

Magia ring

→ La Magia

→ Quarrata

Length: 15 km

Time needed for the journey alone: 4h 30'

Time needed considering the stops: 5h 30'

Detailed description

The route starts from the intersection of paths that is located immediately below the hill where the Torre di Sant'Alluccio rises, detaching itself from the main itinerary of the Medici Route. Next to the boundary stone a wide track branches off in the N-NE direction that points towards Spazzavento and the fortress of Carmignano (RET itinerary) to fork almost immediately: on the right uphill continue to Bacchereto while on the left downhill slightly goes to Spazzavento. Take this last direction, immediately undergo one of the large Montalbano power lines and continue downhill passing through a shady flat stretch, inside the forest on the northern side, consisting of young chestnut trees, oaks and a few pines. Leave the wood with a fleeting view to the right of Florence, and, in the background, the long ridge of Pratomagno, while even further to the right you can see the white Medici Villa of Artimino, the three hills of Roveta and, in the background, the Florentine Chianti. Another flat stretch follows, still in the woods; you then pass the intersection with the small road that on the left leads to the nearby repeater (of which you can hear the hum of the fans) and begin to descend with the wide track that shows outcrops of boulder, the rock of which the structure of Montalbano is deeply made.

At the next curve to the right (15') a first view opens up which, on clear days, is of a certain impression due to the vastness of the territory it embraces: from Chianti (to the east) to Abetone (to the west), from Florence to Pistoia. Immediately below lies the town of Quarrata with the Villa la Magia at its western end, on a slight prominence. Continue on the forest road, passing a sharp left curve and a series of views that alternate with less open sections. Thus, you definitively leave the wood where the view becomes very broad again and where the cultivated fields take the place of the arboreal vegetation; here there is also the lithological contact between the boulder and the formation of sillane which also justifies the different water sources present in the area. Immediately after, on the right, the evocative ruins of the Medici Barco Reale wall anticipate the arrival at Midolla farmhouse (30').

At the height of the accommodation facility, right in front of the utility meters, a visible flat track branches off to the left and enters the woods and also runs alongside a field of olive trees. Take this and continue flat along an old stone wall that serves as a terrace for the overhanging field and shortly afterwards the view opens on Pistoia plain with the city of Pistoia in the background, immediately under the Apennine reliefs on the right which are connected to those of Pistoia Acquerino. In the foreground you can see the town of Quarrata and, on the left, the gentle hills on which Villa la Magia lies, with the pertinent wood behind it. Return to the wood characterized by chestnut, oak and pine trees, always continuing in evenness and then passing an isolated house and shortly after reaching the spring of Bettina (45'). A sign warns that the water is not controlled even if it is drunk by everyone. The spring, as above mentioned, originates from the lithological contact present around 320-350 meters above sea level. on the

whole north side of Montalbano, also responsible for a whole series of water outcrops located at this altitude up to Chiuso, near Verghereto. Continue on the shady road and shortly after pass a picnic area organized by the Municipality of Quarrata a few years ago, with another spring. A fence to the right of the track slightly anticipates the arrival on the asphalt: you are near Hotel il Rifugio (50').

Continue down the road that shows the ancient name on a sign (Via Sanbusceto), present in the Leopold cartography of the early nineteenth century, different from the one with which it is named on satellite maps (Via Leonardo da Vinci). Pass an intersection on the right for Baugiano, pass a point that offers a view of the underlying Quarrata, 'split' by Via Montalbano which runs straight towards the state road 67, on Prato plain and its city, the Medici Cascine with its park and Calvana and Morello mountains. Shortly after you arrive at a crossroads on a narrow curve to the right, near a couple of houses, one of which (Rocca Maestrino) shows, in addition to the microtoponym, also in the forms and walls the ancient military origin (1h). Turn right and, as soon as you pass the entrance gate of this house, a track departs from it which descends into the olive groves below and which you follow. Numerous outcrops of alberese stone testify that the lithological contact mentioned above has given way to the rock that is under the boulder (which forms the entire upper part of Montalbano); continue steeply downhill between fields of very beautiful and well-kept terraced olive trees and quickly arrive at a small group of houses where the paved road begins. You are in Buriano, a hamlet of Quarrata (1h 10'). You pass a roadside shrine and immediately afterwards you have to pay attention to the stairs that, on the right, descend to the street level below that you cross going to take the faint track in the field of olive trees right in front of you, which continues slightly downhill alongside of a property wall. A few meters later leave the small road because it is invaded by vegetation and complete the last meters among the olive trees, pointing to the church already visible in front of you where you arrive almost immediately (1h 20').

The church faces NW and from the square in front of the facade it dominates the entire plain below. From the church square, the municipal road resumes in the opposite direction to that of arrival, that is, moving towards Tacinaia. Go down to the stream below along a stone wall, go up and pass the junction with Via Fissa (road tabernacle) after which the gentle climb continues for another short stretch allowing you to pass Sasso Regino farmhouse; go down a slope and pass an intersection with a private by-pass where you continue straight ahead going over a small bridge and a new intersection where you keep the left flat to get to the small village of Tacinaia (1h 30'). Continue steeply downhill into a beautiful terraced olive grove up to a crossroads with a tabernacle where you continue straight ahead to come to flank a large restored house, at the end of whose enclosure wall the road makes a sharp left downhill curve. You are in Pollaiolo, where the cadastral cartography of the early nineteenth century shows the presence of some buildings going to water (mills) that exploited the consistent fall that Tacinaia river makes between the homonymous village and this point (about 100 meters in altitude) and also that of the river that comes from the church of Buriano and that joins the other shortly after.

Here, on the outside of the curve, a downhill road branches off between the walls: it is the old Via Burianese that immediately crosses a stream that descends from Tacinaia hill. The old road continues on the other bank, touching a long disused wash house and half-submerged by vegetation and begins to climb, leaving a branch on the left and entering a terraced olive grove typical of Quarrata area. In this case, the terraces in alberese stone show a much worse state of conservation than those along Via Tacinaia. At the intersection that is located, continue

straight ahead, ignoring the detour to the right and heading towards the visible house a little further ahead that you pass by passing it. Another short climb takes you to a crossroads where the asphalted road begins: on the right, slightly uphill, you reach the visible rural village of Le Piagge, instead continue straight ahead passing shortly after next to a couple of houses with a large wall in stone in front, while on the left lies the town of Quarrata (now close) and behind, the hill of Villa la Magia with its wood and in the background Pistoia and the Apennines that overlook it. You come to a new intersection characterized by a large and isolated cypress tree (2h 05') where you continue straight uphill until you flank a double row of cypresses alongside the road. At the end of this row you are on the top of a hillock characterized by the presence of a crossroads: go straight on towards Tizzana, and on the right you immediately arrive at the houses of Poggio Casagli. Instead turn left, right next to the last cypress, taking a faint track (it is always the old Via Burianese) that goes straight down among the olive trees and leads quickly to a house that you pass to continue along the dirt road that serves it and which leads quickly to pass a large isolated cypress tree (note the perfect shape) and reach the intersection with the asphalted road (Via dei Ronchi), with the house on the corner. You are in Giachi area. Turn right and you will soon reach a new intersection (with Via di San Lorenzo) (2h 30') where you keep left and immediately descend into the urbanized plan continuing to the right, passing the intersection with Via Salvator Allende and arriving at Fosso delle Mulina. Here, next to the ancient road tabernacle that housed the old Via Burianese and San Lorenzo in the early nineteenth century, turn right and enter the recent cycle-pedestrian path created by the Municipality of Quarrata that runs alongside Fosso delle Mulina (mill's ditch). Following the track you pass, in order: two city streets, a bridle on the watercourse and some lateral detours accessible via small brick bridges. You then come to cross Via Roma, which at the beginning of the nineteenth century was the "Via vecchia Fiorentina" (2h 45') where you turn left following the aforementioned road which, in a hundred meters, leads to the main square of Quarrata (Piazza Risorgimento) with a monument by Agenore Fabbri in memory of the fallen of all wars, with a strong emotional impact, located at the point where the focal point of the very long Viale Montalbano converges. Pass the square and take Via Pistoia on the opposite side (at the beginning of the nineteenth century it was the old Via Fiorentina that led to Pistoia) continuing straight and thus crossing Via delle Libertà (on the left) and also a small bridge over Farnio stream which comes from the nearby artificial lake (extended for about 3 hectares). Immediately after the curve to the right that the road makes, turn left into a narrow road between two old columns that betray the function of the entrance that this route must have once had. It flanks a perfect example of a farmhouse, complete with a granary on the upper floor and a large window for accessing the harvested wheat, and after a few meters you take the path that gently climbs the side of the hill towards Villa la Magia which you reach quickly (3h 05'). The vivid contrast between the noise of the traffic of the city center and the peace and silence that reign in front of the villa, surrounded by the cereal crops in front and by the forest at the back, helps to create moments of intense suggestion in the walker, who suddenly finds himself in a pleasant place rich in history, facing the wooded ridge of Montalbano.

Continue on the small road that crosses the hill with an exhibition of land art and two stone columns in travertine to signify the old entrance to the part in front of the villa, continuing with a long straight at the edge of the wood that leads to a restored farmhouse where you turn sharply to the left taking the dirt track that descends gently and continues alongside a large brick wall. This shows artifacts that are parts of a clear hydraulic matrix, until it crosses the paved road (Via Boschetti) in Case Ferretti (3h 25').

Continue straight to the next crossroads, starting along Via del Sole characterized by a row of

modern and anonymous villas that ends with the end of the asphalt. Here the road becomes rural, betraying its ancient function as evidenced by the olive trees and the plants of the scrub that surround it until you reach a new house that you leave to the right continuing on asphalt in a slight slope up to a crossroads in Leano (3h 40'): keep left and start walking along the street of the same name, touching other isolated houses in the countryside located on the hilly ridge that divides two small rivers (Buscione torrent on the right and the nameless one that flows into the visible lake on the left). Some of these houses are located on the top of the hill in a position that certainly has to be traced back in time. The view opens onto the steep and wooded Monte Fiore and the ridge of Montalbano which joins this summit to the other places further to SE, all characterized by repeaters. Note the clear line of junction between the cultivated fields and the forest above which runs around 300 meters asl. and which also shows a marked change in slope, a sign of another change (occult in this case), namely the lithological one between the formation of sillano (especially alberese stone) and the boulder of the upper part of Montalbano, as mentioned above. A short descent and a shady stretch between the houses anticipate a new crossroads: you are in Prunaie area (3h 55').

Keep to the left and immediately after, at the height of a large poplar, left again on the flat, skirting a small vineyard (on the left) and two isolated cypresses (on the right) and then a partially renovated house (on the left). Cross the small ditch that further downstream enters the artificial lake, skirt a vineyard and begin to climb by turning right. Pass a stretch where a nice pavement emerges, perhaps to refer to the ancient road system of the area, while on the left appears a fleeting view of the north-eastern end of Pistoia with the recognizable sky line of the Triangle by the architect Savioli, the most discussed of all the buildings that make up the popular housing complex of Fornaci, born in the eighties of the last century. A short climb leads to an intersection with the asphalt road (4h 10') where you turn right to immediately reach the scattered houses of Lucciano and to a new intersection: keep right uphill (Via per il Monte) and immediately reach the crossroads then continue straight ahead in a steep climb on a narrow asphalted road. Skirt the houses to continue on a country lane, the remnant of an ancient road, as evidenced by the repeated aedicules placed on the walls of the houses that flank the lane. Return to the paved road you left shortly before and continue uphill while the view of Pistoia plain widens as does that of the clearly visible hills (Pistoia Apennines and Pistoia-Prato Acquerino) and the conurbation of the plain below. At the new crossroads, continue straight, avoiding taking both Via delle Poggiole (on the right) and Via del Gozio (on the left) (4h 25'), continuing to walk among the few houses that become more and more sparse as the forest approaches. At the umpteenth intersection with a black metal cross in the middle, keep to the right pointing towards the visible house not far away that you pass and do the same with the next one.

Enter the wood of Monte Fiore where the climb is immediately sustained (on average the northern side of Monte Fiore has a gradient of almost 30%) and where, fortunately, some short stretches where it calms down allow you to pull the breath. Continue to climb in a very cool and humid landscape up to a hairpin bend that the track makes to the right (4h 45') which is followed almost immediately by another to the left where you ignore the deviation that on the outside of the latter continues to straight ahead. Continue to climb even if in a less sustained way and soon you arrive at the saddle located between Monte Fiore and Poggio Papinta, where the track enters a crossroads with an asphalted road that comes from the southern slope of Montalbano and another (barred) that goes up to the repeaters of Monte Fiore (5h). Turn left following the directions for Romea Strata and starting to go uphill Via Pali di Matteo; shortly afterwards leave the detour that goes to the left, continuing straight uphill and shortly

after starting to flank a long stretch of the Medici Barco Reale wall that climbed to the top of Monte Fiore, as evidenced by the Leopold cadastral maps of the early nineteenth century. Pass a slight descent and come to flank an abandoned restaurant with swimming pool (!), a real insult to common sense, where the wide track makes a curve to the right that you follow (5h 15'), ignoring the deviation to the left. Follow the wide ridge road with white/red CAI signs, leave off a detour to the right that goes down to Porciano and instead keep to the left, always following the signs for Romea Strata, immediately facing a slightly uphill right-hand bend. An uphill stretch follows where extended slabs of boulder emerge that anticipate the detour to the right for Sasso di Pietra (5h 30').

At this point you return to the main path of the Medici Route.
