



VISITUSCANY

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Travel tips to discover Tuscany  
in the tracks of the Etruscans

# Valdichiana Senese: Etruscan Land

Valdichiana Senese



## Tuscany



**VALDICHIANALIVING**  
Tours & Vacation in Tuscany

Piazza Grande, 7  
53045 Montepulciano (Siena) Toscana, Italy  
tel. +39 0578 717484

info@valdichianaliving.it  
www.valdichianaliving.it



STRADA DEL VINO NOBILE  
DI MONTEPULCIANO  
E DEI SAPORI  
DELLA VALDICHIANA SENESE

info@stradavinonobile.it  
www.stradavinonobile.it

In collaboration with Toscana Promozione Turistica and the Tuscany Region



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## When Valdichiana Senese was Etruria

Almost 3000 years ago, in the heart of Italy, a **fascinating and mysterious civilization** was alive and thriving: it has never been possible to clarify its origins, to fully understand its language or to interpret its enigmatic faces. But in addition to the many questions that remain unanswered, **the Etruscans have left a vast heritage, which enriches all of Tuscany and the Valdichiana Senese area in particular.**

In this border land, between Umbria and Lazio, there are many testimonies of life in ancient Etruria. The local **museums** (in Chiusi, Chianciano Terme, Montepulciano, San Casciano dei Bagni and Sarteano) preserve artefacts by skilled artisans and true works of art, while the **collections** on display in Sinalunga and Trequanda contain objects of everyday use. The **necropoleis** of Poggio Renzo (Chiusi) and Pianacce (Sarteano) hide tombs that reveal the mystical and spiritual face of this civilization. The **thermal waters** on the other hand seem to explain why the Etruscans wanted to make this land with therapeutic powers their own (there are three spa localities in the Valdichiana Senese: Chianciano Terme, Montepulciano and San Casciano dei Bagni).



## Tours and experiences in the Etruscan Valdichiana Senese

### Tour of the underground Valdichiana Senese

Itinerary among the Etruscan tunnels of the Civic Museum "The Underground City" in Chiusi, the "Water Trail" in Sinalunga and the underground cellars of Montepulciano

### The sacred waters of San Casciano dei Bagni

From the thermal waters that have returned the archaeological site of the Rediscovered Sanctuary, to the thermal waters that provide relaxation in the exclusive Fonteverde SPA

### Descent into the underworld in the Tomb of the Infernal Chariot

A cold and damp tomb, inflamed by spectacular representations that have inspired Gucci creations. Not to be missed

### Women and Wine: from the Etruscans to today

From the Etruscan women, who enjoyed wine and the pleasures of life, to the female entrepreneurs who produce Vino Nobile di Montepulciano



Searching for other  
Etruscan-themed experiences?

Discover  
Valdichiana Living's selection





## The cult of thermal waters

The wealth of beneficial springs made the Valdichiana Senese area particularly interesting for the Etruscans. **It was common to go to the spring sources**, where there were architectures dedicated to the patron deities of the spa town, **in the hope of curing illnesses** both through prayer and baths in the thermal waters.

In **Chianciano Terme**, near the Acqua Santa, Sillene and Fucoli springs, **votive deposits, sculptures depicting gods and various architectural elements have been found, which suggest the presence of actual sacred buildings** (these findings are mostly on display at the Civic Archaeological Museum of Chianciano Terme).

The **discovery of the Rediscovered Sanctuary in San Casciano dei Bagni** is also recent. **From the warm thermal waters a treasure emerged that includes more than 20 bronze statuettes, whose faces have gone viral around the world.** The presence of

inscriptions in both Latin and Etruscan make us think that this place was a meeting point for the two civilizations, who lived here in peace.

The thermal springs of the Valdichiana Senese, which are very different from one another thanks to their unique properties, still supply the spa centers of the area today:

- **Theia Thermal Pools** (Chianciano Terme): a wellness center designed for the whole family
- **Sensory Spa** (Chianciano Terme): it offers sensory journeys inspired by eastern philosophies
- **Terme di Montepulciano** (Montepulciano): a proposal specialized in health care
- **Fonteverde SPA** (San Casciano dei Bagni): here the focus is relaxation, against the backdrop of a unique panorama



## The golden hands of the Etruscans artisans

The first artisan workshops in this corner of Tuscany were founded when the Valdichiana Senese area was still named Etruria. Among the streets and alleys of the towns, terracotta and ceramic containers and vases, bronze furnishings and tools, refined footwear and tailored clothes, gold and other precious metal jewellery were handmade: products that were either purchased locally or reached distant lands. The collections on display in Valdichiana Senese have allowed us to piece together the daily life of the Etruscan populations, from their culinary habits to personal care, but the relevance of these objects also lies in their ever-present power of inspiration. **Local artisans still today are inspired by the Etruscans in their creations:** not only the **ceramists**, who sometimes create artefacts using the **bucchero** technique, but also the **goldsmiths**, who reproduce refined ancient motifs attempting to faithfully use the **Etruscan granulation** technique (a decorative method whose process is shrouded in mystery).

## The first Tuscan winemakers

The winemaking vocation of the Valdichiana Senese, land of **Vino Nobile di Montepulciano**, was an Etruscan intuition. After tasting the imported Greek wine, the pleasure-seeker Etruscans soon became real experts in the art of viticulture, which turned into a driving force for the economy of Etruria, as documented by the many local craft amphorae found in the Mediterranean. **But what was Etruscan wine like?** Well, very different from what we currently drink. It was a **very dense beverage, with a high alcohol content, enriched with aromatic herbs, usually consumed with the addition of water or honey.** In Valdichiana Senese, the origins of the winemaking tradition take on legendary traits. Livy, in his "Histories", tells that a certain **Aruntus of Chiusi**, rival in love of his king, took revenge on him by inviting the Gauls to invade, with the promise of offering them his prized wine.



For opening hours and more info on **Museums** and **Archaeological sites**

### Montepulciano

**Palazzo Bucelli**  
Via di Gracciano nel Corso, 81

**Consorzio del Vino Nobile di Montepulciano "Enoliteca"**  
Via di San Donato, 21

**Crociani Civic Museum and Picture Gallery**  
Via Ricci, 10  
Tel. +39 0578 717300

★ **MUST-SEE: The Etruscan door to the Afterlife**

### Chianciano Terme

**Civic Archaeological Museum**  
Viale Dante  
Tel. +39 0578 30471

★ **MUST-SEE: Thesan, Goddess of the aurora**

### Chiusi

**National Etruscan Museum**  
Via Porsenna, 93  
Tel. +39 0578 20177

★ **MUST-SEE: Chiusi's Sphinx**

**Civic Museum "The underground city"**  
Via Il Ciminia, 2  
Tel. +39 0578 20915

★ **MUST-SEE: The Etruscan "civil registry" in the underground of Chiusi**

**Museum of the Cathedral**  
Piazza Duomo, 1  
Tel. +39 0578 226975

★ **MUST-SEE: Porsenna's Labyrinth**

### San Casciano dei Bagni

**Rediscovered Sanctuary Archaeological Site**  
Via della Fontaccia - Tel. +39 0578 58141

**"Le Stanze Cassianensi" Exhibition rooms**  
Piazza Repubblica, 4 (Palazzo comunale)  
Tel. +39 0578 58141

★ **MUST-SEE: statuette of the Goddess Igea**

**Fonteverde SPA**  
Località Terme, 1



## Etruscan women: one of a kind figures in ancient times

**Libertines, worldly, lovers of beauty and the pleasures of life**, they distinguished themselves from their contemporary Greek and Roman women by their independence and participation in public life. Etruscan women attended banquets and popular events, were educated (at least in reading) and could be owners of commercial activities. In Valdichiana Senese, **an entire section of the Civic Archaeological Museum of Chianciano Terme has been dedicated to these fascinating female figures**, which represents the many faces of Etruscan women. Sculptural works reveal their domestic side, depicting them in the act of breastfeeding or sitting at their husband's side, but everyday tools and creations of local craftsmanship tell us about the passions they loved to cultivate, from jewellery collection to weaving.