

Savoring Maremma, a Quiet Corner of Italy

Whether on horseback, by bike or on foot, the least populated part of Tuscany offers a pastoral escape, where your days follow the cycles of the weather, animals and plants.



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By Laura Rysman

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I woke up to the braying of donkeys. Opening the window to morning air perfumed by wisteria and honeysuckle, I could see the herd — 16 sweet-eyed animals in all — grazing by the olive groves of [La Pescaia](#), a country estate turned idyllic inn that embodies a fantasy of pastoral happiness for me: life among animals and bird song and olive trees, encircled by the rugged nature of Maremma, in Italy.



The following morning, I set out on a hiking trip with Rudston Steward, a onetime New York party promoter who today leads the [Maremma Safari Club](#), offering multiday hiking tours. We walked for hours, past yellow hills of rapeseed flowers, fields of chestnut trees, abandoned farmhouses and wild-growing asparagus, which Mr. Steward showed me how to pick.

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“After Covid, people have become much more open to this kind of trip,” he said. “We evolved to walk and it works at a deep level on our brain. After all, travel should change your mind-state.”

By the time we reached a peak in the town of Monticello Amiata, my head was hushed and unburdened by the looming deadlines that usually haunt it. There, we lodged at [Le Pianore](#), a farm-stay run by a family from Naples who had relocated to the Maremma countryside. They fed me a bountiful risotto dinner before sending me to bed in a new cabin built entirely of biodegradable straw and clay.