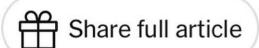
Savoring Maremma, a Quiet Corner of Italy

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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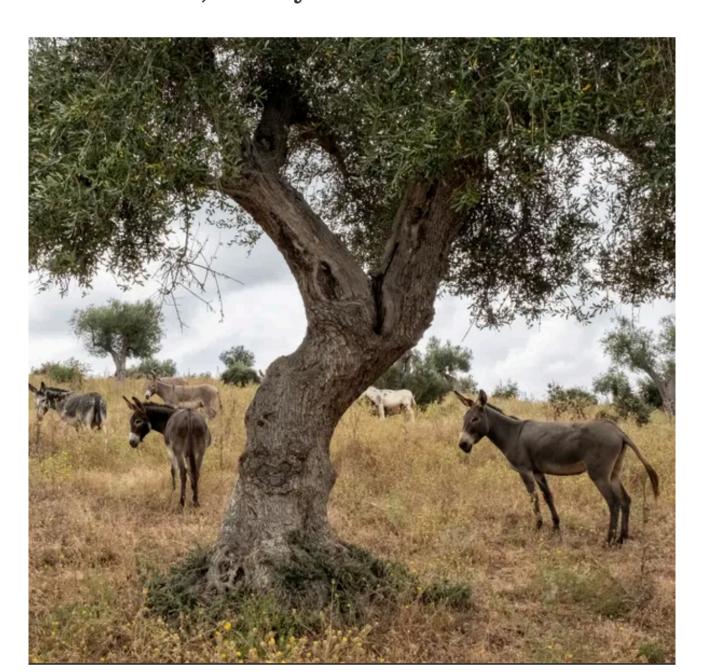


By Laura Rysman

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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.