

ITALY - UMBRIA EXPLORING ASSISI, SPELLO, SPOLETO & PERUGIA

8-days / 7-nights **GREAT VALUE** self-guided inn-to-inn easy to moderate cycling holidays



One of our most popular in Europe this inn-to-inn 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: its 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, allowing for wonderful vistas of the many lively medieval hilltop villages and towns overlooking the *Valle Umbra*. 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 in 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 makes 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 Casco dell' Acqua. On the second day cycle 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. Continue on 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 returns you to Assisi.

Tour Cost from: **\$1240** per person twin share Single room supplement from \$340

Optional half board supplement which includes 7 dinners: \$350

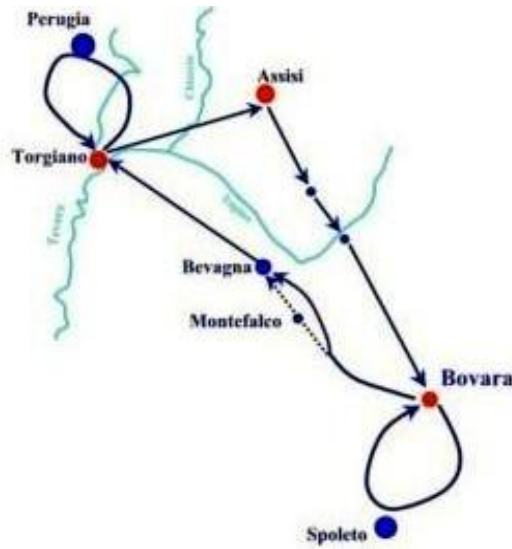
Departs: Daily all year round (April to October is the recommended time)

Includes: 7 nights of accommodation in good 3-star hotels, B&Bs or Country Houses with breakfast daily; trekking bike hire with pannier, repair kit and helmet; luggage transportation; arrival briefing; route notes (in English); route maps and information brochures; local emergency support and hotline.

Not included: Lunches, dinners if not taking Half Board option, drinks, personal expenses, transport to the start or from the end of the tour.

This tour is also available as a **GUIDED** tour, cost and dates on request, subject to a minimum of 6 people. Guided tour also includes English-speaking tour guide, tour information and support service, welcome briefing and drink, guided tour of Assisi, olive mill visit, 1 x wine-tasting. Please ask for a group quote and more details.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations



Optional Extras E-Bike hire is available on this tour at an additional cost of \$260 per bike + security deposit. GPS hire available at extra cost of \$105 + security deposit – please request when booking

Grade: Easy cycling mostly flat or gentle rolling hills. Short distances each day of between 25 - 50km.

Accommodation: The hotel in Assisi is a quality 3-star hotel located 900 metres (a pleasant, easy walk) from the historical centre. In Casco dell' Acqua we stay in a delightful eco-chic country house on the Clitunno River; all rooms have a private bathroom and air-conditioning and there is a restaurant and swimming pool. In Bevagna stay in a 3-star hotel in a restored *palazzo* in the historical centre. In Torgiano we offer an excellent family run 3-star hotel in the town centre; all rooms have private bathroom and air-conditioning. Extra nights in Assisi can be arranged (at extra cost). If our usual accommodation choice is not available we will look for an equivalent.

Suggested itinerary:

Day 1 Arrive in Assisi

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 Casco dell' Acqua

cycling distance @ 26km

Leaving Assisi you cycle along the contoured slopes of Mount Subasio to Spello. 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 naïve 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 Casco dell' Acqua, where you stay two nights.

Day 3 Circular ride to Spoleto

cycling distance @ 45 or 50km

Begin with just a short ride to the historic and popular town of Spoleto. Spoleto's castle can be seen from a distance, 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 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 Casco dell' Acqua.

Day 4 Cycle to Bevagna, with an optional ascent to Montefalco

cycling distance @ 28km

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. We highly recommend you make the effort to visit Montefalco (at 472m) – however you can also choose to continue along the valley straight to Bevagna. 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. 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 it is a downhill ride to Bevagna. This town has a medieval square and a fountain and two Romanesque churches.

Day 5 Bevagna to Torgiano

cycling distance @ 30km

There is time for a leisurely breakfast this morning and to explore Bevagna further before getting back in the saddle. Leaving Bevagna you cycle mostly in the valley to Torgiano, a small town 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 two nights. Torgiano has both a wine museum and an olive museum, with old presses once used for pressing grapes or olives, Etruscan and Roman amphorae, and local ceramics.

Day 6 Cycle to Perugia or Torgiano

cycling distance @ 25, 32, 35 or 50km

You have a choice of routes today:

Visit Perugia (25-32km) - Discover the town of Perugia, which is the capital of the province. A short ride takes you to the station in Ponte San Giovanni at the foot of Perugia. From here a local train will take you into the historical centre of Perugia (or, instead of taking the train, challenge yourself with an uphill climb to the centre of Perugia, adding about 7 kilometres and 240 metres of ascent to your ride). 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 (35km or 50km) – Just 6 kilometres from Torgiano, the village of Deruta 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 7 Torgiano to Assisi

cycling distance @ 25km

You cross the valley, cycling on quiet country roads towards Assisi, which like many other Umbrian towns, is built on a hilltop. Before reaching Assisi you may like to visit the Franciscan basilica in Santa 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. Then just a final short ride to return to the same hotel you stayed in on the first night.

Day 8 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 inn-to-inn with luggage transfers – 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, in Romania, Poland, the Czech Republic or in Switzerland. We also offer cycling tours in the USA, Canada, Japan, South Africa, China, Vietnam and New Zealand or **Bike & Barge** or Bike & Boat cycling cruises in many areas of Europe and in Vietnam – ask for details:

Contact Outdoor Travel for more itinerary details and reservations:

- Call toll free on 1800 331 582 or (03) 57551743 or Fax (03) 57501020
- Email: info@outdoortravel.com.au
- Web: <http://www.outdoortravel.com.au>
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