

## Hidden Italy Umbria 1 self-guided walking tour: Cammino stage 1

### 6 days/5 nights

This six-day walk is the first section of the Cammino of St Francis. It follows the official pilgrim route, a regularly marked trail that weaves through the hills and farmlands of Central Italy, from Assisi, home of St Francis, to Spoleto through some of the most beautiful country in the region.

This first section starts in the beautiful town of Assisi, the home of St Francis. The trail contours along the foothills of the Apennine Mountains with spectacular views over the Vale of Umbria, winding through classic Umbria countryside of farmlands and olives groves. You visit some of the best-preserved hill-top towns in the region that date from Roman times when the valley was crossed by the Via Flaminia, a trade route that linked the capital with the Adriatic Sea. You finish in the remarkable town of Spoleto, crossing over the Ponte delle Torri bridge, one of the marvels of medieval engineering.

The highlights of this five day walk include extraordinary Assisi, a centre of international pilgrimage which contains some of the finest art in Europe, including the celebrated fresco cycle by Giotto that revolutionised Western art; the spectacular views along the way as the path contours along the hills looking out across the farmlands and towns in the valley; the beautiful hill-towns you'll stay in; the fine Umbrian cuisine, based on fresh local produce and accompanied by some of the finest wine produced in the Central Italy.

This independent walk is the second section of the Cammino of St Francis – in the spirit of the long-distance pilgrimage, we have sought to keep the costs down.

#### **The walks:**

The walks follow clear, well-marked trails mostly along unsealed country lanes over undulating hills. There are two longer walks at the beginning (16 and 19 kms) as well as a long section of asphalt on Day 2, where the trail dips down from the hills and crosses through Foligno, a fascinating town on the plains. This a Grade 3 walk.

#### **The accommodation:**

In the spirit of the long-distance pilgrimage, we have sought to keep the costs down. The accommodation is in centrally-located, historical family-run, centrally located 2-star and 3-star hotels. They are comfortable and welcoming. All rooms have en suite bathrooms.

#### **The food:**

You are walking through one of the food and wine regions of Italy - famous for its Sagrantino red wine; 'norcineria' (sausages and cold cuts); lentils; truffles and.... chocolate. The key to Umbrian is it's seasonality and freshness, using only the best local ingredients. With notice, the hotels will be able to prepare a cut lunch for the walk.

#### **Inclusions:**

- Five nights' accommodation
- All breakfasts and dinners (3 courses)
- Reading lists and historical and cultural notes
- Maps and detailed walking instructions
- Daily transfers of baggage between hotels
- 24 hour backup from local manager

## **Umbria 1 self-guided walk, Cammino of St Francis stage 1: Spoleto to Rieti**

### **Day 1:**

Arrival in Assisi, one of the most beautiful towns in central Italy. It is, of course, the home of St Francis (1182 – 1226). It is dominated by the two-level Basilica of St Francis (consecrated in 1256) which contains some of the finest art in Western Europe, including works by Giotto, Cimabue and the Lorenzetti brothers.

### **Day 2:**

This itinerary starts with a steep climb up to a beautiful hermitage surrounded by forests that was a place of retreat for St Francis. From here the path contours around the side of Mt Subasio with wide views across the valley to Montefalco and the Martani Hills before descending to a beautiful hill-town founded by the Romans. (16 kms, 6 hrs).

### **Day 3:**

The first half of today's walk takes you down onto the valley floor passing through a string of towns including Foligno, before climbing up the side of the valley and picking paths that take you classic Umbria countryside dominated by centuries old olive groves finishing in one of the best-preserved and attractive hill-towns in the region (19kms, 6 hrs)

### **Day 4:**

The route continues to skirt along the side of the mountains with spectacular views across the valley and up to the Sibillini Mountains. It largely follows unsealed country lanes through farmlands and olive groves passing sites of considerable historical interest, including a Franciscan hermitage and a sleepy medieval village. (13 kms, 5 hrs)

### **Day 5:**

The last walk, one of the most beautiful in Umbria, winds through olive groves, around the side of the hills past a string of villages before climbing up to enter Spoleto through forests via a medieval bridge, (14 kms, 4.5 hrs).

### **Day 6:**

After breakfast, you'll be transferred to Spoleto station, which has direct connections to Rome and Florence.