



Crete Senesi

A region rich in history and natural beauty

In the south-east of Siena, soft, rolling clay hills with iridescent colours create a spectacular, unspoilt landscape, a symbol of one of the most evocative places in Tuscany: the **Crete Senesi**.

The name derives from the **clayey composition** of the soil. This clay, mixed with rock salt and gypsum, known as *mattaione*, comes from the sediments of the sea that covered the area over 2 million years ago.

As the waters receded, typical **ravines** formed, deep furrows on the sides of the hills. Other typical and characteristic formations in this area are the **biancane**, small 'dome-shaped' and 'knife-blade-shaped' reliefs rich in limestone.

The presence of clay or loam in the soil gives the landscape its characteristic **grey-blue colour**, sometimes **whitish** due to the salts it contains. The result is an almost lunar landscape.

The landscape of the area is very changeable in appearance and colour. Depending on the season and the crops in the fields, it ranges from bright spring

green, alternating with the yellow of wheat and sunflowers during the growing season, to golden summer hues when the threshing is over and the famous “round bales” appear. Between autumn and winter, the atmosphere is more rarefied, with fog that, when it lifts, gives way to shades of purple and blue.

The unspoilt landscape of the Crete stretches for miles and miles, dotted with parish churches, monasteries, farms and small villages, such as Asciano.