

THE SURROUNDING AREA AND THE VIA FRANCIGENA

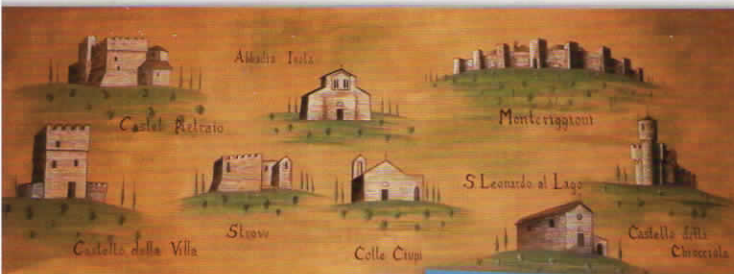
The townlands of Monteriggioni, with the walled town as their capital, cover an area of about 100 Km² directly to the north of Siena, full of woods, hills, vineyards and olive groves, dotted here and there with often very ancient settlements.

There are many vestiges of the past, among which the **former Abbey of Abbadia Isola**, with its 12th Century church, the 13th century **Hermitage of San Leonardo al Lago** and the castles of **La Chiocciola** and **Castiglion Ghinibaldi** are worthy of note.

The townlands also take in the western slopes of the Montagnola Senese, a large area of unspoiled nature that has been declared a Site of Community Importance (SCI).

The area is criss-crossed by a network of trails, including the Via Francigena, which can be travelled on foot, bicycle or on horse-back.

An ancient pilgrim route leading from Northern Europe to Rome, the **Via Francigena** passes by the Castle of Monteriggioni, which is also a stop-off on the present-day Ministry of Culture route between San Gimignano and Siena.



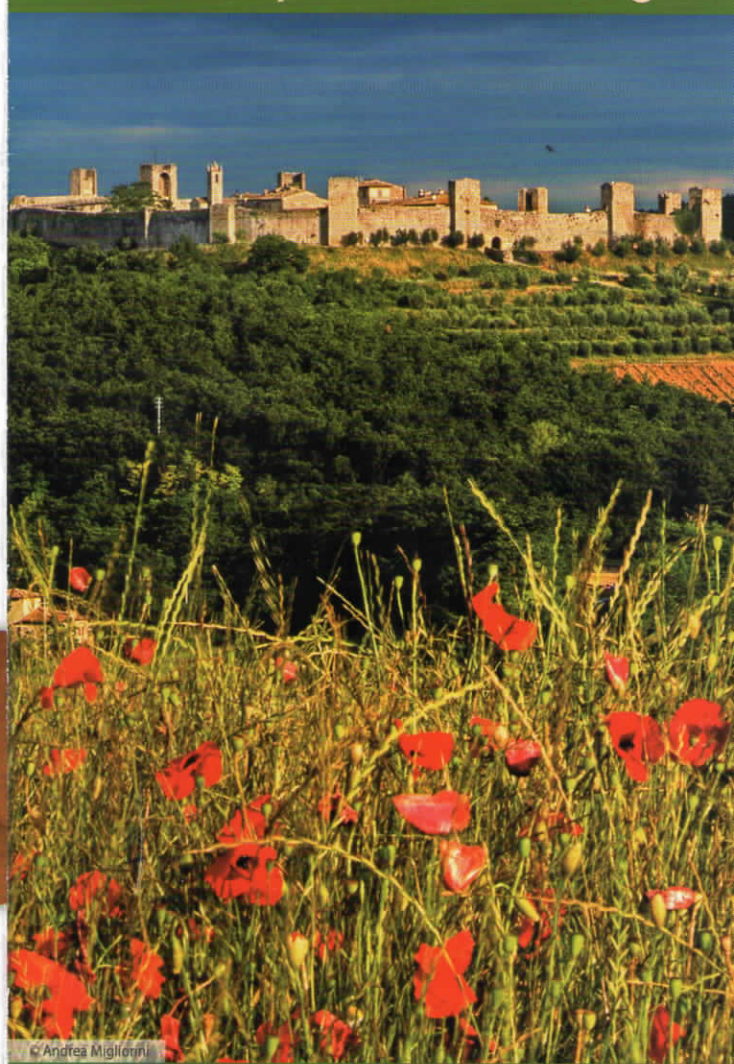
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MONTERIGGIONI

Gateway to the Middle Ages



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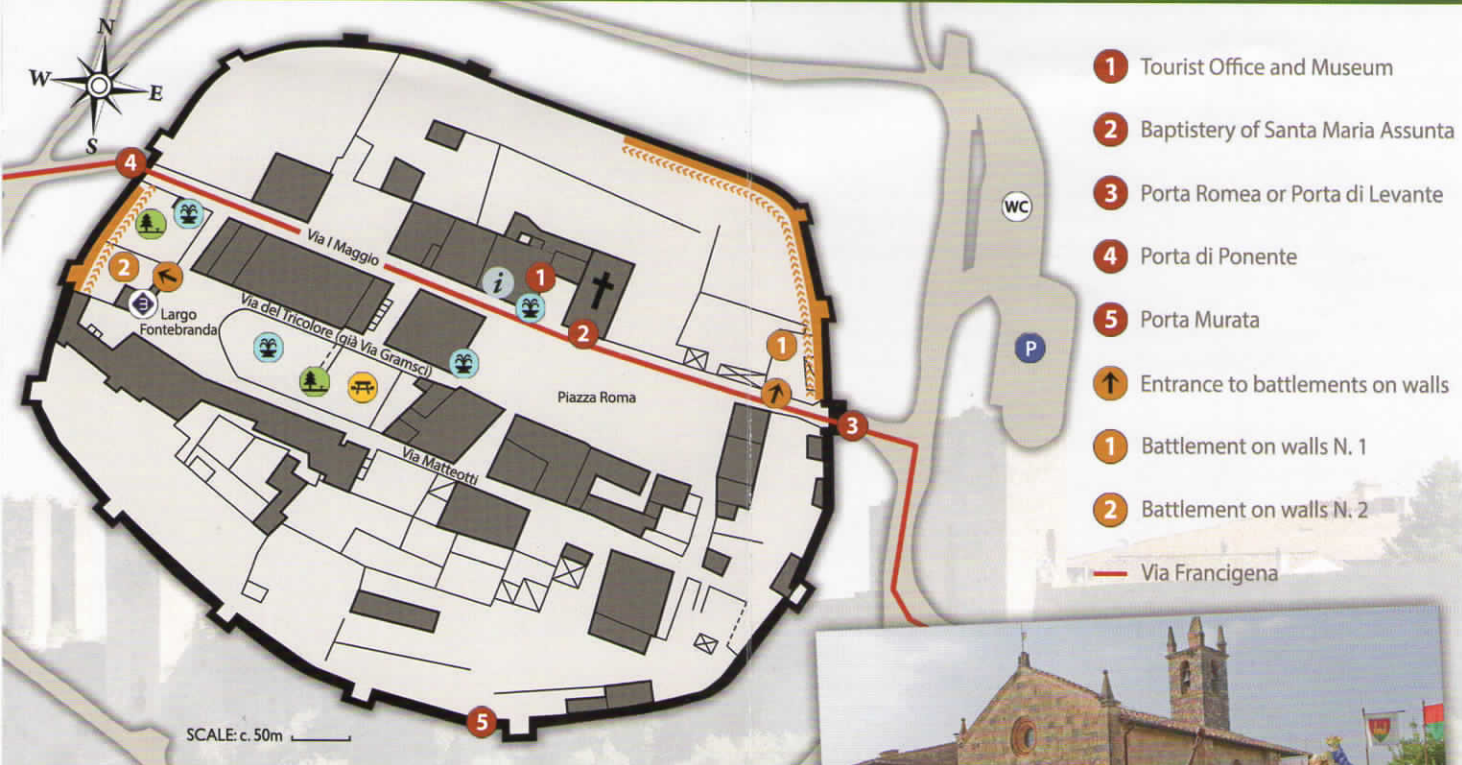
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Monteriggioni



THE CASTLE OF MONTERIGGIONI AND THE MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL



Located in central Tuscany, the Castle of Monteriggioni was built by the Republic of Siena at the beginning of the 13th Century in order to defend its southern border against Florence.

The town walls date from that time. With their **impressive towers**, they feature in Dante's Divine Comedy ([...] *Because as on its circular parapets / Montereggione crowns itself with towers, / E'en thus the margin which surrounds the well / With one half of their bodies turreted / The horrible giants* [...] Inf., XXXI, 40-44).

The main sights inside the town are the **Church of Santa Maria Assunta** (13th Century), the battlements on the town walls and the small **'Monteriggioni in Arme' museum**, which uses models, panels and life-size armours that can even be tried on to offer amusing insight into the glorious military past of the town.

Every year in the month of July, the magic atmosphere of the Middle Ages comes alive in Monteriggioni in the form of an atmospheric Medieval Festival, by now one of the most eagerly awaited events of the Tuscan summer.

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