



Montepulciano Italy – Explore it as a Local

Description

Ultimate Guide to Montepulciano – A Tuscany Gem

“What is the fatal charm of Italy? What do we find there that can be found nowhere else? I believe it is a certain permission to be human, which other places, other countries, lost long ago.”

Erica Jong

default watermark



Piazza Grande in the Old Town of Montepulciano – Image from Adobe Stock Photos

The beautiful Renaissance hill town of Montepulciano is known for its red wine. It is considered one of the finest winemaking regions in the world. However, red wines shouldn't be the only reason to visit this gem. This Tuscany wonder offers magnificent views, medieval history, and many attractions to keep visitors of all ages entertained. Now, you can visit Montepulciano, Italy, and explore it as a local.

Though the setting and attractions here are fantastic, the streets and alleyways are truly the most delightful part. That has drawn Joelle back here three times, the charm at the core of this quintessential Tuscan Village that takes a piece of her heart each time. The long main street is adorned with flowers, plants, intriguing entryways, and beautiful gates. Titillating cafes and restaurants serve regional cuisine (How about some Pappardelle in Wild Boar Sauce?), wines, and sumptuous desserts. The wine shops are impressive, and many offer tastings. Oh, and the cheese just might be our favorite display of cheeses in all of Italy; on top of that, they offer generous free samples. The Ironworks of Montepulciano is one of the artisan crafts that bring many shoppers here.

And those views!

default watermark



Montepulciano Italy views

Montepulciano is located on top of a hill, surrounded by many vineyards, rolling green hills, golden fields, and a fortress. No matter what alley you turn into, you will come to a terrace with expansive views of iconic Tuscany. Its beautiful hilltop presence adds so much to this medieval fairytale. In addition, the elegant Palace, visually enticing markets, and lovely historical buildings give it a majestic, reticent atmosphere.

Montepulciana History



Town of Montepulciano, Italy

Recent findings indicate that Montepulciano was settled here between the 3rd and 4th centuries BC. Many Etruscan and Roman finds have been made in this district, confirming its great antiquity. King Liutprando first recognized the name Montepulciano

in a document dated 715.

Due to its strategic position overlooking the Val d'Orcia on one side and the Val di Chiana on the other, Montepulciano was constantly being fought over by the Florentines and the Sieneese. The Florentines and Sieneese clashed several times, and in 1232, Siena managed to take control of the city. Over the next 200 years, however, Montepulciano changed hands several times.



The final ownership happened in 1511 when Montepulciano again came under the jurisdiction of the Florentines. During the 15th century, Florentine rule played a prominent role in the town's architecture, urban planning, and politics. Florentine architect Michelozzo Michelozzi built the Piazza Grande during this time.

In the early 1600s, Montepulciano was under the rule of Ferdinand I de Medici and his widow, Christina of Lorraine. During this period, many grand religious buildings, such as the Cathedral, St Lucia, St Bernard, St Josep, and St Lawrence churches, were built.

Recent centuries

In the 19th century, Montepulciano became an important agricultural market and center. The 20th century brought changes to the road outside Montepulciano in the direction of Chiusi-Chianciano, leading to a transformation of the city and the Old Town. The town began welcoming banks, insurance companies, local governments, and other service functions.

Where is Montepulciano, Italy, and how do you get there?

- [Montepulciano](#)

Medieval Montepulciano is a Renaissance hill town in the Italian province of Siena in southern Tuscany. It is located in the Val di Chiana, within easy reach of the Val d'Orcia, one of Tuscany's most attractive hill towns. It sits high on a 1,985-foot limestone ridge of Monte Poliziano, which makes the approaching view a treat.

The closest airport to Montepulciano is Perugia, which is 38 miles away. If you plan to visit other cities in Italy, the larger airports to choose from are Rome and Florence. The town is 43 mi southeast of Siena, 77 mi southeast of Florence, and 116 mi north of Rome by car. Getting there is most accessible by car as buses and trains can be slow, and you will want to make every second count in this spectacular region of Italy.

In our case, we drove and found the roads easy to maneuver with good signage. If coming from Siena, the most scenic route is Val d'Orcia on the SS2 to San Quirico d'Orcia, then you pick up the SS146 east through Pienza (another great stop).



View from Montepulciano, Italy, upper town

Montepulciano is on a minor rail line, and the small train station is a few miles outside town. Buses connect the train station with the town. Hourly buses run from Chiusi train station, on the major rail line between Rome and Florence and probably more

convenient, to Montepulciano. Buses also run to nearby Tuscany villages like Siena and Pienza.

Parking in Montepulciano, Italy

Parking in Montepulciano can be a bit challenging due to its medieval layout and narrow streets, but there are several options available:

Public Parking Lots



Parking Duomo: Located near the Piazza Grande, this is a convenient option if you want to be close to the main attractions. It can fill up quickly, especially during peak seasons.

Parking San Donato: Situated just outside the city walls, this lot is a short walk to the historic center. It offers more spaces and is a good option if Parking Duomo is full.

Parking Porta al Prato: This is the largest parking area, located at the base of the hill. From here, you can take a free shuttle bus or enjoy a scenic walk up to the town center.

Street Parking

There are some blue-line street parking spaces available in Montepulciano. These are paid parking spots, and you'll need to use a parking meter to pay for your time. Make sure to display the ticket on your dashboard.

Parking Tips

- **Payment:** Most parking lots and street parking spots require payment. Look for parking meters or pay stations nearby. Some lots accept credit cards, while others may require coins.
- **Shuttle Service:** From larger parking lots like Porta al Prato, a shuttle bus service runs regularly to the historic center. This can be a convenient option, especially if you have luggage or mobility issues.
- **Early Arrival:** Arrive early in the day to secure a parking spot, especially during peak tourist seasons.
- **ZTL Zones:** Be aware of the ZTL (Zona a Traffico Limitato) zones in Montepulciano. These are restricted areas where only residents and authorized vehicles can enter. Pay attention to signs to avoid fines.
- **Parking Apps:** Consider using parking apps like EasyPark or MyCicero, which can help you find available spots and pay for parking digitally.

By planning ahead and considering these options, you can make your parking experience in Montepulciano smooth and stress-free. It is quite a workout, and it will be wise to have some water on hand in the summer months.

Montepulciano, Italy – Interesting Facts

Believe it or not, the event calendar is loaded here. It's like something special is always going on. For example, in spring, they have the Anteprima Vino Nobile event, which gives you a chance to taste the fresh wine. The Fiera delle Tre Berte is a festival held every year in May. The festival showcases regional agricultural produce, as well as agricultural machinery. In August, there is the Bravio delle Botti, a race through the oldest streets with flag wavers and historical dress. Additionally, the Montepulciano Run event is a multi-day running festival in the fall.

The Vino Nobile Di Montepulciano wine was known as the King of All Wines in the 17th century, and it's still very famous in Italy today. Thanks to its superb vineyards, the Montepulciano area is considered one of the finest winemaking regions in the world.

In front of the Sant'Agostino church stands a tower, and on top, you will see one of the most peculiar sights in Montepulciano: a statue of Pulcinella! Pulcinella is a traditional character or commedia dell'arte (an ancient form of Italian theater), and it is from Naples, so very much out of place here. It now stands tall on top of the tower, marking the hours passing on the big clock.

Pulcinella



The name of this town is highly debated since no one knows when the name “pulciano” was initially derived. However, the common (but still debated) consensus among most local experts is that this name comes from the Etruscan word, which means “Ruler.” So, adding the Monte of Italian with the name means “Mountain of the Ruler.”

Every town or city in Italy usually has only 2-3 churches, but Montepulciano has 29 churches for around 14,000 people. Cathedral di Santa Maria Assunta church is the most famous one. Tourists often visit it as it is listed as a national monument too.

The Palazzo Comunale di Montepulciano was designed by Michelozzo. The palace was built in an architectural style typical of Tuscany and Florence in particular. In fact, the design of Montepulciano's Palazzo Comunale is very similar to that of Palazzo della Signoria in Florence.

Generally, we all know Italy offers impressive food. But if you want to taste the best traditional food in Italy, Montepulciano is for you. It has the tastiest food, in our opinion, with all the authentic flavors of Italy. There are some good western restaurants as well, but we highly recommend the local traditional food of this town.

Tuscany has so many charming hilltop villages. One of our favorites was Monteriggioni. Check out our blog post to learn more [Castello Monteriggioni, Tuscany: A Visitor Guide](#)

Here are 19 of the best things to see and do in Montepulciano

default watermark



Cheese, in Montepulciano, Italy

These activities highlight the beauty, history, and culture of Montepulciano, making it a must-visit destination in Tuscany.

1. **Piazza Grande:** The heart of Montepulciano, this beautiful square is surrounded by historic buildings and offers a vibrant atmosphere with local shops and cafes.
2. **Wine Tours:** Join a guided tour of the local vineyards and wineries, where you can taste a variety of wines and learn about the region's viticulture.
3. **Palazzo Comunale:** Climb to the top of this medieval town hall for panoramic views of the Tuscan countryside and the town's charming rooftops.
4. **Cantina de' Ricci:** Explore this ancient wine cellar, where you can taste some of Montepulciano's famous Vino Nobile and learn about its rich winemaking history.
5. **Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta:** Marvel at the impressive architecture and serene interior of this Renaissance-era cathedral located in Piazza Grande.

default watermark



6. **San Biagio Church:** Just outside the town, this stunning 16th-century church is an architectural masterpiece set against the rolling Tuscan hills.
7. **Monte Amiata:** Take a scenic drive to this nearby mountain for hiking, skiing, and breathtaking views of the surrounding countryside.
8. **Torre di Pulcinella:** Look for the unique clock tower featuring a statue of Pulcinella, a character from the Italian commedia dell'arte, which chimes on the hour.



9. **Etruscan Tombs:** Discover the ancient history of the region by visiting these well-preserved tombs, offering a glimpse into the life of the Etruscans.

Another great destination in Italy is Cinque Terre. Checkout our blog post [Cinque Terre Visitor Guide and Photo Gallery](#)

10. **Montepulciano Lake:** Enjoy a peaceful day at this picturesque lake, perfect for picnics, bird-watching, and leisurely walks along the shore.
11. **Museo Civico:** Dive into Montepulciano's rich cultural heritage with a visit to this museum, housing art, artifacts, and historical exhibits.
12. **Piazza Michelozzo:** Wander through this charming square, home to the beautiful Palazzo Ricci and other notable Renaissance buildings.
13. **Cooking Classes:** Experience the flavors of Tuscany firsthand by joining a local cooking class, where you can learn to make traditional dishes.
14. **Via di Gracciano:** Stroll along this lively street, lined with artisan shops, boutiques, and gelaterias, perfect for a leisurely shopping experience.
15. **Tuscan Cuisine:** Indulge in the local flavors by dining at traditional restaurants. Don't miss trying Pici all'Aglione (hand-rolled pasta with garlic tomato sauce), Bistecca alla Fiorentina (Florentine steak), and Cantucci with Vin Santo (almond biscuits dipped in sweet wine).
16. **Palazzo Avignonesi:** Visit this elegant Renaissance palace, known for its stunning architecture and fascinating history.
17. **Watch the sunset** from the terraces at the top of town.



18. **Sanctuary of the Madonna di San Biagio:** The sanctuary was built on the site of an ancient church and is in the typical Tuscan style. It is circular with a large dome over a terrace. The façade is all white travertine and features two large bell towers.

19. **Wander in Wonder:** Our favorite part of visiting Montepulciano is simply strolling aimlessly through this incredible town. People watch, take photos, shop the charming stores, and take in the views.

The Most Attractive Feature



We believe one of the best reasons to visit is for its world-famous two wines – Vino Nobile di Montepulciano and Rosso di Montepulciano.

Vino Nobile Montepulciano (Noble Wine of Montepulciano) is primarily made from Sangiovese Grapes grown in the surrounding areas of Montepulciano. It's an age-worthy classical Tuscan red wine that improves gracefully over 5-10 years.

On the other hand, we also have Rosso di Montepulciano (Red of Montepulciano). It's a dry, fruity red wine often produced in Tuscan villages.

Both are available in every shop, but you can visit the wineries directly to taste them. Some famous wineries are Contucci Winery, De Ricci Winery, Ercolani Winery, and Talosa Winery. All these wineries follow the locals' traditions and use only native grapes of the region.

Apart from this, you can easily find some of the best bars on the main street, such as La Dolce Vita and Per Bacco, which offer a wide variety.

If you are indeed a wine lover and have some time to spend in this town, you should go outside the walled city. There are some incredible options, too, like Poliziano Winery, Avignonesi, and Palazzo Vecchio, which are not far from town by car.

Considering a trip to beautiful Italy? Check out [our Italy Travel Guide](#)

How to get around Montepulciano, Italy



Montepulciano is pretty small, so visitors can quickly move around without worry. The town has car-free pedestrian streets, so exploring must be done on foot. That is no issue since the streets here are picturesque and relatively wide.

The one warning we give you is the walk from the Porta al Prato to the Piazza Grande is continuously going uphill. The incline is not steep but can require some effort for those who struggle with hills and quickly get out of breath.

Dining in Montepulciano

Montepulciano has many good eating-out options, especially for its agricultural produce and local dishes. Most restaurants serve local Tuscan dishes, including pork, cheeses, and thick pasta called pici. Most restaurants also offer excellent-quality wines since the region is famous for its red wine.



If you wish, you can fill out the samples provided alone, but then you miss out on the local dishes and excellent pasta. It is also fun just to grab an Aperol Spritz at one of the sweet cafes and watch the people wander up and down the main street.

Some good places to try in Montepulciano are Ristoranta L'Oliveto, La Vineria di Montepulciano, Villa Cicolina, La Pasion, L'Altro Cantuccio, Le Logge Del Vignola, Ristorante La Grotta, and La Taverna di Fucile,

Shopping in Montepulciano, Italy

We found ourselves stopping in almost every store along the main street. We enjoyed cheese samples, tasted the wine, grabbed a snack, local artisan works, and much more. Here is a slide show of some of what we saw.



•

default watermark





•

default watermark



•

default watermark



•

default watermark



•

default watermark









•

default watermark





•

default watermark









When in Tuscany, another must-do hilltop city is Siena, Italy. [Check out our article here.](#)

Where to Stay in Montepulciano, Italy



Montepulciano is a tiny town, but because of the rise in agri-tourism, there are many reasonable accommodations in the area. Most of them have been converted from old villas and family homes. There are also a few good bed & breakfasts and vacation rentals. Most hotels are close to the town center, and rooms are available all year.

During all our visits, we never stayed in Montepulciano. We were based either in Florence or at a vacation rental property in the village of Montisi. Siena would be another popular base.

It is important to price out accommodations on various sites. [Expedia](#) is a US-based company, whereas [Booking.com](#) is Europe-based. Not all properties appear on both, so it is ideal to check both out. Our personal first choice is [Booking.com](#). If the establishment has a website, check the price there as well. Click the link below to check out hotels and vacation homes in the area. It may be just the motivation you need to start planning that next grand adventure.

[BOOK NOW](#)

When to Visit Montepulciano, Italy



Montepulciano, Italy Vineyards

The best time to visit Montepulciano, Italy, is typically during the spring (April to June) and fall (September to October). Here's why:

Spring (April to June):

- **Weather:** Pleasant temperatures, ranging from 15°C to 25°C (59°F to 77°F), with blooming flowers and lush green landscapes.
- **Events:** This period often features local festivals and events, such as the Cantine Aperte (Open Wine Cellars) in May, where wineries open their doors to visitors for tastings and tours.
- **Crowds:** Fewer tourists compared to the peak summer months, allowing for a more relaxed experience.

Fall (September to October):

- **Weather:** Mild temperatures, ranging from 13°C to 23°C (55°F to 73°F), with beautiful autumn colors in the vineyards and countryside.
- **Harvest Season:** It's grape harvest time, making it a fantastic period for wine lovers to visit and experience the local winemaking traditions.
- **Events:** In August, the Bravio delle Botti, a unique barrel-rolling race, takes place, and various food and wine festivals celebrate the season's bounty.

Other Considerations:

- **Summer (July to August):** The weather is hot, with temperatures often exceeding 30°C (86°F). It's also the peak tourist season, so the town can be crowded, and accommodations might be more expensive. However, this is when many cultural events and outdoor performances take place.
- **Winter (November to March):** Colder temperatures, ranging from 3°C to 11°C (37°F to 52°F).

While it's the off-season and less crowded, some attractions and restaurants may have limited hours or be closed. However, this can be a peaceful time to visit and enjoy the town's cozy atmosphere.

Final Thoughts



This little town had a charm and intimacy. It was as if an animated character was peeking around the corner to surprise you at every turn. Something felt different than the many other Tuscany towns we visited. It has its distinct vitality and personality. Even having visited three times, we would return in a heartbeat.

We believe this town is one of the most idyllic destinations for those who want to be swept away by the romance of Tuscany, Italy. It has the originality of the past, strategic location, fascinating culture, an abundance of wine, delicious cheese, and picture-postcard landscapes of the Tuscan countryside that will take your breath away. It is a photographer's dream.

I hope our love for this lovely town inspired you to visit and that you enjoy this guide. If you are already in or just returned from Montepulciano, let us know what you enjoyed the most.



Montepulciano Italy Photo Gallery

default watermark





default watermark



default watermark



default watermark





default watermark



default watermark



default watermark



default watermark





default watermark











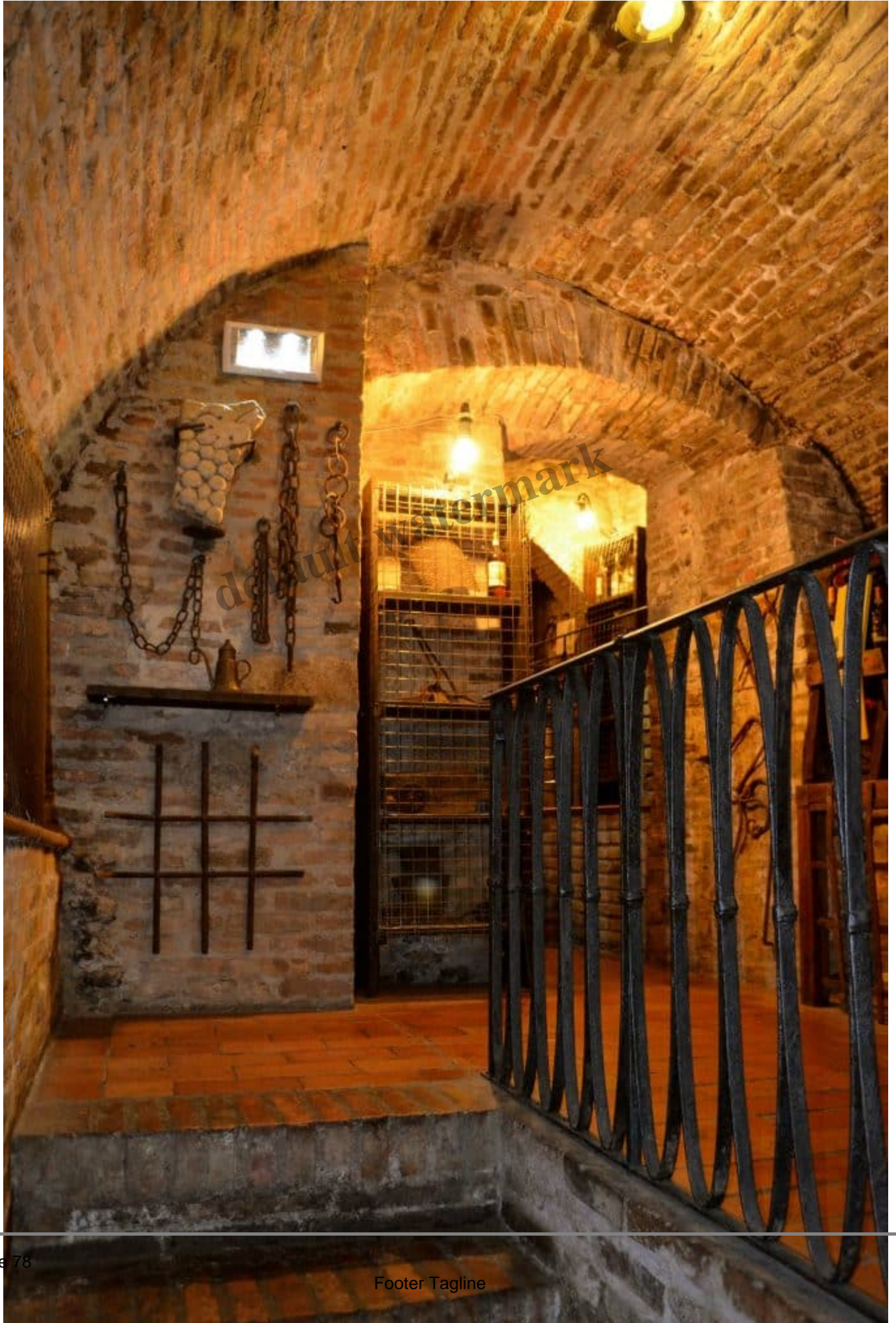




default watermark



default watermark





default watermark



default watermark





default watermark





default watermark





default watermark



default watermark

default watermark



default watermark





Check out our most recent blog posts



Tokyo Unleashed: Delighting in the Fun Side of Japan's Capital



[Cinque Terre: A Journey through Italy's Five Charming Villages](#)



[Exploring Trim Castle: History, Architecture, and Visitor Guide](#)



[Level8 Luggage Review: A New Standard in Travel Gear](#)



[Why Milk is the Perfect Hydration Boost for Plane Travel](#)



[Iceland's Surprising Natural Wonders: Beyond the Famous Tourist Attractions](#)



**Imperial Hotel Tokyo: A Fusion of Timeless Elegance,
Unparalleled Luxury and Historic Legacy**



Europe Wine Wonders: The Most Unexpected Places to Sip and Savor



Embracing Morocco's Customs and Traditions: A Guide for Visitors

Category

1. Destinations
2. Italy

Date Created

July 29, 2024

Author

contactwandererscompass-com