



Chianti

# Barberino Tavarnelle

The green heart of Chianti,  
between Val d'Elsa and Val di Pesa.

[www.visitchianti.net](http://www.visitchianti.net)

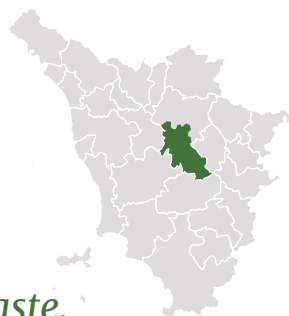
**VISITTUSCANY**

ENG

## Tuscany



# Barberino Tavarnelle



## *History, sustainability and taste. Naturally Chianti.*

Six towns dot the landscape between Florence and Siena. The geography is marked by the **Hills of Chianti**, a smaller mountainous range where the valleys and hills are constellated by villages and towns. This land has always played a key role in history, with its landscape forged by hundreds of years of synergy between humans and nature: Chianti culture has birthed a thousand traditions which are still alive and well. This fertile land boasts great biodiversity and a sustainable, innovative lifestyle.

### **Chianti - Regional Tourist Board**

Municipalities of Barberino Tavarnelle, Castellina in Chianti, Castelnuovo Berardenga, Greve in Chianti, Radda in Chianti, San Casciano in Val di Pesa.

Share your experiences

#visitchianti #visittuscany



[visitchianti.net](http://visitchianti.net)



Barberino  
Tavarnelle



Castellina  
in Chianti



Castelnuovo  
Berardenga



Greve  
in Chianti



Radda  
in Chianti



San Casciano  
in Val di Pesa

This project is financed with FSC resources,  
Piano Sviluppo e Coesione della Regione Toscana:



Regione Toscana





# Chianti

**'Famous for its wines,  
for the salubrious climate  
and even more well-known  
for its geographical position,  
which can be said to be in  
the centre of the Grand Duchy  
of Tuscany'**

Physical Historical and  
Geographical Dictionary of Tuscany



## Barberino Tavarnelle



### Tourist office

Palazzo Malaspina – via del Giglio 31  
loc. San Donato in Poggio FI – Tel. 055 807.2338  
Spedale dei Pellegrini – piazzetta Spedale dei  
Pellegrini 2 loc. Barberino Val d'Elsa – Tel. 055 807.5319  
ufficioturistico@barberinotavarnelle.it  
www.barberinotavarnelle.it

**B**arberino Tavarnelle is a municipality consisting of two main small towns: Barberino Val D'Elsa and Tavarnelle Val di Pesa, joined to form one metropolitan city in 2019. Separated by barely 2 km, the two small towns are located in the area of Chianti Classico. The wonderful land of Val d'Elsa and Val di Pesa offers a vista of verdant nature, of vineyards and olive trees stretching as far as the horizon. On foot or by bike, there are many routes to explore in these places immersed in nature and history, which in ancient times were crossed by pilgrims' routes. Among these winding hilly skylines, small towns and treasures of absolute excellence stand out, ready to be explored.

### In numbers

From historical towns to the wine country of Chianti: a land of a thousand flavours and traditions.

**11,941**

Population

**389** m

Altitude

**123** km<sup>2</sup>

Surface

**98.1** p/km<sup>2</sup>

Density

**San Pietro**

Patron Saint - 29 June



# Paths for exploring Barberino Tavarnelle

*The great natural beauty of Chianti can be explored on foot, deep in the landscape and its world-famous views. Barberino Tavarnelle is the ideal place to dive into fascinating history and countryside, pervaded by Tuscan charm. In these small towns and villages, traditions are safeguarded and culinary excellence is brought to the table by numerous local restaurants, offering visitors unforgettable flavours.*

## 6 Trails Exploring Chianti at a slow pace!

Scan the QR code  
to view and  
download the official  
Visit Chianti trails.



### VIA ROMEA SANESE

*From the Renaissance in Florence to the Middle Ages in Siena, discover and explore villages, vineyards and landscapes of Chianti.*

The **Via Sanese**, one of the ten *strate et vie maestre* of the Florentine countryside, was the fastest way to go from Florence to Siena in the Middle Ages. It was a fundamental pilgrimage route because it joined the **Francigena** thus allowing pilgrims to continue towards **Rome**. In the initial section, the route coincided with that of the Regia Romana road to then separate at the bottom of the Pesa valley where, after crossing the **Sambuca Bridge**, it went up the hills and finally descended towards Siena. Today, the **Via Romea Sanese** follows the traces of that ancient road, uniting the **historic centres** of the two cities with an **80 km** route which unwinds along roads and dirt tracks that slowly immerse travellers into the **vineyards** and **olive groves** of the Chianti Classico. Four legs within everyone's reach that cross the **Florentine and Siennese countryside** and allow travellers to discover parish churches, abbeys and mediaeval villages and castles. To hike along the Via Romea Sanese is the ideal way to delve into the municipalities and small towns of the Chianti region in an authentic and sustainable manner.

 The Via Romea Sanese is part  
of the Atlas of Tuscan Walks:  
[cammini.visittuscany.com](http://cammini.visittuscany.com)

### San Giovanni Gualberto Ring Road

This wide-ranging route runs along ridges sloping down towards the Pesa river. Here, woods and farms, vineyards and olive groves are alternated with open views of Tavarnelle, Barberino and San Donato. A not-to-be-missed diversion to the place where legend has it that St John Gualbert encountered the devil, is recommended: here, the saint's frightened horse left its still-visible footprints, and the spot is in fact called 'the footprints of St John Gualbert's horse'.

**Duration:** 3 h  
**Length:** 7.4 km  
**Ascent:** 133 m

### Pesa Route

An interesting route with naturalistic aspects which runs along the Pesa River. The path follows the road that skirts around the course of the river through groves, clearings, and river floodplains. In the initial part, the path crosses the suggestive Roman bridge in the village of Sambuca, while in the final part it brings visitors to the old Petrazzo mill. Behind the mill it is still possible to admire the load tank and water intake basin. The way back is along the same path.

**Duration:** 2.3 h  
**Length:** 8.6 km  
**Ascent:** 46 m

### San Donato Ring Road

A fascinating path that heads north from the starting point in the characteristic mediaeval hamlet of San Donato in Poggio. The itinerary immediately ventures into the woods in the direction of the Pesa River. The route is immersed in extensive vineyards, olive groves and rows of cypresses, the most typical Tuscan landscape. It should be noted that the path follows a stretch of the ancient Via Romea Sanese. The loop makes it possible to return towards San Donato and its mediaeval historic centre, which is well worth a visit.

**Duration:** 2.5 h  
**Length:** 5.3 km  
**Ascent:** 134 m

### Passignano Ring Road

This trail includes a historically important road, the Guardingo di Passignano route, which connected the Val di Greve with the Val di Pesa. Starting from Badia a Passignano, the trail follows the dirt road of Poggio al Vento passing alongside vineyards. The road then comes across Casa Pugliano, where Domenico Cresti, known as Il Passignano, was born; about 1 km after Badia a Passignano, a signpost indicates a diversion to the Cappella dei Pesci, not far from the trail.

**Duration:** 2.5 h  
**Length:** 6.7 km  
**Ascent:** 160 m

### The Briglie Path

The itinerary begins on the Via Cassia between Barberino and Tavarnelle at the junction with the Spoiano road. Along the way, walkers will encounter the Briglie dell'Agliena, a unique historical route between the Agliena Grande and Piccolo streams, known for the 27 weirs described by Leonardo da Vinci in 1500. Further on, the path reaches the former castle town of Semifonte: an obstacle to Florentine trade, it was besieged and destroyed in 1202. Today only the dome of S. Michele Arcangelo remains.

**Duration:** 4 h  
**Length:** 8.5 km  
**Ascent:** 373 m

### The Maggiociondolo Ring Road

This itinerary crosses the Protected Natural Area of Badia a Passignano with broad views where travellers can admire the beauty of the Benedictine abbey founded by San Giovanni Gualberto. The trail enters into woods that then open onto extensive, ancient vineyards; it continues along country lanes dotted with farms and farmhouses. The route starts and ends in Badia a Passignano where there are restaurants, parking lots and a useful bus stop.

**Duration:** 3 h  
**Length:** 4.7 km  
**Ascent:** 139 m





# Two towns in one landscape

*A journey through the two historic centres located in the green heart of Val d'Elsa and Val di Pesa: admire ancient parish churches, mighty walls and architectural gems steeped in history.*

## THE TOWNS

*'Immersed in history and art and surrounded by the most evocative Tuscan countryside'.*

It is possible to enter Barberino Val d'Elsa through either of the two access gates, **Porta Fiorentina** and **Porta Senese**, which together with the wall surround the historic centre. Barberino is connected with the history of **Semifonte**, an ancient city completely destroyed by the Florentines, that in the Middle Ages played a very important economic role thanks to its strategic position. This is why the city was seen by Florence as a threat, to the extent that the Florentines razed it to the ground after a siege lasting four

years. Legend has it that the ruins of the buildings were used to found the new town: Barberino Val d'Elsa. Thanks to its position, Barberino gained a prestigious commercial and military status, besides becoming a reference point for pilgrims and wayfarers. In the centre in fact, is still visible the **Ospedale dei Pellegrini** (Pilgrims' Hospital), built around the mid-14th century, which today holds a library with a modern structure. Not far is the **Church of San Bartolomeo**, reconstructed in neo-Gothic style, which serves as a frame to a panoramic terrace over the rolling Tuscan hills. Continuing through the town, it is possible to see **Palazzo Pretorio**, with its facade full of coats of arms, and **Palazzo del Cardinale**, with the coat of arms of the family of Pope Urban VIII at the entrance door. Walking towards Porta Senese, visitors can admire interesting palaces and towers made of stone and in a small alleyway, it is possible to see the Oratorio di San Bartolo Sulle Mura, a small church which holds the most ancient coats of arms of the Barberino



## EVENTS

*Events not to be missed*

### MAY

#### Barberino in Fiore

Spring market exhibition of plants in bloom that fill the streets of the historic centre of Barberino Val d'Elsa with beauty and exquisite scents. During the event, there are exhibitions of handicraft products in the local workshops and tastings of wine and delicious food from the area between the Val d'Elsa and Val di Pesa.

### JULY/AUGUST

#### Tuesdays in Tavarnelle

Summer evenings 'on Tuesdays' turn into white nights to be experienced and lived outdoors in the centre of Tavarnelle Val di Pesa: thanks to a pedestrian area, it is possible to stroll, taste traditional dishes, and shop in stands and boutiques. The evenings are enlivened by a rich calendar of events including music, shows, and cultural performances.

### SEPTEMBER

#### Medieval Festival

Musicians, dancers, fire-eaters, storytellers, flag-wavers, cooks, merchants, and seamstresses bring the year 1000 back to life in the streets of the mediaeval castle of Barberino Val d'Elsa. The initiative is inspired by the thousand-year-old Barberino castle and its deep connection with the lost city of Semifonte, besieged and destroyed in 1202 AD.



family, still coloured in part, and bearing important inscriptions. **Tavarnelle Val di Pesa** boasts, both within the town and just outside it, many large and small churches of great artistic merit. Strolling in the centre, you will find the church of **Santa Lucia al Borghetto**, an ancient Franciscan convent, while just outside the town, there is the church of **Santa Maria del Carmine** and the **Romanesque parish church of San Pietro in Bossolo**, located next to the Diocesan museum of sacred art and traditional embroidery of Tavarnelle. Its lively centre, dotted with shops, bars and restaurants, boasts numerous civil architectures of historical value connected to Tavarnelle's ancient role as a post station. In fact, since it was a crossing point, the town does not have any fortifications. The post station consists of various structures intended for the stopping and unloading of goods by travellers and merchants who, during the Middle Ages and after, travelled along the Roman road to Siena, and its function is deeply rooted in Tavarnelle's historical origins.

The town was full of **taverns**, hence the origin of its name. There was also a **hotel** that offered accommodation in Via Roma, stables for horses called **Ortone**, internal courtyards which could be accessed through an arch next to the road, a place for loading and unloading goods called the **Fondaccio** located in today's Piazza Vecchia, and the so-called '**carratore**', a specific place for repairing carts and means of transport. More recently, the town suffered extensive damage during the Second World War when the town hall was razed to the ground, while towards the end of the 1990s, there was an urban development which defined the charming appearance that can be appreciated today. In 2019, Tavarnelle Val di Pesa and Barberino Val d'Elsa were reunited under a single municipality, restoring their ancient bond (Tavarnelle administratively referred to Barberino until the end of the 19th century) thus merging a unique territory rich in history, art and nature, surrounded by the most beautiful hills in the world, the Chianti hills.



# An immense cultural heritage surrounded by rolling hills

*Lost cities, mediaeval castles, Renaissance masterpieces and places of worship: the surroundings of Barberino and Tavarnelle safeguard treasures of great historical, artistic and spiritual value.*

## THE TERRITORY

*'A legendary land and iconic landscapes to be discovered slowly'.*

The land around Barberino Tavarnelle presents truly enviable features of historical-artistic and naturalistic excellence. Top of the list is **Badia a Passignano**, a monumental monastery of the 11th century; the crenellated walls make it look like a castle; inside there are many frescoes of important painters among which stands out the **Last Supper** by **Ghirlandaio**. A few kilometres from the historic centre of Barberino you can explore the ancient city of **Semifonte**, the thriving city that was razed to the ground by the Florentines in the Middle Ages and that was the foundation of Barberino Val d'Elsa: today, if you pay due attention, you can see a few ruins sticking out of the vegetation. Not far from it, exploring the incredible grounds of this place, you come across the **Chapel of San Michele Arcangelo**, built at the end of the 16th century by Santi di Tito. You will spot it immediately since it is inspired by and is a replica of Brunelleschi's dome for the Duomo in Florence at a scale of 1:8. Another place you cannot miss, not far from Barberino, is the **Church of Sant'Appiano**, known as one of the most ancient churches of Chianti. Constructed on a settlement that dates back to the Etruscan era, it is one of the most picturesque and perfectly preserved churches, very attractive thanks to the remains of the pillars of the baptistry in the framework of the cypresses and a green lawn. On the top of an isolated hill, you will be able to venture to the **Castle of Tignano**, that was built in a walled city that has kept its mediaeval structure. The castle has the original round plan, and in the internal square there are a church, a cistern, and a well. Another identity-related place is the mediaeval town of **San Donato in Poggio**, with its **Palazzo Malaspina** in the main square, the Gothic church of **Santa Maria della Neve** and the **Palazzo Pretorio**. When walking through the roads of this town, you can just imagine the pilgrims and wayfarers who in ancient times travelled to Rome. Also interesting is a visit to the **Museum Emilio Ferrari**, devoted to farming culture. Furthermore, just outside the ancient city walls there is the Romanesque parish church of San Donato in Poggio, which has a baptismal font from the Della Robbia school and a crucifix from the Giotto school. Continuing along the road leading to Castellina, the Sanctuary devoted to St. Mary of Pietracupa is of remarkable interest. Travellers can discover the wonderful territory of Barberino Tavarnelle on foot or even on horseback along the **Via Romea Senese**, an ancient route that lead to Rome. The stretch that crosses the Barberino territory goes through Badia a Passignano and San Donato in Poggio; it follows the steps of pilgrims and merchants who walked along these roads in the Middle Ages, and is full of fascinating myths and legends, such as the one about St. John Gualbert, a monk and founder of the Vallombrosian congregation of Badia a Passignano, who was walking along these roads to visit some peasants when the devil appeared in front of him; this encounter, which was more of a clash, is recorded on the boulders located along a marked section of the path in the oak woods. Here, millennia of history combine harmoniously with the environment thanks to the Badia a Passignano **Protected Natural Area**: with its 364 hectares, this green oasis preserves more than one hundred different species of birds and mammals. A magnificent example of Chianti nature and rich biodiversity.



## Tips for exploring and experiencing the land

*Discover Barberino Tavarnelle and explore ancient parish churches and abbeys, mediaeval villages and lost towns.*

### Semifonte

The legendary town destroyed by the Republic of Florence. In its place, the Chapel of St Michael Archangel was built between 1594 and 1597 by the Florentine architect Santi di Tito. The form of the dome is inspired by Brunelleschi's dome in Florence Cathedral, while the basal structure evokes the temple of Santo Stefano della Vittoria near Foiano della Chiana, site of the famous Battle of Scannagallo between the Florentines and Senese.



### Badia a Passignano

Dating back to the year 1000, it is one of the iconic churches of Tuscany. This monastery, which looks like a castle because of its high, imposing crenellated walls, is a centre for spirituality enhanced by the cypresses and the splendid valley around it. It was here that St. John Gualbert, a Florentine monk and founder of the Vallombrosian order of Benedictine monks (the congregation that currently manages the abbey), was trained and lived.



### San Donato in Poggio

A small and charming mediaeval hamlet surrounded by the stunning Chianti hills. This town played a fundamental role in the historic dispute between Florence and Siena, and it was here that two peace treaties were signed between the two cities. With its perfectly preserved 12th-century walls, its imposing watchtower, its monumental entrances, the Porta Fiorentina and the Porta Senese, it is a true historical gem which is best appreciated while strolling through its alleys.



### Pieve di Sant'Appiano

It has ancient Etruscan origins, later superseded by the Romanesque style. It definitely deserves a visit for its state of preservation, its works of art, and the stunning pillars in the front lawn, and especially for its Antiquarium, the archaeological museum located inside the town. This museum houses numerous Etruscan artefacts such as decorated ceramics and alabaster funerary vases, found in the Sant'Appiano area and the neighbouring areas of San Martino at Colli and Semifonte.

