

Montecatini V.C. and the Decimo forest



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Type: Bicycle - Gravel, Bicycle - MTB | 450 m | 419 m | 27 km

Località di partenza e arrivo: -

We have described only the points of interest located outside the town area.

Montecatini V. C.'s territory is a large hilly area, with a thick wood and very few inhabitants and rural, historic and natural strikingly beautiful and well preserved features. From the Montecatini central square you can take an upwards path to the well known Miniera di Caporciano, which in the 19th century was the largest copper mine in Europe. Here you can go through the 19th century miners' village and the S. Barbara church, the mine's administration offices, the Villa dei Signori and the typical watchtower guarding the mine forecourt. Once past the forecourt and the entrance to the tunnel leading to the mine, you can take the Gello municipal road downhill and then turn onto a dirt road towards Lago di Scandri and the farm of the same name, which is also the last village before entering the forest.

From there you will thread on a well kept dirt road down into the heart of the Decimo forest, which is now officially a public property but which has been a well known and precious source of timber, beginning in the middle ages and up to the days of the Saline di Volterra state-owned saltwork.

At Decimo, deciduous broadleaf trees (mostly turkey oaks) alternate with Mediterranean evergreen shrubs and a patch of lowland forest typical of hilly valley floors, with trees such as the southern ash and white hornbeam. From then you can move back to a paved road that crosses with a flat part of SR 68.

After passing the village of Ponteginori you then go back to Gello via one of the most beautiful (with little to no traffic) scenic roads in the Cecina Valley and enjoy a breathtaking landscape featuring woods and open fields; you can also enjoy views over much of the Cecina Valley as well as the peace and quiet of the small Etruscan village of Gello and its ancient castle in Volterra.



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The appearing of the mighty Belforti tower (11th century), which dominates the stunningly beautiful village of Montecatini, will mean that you have now returned to the starting point and can now lose yourself in the quiet, discreet alleys and small squares of the village, rest in Piazza della Repubblica enjoying it or visit the old mine.

Points of interest

Valdicecina - *OUTDOOR* -

1. Start and end of the route - Montecatini V.C. and the Decimo forest Start-End

Piazza della Repubblica, Montecatini Val di Cecina [Read more about the village of Montecatini...](#)

Valdicecina - *OUTDOOR* -

2. Lake Scandri Naturalistic feature

This picturesque open area suddenly opens up in the middle of the wood, with the Scandri farm, where cattle and sheep are reared, pastures, olive groves, arable land and a basin with a characteristic lake of about 100 m in diameter, with a small island in the middle and the banks largely covered by herbaceous and shrub vegetation. It is not uncommon to see water birds such as herons, mallards and moorhens near the lake, as well as various species of wild mammals in search of water and food.

Valdicecina - *OUTDOOR* -

3. Forest of Decimo Naturalistic feature

A forest owned by the Tuscany Region, known since the Middle Ages because it was reserved for cutting for the wood supply of the Volterra saltworks. At Decimo, deciduous broadleaf woods dominated by Turkey oaks with good vertical development alternate with Mediterranean evergreen sclerophyllous scrubland and a fragment of lowland forest typical of hilly valley floors with southern ash and white hornbeam.

The forest includes all the most typical fauna of the woods in this area, ungulates such as wild boar and roe deer are common, so even their main predator, the wolf, seems to frequent the area assiduously thanks to the extension of the forest and the scarce anthropic disturbance.

Valdicecina - *OUTDOOR* -

4. Ponteginori Historical-cultural feature

Crossed by SR 68, on the bank of the Cecina River near the confluence with the Trossa stream, it is a typical example of an industrial village created around the exploitation of the rock salt deposits by the Belgian company Solvay. The name comes from the bridge that Count Carlo Ginori built between 1831 and 1835 over the river Cecina. [Read more...](#)



5. Village of Gello

Historical-cultural feature

Its identification with the Agellum cited in 754 as one of the founding properties of the Abbey of Monteverdi is doubtful, but it is certain that Gello was assigned in 1186 by Emperor Henry VI to the Bishop of Volterra. In 1288 it was entirely subdued to the Municipality of Volterra and conquered after a long siege by the Pisans in 1363. In 1436 it seems that there was an abbey on the site. Occupied and devastated in 1447 by the Aragonese troops, it passed under the dominion of Florence in 1472, becoming part of the Vicariate of the Val di Cecina. Conquered by the Sienese in 1479, Gello was sacked and has not been used since. Today its restored houses offer tourist accommodation. Its identification with the Agellum cited in 754 as one of the founding properties of the Abbey of Monteverdi is doubtful, but it is certain that Gello was assigned in 1186 by Emperor Henry VI to the Bishop of Volterra. In 1288 it was entirely subdued to the Municipality of Volterra and conquered after a long siege by the Pisans in 1363. In 1436 it seems that there was an abbey on the site. Occupied and devastated in 1447 by the Aragonese troops, it passed under the dominion of Florence in 1472, becoming part of the Vicariate of the Val di Cecina. Conquered by the Sienese in 1479, Gello was sacked and has not been used since. Today its restored houses offer tourist accommodation. Read more...

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6. The Caporciano Mine

Historical-cultural feature