

3 STAGE

→ Bacchereto

→ Vinci

Length: 18 km

Time needed for the journey alone: 6h 40'

Time needed considering the stops: 8h

Detailed description

From Bacchereto resume the route already used to descend from Pietramarina and return to the saddle located on the ridge where several paths cross (2h).

Once on the asphalted service road, turn right and start along the forest road which, on the flat, branches off alongside the asphalted road that goes up to the repeaters. In order, you pass a curve to the left with a large oak and a small power line (go under it) and then enter a beautiful holm oak forest made up of adult specimens that cover the steep south-western slope of Poggio Ciliegio. The holm oak wood is followed by an ugly stretch with the coppiced wood and the relative service roads to the cut that branch off both uphill and downhill. You arrive at a curve to the right on the flat with a large specimen of holm oak placed on the outside that leads back into the wood with a slight descent followed by a wide curve to the left on the flat, at the end of which you arrive at a small plateau, with a young holm oak in the center. The plateau was recently used by mechanical vehicles that cut the wood cover (2h 30'). Here several traces converge: take the path that, on the right, not marked, climbs in a decisive way on the southern side of the Cupolino, the highest peak of Montalbano (640.5 masl) until you reach the watershed ridge, just below the summit (2h 50').

Also in this point different paths cross: to the right you go back towards Pietramarina using the ridge path; on the left you go in the direction of Torre di Sant'Alluccio (your direction), while beyond this well-trodden path there is a small road that leads to the top of the Cupolino. The summit is a bit shabby, hosting the usual repeaters and being covered by a sparse and cut forest, however enough to almost completely hide the view of the plain between Seano and Quarrata. Anyway, those wishing to climb it can take the small road that takes you there in a few minutes and then descend on the other side via the "Cupola FR1" path for bikers which almost immediately returns to the main route. For those wishing to stay on this one, once you come out on the ridge, turn left following the signs for Torre di Sant'Alluccio. A short flat stretch of the little road shows beautiful specimens of oak placed all in a row on the edge of the path; this section immediately anticipates a curve to the right with a crossroads to the left for Santa Lucia - Faltognano, which you neglect, continuing on the flat until you reach Torre di Sant'Alluccio (3h 15'). It is a locality of Montalbano pass of ancient origin, located between the summit of the mountain and Sasso Regina and a meeting place for the administrative borders of Quarrata, Carmignano and Vinci and therefore of the former provinces of Pistoia, Prato and Florence. Here, in fact, many paths converge: on the right, in your direction of travel, a wide flat road starts which a few tens of meters later divides further into two sections that lead to Spazzavento (the one on the left) and Bacchereto (the one on the right). On the left (almost to go back), the visible track begins that leads to Santa Lucia and Vinci while straight ahead you continue in your direction (North-West). Of particular importance are two stones still present

on the plateau (one right in front of the deviation that goes up to the tower and the repeaters) to indicate the administrative boundaries. Continue straight ahead, almost immediately overcoming the short detour to the right for the ruin, which has taken the place of the tower, and the lawn right under the repeaters. Shortly after you meet the crossroads for Sasso Regino spring (on the right), which you neglect, continuing slightly uphill followed by a descent with a view of Monte Fiore, one of the northernmost peaks of Montalbano, in the Middle Ages the site of a very powerful castle of Carmignano community. Today it houses yet another repeater. At the bottom of the descent you arrive at a new intersection (3h 35') where on the left you go towards the spring of Romito-Santa Lucia-Vinci, while straight ahead you continue on the ridge in a false plane. Continue in the latter direction, passing some centuries-old chestnut trees and letting go of a detour to the left without indications to immediately reach the bottom of a short descent where the main road is held (on the left), which immediately leads to a new intersection with an asphalted road. (3h 40').

Straight up enters Via le Croci, the carriage road that leads to Anchiano and Vinci, while on the right the forest road slightly climbs the southern slope of Poggio il Casino, towards San Baronto pass. Continue on the forest road that climbs slightly and almost immediately you meet a deviation to be overlooked which, on a tight curve to the right, comes from the left. Shortly after (4h) you arrive at another similar intersection, with a small road that also comes from the left; continue straight ahead following the white/red signs. A flat stretch, two other crossroads with side deviations to be omitted and a slight descent, anticipate a further crossroads where a forest road branches off to the left that leads to Lamporecchio and Porciano (signs); you also omit this detour by staying on the track in the direction of Casa di Monte (sign) to arrive quickly at the point where you turn left taking the narrow path that enters the chestnut wood on the left and leads to Sasso di Pietra (sign) in a few minutes on the flat. You are on the top of Poggio Campo di Baldo (522 masl), one of the peaks that form the north-western Montalbano ridge (4h 10').

Go back along the same path up to the ridge road where you turn right and arrive again at the crossroads with the signs for Lamporecchio and Porciano which, this time, you follow until almost immediately arriving at an intersection with a similar forest road to the one you are traveling on: here you turn left and continue on a false plain until you pass a large power line (4h 20') after which the downhill stretch that will take you to the little village of Fornello begins. A few tens of meters after the power line, at a point where large slabs of boulder emerge and another path arrives from the left, you have to pay attention because on the sides of the wide forest road you are walking along you can see the remains of the ancient wall of the Medicean Barco that go into the woods. Shortly after, you reach a point characterized by a solitary cypress tree at the foot of which two large boulders stand out, which serve as an observation point for the panorama towards the South-East: you can see the two towns of Empoli and (on the left and partially covered by the Montalbano) Montelupo, with behind the hills that rise to Montespertoli along the Turbone valley. In the background, in the distance, the long ridge that separates Valdelsa from Valdera with the reliefs of the Metalliferous Hills (Cornate di Gerfalco and Poggio di Montieri) behind it. Continue straight on to descend; the panorama widens to the right on Fucecchio Marshes with Monte Serra and the Apuan Alps behind you, then, right in front of you, the Valdarno below and in the background - on clear days - the cranes of Livorno port. Continuing to descend, the landscape widens more and more: on the left, very close, on a ridge parallel to the one you are traveling on just beyond Burrino gorge, the Church of Sant'Amato appears clearly visible; on the right, in addition to the above, you can now see the clearly evident 'dome' of Monsummano, the hill of Montevettolini with the Medici Villa

and, closer, the Castle of Larciano. At the point where the track shows a deviation to the right downhill, flanked by three pine trees (4h 40'), turn and descend a few tens of meters steeply between old terraces covered by woods. As soon as this gives way to an olive grove, you can see on the right a sort of small stone 'dome', with a circular plan, equipped with an entrance and built from stones subsequently projecting with a tholos-like roof. It is an artifact whose functions are still unknown to scholars today (small furnace?), present in several examples in the Leporaia-Fornello area. Go back to the main track where you turn right continuing to descend with the view that also widens to Vinci with the castle (your goal) and to the domed profile of the highest point of Montalbano, which takes its name from this shape (the Dome/Cupola). Shortly after you meet a fence that you flank until you come out on a white road right in front of a small brightly colored house (4h 50').

Follow the cart track to the left (note on the right, among the olive trees, another of the enigmatic artifacts) and after 50 meters on the right among the olive trees follow a downhill road. The intersection is marked by the presence of a house with a wooden shed alongside. Continue to descend and quickly arrive at Fornello di Sopra, in a clearing between the houses where you keep to the left to go down on the provincial road right near a small fountain (5h 05'). Continue on the main road towards the intersection in front of you, a few meters away, and here take a left downhill towards Orbignano and Lamporecchio. Go down among the few houses in Fornello, pass a small tabernacle and also the cemetery of the Church of Santa Maria Assunta in Orbignano. You immediately reach the small church surrounded by cypresses (5h 25').

Pass the church and at the Enel pole, turn left among the olive trees, taking the ancient Via Orbignanese which led to Vinci, in perfectly preserved cobblestones. Descend steeply among the olive trees to the underlying ditch that has served as a community border for several centuries, as evidenced by the stone well planted in the ground near the waterway and the house (former mill). Cross the stream and take the small road that climbs up on the opposite side and which quickly leads to an ancient tabernacle dated 1848, demonstrating how old the path you are using is. Continue straight, touching a border network with a house to reach an intersection on asphalt. Here go straight (Via Orbignanese) ignoring the deviation to the left uphill to Tigliano, continue in a landscape made of olive trees and old stone terraces, go down a descent until you reach a small bridge (5h 41') where you continue straight uphill. At the intersection you meet immediately after, continue straight ahead and at the next one, follow the asphalt road that bends to the right and begins to descend. At the intersection immediately after, continue downhill to the left, ignoring the deviation to the right (Via Magrina). Then descend decisively into another small valley until you reach the little bridge very similar to the one already passed (6h 05').

Immediately upstream of this, on the left orographic bank of the small stream, you can see old stone artifacts; these are hydraulic works belonging to the many mills that marked this (and all the others) watercourse and which remained active until the second postwar period. Then take the dirt road that runs along the river in the direction of Burra farmhouse; the property you immediately encounter is an old mill with the old collection basin, now underground, still recognizable. In front of the semi-abandoned building, in the course of the water, there is a beautiful stone dike with an old millstone inserted in the masonry as evidence of the building's past use. Continue on the small road in the direction of Burra (a small path on the left that slips into the shore leads to another old stone dike much higher than the previous one). Once you arrive at the house, turn left towards the watercourse aiming for the large holm oak that can be seen on the edge. Reached the edge of the field continue parallel to this to quickly reach the

vegetable gardens belonging to the next house that you pass by entering the paved road and turning left. Quickly reach a small bridge (6h 25').

Ignore the detour to the right before the bridge and continue on even level approaching the provincial road. Immediately before this, at a house, turn left into Via Mazzantino, ignoring the detour to the right over a small bridge. Pass in front of the house to go and take the track that starts at the point between the corner of the house and the hut. Then enter the wood following itinerary 12C (marked) which quickly leads you to other houses where you meet the asphalt again: here turn right and immediately left (following itinerary 12B-C) in the direction of Vinci. Pass by a house and continue in the fields until you quickly arrive at another house located just below the walls of Vinci. Here turn right and go up briefly to then find a stairway on the left that you follow and that leads right below near the church and castle of Vinci (6h 40').
