



AN IDYLIC, OFF-ROUTE ARCHIPELAGO

ISOLATED BAYS AND COVES AWAIT VOYAGERS TO THIS GROUP OF
OFF-THE-BEATEN-TRACK ISLANDS THAT HAVE SERVED AS THE BACKDROP
FOR MAJOR HISTORICAL EVENTS—AND A BELOVED NOVEL

The Tuscan Archipelago, comprised of seven islands, occupies the northern Tyrrhenian Sea between Italy and Corsica. Mountain peaks of the ancient Tyrrhenian continent that sank into the sea during the Quaternary Period, these islands are connected across the Mediterranean with Sardinia, Corsica, the Balearics, and the Tuscan Islands. Elba, the largest island in the Tuscan Archipelago, is renowned for its natural diversity—although each island has its unique character. The adjacent mainland coast is largely marshland lined with sandy beaches. Large marinas line the coast from Tuscany north toward Pisa, and onward to the Ligurian coast, each within a day's sail of the archipelago.

Though perhaps less busy than the neighboring itineraries of Naples, the Pontine Islands, northern Sardinia, and southern Corsica, the Tuscan Islands are a true hidden gem in the cruising world. Mention this itinerary to anyone, and their first response is likely to be a question, not knowing that Tuscany's coastline boasts an island, let alone an entire archipelago. The harbors are uncrowded, and you're more likely to be anchored next to an Italian family on a day trip than a cruiser from afar.

Elba isn't only well known as a pleasant island lined with safe harbors, bays, and beaches, but also for housing the former Emperor of France, Napoleon Bonaparte, during his first exile after being removed from power. He was

given a palace atop Portoferraio, overlooking the harbor with vistas of mainland Italy. He famously gathered 800 men in secret, and after 10 months of exile, commandeered a fleet of navy vessels to sail ashore and march to French soil to regain power. Later, he was exiled to the vastly more remote and rigorously patrolled island of Saint Helena in the South Atlantic Ocean. (These historic events have drummed up...)

With Corsica so close to the islands, the stretch between France and Italy is an itinerary worthy of exploration and a challenge to complete in just one week. Elba alone is home to dozens of idyllic coves, bays, and ports, and there are many itinerary combinations, from exploring the northeast Corsican coast to the southern Giglio Island. The creation of the Tuscan Archipelago National Park has put much of the islands in protected zones, with efforts to keep the sea safe from pollutants so fauna and flora can thrive.

