



Holy Rollers

Tuscany welcomes cyclists on the millennium-old Via Francigena

When Archbishop Sigeric made the trek from Rome to his home diocese of Canterbury after meeting with the pope in 990 CE, he kept a diary, describing the great churches, dramatic scenery, and small-town hospitality he encountered on his 1,000-plus-mile journey. This itinerary eventually evolved into the Via Francigena, a route used by every manner of pilgrim and traveler heading to the “big city,” from the Middle Ages onward.

Not interested in embarking on a 30-day pilgrimage on foot? New developments

have made the ancient trail freshly appealing to cyclists. Last year, the European Association of the Vie Francigene debuted an app—think of it as a high-tech version of Sigeric’s diaries—featuring GPS navigation, preloaded maps, and offline track descriptions. And this spring, Tuscany completed signposting the 220 miles of its section of the route (taking care to maintain the historical accuracy of the Sigeric itinerary) and upgraded it especially for bicycles, allowing easier access to pedal through the vineyards of Montalcino,

the olive groves of Bolsena and Montefiascone, and medieval hill towns like San Gimignano (pictured).

“The goal was to design a route that would be easily doable with a touring bike equipped with panniers,” says Tullia Caballero, director of S-cape Travel Italy, who helped the signposting project. Best of all, she notes, burning all those calories on your bike will free you up to indulge in Tuscany’s famed culinary scene: “You can practically eat and drink a different local specialty at each town you stop in.”

