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A Week Tuscany by [Tripsketch](#)

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Instead of Florence, consider Lucca as an alternative base for a visit to Tuscany. Start your visit with an audioguide walking tour from the tourist office. Stop at the DaVinci exhibit highlighting the inventor's creativity and scientific acumen.

Lucca is a perfect base from which to explore Tuscany. Centred between the cultural highlights of Florence and the sea at ViaReggio, few cities or sights are more than an hour or two away. Any visitor to the region must visit Pisa, Siena, Florence and the Cinque Terre. Pisa is famous for its leaning tower and cathedral, and little else, so a half day with an early morning start to ensure a visit to the Leaning Tower will suffice. Siena warrants at least two days; enjoy its spectacular cobblestoned streets, houses suffused with a perpetual red glow from the sunlight, and an unusual semicircular square, Il Campo where the famed horse races take place. Don't miss the beautiful Cathedral.

Florence is, in many ways, more dingy and seedy than other Italian cities, but its glorious history of art and architecture, not to mention its role as Italy's capital prior to the Risorgimento, or true unification of Italy when Rome became the Capital, make it an important stop on any trip to this region. Because of its multiple attractions, using a personal guide makes the day more enjoyable. It's the quickest way to see the major monuments; visit the Academia Dell Arte to see Michelangelo's David and the Uffizi Museum without the long wait for tickets. Also of interest is the Church of Santa Maria de Croce, where the famous such as Michelangelo, Macchiavelli and Galileo are buried. The leather guild is still housed around the Church, watch leather artisans at work and shop for unique items.

Finally, no trip to Tuscany is complete without a trip to the Cinque Terre, a national park hugging the coastline northwest of Lucca and warranting a week's visit in its own right. Affected by the recent rains, this area is not quite so accessible but will come back. A hiking path links 5 little hillside coastal towns, and it is a glorious place to get some real exercise and take in spectacular views without leaving the civilized world of good coffee shops and restaurants.

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a <http://tripsketch.com/page?stripsketch#!Id1499&NameLucca&TypeCity&viewAttraction>

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