

EXPLORING UMBRIA – ASSISI, SPELLO, SPOLETO & PERUGIA

7-days / 6-night *great value* self-guided inn-to-inn cycling holidays



This 7-day self-guided cycling holiday is on quiet country roads through a quintessential rural Italian landscape with a beautiful backdrop of forested hills and silver-green olive groves. Umbria has been praised since Roman times for its natural beauty; it's greenness, its many lakes and rivers, refreshing springs, mountain streams and waterfalls. This not-too-strenuous cycling tour follows an interesting and colourful valley route with a few rolling hills. It gives you wonderful vistas of the many lively medieval hilltop villages and towns overlooking the 'Valle Umbra'. You will see Assisi, Spello, Foligno, Spoleto, Montefalco, Bevagna and Perugia with time to visit and explore each of these famous historic towns.

The tour starts and finishes near Assisi a centre for religious art and culture known the world over. At the foot of Monte Subasio (505m) this beautiful pilgrimage town with its narrow alleyways, intimate squares and many medieval monuments always make an unforgettable impression on visitors.

On the first day our scenic route winds its way along the fertile valley via the colourful village of Spello and the beautiful Romanesque Duomo at Foligno, to Bovara. The second day we offer a route through olive groves to the lovely ancient town of Spoleto with its Duomo with frescoes of the Florentine painter Filippo Lippi, a Roman theatre and the medieval bridge and aqueduct Ponte delle Torri.

The second part of the tour is to Torgiano, Montefalco and Perugia, the capital of the region, with its solemn Renaissance palaces, museums, churches and the tightly winding shopping streets.

A short ride along the quiet country roads through the valley will bring you back to your last night near Assisi.

Departs: Daily all year round (April to October is the recommended time)

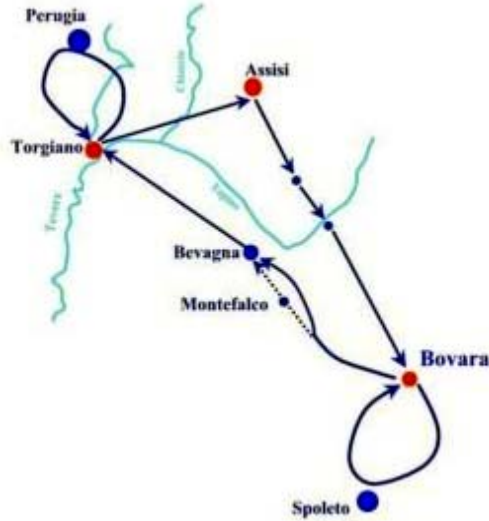
Grade: Easy cycling mostly flat or gentle rolling hills. Short distances each day of between 25 - 60km.

Cost: AU\$1105 per person in a twin/double room with breakfast and dinner
 AU\$1330 for a single room with breakfast and dinner

Tour includes: Overnight stays with breakfast in good 3-star hotels or B & B, Country House accommodation with half board, bike hire with pannier, repair kit, helmet & kilometre counter, luggage transportation, route notes (in English) and route maps including hotel list and information brochures, local emergency support & hotline

Not included: Meals other than those shown or drinks with dinners & personal expenses, transport to the start or from the end of the tour, tour guide or support vehicle. GPS (available at extra cost of \$45)

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Accommodation: The standard hotel in Assisi is a 3-star family-run hotel with air-conditioning, a swimming pool and restaurant / bar. In Torgiano we offer lovely a family run 3-star hotel or a traditional B & B, all rooms have a private bathroom, air-conditioning, safe, fridge and satellite television. Dinner is in a restaurant close by (200m). In Bovarna we stay in a 17th century villa, now a country house, where all rooms have a private bathroom & air-conditioning and there is a swimming pool. The upgrade hotel in Assisi is a quality 3-star and is located 900m from the historical centre. The Assisi hotel upgrade and/or extra nights can be arranged (at extra cost).

Suggested itinerary:

Day 1 Arrival at your hotel at Viole near Assisi (3km)

Plan to arrive in the late afternoon for an evening briefing on the route ahead, to collect and adjust your bicycles.

Day 2 Assisi to Bovarna (37km)

Today the cycling mainly follows the valley, passing Spello and Foligno, ending in the small village of Bovarna.

Leaving Assisi the ride is along the contoured slopes of Mount Subasio to Spello. You should allow time to explore this charming town with its ancient architecture much of which dates back to Roman and medieval periods. Spello is called the town of flowers because of its many alleyways embellished with colourful plants and flowers. The town is also known for the naive artist Norberto – look out for examples of his much-collected work depicting caricatured monks and nuns in rural and village landscapes.

After Spello, descend to Foligno lower down the valley to see the main square with its beautiful Duomo, which still has its Romanesque façade. Continue along the lively shopping street and leave the town, cycling across the valley floor through fields and along waterways to Bovarna. Where you will stay for 2-nights.

Day 3 Circular ride to Spoleto (29km)

This morning a short ride will take you to the historic and popular town of Spoleto. The town can be seen from a distance with its' castle dominating the hilltop on which part of the old town is built. The town centre is still largely inside the medieval walls. There is a lot to see in Spoleto, including the cathedral with its famous frescoes by the Florentine painter Filippo Lippi, the Roman house and theatre and an impressive archaeological museum.

Leaving Spoleto, cycle through the many olive groves back to your hotel at Bovarna.

Day 4 Cycling to Torgiano (60km) passing Bevagna and with an option ascent to Montefalco

Riding through a picturesque undulating landscape you will see Montefalco from a distance, but to reach this lovely town you first have to conquer a steep climb so we offer you the option to continue along the valley directly to Bevagna or to make the effort to visit Montefalco (at 472m). Montefalco is known as the 'balcony of Umbria', because of the fantastic panoramic views it offers. The Franciscan church now a museum, is decorated with 15th and 16th century frescoes by artists such as Benozzo Gozzoli and Perugino. Montefalco is also known for its excellent wines; Rosso di Montefalco d.o.c. and Sagrantino d.o.c.g, produced on the slopes around the town.

From Montefalco cycle downhill to Bevagna. This town has a medieval square and a fountain and two Romanesque churches. You will then reach Torgiano, at the confluence of the rivers Chiascio and Tiber (Tevere), where your comfortable hotel is in the quiet town centre. You stay in Torgiano for 2-nights.

Day 5 Perugia (24km) or Torgiano (33km or 47km)

Today you can choose from two options:

Visit Perugia (24km) - Discover the town of Perugia, which is the capital of the province. A short ride takes you to the station in Ponte S.Giovanni at the foot of Perugia. From here a local train will take you into the historical centre of Perugia. The centre, with its little alleys and characteristic squares, is a lively vibrant place. The renaissance palaces, medieval churches, museums and many galleries will make a lasting impression.

Return by train and bike to Torgiano. Perhaps take time to sample the vintages from this famous wine region, which in 1968 became the first area in Umbria to achieve d.o.c. denomination status (the d.o.c.g. status was added for the local red wine Torgiano Rosso Riserva in 1999).

Discover the area around Torgiano (33km or 47km) - close to Torgiano (6km) is the village of Deruta, which has retained many highly distinctive medieval buildings. Deruta is also famous for its ceramics and the origins of this ancient art date back to Etruscan times. Numerous museums in Italy and around the world have ceramic pieces from Deruta on display, including the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Today local workshops still make excellent quality pots, bowls and vases. The town hall has an art gallery and ceramics museum.

The next stop is the sanctuary of Madonna dei Bagni, which was built – so it is said - after a miracle, which took place in the year 1657. Inside the church there are over 600 votive tiles, made in the traditional Deruta style.

Cycling through rolling hills through a typical rural landscape you pass several traditional Umbrian farming hamlets like Casalalta. In the afternoon ride back to Torgiano through the Tiber Valley.

Day 6 To Assisi (25km)

Today we cross the valley, cycling on quiet country roads towards Assisi, which like many other Umbrian towns, it is built on a hilltop. Before reaching Assisi you can stop to visit the Franciscan basilica in San Maria degli Angeli. Under its impressive dome lies the humble little chapel 'Porziuncola' where Saint Francis came to pray.

You have a short, steep climb to Assisi, but it is well worth the effort. And once there you have time to explore Assisi's squares and shopping areas and the main monuments such as the basilica of Saint Francis with its beautiful frescoes by the painters Giotto, Simone Martini, Cimabue and Pietro Lorenzetti.

It is a short ride to the hotel just outside the town where the journey began. If you prefer to stay in the town of Assisi on this last night it is possible but with an additional cost (this must be requested at the time of booking).

Day 7 Tour ends after breakfast

Extra nights can be booked in Assisi for those interested in exploring more of the city of St Francis.



Other cycling holidays – guided in small groups or self-guided - are available in Italy and across Europe through **Outdoor Travel** including Tuscany, Lake Como, the Alps or Dolomites, Amalfi or the Cinque Terre coast and Provence, Loire Valley or Dordogne in France, along the Danube in Germany and Austria or in Switzerland.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more itinerary details and reservations

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