

Walking Tour in Umbria - Assisi to Spoleto

7 days / 6 nights:

Following paths that have linked the towns for centuries, this walking tour in Umbria takes you through the 'Vale of Umbria', the green heart of Italy, visiting each day some of the greatest works of the Italian Renaissance: including the Basilica of St Francis in Assisi 'one of the greatest monuments of Italian art'; Pinturricchio's masterpiece, Gozzoli and Perugino's sumptuous frescoes in Montefalco and Filippo Lippi's superlative frescoes in the Spoleto cathedral. On the way you will visit an enchanting hill town, perched above the Vale of Umbria, a tranquil farming town with extraordinary Roman remains; another hill town famous for its red wine and rich artistic heritage, and Spoleto, one of the most interesting towns of central Italy which, for three weeks at the end of June and beginning of July, is the seat of Italy's most celebrated arts festivals.

The walks

This is a great Grade 4 Walk. The walks follow good paths, generally unsealed country roads, although there are a couple of sections where you will need to have a good sense of orientation. The walks range from 8 to 15 kilometres (3 to 6 hours). The first walk on Day 2 is probably the most challenging being 15 kilometres long and with a steep climb, however, the views on the top of Mt Subasio are worth the effort.

The accommodation

Hidden Italy uses the best accommodation available and the accommodation is one of the highlights of this walk: Day 1 is in a small 3-star family hotel off the main square in Assisi; Day 2 is a 4-star hotel in a restored palazzo; Day 3 is a 3-star hotel in a restored convent in the centre of the village; Day 4 is a 4-star hotel in a beautiful villa with a pool surrounded by parklands on the edge of the region's premier wine town; Day 5 is in a restored 15th century castle and Day 6 in a 4-restored palazzo in the shade of Spoleto's cathedral. All rooms have en suite bathrooms and air conditioning.

The food

You are walking through one of the food and wine regions of Italy - famous for its Sagrantino red wine; 'norcineria' (sausages and cold cuts); lentils; truffles and.... chocolate. Generous breakfasts are included each day (you'll need them for your walks). With notice, the hotels will be able to prepare a cut lunch for the walk. Dinners are not included in the standard however, if you select the 'Dinners option' (which we strongly recommend) this will include 3 course meals alla carte (ie free choice) in some of the finest restaurants in the area. The dinner option also means you'll have a guaranteed booking each night.

What's included in this walk?

- six nights accommodation
- all breakfasts and dinners
- recommendations for lunch
- reading lists and historical and cultural notes
- maps and detailed walking instructions
- daily transfers of baggage between hotels
- transfer to Spoleto railway station (with direct connections to Rome and Florence)
- 24 hour backup from local manager

Umbria Walking Tour Itinerary

Day 1

Even without St Francis Assisi would be irresistible, a charming medieval town nestled under the forested peak of Monte Subasio. However, the monuments that have been dedicated to the saint make Assisi a highlight of any visit to Umbria. The Basilica dedicated to Saint Francis contains some of the masterpieces of Western art, including seminal works by Cimabue, Giotto, Simone Martini and the Lorenzetti brothers.

Day 2

The first walk takes you up to the peak of Monte Subasio via a Franciscan hermitage, with astonishing views across Umbria to the hills of Tuscany, to a spectacular hilltop village perched on a ridge on the other side of Monte Subasio. You'll have time to visit the 13th century church of Santa Maria Maggiore with Pinturicchio's dazzling fresco cycle, fresh and glowing after recent restoration. (17 kms, 7 hrs).

Day 3

A gentle walk following country roads across the valley floor, leaving Spello via a magnificent Roman gate and passing through wheat fields to a small town on the plain, one of the hidden treasures of the region. This sleepy town has two of Umbria's finest Romanesque churches as well as impressive Roman mosaics and a delightful little 19th century theatre. (10 kms, 3 hrs).

Day 4

Today you walk up rolling hills to one of the viticulture centres of the region, passing through the vineyards that have made the town famous. Montefalco spreads across a ridge 500 mts above the valley. As the seat of the papal governors in the 14th century, it has a rich artistic heritage out of all proportion to its size, including a beautiful fresco cycle of St Francis' life by the influential Florentine artist Gozzoli. (8 kms, 2.5 hrs)

Day 5

Descending from the hills, you cross the valley floor again, following a medieval path through wheat fields, past quiet farming villages and springs from a river source sacred to the Romans which inspired poets from Virgil to Byron (a charming nearby 8th century temple contains some of Umbria's oldest frescos), before climbing up to your accommodation, in a country tavern surrounded by lawns and forest that boasts one of the district's best known restaurants. (21 kms, 6 hrs)

Day 6

The last walk, one of the most beautiful in Umbria, winds through olive groves, around the side of the hills past a string of villages before climbing up to enter Spoleto through forests via a medieval bridge - Shelley declared Spoleto 'the most Romantic city I ever saw'. Your accommodation is in a restored patrician palazzo 100 metres from the town's cathedral, whose façade of restrained elegance is one of the most memorable in the region. The Duomo also contains superlative frescos by the Florentine master Fra' Filippo Lippi, including his final masterpiece, the Coronation of the Virgin, a fitting finale to your tour! (14 kms, 4.5 hrs).

Day 7

After breakfast you'll be transferred to Spoleto station, which has direct connections to Rome and Florence.