

The ruins of Badia di San Michele alle formiche

Text by Filippo Brancoli, Photos by "La Rivista del Trekking" archives

Località di partenza:

Regione Toscana, Provincia di Pisa, Pomarance, Frazione Montecerboli

Tipo di itinerario:

a piedi

Fondo stradale:

Misto

Difficoltà a piedi:

Escursionistica

Dislivello in salita (m):

205 m

Dislivello in discesa (m):

205 m

Tempo (hh:mm):

3:00

Periodo consigliato:

All seasons

Cartografia:

SELCA, Alta Val di Cecina ? trekkers and tourist map, scale 1:50 000 alternatively SELCA , GEOSITI , Alta Val di Cecina, scale 1:50 000

Segnavia:

red

Uffici informazioni:

For further informations on Costa Toscana:

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This itinerary, that combines attractive scenery with the archaeological ruins of an ancient hermitage, starts just outside the village of Montecerboli, 100 meters after the signpost to the belvedere, in a northerly direction. Here we continue along an asphalt road following the signs for S. Ippolito, climbing slightly and with the Pomarance valley below to our right. We continue without taking any turning until we arrive at a detour marked with signs for geothermal wells: we go straight on, in the direction of wells 122 and 164. Just after leaving the detour we keep to the right, walking along a dirt road that climbs slightly. We pass a villa on our right



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and come out again on a small asphalt road with clear signs to the hermitage of San Michele alle formiche. We continue along this descent until we see, on our right, the tower of Gabbro power station. The scenery has gentle hills full of olive groves and, after passing a farm, we can admire the crag towards which we are walking, with the ruins of the hermitage on its peak. We climb up and down until we approach the farm of le Vignacce which we pass, keeping it to our left. We now arrive at a crossroads, where the only road up points us to the road we must take to reach the abbey. Just after taking the path we come out onto a parapet where, continuing to climb, we can stop to rest near an area equipped with picnic tables and benches. There is also a small cypress tree marked in red indicating the direction to take to reach the summit. The path now climbs steeply, but it is not too demanding and soon brings us to the ruins. The hermitage, which was built in the XIV century, enjoyed a certain notoriety in the past, partly due to the popular spa of Bagni () di San Michele, down in the valley. In the XIX century the abbey fell into ruins with only one hermit remaining to act as custodian. We can still see some of the ruins of the building, which from up high, enjoys an exceptional view, dominating the whole of the surrounding area. We return along the same path until we come to the crossroad, with signs for San Michele, which we passed on our way up. Here we turn left, taking the detour down through the woods. We pass a spring and at the next crossroads turn left, climbing slightly. The path shows obvious signs of a dry stream and continues towards the valley floor. Here we arrive at a second crossroads, still descending, while alongside us we can see a little stream that we meet after a sharp bend. We cross this and the second stream shortly afterwards arriving near Bagni di San Michele, the ancient spa we just mentioned. Passing under a little stone bridge we continue climbing in the direction of the road that we take. We continue walking along the last section of our route which in a quarter of an hour brings us to our starting point.



This itinerary is part of a collection that the magazine "Trekking", together with the APT (Provincial Tourist Authority) of the Tuscan Coast, has dedicated to the most beautiful trekking routes in this area. A series of itineraries that will help you discover lovely places and will introduce you to a district that has great environmental and cultural appeal.