

Walking the Way of St. Francis in Italy Camino of Saint Francis of Assisi / Camino di Francesco

13 Days

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Rome (Papal Audience with Holy Father) · La Verna · Sansepolcro · Pieve Santo Stefano · Citerna · Citta di Castello
Pietralunga · Monteleto · Gubbio · Biscina · Valfabbrica · Assisi (St. Francis)



Assisi Basilica, Italy

YOUR TRIP INCLUDES

- Round-trip airfare from your desired Airport
- book without airfare (land only option)
- All airport taxes & fuel surcharges
- Centrally located hotels: (or similar)
- 1 night: Eurostar International Palace, Rome
- 2 nights: La Verna Sanctuary, La Verna
- 3 nights: Hotel Tiferno or Hotel Park Ge. Al, Citta di Castello
- 3 night : Hotel Gattapone or Hotel Villa Montegranelli, Gubbio
- 2 night : Hotel Dal Moro or Hotel Dei Priori, Assisi
- Breakfast and Dinner daily
- 8 picnic Lunches
- Wine with dinners
- Assistance of a professional local guide
- Sightseeing and admissions fees as per itinerary
- Catholic Priest available for Spiritual Direction
- Mass daily & Spiritual activities

- Luggage handling (1 piece per person)
- Flight bag & portfolio of all travel documents

NOT INCLUDED:

Lunches, Tips to your guide & driver, Items of a personal nature.

OPTIONAL Travel Insurance

Providing you coverage for both pre-existing conditions and those that may arise during your trip, including medical and dental emergencies, loss of luggage, trip delay, and so much more.

SUPPLEMENTAL CANCELLATION PROTECTION

A Cancellation Waiver - allowing you to cancel your trip and receive a refund anytime - up until 24 hours prior to departure. The "Waiver" expires once you are within 24 hours of departure.

ABOUT YOUR TRIP:

The Way of St. Francis - Camino of Saint Francis of Assisi

Also called Camino di Francesco or Via Francigena di San Francesco, is a walking Pilgrimage which is enthused by Saint Francis of Assisi (Co-patron of Italy, founder of the Seraphic Order). St Francis was a spiritual trailblazer for nature and environmentalists; known for his attitude towards nature. The Way of St. Francis follows an early Roman road between Florence and Rome. Follow in the footsteps of St. Francis through the amazing countryside, and pass by significant Franciscan locations such as Assisi in Umbria. The Cammino di Francesco ends at Rome and the Vatican City. This route has been followed by numerous pilgrims who have been inspired by the life that St Francis lived and encouraged.

About Rome

Rome has been one of history's most powerful and important cities, along with home to the Roman Catholic Church, the Pope, and the site of the Vatican City. First built in 337, St. Peter's Basilica lies over the tomb of St. Peter. Contained within is a vast array of the most beautiful artwork ever assembled, reflecting the immensity, beauty, vastness, majesty, glory and awesomeness of God.

Day 1: Depart for Rome

Make your way to your local airport where you will board your overnight flight(s). Your meals will be served on board.

Day 2: Rome

Upon arrival in Rome, you will collect your luggage in the baggage claim area, and continue to the Arrival's Hall where you will be greeted by your tour guide and/or driver. Make your way to the bus where your group will transfer to your hotel in Rome for overnight and dinner.

Day 3: Rome - La Verna / Sansepolcro

After breakfast this morning we will drive to La Verna/Sansepolcro (approximately four hours). Following check-in your group will enjoy the convent of La Verna. This is the place where St. Francis, over the years, has been seven times and the last time in 1224 where he received the stigmata. Here you will be able to pray in the Chapel of the Stigmata, the Basilica and the Chapel of Saint Mary of the Angels. You will also be able to admire the beautiful artworks of Andrea della Robbia. Following this visit, you will enjoy dinner and a restful overnight in La Verna convent before your walking tour begins!

Day 4: La Verna - Pieve Santo Stefano

(Walking day 9.4 mile / 15 km)

Today is the day that your walking pilgrimage to Assisi officially begins! Following breakfast, your group will venture through the mountains of Tuscany. With the guidance of Our Lord, and through the spirit of St. Francis, you will become an authentic pilgrim by journeying along the physical road, as well as, the spiritual one. Your first official day of walking will culminate in Pieve Santo Stefano. Pieve is already mentioned in a document from 723, where we read that a gentleman of Città di Castello donated a monastery to the Benedictine monks. In 1589, a supernatural event brought Pieve into the limelight: hordes of angels bearing burning torches were seen at nighttime heading in procession towards a sacred image painted in the wall of a niche along the road leading to Sansepolcro. There you can find, still nowadays, the Sanctuary of the Madonna dei Lumi (Virgin of the lights). In the parish church, dating back to 1200, you can admire a beautiful glazed terracotta altar frontal by Andrea della Robbia. Dinner and overnight in La Verna or Sansepolcro

Day 5: Pieve Santo Stefano - Sansepolcro

(Walking day, 11.2 mile / 18 km)

This morning, you will enjoy breakfast at your hotel and journey from Pieve Santo Stefano, alongside the river Tiber (yes the same that flows through Rome!) to Sansepolcro. This town owes its name and its foundation to two pilgrims. Arcano and Egidio, a Greek and a Spaniard, returning from Jerusalem and bringing some precious relics with them, stopped a locality in the Tiber Valley and spent the night near a spring in the walnut-tree wood. During the night, Arcano had a vision following which he stayed to found a town in honor of the Holy Sepulcher of Christ. On the site of the first chapel, around the year 1000, a church was built and dedicated to St. John the Apostle, but ever since it has been known by all as Santo Sepolcro, the Holy Sepulcher. Conserved inside the cathedral of Sansepolcro, is a valuable representation of Christ on the Cross in priestly and royal attire. Tradition has it that it was sculpted by Nicodemo with divine inspiration. The image now preserved in Sansepolcro is a copy (from the 12th century) of the original, which had been damaged by time. This image has always been venerated as an acheiropoieta image (one not made by human hand!) Dinner and overnight Sansepolcro or Citta di Castello

Day 6: Sansepolcro - Citerna

(Walking day, 12.4 mile / 20 km)

Breakfast will be served at your hotel. Your pilgrimage continues winding through the lowland crossing the Tiber Valley. Today we are entering Umbria! The walk will lead your group through the fields of the valley up to the gates and into Citerna. Citerna is a small

medieval town founded by the Etruscans. It conserves the fortress and the medieval walls that completely surround it, with a covered communication trench that goes along for almost their whole length. According to tradition, when St. Francis stayed here, he blessed the hill, calling it "the sacred mountain". The church of St. Francis and that of St. Michael the Archangel, which conserves a beautiful panel by Pomarancio, are well worth a visit. Dinner and overnight in Citta di Castello

Day 7: Citerna - Citta di Castello

(Walking day, 12.4 mile / 20 km)

Today you will walk across the hills on the right hand side of the Tiber valley to reach Città di Castello. The town lays on the left bank of the Tiber and was founded by the Umbri, then became a Roman municipium. In the 1st century AD Pliny the Younger lived there in a villa in the suburbs. In the 12th century it became a free municipality with the name Civitas Castelli. Subjugated by Florence and then by Perugia, in 1400 it came under the rule of the noble Vitelli family, who embellished the town with churches and palaces. With the installation of Cesare Borgia, it came under the power of the Papacy until the Unity of Italy. It is still surrounded by a mighty town wall dating back to 1500. Of great interest is the municipal art gallery, with masterpieces by Raphael, Luca Signorelli, Giovanni and Andrea della Robbia, Pomarancio and Ghirlandai. Following your visit of the town, you will enjoy dinner and an overnight in Citta di Castello.

Day 8: Citta di Castello - Pietralunga

(Walking day, 17.4 mile / 28 km)

After breakfast at your hotel, walking out of the town, you will be able to see one of the most famous ex tobacco curing plant of Italy. During the 1950s this area became very important for Italian tobacco production. Today you will be leaving the Tiber valley, the road climbs amid green, silent hills and winds along in a succession of curves that offer ever new views. Here Umbria is at its best! At the end of this daily walk, your group will reach the small town of Pietralunga, founded by local Umbri populations. Numerous traces of villas and aqueducts remain from the Roman period. The growth in Christianity is associated with the figure of St. Crescenziano, to whom tradition attributes the killing of a dragon. The remains of St. Crescenziano are now buried in Urbino cathedral, of which the saint is the patron. Pietralunga retains the appearance of a medieval town, encircled by walls and clustered around the Lombard fortress from the 8th century, the mighty remains of which can be admired in the piazza. Dinner and overnight in Gubbio.

Day 9: Pietralunga - Monteieto

(Walking day, 9.4 mile / 15 km)

You are now well into the second half of your pilgrimage. After leaving Pietralunga your group will reach the locality of St. Benedict, where the abbey of St. Benedict is. Inside the abbey, once populated by a community of Benedictine monks, there is a memorial stone confirming the popular belief that St. Francis stopped here on his way to La Verna. The panorama you will enjoy is truly magnificent! Upon arrival to Monteieto, your group will be transferred to the enchanted Gubbio. Gubbio is a town where early in the morning you still hear the bells ring and there are many, each with its own voice. Gubbio seems to be painted onto the hill, a succession of backdrops against which towers and houses stand out, all embraced by walls. It is a place that seems to have come out just as it is from a fresco of the time. Gubbio is also the town where St. Francis, having compassion on the men of the city, was minded to go forth and meet a very great wolf, terrible and fierce, who afflicted the town. During the famous meeting of St. Francis with the wolf, while the latter was waiting with an open mouth, St. Francis advanced towards him and made over him the sign of the most holy Cross. Scarcely had St. Francis made the sign of the cross than the terrible wolf instantly closed his mouth and laid himself down at the feet of St. Francis. After a visit of the town, you will enjoy dinner and an overnight in Gubbio.

Day 10: Gubbio - Biscina

(Walking day, 17.4 mile / 28 km)

Your journey is almost over as you will follow the "Franciscan Path of Peace" a praiseworthy initiative created for the 2000 Jubilee that goes over Francis' stages from Gubbio to Assisi. Your group will cross Gubbio valley and after admiring a last postcard view of the beautiful Gubbio, will immerse in the Umbrian hills. At the summit of the last hill for the day, in the proximity of the River Chiasco, is the Biscina Castle. The construction date of the fortress is not known, but it is certain that it existed at the end of the 10th century. It is an irregular structure that envelops the inner courtyard and is open to the east, emerging above smaller volumes such as the church and, beyond, the valley below. Conserved in the northern elevation of the castle is one of the towers. Dinner and overnight in Gubbio.

Day 11: Valfabbrica - Assisi

(Walking day, 8 mile / 13 km)

Today, you culminate the walking portion of your journey! The history of Valfabbrica is associated with that of the Benedictine monastery of Santa Maria In Vado Fabbricae. The ancient abbey, documented from the year 820, stands near the River Chiasco. In the Middle Ages the alliance with Assisi brought

great prosperity to the abbey and the castle, but in the early 13th century clashes with the Perugian feudal lords led to the destruction of the town by Perugia. From Valfabbrica, climbing through a dense thicket you will reach the crest of the hill. From here, for the first time, you can clearly see Mount Subasio above Assisi. As Assisi gets ever closer, to the right of Mount Subasio you can make out the bell tower of the Upper Basilica. A last steep slope and you finally enter Assisi through St. James gate (this is the gate out of which pilgrims going to Santiago of Compostela would walk). Descending along a narrow alley you will reach the square in front of the Upper Basilica of St. Francis. There, beneath the two great churches, in a shrine inside a pillar, lies St. Francis, the companion of our pilgrimage. Dinner and overnight in Assisi

Day 12: Assisi (The Life of a Saint, that inspired a Holy Father)

This morning, your group will enjoy breakfast followed by a full day of touring the hometown of St. Francis. St. Francis is the “Patron Saint of Animals and the Environment.” Additionally, he is responsible for founding the Franciscan Order, and the inspiration for our Holy Father, Pope Francis. He chose his name in admiration of the Saint of Nature, and Servant to the Poor. Known for being a humble man himself, Pope Francis spent most of his life denying the luxuries of life. He preferred to live in simplicity and humility, while giving up all other worldly possessions, just as St. Francis did. As your group visits the birthplace of St. Francis, you will become captivated as the atmosphere has not changed since St. Francis began his ministry, in the early 13th-century. During the tour, your group will have the opportunity to visit the tomb of St. Francis at his Basilica. Also, at the Basilica of St. Francis, you will have the opportunity to view a series of frescoes depicting his life, as well as, view a few of the saint’s possessions. As the tour continues, your group will visit St. Mary of the Angels Basilica. This Basilica is where St. Francis spent most of life, and is made up of two structures; both of which you will visit. The Porziuncola is where St. Francis founded his order of the Friar Minor (Franciscans), and the Capella del Transito, which is the place of St. Francis’ death. During this visit, your group will have the opportunity to visit the beautiful Rose Garden where St. Francis and other friars lived, as well as the cave where the Saint retired to pray. After visiting this beautiful Basilica, your group will enjoy some free time on your own. Feel free to take this time for additional prayer, or shop in the Gift Shop. The last stop on your tour will be to the Church that honors St. Clare, the foundress of the Poor Clare Sisters. This Saint followed the teachings of St. Francis very

closely by also living a life of poverty and humility. Lastly, your group will transfer back to the hotel, where you will have some free time to walk, shop, or pray. Return to the hotel for dinner and overnight.

Day 13: Return Flights Home

After an early breakfast and heartfelt farewells, your group will leave by motor coach and transfer to the Rome Fiumicino airport for return flights home.

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