



GREAT WALKS OF ITALY

NORCIA, UMBRIA IN THE FOOTHILLS OF THE APENNINES - CENTRE-BASED WALKING



The region of **Umbria**, in central Italy, offers excellent **walking** in the green rolling foothills of the **Apennines** and a relaxing way of life. Soon you'll be absorbed into this tranquil rural lifestyle of beautiful scenery and excellent cuisine. Our guided walks in the **Monte Sibillini National Park** include rambles through the stunning Piano Grande, a vast open plain full of wild flowers, to the sleepy village of Castelluccio.

The enchanting **walled town of Norcia**, set in a green bowl below the tranquil green Apennines, is surrounded by excellent walking country and retains the charm and warm hospitality of another age. Appreciate rural **Italian life** by wandering around the narrow cobbled streets to explore the medieval buildings and churches.

OUR BASE - HOTEL GROTTA AZZURA - Dating from the 15th century, this three-star, family-run hotel is full of character and located right at the heart of the medieval walled town of Norcia. The hotel's excellent restaurant serves many local specialities. There are 46 en-suite bedrooms.

2007 DEPARTURE DATES: 5, 12, 19, 26 May; 2, 9,*, 16, 23,30 June; 8, 15, 22*, 29 Sep; 6 Oct 2007

* Note: Weeks of 9 June & 22 Sep offers Mountain Walking

COST PER PERSON: AU\$1240 Single Supplement AU\$235

Day 1: Arrival day

Day 2: The Santa Scholastica Valley

These first day walks head south from Norcia into the wide valley, which lies at the foot of the Sibillini Mountains to enjoy wide views of the Norcia region. The Easier walk follows a gentle downhill path from the village of San Pellegrino. Meanwhile the Harder Walk follows a route from Norcia to the village of Ospedaletto. Both groups should return to Norcia in time to enjoy a relaxing drink in one of the town's cafes and to explore the many narrow streets and alleyways within the town walls.

Easier Walk: 10km, 150 metres of ascent and 700 metres of descent.

Harder Walk: 13½ km 1,850 feet (565 metres) of ascent and descent.

Day 3: The Piano Grande (The Great Plain)

Today we travel by bus into the Sibillini Mountains and start near the Perugia refuge at a viewpoint, which gives us breathtaking vistas over mountains and our objective, the remote mountain village of Castelluccio. The Easier Walk descends to the Dogana Valley and the Pian Piccolo (the little plain). In the afternoon the walk emerges into the full glory of the Piano Grande, which is then crossed to reach Castelluccio. The Harder option follows part of the Grande Anello long distance footpath before following the same route across the plain to Castelluccio.

Easier Walk: 8½km, 160 metres of ascent and 200 metres of descent

Harder Walk: 14km, 170 metres of ascent and 285 metres of descent

Day 4: The villages of the Nera Valley

Today both groups use hired transport to reach the Nera Valley west of Norcia. Both groups will visit picturesque hilltop villages and will make use of the route of the former Spoleto to Norcia railway. The Easier Walk starts in the hilltop town of Cerreto di Spoleto and follows an old mule track to the confluence of the Vigi and Nera rivers. We then continue downstream on a shady riverside path to Piedipaterno. The Harder Walk heads along the valley in the opposite direction starting from Castel S. Felice and walking through Piedipaterno to Cerreto di Spoleto.

Easier Walk: 8½km, 20 metres of ascent and 260 metres of descent

Harder Walk: 15km, 450 metres of ascent and 220 metres of descent

Day 5: Free day

Today no walks are organised, allowing you to explore the local area or just relax in the hotel. Options for your free day include taking a local bus to Spoleto or, if guest numbers justify it, hiring a coach, to reach Spoleto, Gubbio or Assisi

Day 6: Sibillini Mountains

We return to the Sibillini to explore the hills on the western side of the Piano Grande. Both groups will follow a high level footpath, which traverses along the hillside affording views to both east and west. The harder group will be offered the opportunity to climb to the summit of Monte Patino (6,176 feet). This mountain which dominates the Norcia Valley will, on a clear day, give us splendid views of our week's walking so far and of walks to come tomorrow. Both walks end in the mountain village of Casteluccio.

Easier Walk: 10km, 330 metres of ascent and 375 metres of descent

Harder Walk: 15km, 520 metres of ascent and 560 metres of descent

Day 7: Villages of the Castoriano Valley

Both groups start the day by taking the bus to Forca d'Anکارano to the north of Norcia. From here we join a footpath, which leads us from attractive hilltop village to hilltop village. There will be time to linger en route especially in the remarkable village of Campi Vecchio. The path insinuates its way through hills and past wayside churches until it finally descends to the abbey of S. Eutizio where a bar, restaurant and toilets await us. The longer walk will continue beyond the abbey and take us on to the spectacular community of Preci.

Easier Walk: 10km, 113 metres of ascent and 530 metres of descent

Harder Walk: 13½km, 305 metres of ascent and 800 metres of descent

Day 8: Departure day

Please Note: *The above program should give you a good feel for the walks at this resort but is subject to change.*

Local Transport to and from walks - Local transport is not included in the cost of your holiday. Please allow €60 (approx AU\$110) per week, excluding your free day.

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