

16 - Anello della Badia – 10 km – 360 difference in height

This itinerary, too, is a path more than a ring (*anello*).

You arrive in Casagiusti by car and park near the *Al Casone* restaurant.

Along the asphalted road for a very short stretch in the direction of Montescudaio, we will find a path on the left that goes through the fields near a farmhouse with greenhouses attached.

Following the path between the fields we will reach a large building (Podere al Mare) which we will pass, immediately afterwards turning left.

The little road continues on the valley floor with slight ups and downs, meeting a series of farms on the left.

Immediately after the first farm, recently renovated, at the foot of the slope to our right we can identify a source of water (once it was drinkable, but currently I would not trust it, due to the presence of agricultural settlements immediately upstream): it is the Fonte Franca, so called probably because there were no fees to pay to use the water. Speaking of the transformations of the toponyms mentioned in the introduction, the farm next door has been renamed Fonte Francia....

After the Santa Perpetua farm, we find ourselves crossing an asphalted road; we take it to the left and continue a little longer in the plain, up to the locality of Le Mandriacce.

After passing another farm, in whose yard there are shelters for poultry of all species, the road turns right and gradually begins to climb.

On our left we find here a first testimony of the passage of the Second World War: a slab of tuff bears an inscription that recalls two children who died in the explosion of a bomb one year after the passage of the front in this area and just while in all of Italy the Liberation was now being celebrated.

A little further on, a newsstand recalls a bloody clash between American and German soldiers during the latter's retreat.

The road now begins to climb more decisively and, after a farmhouse on the right, we find on our left the archaeological excavations of the Badia di Santa Maria.

It is a female Benedictine monastery, founded on 3 October 1091 by an exponent of the Della Gherardesca family, then abandoned around 1500 and brought to light in recent years thanks to the five excavation campaigns carried out starting from the summer of 2005.

Near the excavations we will be able to stop to eat our snack, and then continue the climb towards the town of Montescudaio.

Once in the town, we will follow the asphalted road towards Cecina for about 1km.

At the indication for Morazzano, we will turn right onto a local dirt road (via delle Vedove); immediately after you can make a small detour to the right of about 50m to admire the church of Santa Lucia.

Back on via delle Vedove, we will turn right again to Morazzano, on the local road that points downhill towards the valley floor.

At the height of a renovated house with modern arches, we turn left and, after coasting a pelaga, we reach the asphalted road that continues to descend towards *Fattoria San Giovanni*. Immediately before the farm we turn left and, always following downhill paths, we find ourselves near the Fonte Franca and, from here, to the starting point.