



Independent cycling tour (BUMB)

Magical Umbria

Cycling on the traces of St. Francis

*Cycling through the Tiber Valley and the Umbrian hills:
good wine, great views and scrumptious Italian food*



TRIP NOTES

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INTRODUCTION

Umbria is one of Italy's smallest regions, and the only of its peninsular regions that is landlocked. Still with its combination of natural and cultural attractions, ranging from the splendid medieval town of Assisi with the world-famous church of St. Francis, and the 'art city' of Perugia, to the rolling hills covered by vineyards and olive groves, and the steep mountain tops of the Appenine mountain range, it more than merits a thorough visit by the conscious traveller looking for a taste of the real Italy, far away from the bustling crowds of popular seaside resorts and large noisy towns.

This tour will take you through the green and yellow hills of Umbria, from the medieval town of Assisi through broad valleys to the region's capital, Perugia, and further on to the hills of Passaggio, dominated by olive yards. You will make your way along the Topino River to the hamlets of Bevagna and Montefalco, famous for its 'vino rosso'. Towards the end of your journey you will cycle around Monte Subasio before returning to Assisi again. All connected by great well-paved and quiet roads, ideal for cycling.

You will cycle past world-famous cultural sites and through pristine natural areas, teeming with small country roads, and rough mountain scenery as well as attractive countryside, with vineyards and olive groves. You'll visit the region's main cultural attractions such as the medieval town centre and church of St. Francis at Assisi, and the city of Perugia, nicknamed the 'art city' for the host of famous painters that have been born here. The city is famous for its chocolate production as well, culminating in the annual chocolate festival every October. Cycling through the green hills you will pass some of the nicest medieval villages in the area, where the traditional way of life is still evident and friendly locals will greet you with open hospitality. This is the land of some famous wines (the rosso di Montefalco!) and delicious local food (brasato ai tartufi, pappardelle al Sagrantino!), waiting for you to enjoy.

The first few days you will cycle from Assisi to Perugia with plenty of time to visit both cities' historical and artistic treasures. Over the next couple of days you will explore the more remote parts of the region, passing through lush green valleys and over slowly unwinding hill country. You will visit the wine village of Torgiano where a museum has been dedicated to the locally produced wines, and the beautiful little towns of Bettona and Bevagna. From Bevagna you will cycle on the 'Strada del Sagrantino' towards Montefalco. You are now deep in the best wine-producing land of the region, where the small hamlets on top of the rolling hills offer great views over a large part of Umbria. The last couple of days will take you through the quiet rural area of the Valle d'Umbria, from Budino to Spello, and around Monte Subasio back to Assisi.



Please note: this is a moderately easy tour suitable even for those with just a basic level of fitness. Rides are short and generally involve few climbs each day, leaving plenty of time for sightseeing. Average cycling times: approx. 2-4 hours each day.



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DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

Day 0 – Rome (or Florence)

Arrival in Rome (or Florence) in case you arrive a day earlier. Both cities have international airports. From Rome and Florence, Assisi can easily be reached by train. There are regular fast regional and Intercity trains: travel time about two hours, cost € 10,00 from Rome; around € 15,00 from Florence. Several hotels can be booked in Rome and Florence, according to your wishes (either 'downtown' centrally located, or near the harbour or train station, ranging from 3 to 5-star).

N.B. If you arrive one day earlier you have the chance to pay a visit to either Rome or Florence, both offering an endless array of historical and cultural points of interest.

Day 1 – Arrival in Assisi

After your arrival at Assisi you will settle in at your hotel and pick up your bicycle. If you arrive early you can visit the famous basilica of St. Francis (UNESCO World Heritage), which was damaged severely by an earthquake in 1997, but has now been restored to its original splendour. In the evening you can go for a stroll in the medieval town centre and pick an appropriate spot for dinner.

Accommodation: Hotel in Assisi – BB

Day 2 – From Assisi to Perugia

Your first trip takes you on a ride through the plain to the region's capital city Perugia. Enjoy the views of the monumental churches of Assisi while you leave them behind and breathe the fresh country air as you cross the Tiber River in the midst of the glowing hay fields. You can have a lazy picnic near the riverbank and stop for a cup of coffee, or why not have a glass of 'rosso' in a local bar? Shortly before reaching Perugia you will have to gradually climb up the road to the ancient city walls, after which you enter the city through one of its majestic city gates. The historical centre of the city, teeming with renaissance 'palazzi', makes for a perfect back drop for a relaxed evening stroll and a pre-dinner 'aperitivo' on the city's main boulevard, the Corso Vannucci.

Accommodation: Hotel in Perugia - BB

Distance : 27 km – Cycling time : 2,5 hours

Day 3 – From Perugia to Passaggio

Before leaving Perugia, you may want to discover the city a little more. Art lovers will have a great time at the *Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria* where several works of Italian painters from the 13th to the 19th century are on display. After leaving the city you then cycle through the valley of the Tiber River to the village of Torgiano. Here you can visit the precious wine museum containing an extensive collection of archaeological artefacts and literary sources on the production of wine. When leaving Torgiano don't forget to stop along your route to taste what you have just learned! A small climb then brings you to the city of Bettona, dating back to the 6th millennium BC. Continuing into the hills near Passaggio you finally arrive at your very comfortable agriturismo. The 17th-century complex with great views over the Topino Valley also boasts a private swimming pool for you to relax by.

Accommodation: Agriturismo in Passaggio - BB

Distance : 29 km – Cycling time : 3 hours



Day 4 – From Passaggio to Montefalco

Today's trip starts with an easy ride over the flat road alongside the Topino River, written about by Dante Alighieri in his Divine Comedy! After passing the river you come to the little town of Bevagna, officially shortlisted as one of Italy's most beautiful hamlets. Here you can have a hearty lunch in one of the local restaurants. Leaving Bevagna you will start following the 'Strada del Sagrantino' that takes you through the heart of the area producing both the excellent 'rosso' and 'sagrantino' of Montefalco. The last part of today's trip takes you up to the medieval centre of Montefalco itself, beautifully located on top of a low hill. From the village you can enjoy some great views over large parts of Umbria. At dinner tonight don't forget to taste the wine!

Accommodation: Agriturismo in Montefalco - BB

Distance : 31 km – Cycling time : 3 hours

Day 5 – From Montefalco to Spello

After breakfast you will leave for an easy stage through the Valle d'Umbria taking you to the nicely situated Spello. While descending from Montefalco you will enjoy cycling through shady olive groves and fragrant vineyards. You ride alongside the River Topino again before crossing a quiet rural area to the peaceful village of Budino situated in the territory of the town of Foligno. Foligno is known for its 'Giostra della Quintana', a historical ring jousting tournament on horseback held each June and September. A last stretch of road will then take you to the old walled town of Spello, situated on the lower southern flank of Monte Subasio. You may want to visit the town's medieval centre and take some time for a drink before settling in at your agriturismo.

Accommodation: Agriturismo in Spello - BB

Distance : 25 km – Cycling time : 2,5 hours

Day 6 – From Spello to Assisi

The last stage of your tour brings you back to Assisi from Spello, by way of Monte Subasio. From the mountain's slopes pink-coloured stones were quarried for use in many of the Franciscan buildings of Assisi. Cycling on the slopes of the mountain, you will pass through several quiet little hamlets where you can stop for a cup of coffee or a cappuccino, or quite simply take in the atmosphere. Climbing around the mountain is not that easy so you may want to opt for a shorter and easier route to Assisi.

When you arrive back at Assisi you still have plenty of time to further discover its monuments and wander through its quiet little alleyways, or maybe take a walk through its lush countryside. For your final dinner this night you may want to sample the region's wines and good genuine food once again.

Accommodation: Hotel in Assisi – BB

Distance : 25 km – Cycling time : 2,5 hours

Day 7 – End of the tour

The tour ends in Assisi after breakfast today. A train transfer can take you back to Rome or Florence. A taxi transfer to other destinations can be arranged on request.



TOUR DETAILS

ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

All nights are spent in beautiful, characteristic hotels or agriturismos (generally 3-star). All rooms have en-suite facilities.

No dinners or picnic lunches are included. You will have plenty of opportunities to eat out each evening, choosing from several typical restaurants.

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.

Night 1: The first night is spent in a beautifully located 3-star hotel in the centre of the medieval town of Assisi. The hotel is within easy reach of all of the town's major monuments.

Night 2: Tonight you are staying in a cosy 3-star hotel in the city of Perugia. From the hotel the whole of the historic city centre can be easily reached.

Night 3: This night is spent in a beautiful agriturismo in the hills near Passaggio, offering a taste of peaceful country life. After your day's cycling you can relax next to the agriturismo's private swimming pool.

Night 4: Tonight you stay in yet another typical agriturismo in the wine village of Montefalco, above the Topino Valley. You can have your dinner, based on local specialties, on the agriturismo's premises.

Night 5: This night you will stay in an agriturismo close to Spello, on the slopes of Monte Subasio. The wonderful panorama costs nothing.

Night 6: The last night of your tour you will stay in the hotel in the centre of Assisi again.

UPGRADE/CHANGES IN ACCOMMODATION

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

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Moderately easy (2/3): Mostly easy rides with just a few moderate climbs, only occasionally quite steep. All roads are well paved with a few short unpaved sections. They are mostly quiet with little traffic. Extensions or shortcuts are possible on some days.

Fitness: The trip requires a basic level of fitness. Day-to-day rides are short (up to 30 km) and mainly involve only one climb, generally at the end of the day, reaching your night's accommodation. Short cycling distances mean you have plenty of time for sightseeing and sampling local culture, and cuisine.



INCLUDED

- Accommodation: 2 nights Assisi, 1 night Perugia, 1 night Passaggio, 1 night Montefalco, 1 night Spello in good *** hotels and agriturismos
- Meals: 6 breakfasts
- Extensive route notes, with description of the route & tourist information
- Maps at 1 : 50.000 scale (or better) ; GPS waypoints and tracks (optional)
- 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 (available on request)

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Arrival: The tour starts in ASSISI, which can easily be reached by train from either Rome or Florence. Both cities have an international airport.

Departure: The tour ends in ASSISI on day 7. A short transfer can bring you to the local train station, where you can easily travel on to Rome or Florence.

TOUR VARIATIONS

EXTRA NIGHTS

It is possible to include extra nights in any of the accommodations 'en route'. Extra cycling and/or sightseeing options can be provided! It is also possible to extend your tour with a few days in Umbria (Assisi, Perugia or any smaller town) or at Rome or Florence. Details & prices on request.

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