Fact sheet Villages of Tuscany

General information

Name of the village	**PORTO ERCOLE**
Province	Grosseto
Tourist information	**Tourist Information Office - Porto Ercole** Via Lungomare Strozzi 18 Phone +39 0564 833507 E-mail: turistico@comune.monteargentario.gr.it
Notes	For people with reduced mobility, it is recommended to visit the village with an electric drive or with the help of a companion. The roads can in fact be bumpy and not always easily accessible, as it is a medieval village.

TESTED BY: Handy Superabile Social Promotion Association in 2025

Please note: The following information refers to the date of verification shown at the bottom of each sheet. The Association is not responsible for any significant changes made by the property after the visit.

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Description

The picturesque seaside resort of Porto Ercole, today one of the most prestigious resorts on the Tuscan coast, arranged around a bay dominated by Spanish fortifications, has a very ancient origin, Phoenician or Etruscan and owes its name, according to legend, to the famous Greek demigod. Some excavations in the locality of "I Molini", on a hill overlooking the town, have brought to light the ruins of a pre-Roman settlement, which various experts are inclined to believe are certainly of Etruscan origin.

The presence of the Romans in the territory is widely documented, in fact we know for sure that Porto Ercole was first owned by the Roman bankers Donizi Enobarbi. From these, through a marriage, it passed to the emperor Dominizio and then in the second century A.D. it became the property of Trajan and in 312 the property of the emperor Constantine.

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the city of Porto Ercole was dominated by the Byzantines and then by the Lombards. In the Middle Ages it belonged to the Abbey of the Three Fountains which obtained it thanks to the intervention of Emperor Charlemagne in 805.

In the thirteenth century it was a possession of the Aldobrandeschi, then later of the Orsini and finally passed to the Sienese who from the mid-fifteenth century, ceded the port several times in concession. During the last years of the war of Siena, a strenuous defense against the Spanish forces was organized here, which ended with the capitulation of Siena in front of the Medici troops of Cosimo I, allied with Charles V of Spain. Porto Ercole then became part of the **State of the Presidi** (1557) and was fortified again, assuming considerable strategic and military importance.

By order of Philip II of Spain, successor of Charles V, the famous engineer Giovanni Camerini undertook the construction of Fort **Filippo** and **Fort Stella** and made further changes to the **Rocca** which gradually took on its current appearance.

Spain at that time was fighting a fierce fight against Islam so this coastal area was ideal as a base for the offensive and strategically as an important area for defense. The Towers and the various Fortresses that dominate Porto Ercole show how over the centuries the need has been felt to defend these coasts from distant enemies, with the construction of organized systems and signaling and control functions.
Important attractions are the Fortresses. Fort Filippo just outside the town, currently houses a private condominium. It still retains numerous gunboats and loopholes that open at the height of the espalier. Further down Fort Santa Caterina used by the batteries to make grazing shots towards the sea. Both fortresses are clearly visible from the village and from the seafront, while Forte Stella is located continuing along the panoramic road and meeting the signs. This building, perched on a hill, completes the extraordinary defensive triangle that surrounded Porto Ercole. Built in the sixteenth century, it constitutes, together with the other fortifications, one of the pivots of the defensive system of the port, organized by Philip II of Spain.

Porto Ercole is also the city of **Caravaggio**. According to the official thesis, the famous painter Michelangelo Merisi on July 18, 1610, coming from Naples by sea, landed, already dying, on the beaches of Feniglia.
Sheltered behind the ancient church of Sant'Erasmo, where a small sanatorium dedicated to Mary Help of Christians was located at the time and managed by the Confraternity of Santa Croce (no longer existing) he died late in the evening.
His remains were then immediately buried in the old cemetery of San Sebastiano, where the center of the new village stands, in Via Nuova, at the corner of Via Caravaggio.
During some excavations in 1956, in fact, some bones were found here, including those presumed by the well-known painter. The confirmation of the attribution of the bones found was made through a combination of scientific and historical analysis.

The research used carbon 14 tests, analysis of heavy metals (lead and mercury, present in paintings of the time) and DNA comparisons with relatives of Caravaggio, whose surname was Merisi.
In this regard, in 2002, a small evocative monument was erected here, with the cape, the sword, the prison railing, the Maltese cross, while in 2010, on the occasion of the four-hundredth anniversary of his death, not far away, a small open-air sarcophagus containing five of the artist's alleged bones was also erected.

The Fortresses and the Fortress

Fort Philip is the sentinel that dominates the entire bay of the old port. Mighty fortification built by the Spanish in 1558.

The quadrangular plan is irregular with the bastions (4 external and 4 internal), separated by a long dry moat, unequal and asymmetrical even with respect to their axes. Equipped with numerous defensive features, Fort Filippo is a typical example of military buildings of the time at the time of the King of Spain Philip II from whom it takes its name.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, after its military function, it was used as a prison. Today it is home to an exclusive holiday residence.



Photo Fort Philip. Source www.castellitoscani.it

Further down **Fort Santa Caterina**: Casamate built by the Spaniards towards the end of the seventeenth century on the extreme northern tip of Porto Ercole; with the grazing fire of its artillery it was used for the close defense of the port.

Today it is privately owned and is in an excellent state of preservation.



Forte Stella: An authentic jewel of military architecture of the late sixteenth century, whose construction was completed at the beginning of the following century.

It is located at 158 meters above sea level, on one of the hills south of Porto Ercole and takes its name from the star shape of its central core: a six-pointed star located in the center of a large quadrilateral enclosure with bastioned corners, built in a later period (1676). The latter, equipped with rather thick perimeter walls, 40 m long by a height of 4 m, encloses two large cisterns underground for collecting rainwater.

The structure is open to the public from April to September and often hosts contemporary art exhibitions.



Photo Forte Stella. Source www.comunemonteargentario.gr.it

The Rocca Antica is instead a building of medieval origin, it has been the subject of several interventions in the Sienese and especially Spanish times that have transformed it into a mighty and articulated fortification whose splendor can still be admired today.

It dominates the ancient village of Porto Ercole characterized by high crenellated walls dotted with towers. With its 2.5 hectares of surface, largely occupied by defensive elements and other buildings such as barracks, warehouses, cisterns, chapel, cells and warehouses, it was the largest and most effective fortress of the entire defensive system of the Argentario.

Today it is possible to visit La Rocca by asking for the appropriate permission from the Municipality.



Photo La Rocca. Source www.castellitoscani.it

How to reach Porto Ercole

By car	**From the North** Take the Genoa-Livorno motorway, exit at Rosignano Marittimo, continue on the Livorno-Grosseto highway towards Rome and exit at Orbetello; along the dam that leads to Monte Argentario, follow the signs for Porto Ercole. **From the South**

	Take the Rome-Civitavecchia motorway, continue towards Livorno on the Grosseto - Livorno highway and exit at Orbetello. From here, skirt the dam that leads to Monte Argentario, follow the signs for Porto Ercole.
By plane	The nearest airport to reach Scarlino: 1. Pisa "Galileo Galilei" Airport, located about 194 km from Porto Ercole. • Rome Fiumicino Airport located 150 km from Porto Ercole
Assistance service for people with disabilities	Yes
Embarkation/disembarkation of passengers with reduced mobility	With courtesy chair and ambulift/finger
Tactile paths for the blind and visually impaired	Yes
There is a toilet room accessible with grab handles	Yes

By train	
Nearest station	The line to take is the Rome-Civitavecchia-Grosseto-Pisa getting off at Orbetello-Monte Argentario station.
Assistance service for people with disabilities	The Orbetello Monte Argentario Follonica station is not enabled for the assistance service for people with disabilities and reduced mobility (PRM), while the Talamone station is not enabled. To use the service, it is necessary to contact the Italian Railway Network through the relevant Blue Room, at the following addresses: 1. toll-free number: 800 90 60 60 (from a landline) 2. National number: 02 32 32 32 (from a landline or mobile) The service provides information on the nearest enabled station and allows assistance to be booked.
Blue Hall Reference	Firenze
There is a toilet room in the station accessible with grab handles	Yes

By public and private transport	
Nearest bus stop	The public transport service is operated by Autolinee Toscane, which offers connections from Orbetello to Porto Ercole. The bus station is located in front of the railway station. It is recommended to consult the website for timetables. For further details, please refer to the website (www.at-bus.it)
Presence of adapted buses with ramp	It is advisable to check the availability of the service in advance by contacting Autolinee Toscane. Contact details: toll-free number: +39 800142424 or +39 05551351

Parking

Public parking nearby	YES Along Via del Caravaggio at number 26 (about 8 parking spaces) Along Via della Panoramica, street number 11 (numerous paid parking lots) Lungomare Doria (numerous paid parking lots) Piazza Roma (numerous paid parking lots)
Type of public parking floor	Asphalt

Presence of parking space reserved for people with disabilities	Yes, some located at a long distance and with sloping sections. n.1 stall at Lungomare Doria at number 68 and 1 stall at number 58. One of the two stalls has a space that has been reduced to be occupied by a wooden fence that has the function of making the area dedicated to waste bins less impactful. n. 2 stalls in Piazza Roma. The public car park, outside the port, has two stalls reserved for people with disabilities, but far away, without pedestrian crossing and with significant slopes. n. 1 stall along the Doria road about 200 meters from the Santa Barbara pier
Eventual notes	Request for access to the ZTL: The service is aimed at people with walking inability, with significantly reduced capacity or blind people who wish to circulate in limited traffic areas and park in reserved parking lots. The request can be requested from the Local Police office of the Municipality of Monte Argentario - Lungomare dei

	Navigatori - Porto Santo Stefano - Tel +39 0564 812520, Email cpm@comune.monteargenario.gr.it



1 Via del Caravaggio public parking



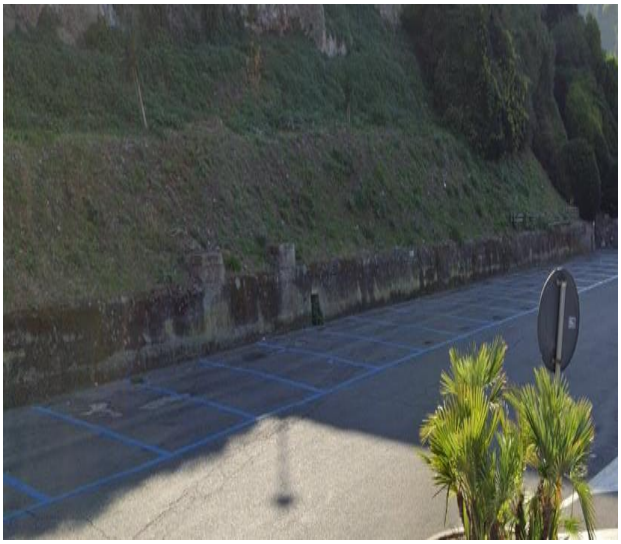
2 Public parking Via del Caravaggio



3 Reserved parking Via Roma



4 Public parking Via della Panoramica



5 Public parking Via della Panoramica



6 Reserved parking Lungomare Doria number 58/68



7 Reserved parking Lungomare Doria number 58/68



8 Reserved parking Piazza Roma



9 Reserved parking near the pier of S. Barbara

Pathway from the car park to the entrance

Distance from parking to entrance	The reserved spaces are quite far from the historic center, so it is advisable to arrive at the entrance by car by applying for a permit for the ZTL.
Type of trail surface	asphalt
There are indicators and tactile maps	No

Description of the itinerary

Length	The Porto Ercole itinerary includes a visit to the upper part of the village, or the historic center. The itinerary is about 360 meters long. As soon as you enter Porto Ercole, on the left there is a monument dedicated to Caravaggio located at the beginning of Via Nuova. Before continuing to the historic center, we recommend a short stop to admire the monument and understand its meaning.

Along the itinerary there are maps and tactile signs for the blind	NO



The Monument to Caravaggio installed on July 18, 2002 by the Municipal Administration, the Pro Loco and other sponsors, features a sword, a shroud, a broken grate and a truncated column.

The sculpture was made of a dual material: copper and a particular type of steel, which has a rust effect.
Behind the monument we find a plaque on the ground bearing the name of the architect Giuseppe La Fauci who designed it and the name of the sculptor Gianfranco Romagnoli who built it later.
This monument dedicated to the painter has a very deep meaning.
The sword represents the weapon that Caravaggio always carried with him but in this case, especially so positioned, it wants to represent the work of the Death of the Virgin, where in the artistic composition we find the Virgin, just so positioned.
Above the sword you can see a cloth with a very strong symbolism. The cloth represents the shroud, while the broken grate represents the end of imprisonment and therefore the end of the artist's torment. According to the sculptor who created it, the broken grate finally represents the freedom acquired. The column we see was added later.
The column was fished out of the sea together with 4 other columns and is truncated, because it wants to represent the turning point of the artist who worked in a stylistic period characterized by different currents: Renaissance, Baroque and naturalism. The sword is positioned on a scaffold-shaped structure, which represents the same stage where the Virgin's body is positioned in Caravaggio's work.
Near the structure (in Via Nuova) there is a small fountain with tap, installed at a minimum height and therefore those who use it must necessarily bend. This gesture represents a sort of reference to the Monument and therefore a tribute to the great works that Caravaggio left us as a legacy.
Via Nuova is divided by a central flowerbed that has trees and plants. Continue inside the street, along the right side of the road, until you reach a small square that has the Mausoleum dedicated to Caravaggio. The Mausoleum is an open-air sarcophagus, containing five of the artist's alleged bones found at the Porto Ercole Cemetery, which

according to scientific studies would be attributed to the great painter. The sarcophagus was inaugurated in 2012.



10 Caravaggio Monument



11 Plaque of the architect and sculptor



12 Sword and grate



13 Body



14 Mausoleum of Caravaggio



The itinerary starts from the square in front of the **Porta Senese**.

The first attraction you encounter is therefore the Gate of Sienese origin surmounted on the inner side, by the clock tower. Above the pointed arch there is a plaque commemorating the great painter Michelangelo Merisi known as Caravaggio, who died in

1610 in Porto Ercole. From this gate you enter the historic center. The octagonal turret dates back to the 1500s and was built above the bertesca of the Sienese gate. Entering inside, immediately on the right we find a very steep staircase that leads to the Rocca and the church of S. Erasmo, patron saint of the town. About halfway up the staircase, on the left there is a small passage where accessing the inside, we find a small square and in front of the Church of S. Erasmo.

The primitive church seems to date back to the fourth century, while the various restorations that have followed date back to the seventeenth century. For many centuries it was the main church of the village.

Inside the church, in the left chapel there is a fresco of the martyrdom of Sant' Erasmo, while in front of the altar there are some epigraphs of Spanish governors and men-at-arms, who died in the village during the period of Spanish domination.

The church lost its importance in the mid-twentieth century, when the parish church of San Paolo della Croce was built, in the area of the modern village. The interior of the church is characterized by a Baroque artistic style.

Leaving the church and returning to the staircase, you can continue the staircase until you reach the Rocca.

Accessibility:

The initial path is free of obstacles and has a regular pavement, in smooth stones sliding for a wheelchair.

Past the Porta Senese, the staircase on the right that leads to the Rocca and the Church of S. Erasmo, has numerous steps. **This section of the itinerary is not accessible to**

people with motor disabilities. Guests with motor disabilities can therefore continue straight towards Corso Amedeo.



15 Porta Senese - external side



16 Porta Senese – internal side



17 Staircase to the Rocca



18 entrance gate to the church of S. Erasmo



19 Church of San Erasmo



20 Altar



21 S. Erasmo

From the Church, the staircase continues and runs along the entire walls of the village. The defensive system of the village of Porto Ercole began to develop in medieval times during the domination of the Aldobrandeschi. In fact, two different sections of curtain walls descend from the sides of the fortress, which completely close the historic part of the town; the north-eastern curtain wall, which in a long stretch culminates with a summit battlement, reaching the plain, incorporates the characteristic Sienese access gate.

Back at the Sienese gate, continue towards Corso Amedeo. From here on the right, as indicated by the information panel, a path called "Caravaggio" begins, not accessible to guests with motor disabilities, which leads to the Governor's Palace through significant ramps and steps. Guests with motor disabilities can then continue on Corso Amedeo, in the direction of the Palace, through an alternative route.

Numbers 7 - 17 on the left side and numbers 12 and 14 on the right side show the portals or a series of lower and older arches in the village, dating back to the fifteenth century. The characteristic of these portals is the lowering of the heights of the doors due to the rise of the ground, over the centuries. The route is free of obstacles.

From here continue straight on the very wide avenue. At the end of the street, we find Piazza di Santa Barbara, characterized by the Governor's Palace and a large square that offers a splendid view of the port. In the center of the square there is a circular well-cistern which, in the past, was used for water supply.

Accessibility

Corso Amedeo: Paving in wrinkled stone blocks. The stretch is free of obstacles.



22 Circuit walls of the Rocca



23 Corso Amedeo



24 Caravaggio Route Beginning



25 Corso amedeo n. 7



26 Corso Amedeon. 17



27 Corso Amedeo



28 Corso Amedeo n 12



29 Corso Amedeo

The Palace of the Governors dates back to the early sixteenth century. Most likely built on a project by the Sienese architect Baldassare Peruzzi, it gave accommodation to the rich Sienese banker Agostino Chigi. Sacked and partly destroyed by the Saracens, in 1544 it was rebuilt by the Spanish and became the summer residence of the Governor.
Destroyed during the Second World War, it was severely damaged and subsequently renovated. The façade is decorated with a rosette motif and is characterized by a three-arched portico in Renaissance style. On the upper floor it is characterized by as many arches and rectangular windows. The pavement of the square is made of bricks positioned in a herringbone pattern. In front of the wall there are benches for resting surrounded by suggestive colored buildings, with balconies that have round arches. From the terrace you can admire the Fortress of Fort Filippo and that of Santa Caterina, the marina and the pier of Santa Barbara which, in addition to enclosing the port, has a length of 315 meters.
Fort Philip surmounts the hill in front of the Terrace. Around 1850 the Fort was used as a prison and during the First World War it housed many Austro-Hungarian prisoners. The Fort can be reached by car following the signs before entering the village.

Accessibility:

The square has no obstacles



30 Governor's Palace



31 Panoramic terrace



32 Entrance to the Governor's Palace



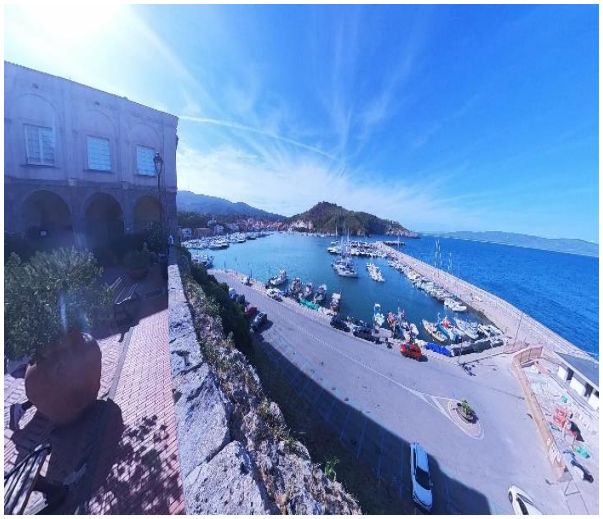
33 Panoramic terrace



34 colorful houses in Piazza del Governatore



35 colorful houses in Piazza del Governatore



36 view of the Santa Barbara Pier



37 Panoramic terrace

Additional information

At the end of the visit, it is advisable to take the car back and arrive at the Santa Barbara pier from where you can admire the natural landscape and the extension of the Tyrrhenian Sea.

Accessibility

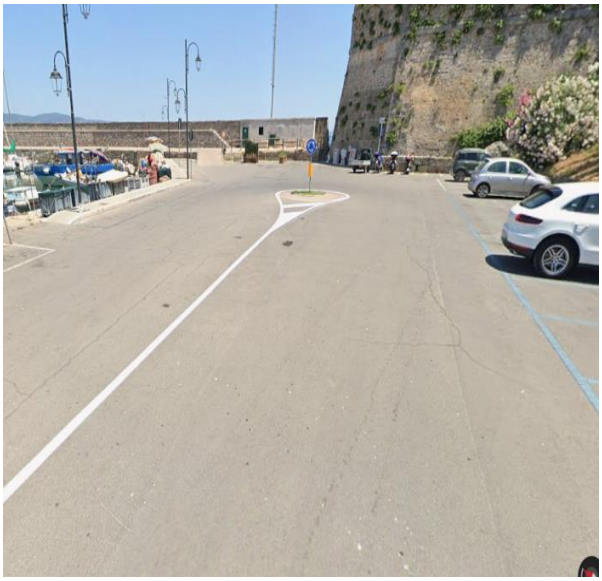
The pier can be reached via a ramp 15 meters long and with a slope varying from 7% to 10%. The ramp is located south of the port and allows you to reach the walkway of the breakwater.

The most significant problems, as regards the accessibility of the port of Porto Ercole, concern the interruption of pedestrian paths, in fact in many sections the walkway takes place only on the roadway, without protections, few pedestrian crossings, presence of bollards, pillars and chains with narrow and dangerous accesses, or not perceived by people with visual impairment and therefore risky for any reason for tripping. **For these reasons, the waterfront of the port can be considered usable, but only with a companion**.

In Piazza Strozzi, a lift for the disabled **was delivered to the Asd Diportisti** as part of the project to remove architectural barriers. It is a certified steel structure, with 360° lifting rotation, up and down movements by electric motor controlled by a mobile push-button panel, for a maximum capacity of 150 kilos, curtain harness, thrust actuator. To optimize its management, the Council has decided to entrust it for use to the Asd Boaters of Porto Ercole which already manages the municipal catenary services on behalf of the Municipality.



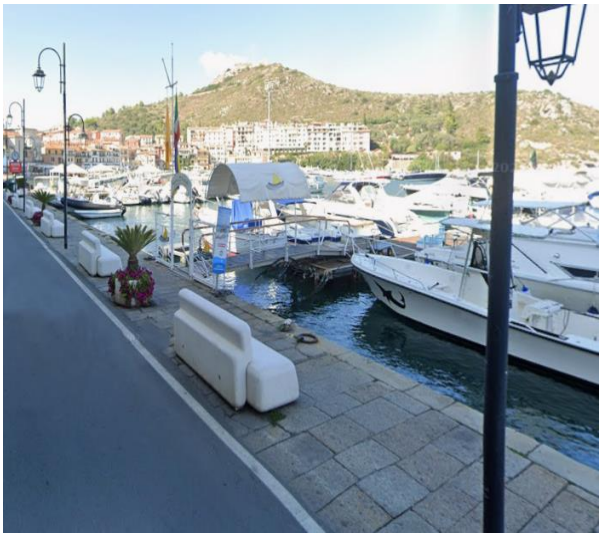
38 Dock ramp



39 Lungomare Doria



40 Lungomare Doria



41 Lungomare Doria

Events

The main event in Porto Ercole is represented by the **Night of the Pirates.**

The night of the pirates is one of the most anticipated events of the Porto Ercole festivals. It is a folkloristic event with important references to history.

On a spring day and night, on the first weekend of May, the town is transformed and becomes even more picturesque and enigmatic thanks to decorations, sets, costumes and various choreographies.

Those who visit **Porto Ercole** on this occasion will have the impression of entering a country full of pirates, or walking through the streets of a port during an assault.

In history there were numerous lootings that the town had to suffer on behalf of pirates.

During the event it will be possible to attend a noisy parade of the crews thanks to the many participants, which takes place along the main street of the town and which precedes the most awaited and evocative event that arrives in the evening, when the crews, having reached the seafront to embark on the "guzzi", the typical local boats, storm the small beaches of the bay waiting for the fateful cannon shot that starts a fun and unique "Treasure Hunt" in night with the aim of finding the key that will allow you to open the chest, containing 10 silver coins covered with gold, which represents the treasure of the pirates of Porto Ercole.



42 Pirate Night Event

Source https://lanottedeipiratidiportoercole.com/

Accessible public places

In Porto Ercole, at the seafront, there are numerous bars and restaurants with outdoor tables that can be reached on the flat. During the verification, no public establishments with accessible toilets were detected.

Communal toilets

There is an accessible toilet	yes
Location of the toilet room	**Lungomare Strozzi**
Eventual notes	The accessible toilets were inaugurated on May 8, 2025 the public toilets. The bathrooms were built in the rooms that housed the information point, they were completely renovated with partitions, new electrical, plumbing and fixtures, also made accessible to the disabled thanks to the contribution of 79,000 euros from the regional accessibility center of the Tuscany Region.



43 Accessible toilets

Medical practices/healthcare facilities

Hospitals near the property	Hospital of St. John of God Località La Madonnella – Orbetello (GR) Single switchboard for the province of Grosseto: + 39 0564 869111 Management Secretariat: +39 0564 869288 - 0564 869321 - 0564 869118 Distance about 9.5 km Emergency Room c/o Hospital of San Giovanni di Dio – Orbetello Tel + 39 0564 869111 Misericordia Hospital - Grosseto Via Senese 161 Grosseto 58100 Switchboard +39 0564 485111 Distance approx. 49 km
Dialysis facilities	Dialysis service present. It is activated at the request of the interested party. For organisational reasons, information and requests should preferably be requested well in advance at the following addresses:

	Grosseto provincial area **MISERICORDIA HOSPITAL IN GROSSETO** Nephrology and Dialysis UnitTel.+39 0564 485.218 from Monday to Friday, hours 09.00-12.00/15.00-19.00 Papi Alberto - Hemodialysis Nursing Coordinator. Tel. +39 0564 485159 - alberto.papi@uslsudest.toscana.it Clinical Manager: Dr. Paolo Conti mobile +39 335 7207316 - paolo.conti@uslsudest.toscana.it Nursing Manager for Grosseto: Dr. Lorenzo Baragatti - lorenzo.baragatti@uslsudest.toscana.it
Other healthcare facilities	ASL area of the Albegna hills district Porto Ercole Headquarters Via Caravaggio – Porto Ercole Tel +39 0564 831111 Open on Fridays from 9.30 a.m. to 12.00 p.m. Italian Red Cross Via Pian dei Mulini – Porto Ercole Tel +39 0564 833052

TESTED BY: Handy Superabile Social Promotion Association in 2025