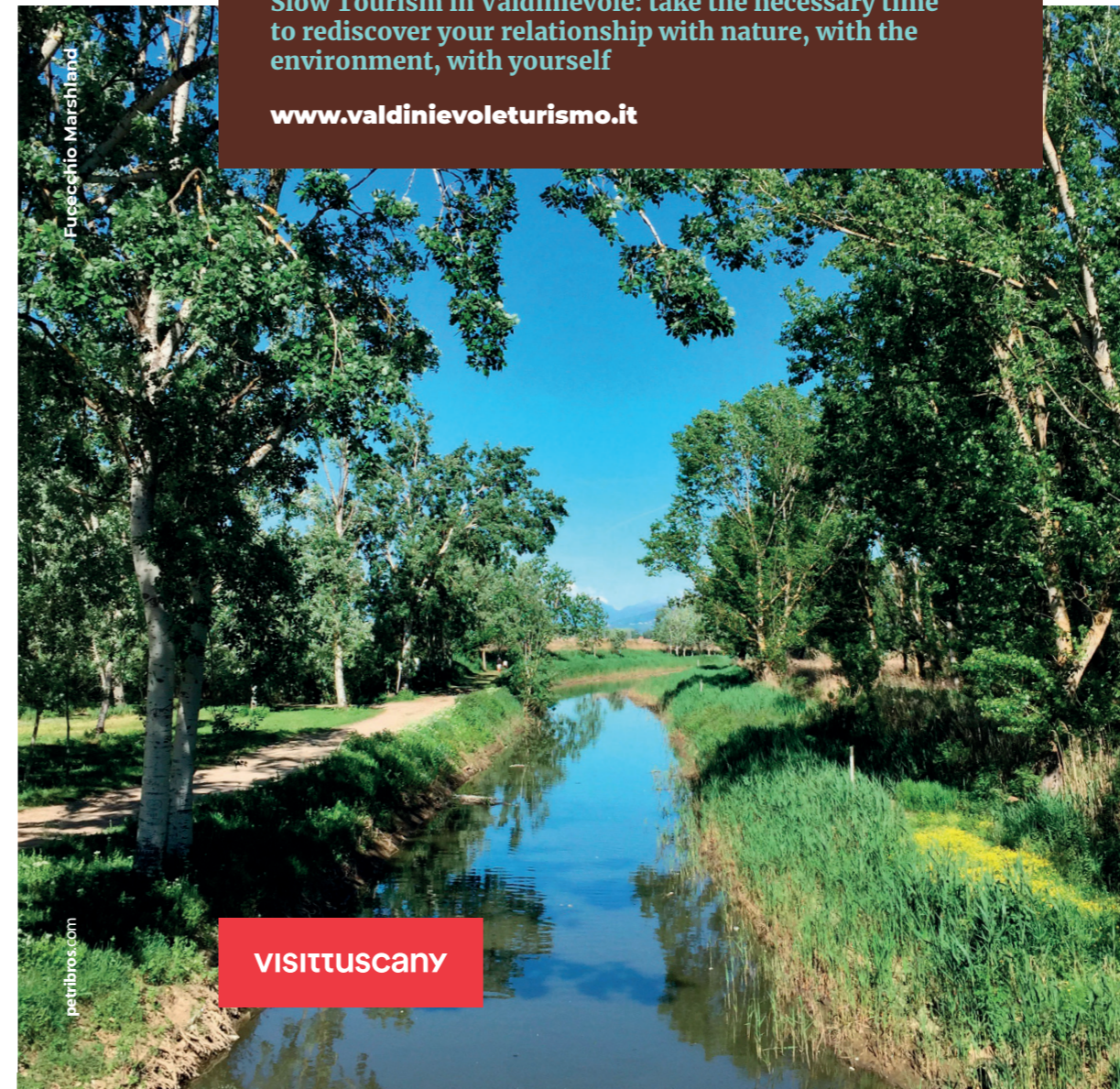
Regione Toscana

Valdinievole
TV/CANY, FROM LEONARDO TO PINOCCHIO

Nature to be enjoyed

Slow Tourism in Valdinievole: take the necessary time to rediscover your relationship with nature, with the environment, with yourself

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Fucecchio Marshland

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IDEAS
NATURE TO BE ENJOYED



Fucecchio Marshland



To enjoy nature in Valdinievole

The Natural Reserve of the Fucecchio Marshland is a paradise for herons, cranes, black storks and for those who love to observe them in the quiet of nature. This is an area of important naturalistic interest, and with its 1.800 hectares of land lying between the Provinces of Florence and Pistoia, it is the largest internal marshland in Italy.

Valdinievole is an excellent departure point for setting off along the various routes and walks. Birdwatching enthusiasts can start from the visitors' centre of **Castel Martini** (Larciano) following the 'Le Morette' itinerary, ideal for naturalistic observation all the year round, and especially in spring.

he wealth of animal and plant life looked after by the Marshland Reserve is a precious treasure to be carefully cared for so as to hand it down to future generations. It is for this reason that the **Centre of Research, Documentation and Promotion of the Fucecchio Marshland** carries



BIRDWATCHING

Standing on the migratory routes between the Tyrrhenian coast and its hinterland, the Marsh is a home for 200 species of birds, and so it attracts birdwatching enthusiasts and lovers of naturalistic photography. Screened paths and faunal observatories, like that of "Le Morette": an old hunting and fishing lookout, which has a perfect viewing point, without disturbing the avifauna.

out many activities: from excursions to thematic guided visits, to conferences, to courses, such as the one which teaches you how to recognize and use **official plants** which here grow spontaneously and abundantly.

Apart from the uniqueness of this amazing natural reserve, Valdinievole offers you green spaces, woods, natural grottos, panoramic views and enticing glimpses of nature.

Vineyards and olive groves grow on the gentle hills of **Montalbano**, crossed by roads that open out on to breathtaking vistas, perfect for motorbikes, like the SP9 (Provincial Road 9) which in the past was used for a special test for the Rally of Pistoia.

The walk around **Colle di Monsummano** is a ring road that departs from the thermal plant of the Grotta Giusti, and goes along the **Geological Path**, so called because it enables you to appreciate the geological features of the hill, and the rock formations, which - like an open book - recount the very long history of the place.

The **grotto Maona**, approximately 15 million years old, unites geological interest to speleological interest. It lies inside the hill of the same name, between the valley and Montecatini Alto. Shaped by the slow dripping of water - which has consequently moulded stalactites and stalagmites - it is the only grotto in Italy to have two wells, one at its entrance and one at its exit. The route through it is 200 metres long, at a depth of 20 metres and at a constant temperature of 15°C, and the visitor is catapulted into an atmosphere of dantesque-like hell. Special inhabitants of the grotto are the approximately 30 examples of bats, belonging to a rare and protected species.

Out of all the possible outdoor experiences not to be missed is the itinerary of the **ten 'Castella della Valleriana'**, or '**Svizzera Pesciatina**' - so called by Charles Léonard Simonde de Sismondi, an economist, historian and Swiss literary critic who, at the end of the 18th century, settled



THE BUTTERFLY HOUSE

At **Collodi**, inside the **Villa Garzoni's Garden**, the **Butterfly House** is home to hundreds of butterflies, originally from tropical and equatorial areas, free to fly about in an environment full of plants and flowers, typical of the zones they came from. The visit enables you to get to know better these splendid creatures, understanding the various stages of their development and the reason or use of the diverse designs that embellish their wings.



THE GARDEN OF CITRUS FRUITS

In **Pescia**, close to **Pinocchio's Park**, is the **Hesperidarium**, a place unique of its kind, a garden entirely dedicated to citrus fruits, with more than 200 types coming from all over the world. A true botanical park with ancient varieties coming from collections of the **Medici family** in the 16th century, and some examples of rare and exotic ones coming from the Far East.



down near **Pescia**, as it reminded him of his homeland in Switzerland. The ten hamlets, all built in **pietra serena**, are still to this day authentic and uncontaminated so they are perfect as the setting off point on the way to discovering art treasures, high quality products, and colourful traditions.

Ancient paths, hidden amongst olive groves, will lead you to unexpected places: to **San Baronto** (Lamporecchio), along an old path once used by wayfarers on their way to prayer, where the Oratory of the '**Madonna delle Grazie**' is to be found. This is only one of the numerous paths around **Montalbano**, a thick network of routes of different lengths of distance and with different levels of altitude, suitable therefore for every kind of walker.

Luxuriant nature, clean air, silence and tranquillity: the way from **Massa** to the **Sanctuary at Croci**, on foot, by bike or on a horse, goes through a wood and then crosses over the **Volata** stream, until it reaches the track of the ancient **Via Crucis** that leads straight to the **Sanctuary**.

Ideal for training the body and for relaxing the mind, immersed in the green **Valdinievole** hills.



THE SARELLO

For centuries, the marsh has supplied raw materials for cattle breeding, for the making of artefacts, such as padding for chairs, for "cappelotti" or special corks, for demijohns, for braid and rope.

The large sedge - locally known as 'sarello' - has always been an important resource for the inhabitants of the **Valdinievole** area: it is a perennial and sturdy plant that grows along ditches and canals, in marshy land, constantly soaked in water. It is made by means of an ancient tradition, kept alive thanks to courses and laboratories organized by the 'Intrecci Onlus' association, which is dedicated not only to the 'sarello' but also to other textile and dyeing grasses of the Marsh.

The artisan culture of the Marshland is the principal character of the 'Museo Della Civiltà Contadina Casa Dei', (The Museum of Peasants' Civilization) at **Larciano**, inside an old farmhouse.



WE SUGGEST YOU
NATURE TO BE ENJOY

To enjoy slow tourism

Slow tourism is an alternative way of going on holiday, aimed at finding once again one's own personal rhythm and serenity, by means of visiting experiences that let you live in places not as the usual tourist but rather as temporary residents. To discover landscapes and local culture, to taste typical local produce and to meet the producers themselves, to move around by bike or with other sustainable means, are just a few of the simple 'rules' that can let you rediscover yourself and live in harmony with your environment.

The **Fucecchio Marshland** is ideal for mountain bikes, an eco-friendly and enjoyable way of visiting the area, uncontaminated, a reminder of the ancient lake-marsh that, once upon a time, covered a large part of the southern **Valdinievole** area and which is, still today, the largest internal Italian marsh.

It is easy to observe in the marshy vegetation examples of little egrets, herons, coots and other species of migratory birds that live in this unpolluted habitat.

The trip can begin from the **Thermal Park of Montecatini Terme**, a green lung in the heart of the thermal and art nouveau town. From here, the route goes along secondary roads until it reaches a dirt track going towards the Marshland. From here on, the landscape becomes more and more fascinating, crossing narrow paths that run along canals, and they finally arrive at **Lake Crocialoni**. Take the same path to return to **Montecatini**.

Do not forget to take a camera with you: this itinerary is perfect for lovers of naturalistic observation and of photography. Far from the chaos of life, in the silence of the marshland, you will come across wonderful glimpses of wild life, to be immortalized by a click.



Guided visit to the Marshland



What the environmental guides have to say



The mountain bike is ideal for trips with all the family



The Thermal Park at Montecatini