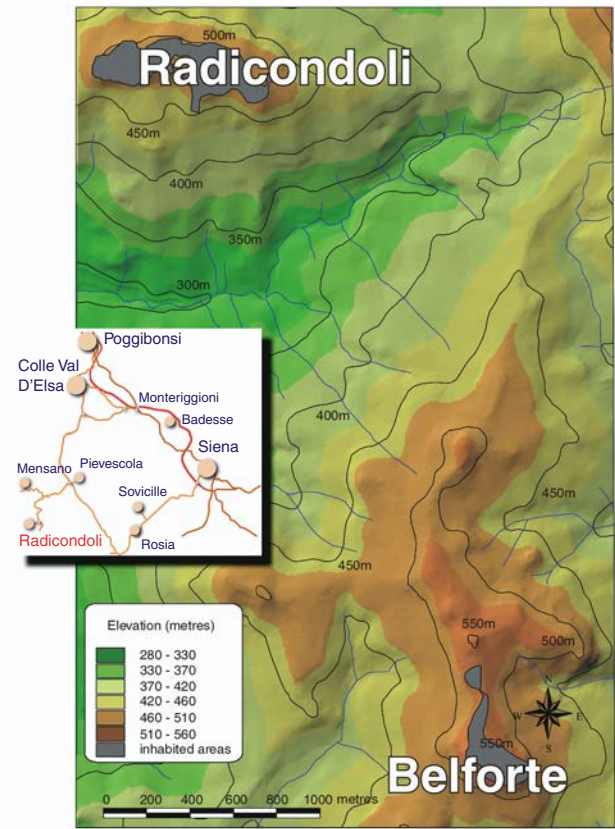


Walks around Radicondoli and Belforte

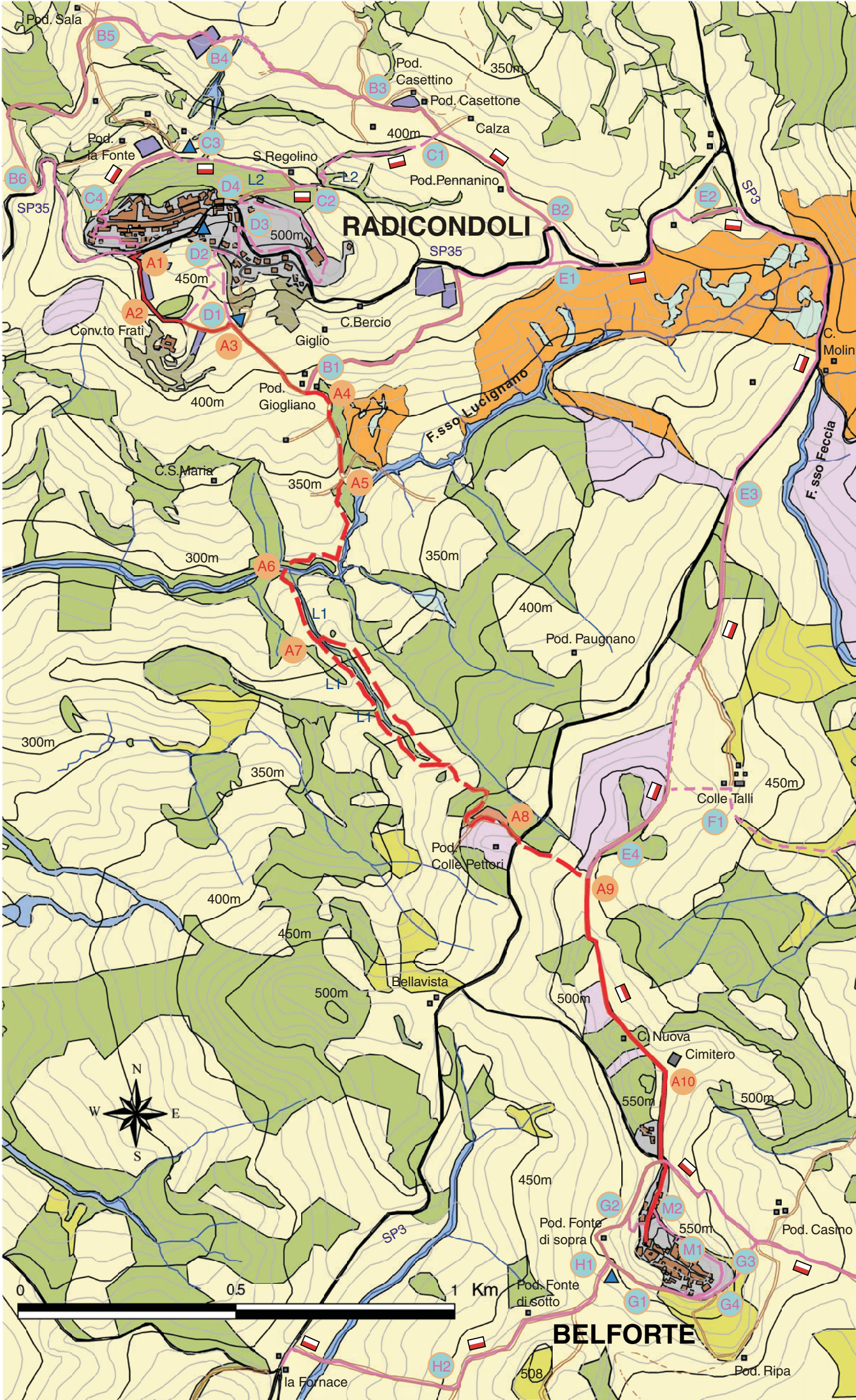
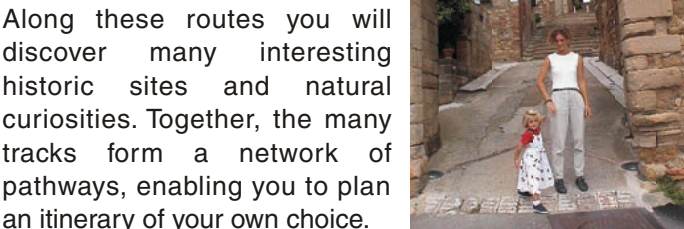
NATURE AND HISTORIC TRAILS



Years ago the tracks we use today for walks were used as the main means of communication from one village to another. Whether by foot, on horseback or riding a donkey, people moved about tracing the shortest routes. The track that goes from **Radicondoli** to **Belforte** is a fine example of these itineraries. This walk starts off at Porta Olla in Radicondoli from where the view opens out to Belforte on the South East.

The actual distance from Radicondoli to Belforte is 2,5 km but the road that runs from one village to the other is 6 km long. In this map we will describe different walks that take you from Radicondoli to Belforte and the vicinity. The major route is about 3km long, but you can choose the minor tracks that wind in and out of the inhabited areas.

Along these routes you will discover many interesting historic sites and natural curiosities. Together, the many tracks form a network of pathways, enabling you to plan an itinerary of your own choice.



MAP SYMBOLS

track Radicondoli - Belforte

— horseback, cycle walking only

other tracks

— cycle, horseback walking only

— rivers and streams

— dirt roads

— mule tracks

— asphalt roads

— practicable side roads

— unpracticable side roads

— isohypse (contour line) 10m

— isohypse 50m

— inhabited areas

— riparian vegetation

— clay areas

— vegetation in erosive areas

— chestnut woods

— artificial implantations (pine, cypress)

— viti maritate (ancient vineyards)

— mixed woods with prevalence of holm-oak

— mixed hardwood area with prevalence of pubescent oak

L1 hedges with prevalence of hawthorn

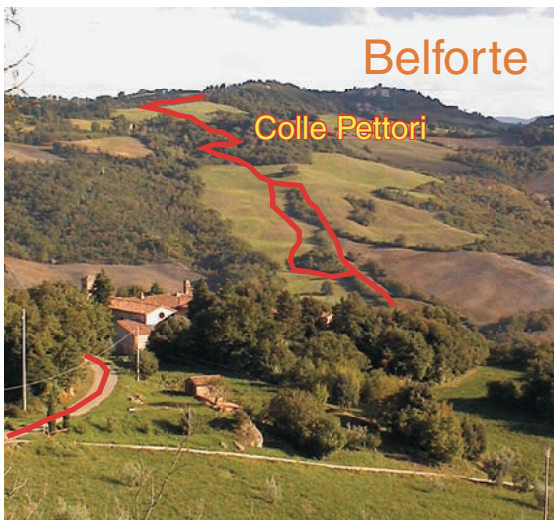
L2 vegetation with prevalence of hop-hornbeam

— shrubberies

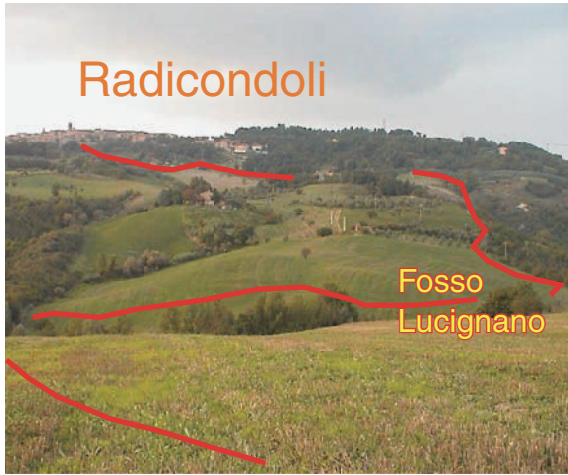
— grassland and cultivable land

— springs and washtubs


Route A view from Radicondoli



Route A view from Colle Pettori



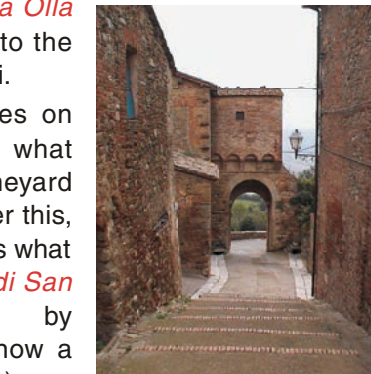
Recommended Routes

- A** Track from Radicondoli to Belforte via Colle Pettori. Effort rating: moderate / difficult. Walking time 1 hr, 40 mins.
- B** Giogliano - Pennanino - la Sala - Porta Olla. Effort rating: easy. Walking time: 1 hr, 30 mins. By bicycle: 30 mins.
- C** Pennanino - S.Regolino - Fonte Vecchia - Porta Olla. Effort rating: easy / moderate. Walking time: 40 mins.
- D** Fonte della Concia - Parco del Poggio. Effort rating: easy. Walking time: 30 mins.
- E** Radicondoli - Belforte via Molini. Effort rating: easy. Walking time: 1 hr, 30 mins.
- F** "S. Croce walk" Effort rating: moderate / easy: Walking time: 1 hour, 20 mins via Colle Talli; 1 hr, 10 mins. return walk.
- G** Belforte, walk around the castle. Effort rating: easy. Walking time: 40 mins.
- H** Belforte - la Fornace (Montegegnoli). Effort rating: easy. Walking time: 30 mins.
- M** Walk around the wall of Belforte. Effort rating: easy. Walking time: 10 mins.
-  Pertaining to the Siena region itinerary.

Route A: Radicondoli-Belforte

1 With your back to **Porta Olla** take the road that leads to the valley south of Radicondoli.

2 After about 150 metres on your left you will see what remains of an ancient vineyard (*viti maritate*). Shortly after this, on your right hand side lies what was once the *Convento di San Francesco* (inhabited by Franciscan monks and now a cultural and musical centre).



3 The road now turns into a dirt track. After just a few metres you will encounter an old stone pond called locally *Fonte della Concia*, it was used in the olden days as a washing tub and for storing water.

4 Keep going straight along this track until you arrive at *Podere Giogliano*, (if you make a left turn you will get back onto the main road). Continue straight ahead. Further on the path slopes slightly and contours to the right. At the end of this curve take a left turn where the pathway gets narrower. The view to your left is of the typical clay gullies (*calanchi*) often seen in Tuscan landscapes.



5 A little further on there is another parting of the ways where you will notice a definite downhill slope on your left. Keep going straight to where the pathway winds into a smaller track. After about 40 metres, before reaching the olive grove, keeping to the left, the path goes through an area thick with growths of trees and shrubs which leads into an open field. Keep to your left and you will come across a riparian area called *Fosso Lucignano*. The ground here forms a deep hollow and curves slightly to your right (toward the west). Keep skirting the woods in this direction for about 200 metres until the grove lies at a right angle to the horizontal plane.



6 Here there is a spot where you can easily get across the *Fosso Lucignano* and thereby enter the nearby field.



7 Advance south along this field (toward *Colle Pettori*) skirting a tree line on your left. Here you will find a series of pathways through the hedges, which will take you into the neighbouring fields. Of all these pathways try and take the one farthest to your left near a group of trees that narrow down the field considerably towards the right hand side.



8 Once you have crossed this field you will encounter a dirt track, which leads to *Colle Pettori* and to the main road. Carefully cross this road and step into the olive grove, which will take you to the adjoining *Strada Comunicativa*.

9 With your back to the open field you have just crossed, take the track in front of you keeping to your right (south).

10 This pathway leads straight to Belforte (about 1 km). Take time to admire the beautiful cypress trees on either side of the footpath.



Other walks

Route B. Suitable for walking and for bicycles, although bicycle riders will find this route less steep if taken in the opposite direction. The route is described from *Podere Giogliano* (**B1**). Skirting the main road takes you onto a small dirt track (**B2**) which crosses the down hill slopes north of Radicondoli. Walk on for about 400 metres from point B2 on the map and you will find a small pathway to your left, this is the starting point of route **C**. Continue straight along route **B** until you go past *Podere Casettino* with its beautiful ancient wine grove. The track divides in two at a certain point; make to the left (**B3**). After about 300 metres the path seems to disappear. Keep to your right even though the pathway is no longer visible until you reach a vine grove. Be careful to cross the vine grove straight through the fourth and fifth row (**B4**). From this point the pathway is visible again. Further ahead you will come to a crossroad (**B5**); the first path to your left will take you to *Podere la Fonte*, a farmhouse with horse-resting facilities, the second pathway to the left leads uphill onto the main road taking you to the west side of Radicondoli. (**B6**) *Porta Olla* lies straight ahead to your left.



Route C. This track is on the same side as route B, but further uphill. After a section of flat track (**C1**) you will pass a small ditch where you must make a sharp turn left. This pathway leads you uphill into a hornbeam woodland area. On leaving the woods go straight along a pathway that will lead you to a very sharp bend in a windy road that goes to *Podere S. Regolino* (**C2**). At this bend you have two choices, either retrace route **D** toward the village or keep on following route C toward *S. Regolino* and then *Fonte Vecchia* (**C3**). On leaving *Fonte Vecchia* the path forks. If you make a right turn you will find yourself on route B again. The left pathway will take you right up to Radicondoli (**C4**) where the door of St Peter once stood.



Route D. This footpath leaves from the *Fonte della Concia* (**D1**) on the south side of Radicondoli and takes you to the town centre. Once you reach the country road (**D2**) keep to the right for about 30 metres then turn left and make your way up the steps in *Via G. Rossa* till you reach the main road (**D3**). Cross the road (looking out for cars) and keep skirting the pathway with



a wooden fence to one side. This by-lane will take you to the *Rimembranza* park where you will find a delightful church *Pieve Vecchia*. Once you reach the main road the pathway forks. Straight ahead takes you into the village, following the downhill pathway to your right leads to *S. Regolino* (**D4**). At this point the pathway bends and you can either take route **C** to the *Fonte Vecchia* or follow route **C** back toward *Podere Pennanino*. In the latter case red and white way markers will reassure you that you are going in the right direction since the pathway is not visible at first. From point **C1** you can go straight back to *Porta Olla* taking route **B** and following directions to *Podere Giogliano*, or if you prefer follow route **B** to the north-west.

Route E. Whether on foot, bike or horse back this track offers a most pleasant way of reaching Belforte. It starts off on the main road, although we advise those on horseback to keep to the dirt tracks (**E1**, **E2**, **E3**). By bicycle the route on asphalt would be best up to point **E3**. From here leave the main road by turning left onto the old gravel road. After a straight stretch the track curves left; leading straight onto a track that will connect you with the road that takes to Belforte.

Route F or *S. Croce walk*. It is a local tradition that every year, on the third of May, people from Belforte and Radicondoli walk in procession from the town of Belforte to the **castle of Falsini**. This commemorates the martyrdom of Father Bernardino from Falsini, which took place in 1161 (written in a papal bull of Pope Pio II). Every year the parish priest and the bishop carry the cross from the church in Belforte to the little church in Falsini. Originally people believed that this helped keep away bad omens and protect the population from plagues and illnesses. The path is quite well kept around this period and the walk that leads up to the castle has something magical about it. The ongoing route leaves from the cemetery road (point **A10**, routes **A** and **E**), goes on through *Podere Colle Talli* (**F1**) and then continues south. After walking for about 100 metres you will find a little pathway that winds its way between the vegetation separating two fields. The pathway continues towards east taking you to *Fosso Feccia* and gently uphill to *Castello di Falsini* (**F2**). Around the castle you will find fenced off areas (for grazing cattle) be careful to shut the gates after going through. The return route takes you through a way marked pathway which crosses *Fosso Feccia* further down hill from where you waded the river on the way there (**F3**). From this point the track contin-

ues up hill taking you straight on to the segment that takes to Belforte. After having walked for about 350 metres, leave the junction signposted Pitena and Casino and turn left onto a path with a big stone to one side. You are now at point **G3** of the route that leads to the south entrance of Belforte.

Route G. Whether you decide to take a bicycle ride or walk, this route guides you all the way round the foot of the castle of Belforte. Our starting point is south of Belforte in Via dell'Olmo (**G1**), and proceeds clock wise down hill. On approaching a junction with an old stone washing tub, ascent to the right. About halfway up this track, toward west you will encounter a flight of wooden steps leading to the main road of the village (**G2**). At this point you can decide whether to end your walk or carry on to where the main road divides; to the right up hill toward the village, straight ahead is *Viale della Rimembranza* where the village cemetery lies. A third lane contours down hill around the northern side of Belforte. After walking for about 300 metres on this country lane you will come to a point where if you turn right (**G3**) you will notice a large stone blocking part of the passageway (next to this track there is a private road leading to *Podere la Ripa*). By taking the path with the big stone you will arrive to the south side of the hilltop (where the villagers have made their vegetable gardens), keep ascending till you arrive at the south entrance of the village from where you left.

Route H traces the antique track that led from Belforte to **Montingegnoli castle**; it is a segment of the itinerary sign posted by the Siena region. Skirting the south side of Belforte, turn left at the first junction and then, after a 300 metre walk turn right toward *Podere Fonte di Sotto* (**H1**). This track leads to a minor path which you will encounter on your right after about 350 metres; follow this path all the way to the main road (**H2**). To your left *Casolare La Fornace*.

Route M contours the ancient castle walls. It is a very easy and short walk, but offers a stunning view. This is the ideal walk for a lazy afternoon with the family. The pathway is way marked on the map (**M1**) from *Via Falsini*, following the castle walls east of Belforte and ends south of the village near *Via dell'Olmo*, where the ancient door once stood.

If you're feeling up to a longer walk the route can be extended following route **G** up to the stairs that lead to the main road in the village (**G2**). By tracing the route back on the segment maked **M2** you will find yourself back at the starting point. (**M1**).

Ethoikos Srl, Centro Studi Etologici and the authors accept no responsibility for any loss, injury or inconvenience sustained as a result of information or advice in this map.



Ancient vineyards “viti maritate”

The words “viti maritate” translate literally into “married vines”. These vines were anciently planted next to trees; then gently tutored on to the tree trunk thus the tree becoming the sole support of the vine. The upper part of the tree with its leaves also protected the vines from the wind, rain and hail stones. These plantations were very common up to 1900 and the trees chiefly used were maple (*Acer Campestre*), poplar (*Populus nigra*, *P tremula*) elm (*Ulmus minor*), the choice depending on tradition and on climatic features. In the Tuscan region, especially around Siena the vines are generally “married” to maples, locally called “chioppi”. The typical plantation in this area consisted of tree lines planted at a distance of 6 metres between which eight vines were planted. The trees were gently shaped throughout the years so as to end up with two branches on each side at two different levels, in axis with the vines. The vines grew towards the branches until they clung horizontally and were then tied by means of leafstalks. The majority of the ancient “viti maritate” have been replaced by modern vineyards where the vines are supported by cement or wooden poles and wire: economically cheaper and easier to manage by far. However, it is fascinating to think that these skills were employed during Etruscan and Roman civilizations. To quote Orazio (63-8 B.C.): “...adulta vitium propagine altas maritat populos” - “...(He) marries the stems that grow from the vines to the tall poplar trees” (II composition of the Epodes, I book).

History and Architecture

The first historical records of Radicondoli date back to 1156. However, historians have attributed the foundation to Desiderio, King of Longobards who ruled from 756 to 774. In 1172, the dominion of Radicondoli and Belforte fell into the hands of the Aldobrandeschi whose governance stretched from Mount Amiata to the Cecina Valley. When in 1230 the Aldobrandeschi were won over by the Republic of Siena, Radicondoli and Belforte became part of this Republic, but for years the two villages were contended over. In 1300 Radicondoli and Belforte had definitely become part of Siena. The state of things changed when in 1557, the Republic of Siena fell into the hands of Cosimo dei Medici (the grand duke of Tuscany). The towns of Radicondoli and Belforte followed in due course; the towers of the villages, together with the gates and part of the wall around the villages were demolished to accentuate the conquest. In 1737 the Medici dynasty lost all its lands through the treaty of Vienna and the Tuscan region fell into the possession of the Hasburg-Lorraine. Of all the grand dukes of this sequence of hereditary rulers the most illuminated was Pietro Leopoldo, who took over the reign in 1765. This enlightened grand duke promoted various reforms, took important political decisions and started major works such as the reclamation of the Maremma marshes and the construction of the *Via Leopoldina* , which crossed the Appennini mountains. In 1799 the grand duchy of Tuscany was taken over by the French troops of Napoleon I. After a succession of events the Lorraines won the empire back and ruled from 1814 to 1860 when all of the Tuscan region became part of the Reign of Piemonte and Sardinia and was called, in 1861, the Reign of Italy. The structural layout of Radicondoli and Belforte is of a medieval fortified village: an outside wall to protect the inhabited area (castle); a main road running through the villages and a series of gates to protect the villagers from intruders. Of all the entrances to the village of **Radicondoli**, the only one left standing to date is on the south side of Radicondoli: *Porta Olla*. The other two, *Porta S. Martino* to the east and *Porta S. Pietro* to the west were destroyed. The main road, *Via Tiberio Gazzei*, is where the most prestigious homes once stood, some date back to year 1200 to 1300 whereas other buildings have been restored. In the main square, *Piazza Matteotti*, stands the Church of Saints Giuda and Simone with baptistery, in the same square you will find the Town Hall. At the east entrance of the village you will find the Church of S. Croce with its side chapel of S. Giovanni Battista. The road that contours the village wall is interrupted on the north side, where the Monastery of S. Caterina della rota (Agostinian Nuns) and adjoining church stands. On this side of Radicondoli the road *Strada della Fonte* skirts slightly down-hill, leading to the most ancient source of water in the area. On the east side of Radicondoli *Via della Pieve* (Parish Road), leads to the oldest church of the diocese. **Belforte**, like Radicondoli is situated on a hilltop. Unfortunately not one of the four original gates have survived. Entering the village from the west where the *Porta a Monte* once stood you will find yourself in the main road of the village, *Via S. Croce*, where, embedded between a series of prestigious homes and buildings, you will notice two churches: S. Croce and S. Maria Assunta The main road ends on the other side of the village where in the olden days another gate, *Porta a Ripa*, looked out from a ridge towards east. The first turning on the left, leads to where another gate once stood (*Porta a Falsini*). Following this route will take you to Falsini castle. On the right hand side of *Via S. Croce* starts *Via dell'Olmo*, which leads to the south entrance of Belforte (once *Porta Nuova*). The road that continues from this point was the main connection from Belforte to Montingegnoli castle. Today it is only partly practicable by car.

Enjoy the countryside and respect these rules:

- 1 - Keep to paths when crossing farmland.
- 2 - Take your litter home.
- 3 - Protect wildlife, plants and trees.
- 4 - Do not pick flowers; they're just as pretty on photo graphs.
- 5 - Guard against all risks of fire.
- 6 - Keeps to trails by using the map.
- 7 - Remember to use a compass.
- 8 - Make no unnecessary noise.
- 9 - Help to keep all water clean.
- 10 - Keep dogs under close control.
- 11 - Fasten all gates.

Emergency numbers

118 Casualty dept.
112 Carabinieri
0577 790 906 Carabinieri Radicondoli
0577 790 910 Town hall
0577 325 110 Chemist Radicondoli

Bus connections Radicondoli-Belforte

(Look-up official bus timetable for variations)

Radicondoli	Belforte
14:40	14:50 FER (Mon-Sat)
15:05	15:15 School (Oct-Jun)
19:15	19:25 FER
21:00	21:10 FER
Belforte	Radicondoli
06:25	06:34 FER
06:50	06:59 School
14:50	15:00 FER
16:00	16:10 FER

Calanchi (clay gullies)

The so-called *Calanchi* are frequently seen in Tuscan landscapes, they are channels and ridges formed by the erosional action of rainwater. These gullies are typical of the Appennini area and originate on clay, tufaceous or sandy slopes. Gullies are frequently found in areas where there is a major sun exposure, therefore south or south east since the sun dries up the surface layer of the soil, forming large cracks which slowly get deeper as the rain-water seeps further down. These rills are then filled by the soil that slides downhill and other gullies form elsewhere. Landscapes where gullies form therefore never look the same since the soil undergoes continuous movements. In this kind of soil it is difficult for vegetation to take root. Thus, in these areas vegetation is scarcely developed. Species often found are deep root perennial plants such as Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*), blackberry bush- es (*Rubus fruticosus*) Artemisia (*Artemisia vulgaris*) hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), dog rose (*Rosa Canina*) and other grass-like annual plants with stubby roots. It would not be unusual to find horse-tail (*Equisetum arvense*) an angiospermous plant considered to be one of the most ancient species of plant life. The areas where *calanchi* form have been classified as nature reserves in order to preserve the land and prevent any use that may change the characteristics of the terrain.

Fields, tree lines and the riparian world

In the countryside, in fields situated near stream banks it is common to find trees and bushes growing in straight rows. Even pathways leading to farms or country homes and main pedestrian roads are frequently bordered by tree lines. This scenic pattern of different types of vegetation exists even thanks to the intervention of man and has always played a key role in rural economy. Hedges, especially when present along watercourses, develop on different storeys (groundcovers, grasses, shrubs and trees), but their role has always been that of giving man fire-wood, providing secure habitats for wildlife, serving as wild berries or simply act as fences or wind breaks. From a strictly ecological point of view hedges and tree lines are transitional habitats (**ecotones**), i.e. zones between two major ecological systems (for example woods and meadows). These composite lands support a greater variety of flora and fauna than other areas (**edge effect**). They are distinctly different from surrounding lands because of unique soil and vegetation characteristics. Animals may migrate from the neighbouring vegetation and use these boundaries for breeding, hiding or hunting out other species. Hedges are fundamental to the ecosystem health since there is a continuous exchange of nutrients from surrounding habitats. Biodiversity is higher in hedges with more complex vertical stratification. They shelter a varied assortment of animals from birds to small mammals. It is not unusual to spot openings in the vegetation of these hedges used as passages by animals. The height of these gaps give us a clue as to what kind of animal uses this gallery: 15 cm field mice; 50 cm foxes or badgers; 80 cm deer. The most frequent variety of trees you will encounter during our walk are maple (*Acer campestre*), elm wych (*Ulmus glabra*), pubescent oak (*Quercus pubescens*), holm-oak (*Quercus ilex*), poplar (*Populus tremula* and *P. nigra*, chiefly in the riparian hedges), wild apple (*Malus sylvestris*) and pear trees (*Pyrus communis*). Most commonly amongst the shrubs you will find the dog rose (*Rosa canina*), May blossom or hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), juniper (*Juniperus communis*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*), Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*), greenweed or dyer's broom (*Genista tinctoria*).