

Destination: Monsummano Terme - The Giusti Grotto. **Montecatini Alto** - The Maona Grotto. **Colodi** - The Butterfly House at Villa Garzoni. **Pescia** - Hesperidarium. *We also advise visits to:* **Pescia** - The Bonsai Museum. **Monsummano Terme** - The Museum of the City and the Territory.

REGIONE

TOSCANA


 Provincia
di Pistoia
Ufficio Cultura

The Giusti Grotto, Monsummano Terme



Discovered quite by chance in 1849 by some quarrymen working on the property of the family of the famous poet Giuseppe Giusti, the grotto is enclosed within the rocks of the mountain

sheltering it and stretches for over two hundred metres underneath the ground, creating underground labyrinths decorated with stalactites and stalagmites and spacious caverns. A natural pool of hot thermal waters lies in the background. Apart from its beauty, which was also praised by the composer Giuseppe Verdi as “the eighth wonder in the world”, the grotto is a great attraction because the climatic characteristics in its three caverns create a natural Turkish bath whose temperatures vary from 24°C in Paradise to 34°C in Hell, while Purgatory has an intermediate temperature (private structure).

How to get there:

by car, from the Montecatini Terme motorway exit: keep to the left and take the Tangenziale Ovest (west bypass). Leave it at the exit for the city centre. Turn right in the direction of Montecatini-Lucca. After about 10 km, turn left at La Colonna into Via Francesca Nord for Monsummano Terme. Carry straight on and then turn right into Via Petrocchi. Continue along this road as far as the traffic lights. Turn left here into Via Mazzini. Continue along this road, keeping to the left to take Via Toti and then turn right at the crossroads into Via Matteotti. Take the first turning on the left into Via Grotta Giusti, and then follow the directions for the spa establishment.

Info and reception: Grotta Giusti Terme SPA - Via Grotta Giusti - Monsummano Terme - tel. 0572 90771
info@grottagiustispa.com

Opening hours and prices: open all year round - access to the grotto is only possible for those using the spa services - prices vary according to the type of treatment to be carried out

The Maona Grotto, Montecatini Alto



The Maona Grotto is thousands of years old and can be reached from the road that leads up to the ancient village of Montecatini Alto from Montecatini Terme, in the heart

of the nearby mountain. Situated in a tourist complex offering various facilities for entertainment, it is 20 m deep and 200 m in length and remains at a constant temperature of about 15°C. This huge karstic cavern is well known for being the only example of its type in Italy to have two wells. The first forms the entrance passage, which leads to a series of galleries that create an atmosphere closely resembling Dante’s Inferno, with cascades of stalactites and forests of stalagmites that have been patiently designed by nature and the continuous dripping of the water; it is followed by the

second well that leads back up to the light of day, so that there is no need to go back along the same route as before (Private structure).

How to get there:

by car, from the Giusti Grotto: go back along the same road as far as Piazza Giusti. Turn left into Via Martini and then carry straight on passing through two sets of traffic lights. Turn right at the second set of traffic lights and then turn left at the stop sign into Via Pistoiese/Sr435. Turn right about 500 m further on into Viale Fanciullacci and then continue straight on to take Via Dalmazia/Via Mezzomiglio. Turn left into Via Marconi about 400 m further on. After driving through Montecatini Terme, turn right into Via Cristoforo Colombo/Sp633 and then, after about 1.5 km, turn left into Via Vecchia di Maona.

Info and reception: Maona Grotto - Via Vecchia di Maona, 52 - Montecatini Terme - tel. 0572 74581
info@grottamaona.it

Opening hours and prices: from Apr 1st to October 31st: daily 9-12am and 3-6pm - closed on holidays
full tickets: € 5.00 - reduced tickets: € 3.00

Butterfly House, Collodi



Built inside the Historic Garzoni Gardens, the Collodi Butterfly House hosts a lush tropical garden where about one thousand of the most beautiful butterflies in the world court each other, feed on the

flowers and reproduce every day. Here it is also possible to view all the stages of butterfly development, observe the differences between butterflies in the daytime and butterflies at night and recognise the various colours and the tricks they use to survive, such as camouflage.

All the butterflies live in specifically created environments that are aimed to give them the sort of space and environ-

ment that they would normally need for survival.

How to get there:

by car, from the Maona Grotto: go back the way you came following the directions for Montecatini Terme. Continue from here along the Sr435/Via provinciale Lucchese, following the directions for Pescia. Once in Pescia, continue in the direction of Lucca/Collodi and then turn right at Ponte all'Abate into the Provincial Road of the Cartiere (Paper Mills), carrying straight on as far as Piazza della Vittoria.

Info and reception: Butterfly House - Historic Garzoni Gardens - Piazza della Vittoria, 1 - Collodi
tel. 0572 427314

Opening hours and prices: from Mar 1st to Oct 30th: daily 9am-sunset - from November 1st to March 1st: weekdays 8-12am and 2-5.30pm holidays 9-12am and 2-5.30pm
full tickets: € 13.00 - reduced tickets: € 10.00

The Hesperidarium - citrus fruit garden, Pescia



This is a unique garden of its type and contains over 200 varieties of citrus fruits that come from all over the world. It is in fact a botanical garden that is specialised in ornamental citrus fruits, a place where visitors can admire the ancient cultivations of the Medici family, dating from the 16th century, as well as rare and exotic species that come from the Far East, and even some new and more modern plant varieties like those from the southern hemisphere. The route, also suitable for people

who are not experts, meanders along footpaths and plant-created tunnels, past fountains and large figures dedicated to the story of Pinocchio. The Hesperidarium is situated in fact about 2 km from the monumental Park dedicated to the famous puppet (private structure).

How to get there:

by car, from the Butterfly House: take Via S. Gennaro on the left and then go right past the Park of Pinocchio before turning left again into Via Pasquinelli. Continue along the main road as far as the junction, bearing left to head towards Pescia. Turn left at the traffic lights and carry on along the provincial road. Take the first exit at the second roundabout into Via del Castellare and then immediately right again into Via del Tiro a Segno. Continue for about 1 km as far as the entrance to the Oscar Tintori Hesperidarium on the left.

Info and reception: Hesperidarium - citrus fruit garden - Oscar Tintori nursery gardens - Via Tiro a Segno, 55 - Pescia - tel. 0572 429191 - info@oscartintori.it

Opening hours and prices: Jan Feb Mar Oct Nov Dec: Mon Tues Wed Thurs Fri 7.30am-1pm and 2-6pm; Sat Sun and holidays 9am-1pm and 2.30-5pm - Apr May Jun: Mon Tues Wed Thurs Fri 7.30am-1pm and 2-7pm; Sat Sun and holidays 9am-1pm and 3-7pm - Jul Aug: Mon Tues Wed Thurs Fri 8am-12.30pm and 3-7pm - Sep: Mon Tues Wed Thurs Fri 8am-12.30pm and 3-7pm; Sat Sun and holidays 9am-1pm and 3-7pm
full tickets: € 4.50 - reduced tickets: € 3.50

We also advise visits to:

The **Bonsai Museum** (private structure, tel. 0572 429262, entrance free on weekdays), situated at **Ponte all'Abate** in the territory of the Borough of Pescia, displays Costantino Franchi's private collection of bonsai plants that come from all over the world. Divided into three distinct sections, the museum contains a series of olive trees and centuries-old plants, small clumps of cypress trees, exotic India Rubber plants, conifers and examples of the strangest and rarest trees in existence, some of which also require a sub-tropical climate.

The **Museum of the City and the Territory** at Monsummano Terme also contains a section dedicated to the spas, which, apart from including a faithful reproduction of a particular area inside the Giusti Grotto, also traces the **history of the hot baths in the Nievole Valley**, showing how this phenomenon has influenced the architecture, life and economy of the surrounding territory. The museum also possesses a section dedicated to the study and observation of the stars with a **domed planetarium** where astronomy lessons are held at certain times of the year (tel. 0572 954463).