

SWISS ALPS TO ROME PILGRIMAGE ROUTE IN 8 WEEKLY SECTIONS8-day / 7-night inn-to-inn **SELF-GUIDED** walks from Gran San Bernardo (Bourg St Pierre) to St Peters**All roads lead to Rome - *Omnes Viae Romam Perducunt***

For centuries pilgrims from across Europe have made their way on foot, horseback, by carriage or bicycle seeking spiritual solace at the three most holy of Christian cities: Santiago de Compostela in northern Spain, Rome in Italy, and Jerusalem.

Following the Muslim domination of Jerusalem in 640AD, Rome remained as the main destination for Christian pilgrimage until the 10th Century, when the veneration of St James of Compostela – the *Camino de Santiago* – in Galicia, Northern Spain began.

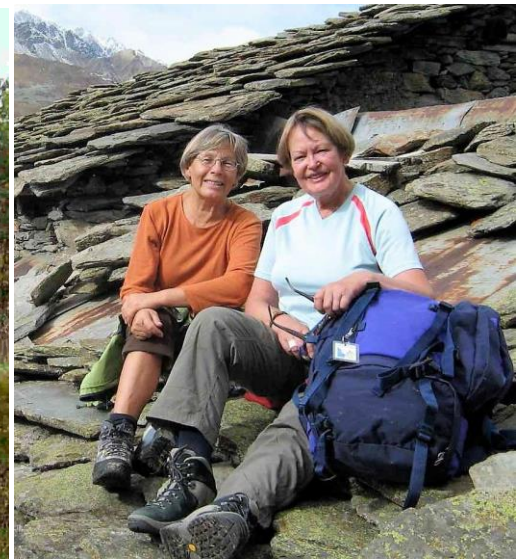
The pilgrim's road to Rome or **Via Francigena** is not a single road, as it comprises several possible routes that have changed over the centuries. The *Via Francigena* did however become the 'backbone' of the road system of Western Europe in 58BC, when Emperor Julius Caesar opened his "*Road of the Sun*", the shortest route between the North Sea and Rome.

As the number of pilgrims to Rome grew, abbeys, monasteries, cathedrals, churches and shrines were built to encourage and support them. Hospices, hospitals, shelters or refuges were established to accommodate and cater to the needs of the ever-increasing flow of the devoted and travellers.

Today, it is possible to experience the same route as the medieval travellers, walking the most unspoilt sections of the route on a self-guided 'inn to inn' walk – staying in 2 or 3-star hotels or agriturismo (farm or guest houses) – all with ensuite bathrooms, mostly with breakfast, with route notes and with your baggage transferred each day. We offer weekly easy to moderate walking sections from the Alps near the **Swiss border** down to the **Cinque Terre** coast, through **Tuscany** and across the **Appenines** to St Peter's Square and the **Vatican** in Rome.

Share in the sheer scale, the mystery and the history of this great medieval pilgrimage phenomenon. Take a journey where you can imagine the hardships, the pleasures and devotions of those early pilgrims. Follow an infinitely varied succession of paths and trails that link cities and villages, great cathedrals, fine churches and ancient monuments. Travel through the alpine meadows, across valley and fertile plains, climb coastal pathways, past vineyards and rustic farmlands, across the cretan landscape of Tuscany before reaching the magnificent city of Rome and - like millions of others have done through history - the sacred shrine of St Peter.

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The road to Rome was known first as *Iter Francorum* then as *Via Francigena*. It was described for the first time in the *Actum Clusio*, a parchment kept in the Abbey of San Salvatore al Monte Amiata in 876AD. At the end of the 10th Century, Sigeric, the then Archbishop of Canterbury, travelled the *Via Francigena* to Rome to be blessed by the Pope and, on the return journey to Canterbury he made a detailed record of his route and his stops. This record helped us form much of the route taken today. Other travellers' accounts of this passage are by the Icelandic traveller Nikolás Bergsson (in 1154) and Philip Augustus of France (in 1191).

With the proclamation of the Holy Year in 1300, the *Via Francigena* was travelled by thousands of wayfarers and pilgrims. However the concept of pilgrimage and the use of this road to Rome fell out of fashion around the 17th Century. By contrast the 'Way of Saint James' or 'Camino de Santiago' remained popular and is still a well-used pilgrimage, walking, cycling or riding route today.

The official *Via Francigena* closely retraces Sigeric's steps, however pilgrims came from all over Europe, from many different directions; many came from Spain, Switzerland, Holland and France as well as England. They crossed the Italian border in different places including the Grand San Bernard or Monginevro Passes and via Ventimiglia and Genoa along the coastal route. Some arrived by sea, disembarking at the port of Luni south of Sarzana near the fabulous Cinque Terre and Tuscan coast.

In 1985 the Italian 'archaeologist of roads', Giovanni Caselli, retraced the itinerary described by Archbishop Sigeric. The eighty stages on Sigeric's route averaged about twenty kilometres a day, covering some 1700km from England to Rome. In 1994 the *Via Francigena* – like the *Camino de Santiago*, which attracts an estimated 120,000 pilgrims, walkers and cyclists each year – was designated a **European Cultural Route** by the Council of Europe. Unlike the *Camino de Santiago*, the *Via Francigena* is only now starting to be discovered again and the flow of pilgrims and walkers is still just a trickle steadily increasing.

As with the *Camino de Santiago*, Outdoor Travel has recognised the growing demand not just from pilgrims, but for those looking for an interesting walking or cycling holiday. A holiday on a route through rural Italy to Rome with a spiritual or historical dimension as well as the beauty and majesty of the countryside and ancient towns and cities, the traditions and culture borne of centuries of civilisation, of food and wine and of the joy of an *active* holiday. Working closely with our partners in Italy, we have recognised that pre-booked accommodation and daily baggage transfers allow you the freedom to really enjoy this ancient trail; to take time to celebrate the dramatic and ever changing scenery, to explore the historical and religious communities along the route and to discover for yourself the spirituality and camaraderie available to all on the *Via Francigena* route to the holy city of Rome.

Currently there is still not one single *official* Via Francigena route (it even still goes under several often confusing names such as *Cammini di Santiago Vie Francigene* although there is no direct relationship with Santiago in Spain). Parts of it are now being signposted by councils and tourism communities together with the Italian Government and the EU – even the Vatican Swiss Guards are helping with installing arrows and signs on some sections. In many parts the original *Via Francigena* follows the ancient Roman roads: the *Aurelia* and the *Cassia* which are now mostly sealed and used as roads and highways. Moreover, some of Sigeric's daily stages are a challenging 30km plus per day, so we decided where necessary to find alternative paths and footpaths or trails (or quieter secondary roads when nothing else is available) and even parts of older (pre-Sigeric) versions of the *Via Francigena* to include historical and artistic centres of interest along the route.

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SELF-GUIDED INN-TO-INN WALKING

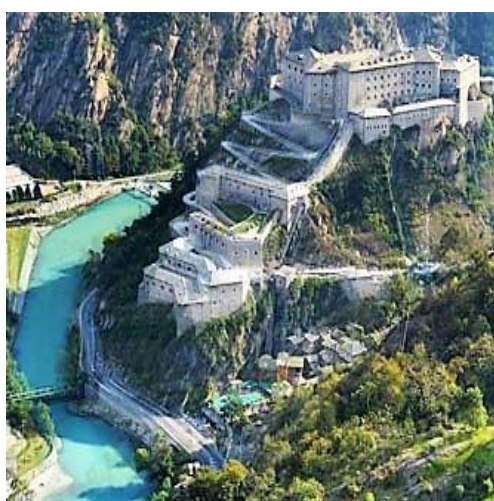
Our self-guided route starts at the San Bernardo pass and we have divided it into eight week-long sections to Rome. In each overnight stop, have your *credential* (Pilgrims Passport) stamped as a record of your visit. At our starting points we have arranged for a priest's benediction for those following a more spiritual journey.

This approximately 950km self-guided walking or cycling route travels from Bourg St Pierre near Monginevro just across the Swiss border in the Alps, into Italy and on to Rome via Ivrea, Pavia, Fidenza, Aulla, San Miniato, San Quirico d'Orcia and Montefiascone. It offers ever-changing landscapes: from steep alpine meadows to the vineyards and 'creten' hills of Tuscany; from traditional villages bypassed by time to large modern towns and urban centres, passing Roman ruins and Etruscan tombs.

Walks can start daily on demand from eight easy to reach starting points. We offer pre-booked accommodation and daily baggage transfers (1 bag per person, up to 20kg). We include comprehensive travel kit with the route notes, maps and a *credential* or, for true pilgrims, a priest's benediction.

Self-guided tour cost – shown in Australian dollars - includes:

- * Self-guided Inn to Inn walking
- * 1, 2 or 3-star accommodation
- * Daily baggage transfers from Inn to Inn
- * Breakfasts each day as indicated



THE VIA FRANCIGENA – ONE TO EIGHT WEEKS FROM THE ALPS TO ROME

Flexibility is important on our self-guided walks. Departures are daily on demand in season as long as the accommodation is available, minimum two people. You can do just one week; choose several weeks in a row or jump from one to another skipping sections in between (transfers between sections are at own expense).

Suggested itineraries from week 1 to week 8 – all distances and timings are approximate:

Week 1: From Gran San Bernardo (Bourg St Pierre) - Pont St Martin

Spectacular alpine views crossing the Colle del San Bernardo and Valle d'Aosta from the Swiss border to Italy

Duration: 8 days / 7 nights
Cost per person: **\$1775** (twin share), single room supplement \$365, solo traveller supplement \$515
Departs: Daily 15 June to 15 September
Includes: Breakfast daily
Total distance: @ 115km (average 19km daily)
Type of route: Trails: *strada bianca* (white roads) and secondary paved roads
Highlights: Alps crossing and landscapes, Val d'Aosta villages and Nus, Fénis and Verrès castles

Day 1 - Arrive Bourg St Pierre	Altitude 1632m above sea level
Day 2 - Bourg St Pierre to Colle del San Bernardo	12km (4 hours)
Day 3 - Colle del San Bernardo to Étroubles	13km (4 hours)
Day 4 - Étroubles to Aosta	16km (4½ hours)
Day 5 - Aosta to Chambave	26km (7 hours)
Day 6 - Chambave to Verrès	28km (7 hours)
Day 7 - Verrès to Pont St Martin	20km (5 hours)
Day 8 - Arrangements end after breakfast	

Nearest train station to start: Martigny (then bus 30 minutes)
Nearest train station to end: Pont Saint Martin.

Nearest international airport: Geneva
Nearest airports: Milan (Malpensa or Linate)

Week 2: Pont St Martin to Garlasco

The second week crosses northern Piedmont and to Lombardy, from the Alps to the Pavese plain. See towns rich in history, the beautiful lake of Viverone and the sanctuary of Madonna della Bozzola at Garlasco.

Duration: 8 days / 7 nights
Cost per person: **\$1670** (twin share), single room supplement \$365, solo traveller supplement \$515
Departs: Daily mid-April to mid-October
Includes: Breakfast daily
Total distance: @ 144km (average 26km daily)
Type of route: Trails, unpaved *strada bianca* and secondary asphalt roads
Highlights: Ivrea and Vercelli, the lake at Viverone, bell tower at Piverone

Day 1 - Arrive Pont St Martin	Altitude 345m above sea level
Day 2 - Pont St Martin to Ivrea	27km (6 hours)
Day 3 - Ivrea to Viverone	23km (5 hours)
Day 4 - Viverone to Santhià	17km (4½ hours)
Day 5 - Santhià to Vercelli	31km (6½ hours)
Day 6 - Vercelli to Robbio (train from Robbio to Mortara, stay Mortara)	22km (4 hours)
Day 7 - Mortara to Garlasco	24km (5½ hours)
Day 8 - Arrangements end after breakfast	

On Day 6 you can reduce the distance by taking the train from Robbio to Mortara (cost is @ €4 per person).

Nearest train station to start: Pont Saint Martin.
Nearest train station to end: Garlasco.

Nearest airports: Turin, Milan Malpensa, Milan Linate
Nearest airports: Milan Linate, Milan Malpensa, Bergamo



Week 3: Garlasco to Fidenza

Cross the vast plains alongside the River Ticino and the River Po, walking between Lombardy and Emilia Romagna. This is mainly a rural area, and it is rich in abbeys and churches dating from medieval times. On some sections it is not possible to follow the Francigena Way so we use a different route, away from traffic.

Duration: 8 days / 7 nights
Cost per person: **\$1670** (twin share), single room supplement \$365, solo traveller supplement \$515
Departs: Daily mid-April to mid-October
Includes: Breakfast daily
Total distance: @ 141km (average 24km each day)
Type of route: Mostly flat trails, unpaved *strada bianca* and secondary asphalt roads
Highlights: Historical cities; Pavia and Piacenza, the River Ticino, the Chiaravalle Abbey

Day 1 - Arrive at Garlasco	Altitude 93m above sea level
Day 2 - Garlasco to Pavia	26km (6½ hours)
Day 3 - Pavia to Miradolo Terme (transfer Sta. Cristina Miradolo included)	28km (6½ hours)
Day 4 - Miradolo Terme to Piacenza	30km (7½ hours)
Day 5 - Piacenza to Carpaneto	23km (5½ hours)
Day 6 - Carpaneto to Castell'Arquato	14km (3½ hours)
Day 7 - Castell'Arquato to Fidenza	20km (5 hours)
Day 8 - Arrangements end after breakfast	

Nearest train station to start: Garlasco.
Nearest train station to end: Fidenza.

Nearest airports: Milan Linate, Milan Malpensa, Bergamo
Nearest airports: Parma, Bologna, Milan (Linate or Malpensa)



Week 4: Fidenza to Aulla

From the Padana Plains to Apennines and down towards the Tyrrhenian Sea and Tuscany

Duration: 8 days / 7 nights
Cost per person: \$1670 (twin share), single room supplement \$365, solo traveller supplement \$515
 Departs: Daily May to September
 Includes: Breakfast daily
 Total distance: @ 122km (average 21km daily)
 Type of route: Trails, unpaved strada bianca & secondary sealed roads
 Highlights: Parma's Duomo and Battistero; the fort at Pontremoli, Cassio, Castellonchio, Berceto, Groppoli, Arzenigo, San Caprasio Abbey, Cisa Pass, spectacular views over Emilia Plain

Day 1 - Arrive at Fidenza	Altitude 57m above sea level
Day 2 - Fidenza to Fornovo	31km (7 hours)
Day 3 - Fornovo to Cassio	21km (4 hours)
Day 4 - Cassio to Berceto	11km (4 hours)
Day 5 - Berceto to Previdé	14km (4½ hours)
Day 6 - Previdé to Filatteria/Pomtremoli	22km (5 hours)
Day 7 - Filatteria/Pomtremoli to Aulla	23km (5 hours)
Day 8 - Arrangements end after breakfast	

On Day 2 you can reduce the distance by taking the train from Fidenza via Parma to Collecchio, cost @ €4 per person. Perhaps take some time to explore Parma, which has an impressive Romanesque Duomo (cathedral) with a 13th Century bell tower and Correggio frescoes, and the octagonal, pink marble Battistero.

You can shorten the walk on Day 7 using the train from Pontremoli to Aulla via Villafranca, or break the walk into two stages and stay an additional night en route (at extra cost).

Nearest train station to start: Fidenza
Nearest train station to end: Aulla

Nearest airports: Parma, Bologna, Milan Linate, Milan Malpensa
Nearest airports: Parma, Pisa, Florence or Bologna



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Week 5: Aulla - San Miniato

After crossing the *Appennino* Mountains we view the sea! We leave the official route from Sarzana heading east through hills overlooking the Mediterranean, passing through Massa, Camaiore and Lucca to the lovely village of San Miniato (the closest the route comes to Florence).

Duration:	8 days / 7 nights
Cost per person:	\$1670 (twin share), single room supplement \$365, solo traveller supplement \$515
Departs:	Daily mid-April to mid-October
Includes:	Breakfast daily
Total distance:	@ 124-144km (average 24km daily – see bus/train options in busy areas)
Type of route:	Trails, unpaved <i>strada bianca</i> and secondary asphalt roads
Highlights:	The first glimpse of the sea, Sarzanello Fortress, Lucca and the Volto Santo, Altopascio Hospital San Miniato

Day 1 - Arrive Aulla	Altitude 100m above sea level
Day 2 - Aulla to Sarzana (train option to Sarzana)	22km (5 hours)
Day 3 - Sarzana to Avenza	18km (4½ hours)
Day 4 - Avenza to Camaiore	24km (5½ hours)
Day 5 - Camaiore to Lucca (option to catch a bus to Lucca after 17km)	30km (7½ hours)
Day 6 - Lucca to Altopascio *	train (paid locally)
Day 7 - Altopascio to San Miniato	30km (7½ hours)
Day 8 - Arrangements end after breakfast	

On Day 1 there is the option to take the train to Sarzana (cost is @ €4 per person paid locally), or to shorten the walk by catching the train part-way at San Stefano di Magra.

Option to shorten the walk by catching a local bus on Day 5 and Day 7.

* On Day 6 the route (20km, 4½ hours' walking) is through a heavily populated area so we recommend you spend time exploring Lucca and catch a train to Altopascio (cost is @ €4-8 per person, 15 minute journey).

Nearest train station to start: Aulla	Nearest airports: Parma, Pisa, Florence, Bologna
Nearest train station to end: San Miniato Bassa	Nearest airports: Pisa, Florence, Bologna

Week 6: San Miniato - San Quirico d'Orcia

Perhaps the richest week for art and history along the route. Take time firstly to visit nearby Florence then join the walk from the lovely village of San Miniato to San Quirico d'Orcia.

Duration:	8 days / 7 nights
Cost per person:	\$1895 (twin share), single room supplement \$365, solo traveller supplement \$515
Departs:	Daily mid-April to mid-October
Includes:	Breakfast daily
Total distance:	@ 127km (average 22km each day)
Type of route:	Mostly unsealed trails with some secondary roads
Highlights:	San Gimignano towers, Monteriggioni, Siena - St Antimo Abbey, Etruscan museum, San Quirico Collegiata

Day 1 - Arrive San Miniato	Altitude 195m above sea level
Day 2 - San Miniato to Gambassi Terme	24km (5 hours)
Day 3 - Gambassi Terme to San Gimignano	14km (3 hours)
Day 4 - San Gimignano to Strove	24km (6 hours)
Day 5 - Strove to Siena	23km (5 hours)
Day 6 - Siena to Buonconvento (transfer from Grancia di Cuna)	18km (6 hours)
Day 7 - Buonconvento to San Quirico d'Orcia	24km (6 hours)
Day 8 - Arrangements end after breakfast	

Nearest train station to start: San Miniato Bassa	Nearest airports: Pisa, Florence, Bologna
Nearest train station to end: Buonconvento (take local bus from San Quirico or private transfer at extra cost)	Nearest airports: Florence, Pisa, Bologna, Rome

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Week 7: San Quirico - Montefiascone

The official *Via Francigena* followed the ancient Roman roads; paved parts of it are still fine to walk, however other parts are too dangerous or carry too much traffic. We have decided to take a slightly longer but much more attractive route via St Antimo. We return to the main route in Radicofani and leave Tuscany behind as we cross into Lazio en route to Castello di Proceno. We continue to Bolsena and its eponymous lake, Lago di Bolsena, the crater of an ancient volcano, and finish this stage in Montefiascone.

Duration: 8 days / 7 nights
Cost per person: **\$1670** (twin share), single room supplement \$365, solo traveller supplement \$515
Departs: Daily April to mid-October
Includes: Breakfast daily
Total distances: @ 133km (average 22km per day)
Type of route: Trails, unpaved roads and secondary paved roads
Highlights: The Collegiata in San Quirico, the "crete" landscape, San Salvatore Abbey.

Day 1 - Arrive San Quirico	Altitude 409m above sea level
Day 2 - San Quirico to St Antimo	14km (4 hours)
Day 3 - St Antimo to Rocca d'Orcia	19km (5½ hours)
Day 4 - Rocca d'Orcia to Radicofani	28km (6½ hours)
Day 5 - Radicofani to Proceno	25km (5½ hours)
Day 6 - Proceno to Bolsena	30km (6½ hours)
Day 7 - Bolsena to Montefiascone	17km (4 hours)
Day 8 - Arrangements end after breakfast	

Nearest train station to start: Buonconvento (local bus to San Quirico or taxi transfer at extra cost, ask for details)

Nearest airports: Florence, Pisa, Bologna, Rome

Nearest train station to end: Montefiascone (taxi from hotel)

Nearest airports: Rome, Florence, Pisa.



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Week 8: Montefiascone - Roma

The last section of the *Via Francigena* – the approach to the Eternal City, Rome. Starting in Montefiascone, walk near the deep volcanic Lake Bolsena. Near Viterbo are the steaming thermal pools of Bagnaccio. Be rewarded with excellent views along the volcanic lakes of Vico and Bracciano. Pass through the lovely town of Sutri, with its well-preserved Roman amphitheatre, then walk along a pleasant mountain route to reach the outskirts of Rome. Stay in the small hamlet of Isola Farnese the evening before your final walk to Rome.

Duration: 8 days / 7 nights
Cost per person: **\$1895** (twin share), single room supplement \$365, solo traveller supplement \$515
Departs: Daily mid-April to end of October
Includes: Breakfast daily
Total distance: @ 125km (average 21km daily)
Type of route: Trails, unpaved roads and secondary paved roads
Highlights: The Bolsena and Vico lakes, Cimino Mountains, Rome (Appia Antica)

Day 1 - Arrive Montefiascone	Altitude 640m above sea level
Day 2 - Montefiascone to Viterbo	18km (4 hours)
Day 3 - Viterbo to Caprarola	18km (6½ hours)
Day 4 - Caprarola to Sutri	16km (4½ hours)
Day 5 - Sutri to Campagnano di Roma	27km (7 hours)
Day 6 - Campagnano di Roma to Isola Farnese	21km (5 hours)
Day 7 - Isola Farnese to Rome (San Pietro)	25km (5½ hours)
Day 8 - Arrangements end after breakfast	

The walk into Rome follows the original route of the *Via Francigena* along the modern *Via Trionfale* and *Viale Angelico*, through the nature reserves of Insugherata and Monte Mario. Monte Mario (139m) is where medieval pilgrims first saw Rome. Note that this route is largely through the busy suburbs of Rome so traffic can be heavy and noisy.

If you prefer not to walk through the suburbs of this busy capital city, take a taxi or walk (5km) from Isola Farnese to the suburban train station at La Storta. From La Storta you can take the train to Rome (takes 20-30 minutes, cost approx. €3-6, or if you will be spending several days in Rome consider purchasing a multi-day transport ticket). Alight at Roma San Pietro and walk the final stretch to St Peter's Square and the Basilica.

Nearest train station to start: Montefiascone (taxi to hotel) Nearest airports: Rome, Florence, Pisa
Nearest train station to end: Roma Termini or Trastevere Nearest airports: Rome Fiumicino or Ciampino

It may be possible to upgrade hotels at extra cost. Upgrades may require adjustments to daily walking distances as some upgrade hotels may be in different locations – ask for details.

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Walking tours – guided in small groups or self-guided with inn-to-inn luggage transfers and meals – are available in many regions of Europe including in France the **Dordogne**, the **Vermillion Coast**, **Corsica**, **Burgundy**, **Alsace**, the **Loire Valley**, **Provence**, **Cevennes** and the **Ardeche**. In Spain try a walk in **Andalucia**, the **Alpajurras** or the **Picos de Europa**. In Italy walk the **Dolomites**, the **Amalfi Coast**, **Cinque Terre**, in **Tuscany** or **Umbria**.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more details, travel brochures and reservations:

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