



The Best of Tuscany and Umbria

*Cycling through enchanting landscapes along medieval
pilgrim ways and into the country of Saint Francis of Assisi*



TRIP NOTES 2018

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GENIUS LOCI TRAVEL - The Real Spirit Of Italy



INTRODUCTION

This ten-day tour is a true and full immersion into two beautiful regions that are considered among the greatest places for cycling holidays. You will see the very best of Central Tuscany and Umbria. These two regions are in themselves historically, culturally and climatically different. Tuscany is known for its hamlets and hill towns, terracotta rooftops, swaying cypresses and golden valleys, as well as being the birthplace of the Italian language, the Renaissance, and the cradle of Italian art. It was also the land of wars between hundreds of its towns and villages.

Here you will enjoy the countryside, the rolling vineyards, the poppies in spring and the wild cyclamen in autumn. Most of all, many of the views have barely changed for hundreds of years. On this tour you head off into a picturesque Tuscan landscape of gentle hills, tipped by a lonely pine or oak tree while cypresses line the way leading to the distant farmhouses.

The holy Umbria was a land of peace, historically bound to the State of the Church. It is the land of St. Francis and it is the "Green Heart" of Italy - with its green fields, plains, forests and meadows of the Apennine Mountains. It is known not only for its precious liquid, olive oil, but also for its white and pink Umbrian limestone that was used to build many of its medieval villages.

Umbria is not as famous as the Tuscan landscape, but perhaps more genuine and at least as beautiful! You will cycle from village to village, through forests and vineyards, then through the rolling hills between the spectacular hilltop towns of Spoleto, Spello and Assisi in a full immersion in the mythical Umbrian landscape.



Please note: this is a moderate tour which is suitable for all those who have some experience of bicycle touring and are in a good general physical condition. On some of the inland stretches you may encounter some steeper climbs. Average cycling times: approx: 5-6 hours each day.



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DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

Day 1 Arrival at Montepulciano

On arrival at your charming hotel in Montepulciano you will be met by our staff. After checking in you attend a short bike-fitting session and afterwards are free for an exploratory walk in the medieval town. Of course you must take your time to see some of the local wineries and why not have a taste of a nice glass of local red wine?

Accommodation: Hotel in Montepulciano – BB

Day 2 Montepulciano to Pienza ride

Today you cycle from Montepulciano through the delightful Tuscan countryside to the village of Pienza, a small, perfectly laid-out Renaissance town, completely re-built under the orders of Pope Pius II. Pienza is often described as the "ideal city" or the "utopian city", representing the so-called utopia of the "civitas", based on the concept of a town able to satisfy the needs of a peaceful and hardworking population.

Accommodation: Hotel in Montepulciano – BB

Distance : 40/70 km – Cycling time : 4/7 hours

Day 3 Montepulciano to Cortona

After your breakfast you say goodbye to Montepulciano and start cycling towards the Trasimeno Lake, which is the biggest freshwater body in peninsular Italy. You will follow a quiet, easy cycling path around the lake, showing you the most beautiful spots in the area. You need to get off your bikes of course and enjoy a picnic at the lakeside. At the end of the day you arrive at Cortona, an important Etruscan settlement with its nicely preserved medieval centre.

Accommodation: Hotel in Cortona – BB

Distance : 42/70 km – Cycling time : 3-4/7 hours

Day 4 Cortona to Montone & Umbertide

Today's ride first takes you up into the hills of the pre-Appennine Mountains, and then down the gorgeous gradual descent again on minor asphalt roads towards the Upper Tiber valley. Here you enjoy stupendous views of the rolling hills and shallow valleys of this part of Umbria. You visit the charming little village of Montone perched on a low hilltop and then check in at your nearby hotel.

Hotel in Montone/Umbertide – BB

Distance : 55/75 km – Cycling time : 5-6/7 hours

Day 5 Monte & Umbertide to Assisi

Today you continue cycling through the Tiber Valley, passing medieval castles and abbeys, on a road flanked by fields and forests, to the slopes of Mt. Subasio. A final climb takes you to splendid medieval Assisi, the hometown of Saint Francis. Here you have ample time to explore the city. This little town is full of highlights, among which is the Basilica of San Francesco d'Assisi (St. Francis) of course, with its wonderful frescos by Giotto, a World Heritage Site. But the other churches, the Greek temple of the central square and the underground Roman Forum are also worth a visit.

Accommodation: Hotel in Assisi – BB

Distance : 50/70 km – Cycling time : 4-5/7 hours



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Day 6 From Asissi through Spello to Bevagna

Today's ride takes you along the Via degli Olivi (Olive Grove Way) on the lower slopes of Monte Subasio. This road offers wonderful views over the plains below. It takes you to the very picturesque old Roman town of Spello, considered by many to be one of the most charming towns in the area. This is an ideal location for a lunch stop en route. From Spello you can then ride across the Umbra Valley to the foothills of the Montefalco territories, home of the superb Sagrantino red wine, and on to the Roman settlement of Bevagna.

Accommodation: Hotel in Bevagna – BB

Distance : 40/65 km – Cycling time : 4-6 hours

Day 7 Bevagna ride

Today you are free to either relax in the lovely little medieval village of Bevagna or you can choose to go out for a short ride taking you to one of the many outstanding medieval hilltop towns in the area. Either way do remember to pause for a glass of the wonderful locally produced red wine.

Accommodation: Hotel in Bevagna – BB

Day 8 Bevagna to Spoleto

This morning you set off for a gentle easy ride through the Umbra Valley with scenic views of the hilltop towns that face it, taking you to the charming town of Spoleto. Alternatively you first cycle to Montefalco - a medieval town famous for its wines - and to Trevi, a gorgeous medieval town that is also known as the capital of olive oil. After arriving in Spoleto and checking in at your hotel you simply must make the small walk through the ancient centre of the town to admire the famous Bridge of Towers (Ponte delle Torri).

Accommodation: Hotel in Spoleto – BB

Distance : 40/70 km – Cycling time : 4-7 hours

Day 9 Spoleto ride

After breakfast you head off for a short half-day ride taking you deep into Umbria. If you wish you can top off your last cycling day with a challenging and epic climb towards one of the most remote areas in the region, the 'Holy Forest' of Monteluco, venerated by the Romans and sacred to St. Francis.

Accommodation: Hotel in Spoleto - BB

Day 10 End of the tour

The tour ends today after breakfast at Spoleto. There are regular departures by train to reach Rome, Perugia or Firenze. On request a private transfer can take you to the train station.



TOUR DETAILS

ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

All nights are spent in beautiful, characteristic ***hotels and B&Bs. All rooms have en-suite facilities.

No picnic lunches or dinners are included in the tour price. Picnic lunches can be prepared for you by the accommodation holders, or materials for picnics can be purchased in the villages where you'll be staying. In the evenings you are free to go out and choose from the many osterias and restaurants in the towns and villages where you will be staying.

Nights 1 & 2: The first two nights are spent in a nice 3-star hotel in the wonderful medieval hilltop town of Montepulciano. From the cosy hotel the whole of the village is within easy reach.

Night 3: Tonight you stay in a charming hotel in the historic centre of Cortona near the Trasimeno Lake.

Night 4: The next night you stay in a charming hotel near the town of Montone or Umbertide.

Night 5: Tonight is spent in a nice hotel in the famous medieval town of Assisi, birthplace of Saint Francis. From the hotel you can easily reach the main attractions of the town.

Nights 6 & 7: These two nights you stay in a nice 3-star hotel in the medieval town of Bevagna.

Nights 8 & 9: The last two nights you stay in a charming hotel in the centre of the medieval town of Spoleto, beneath Monte Subasio.

UPGRADE/CHANGES IN ACCOMMODATION

It is possible to book an upgrade in some of the places en route. Details and prices on request.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Moderate (3): Mostly moderate rides but inevitably with several climbs, only a few of which are really strenuous. All roads are well paved and mostly quiet, with little traffic. Extensions or shortcuts are possible on some days.

Fitness: Some experience of bicycle touring and a good general physical condition will certainly make your travel experience more enjoyable. You should be able to cycle for several hours a day even in hot weather conditions.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Arrival: The tour starts in MONTEPULCIANO, reached by a short transfer from Chiusi train station.

Departure: The tour ends after breakfast in SPOLETO. A short transfer brings you to the train station.



INCLUSIONS

- Accommodation:
2 nights Montepulciano, 1 night Cortona, 1 night Montone/Umbertide, 1 night Assisi, 2 nights Bevagna, 2 nights Spoleto; all nights in good ***hotels and B&B's.
- Meals: 9 breakfasts
- Extensive route notes, with description of the route & tourist information
- Maps at 1 : 50.000 scale (or better)
- 24/7 assistance
- Luggage transport
- Private transfers as specified

Not Included

- Departure taxes & Visas
- Travel Insurance
- Drinks and meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Optional additional tours or activities
- Tips & Items of personal nature
- Bicycle rental

TOUR VARIATIONS

EXTRA NIGHTS

It is possible to extend your tour with a few days in Umbria or Tuscany. Details and prices on request. Extra cycling and/or sightseeing options can be provided!

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