



# HEDONISTIC HIKING

## Medieval Umbria – 8 Days Abbeys and Art in the Apennines

Start the tour with the exciting historical crossbow festival between Sansepolcro and Gubbio. Hike in the Apennine mountains with views to Umbria, Le Marche and Tuscany. Follow evocative pilgrim trails to remote churches and walk along pretty woodland paths. Stay in a beautifully restored Abbey and finish the holiday with three nights in the heart of the lovely town of Gubbio.

What is included?

- **7 nights' accommodation in 3 delightful hotels**
- **Two experienced and knowledgeable guides** who will look after your every need and bring this stunning area to life
- **All meals including wine.**
- **Gourmet picnic lunches** each day and snacks en route
- Dinner in a variety of **superb restaurants**
- **Museum visits and wine/food tastings** as per itinerary
- **Support vehicle**, enabling you to walk as little or as much of the trail as you please
- **Transport to/from Florence** in air-conditioned minibus
- **Comprehensive pre-trip information.**
- **Luggage transported for you** so all you need to carry is a small backpack with water etc.

### Itinerary

The walking holiday starts and ends in **Florence**, the cradle of the Renaissance. There are daily flights from the UK and other European cities to Florence airport and the city is on a main train line from Milan and Rome. You can also join the tour in Arezzo which is on the train line from Rome.



### Day 1



Meet Florence Santa Maria Train station at 11am. Drive(1½ hours) towards the charming town of Anghiari, where we start the tour with a leisurely lunch and olive oil tasting at an organic farm. We continue the short distance to Sansepolcro. We stay for the next 2 nights in the delightful family-run Albergo Fiorentino in the heart of the town. Enjoy a glass of *prosecco* on the terrace overlooking the terracotta rooftops before we walk to dinner. After dinner we join the locals in the *piazza* to see the opening of the *Palio della Balestra* – a medieval crossbow competition between Sansepolcro and nearby Gubbio.



## Day 2

We start the day with a visit to the town's museum to see the renowned works by Piero della Francesca. Then we drive up above the town takes us to the evocative Franciscan convent and hermitage at Monte Casale. A beautiful hike follows a low ridge of the Alpi della Luna with views across the Tiber Valley. Free time in Sansepolcro later in the day. (6km/4miles)



## Day 3

A short drive takes us across the border into Umbria. We start our walk high above the town of Citta di Castello and hike through open farmland and woods, passing abandoned stone houses and a dramatic fort before arriving at the stunning Abbazia San Faustino, a beautiful small hotel converted from a former abbey. Dinner in the hotel restaurant. (16.5km/10.5miles)



## Day 4

A leisurely walk in the remote farmland near the Abbey of San Faustino. Visit an agriturismo for a tasting of local produce. Time to relax and enjoy the pool and the tranquil setting of Abbazia San Faustino in the afternoon. (10km/6miles)



## Day 5

We depart San Faustino and a short drive takes us into the foothills of the Apennines from where we follow trails past hamlets and through woods to arrive at the Basilica of San Ubaldo, perched on a hill above the lovely medieval town of Gubbio. We walk down through the cobbled streets to arrive, on foot, at our delightful four star hotel in the heart of the town overlooking the square. We use this as our base for the final 3 nights of the holiday. Dinner in a Slow Food restaurant on the outskirts of the town. (18km/11miles)



## Day 6

Optional walk which follows an ancient merchant trail connecting the cities of Gubbio and Perugia. Exclusive guided tour of the thirteenth-century Benedictine abbey of Montelabate, formerly one of the most important abbeys in the region. Our picnic today includes wine, cheese and olive oil from the estate. Later in the day there is time to explore Gubbio and visit the town museum with the precious Iguvine Tablets from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. Dinner in Gubbio this evening. (7km/4.4miles)



## Day 7

Our final hike takes us to Monte Cucco National Park, a short distance from Gubbio. Starting from a high alpine meadow at 1132m we climb up through beautiful beech woods to emerge above the tree line at just above 1400m. We circle the summit of Monte Cucco, enjoying spectacular views across the Umbrian hills and to Le Marche towards the coast. We picnic in the alpine meadow before returning, by van, to Gubbio. Free time in the afternoon before our final dinner in a local restaurant. (6.7km/4.2miles)



## Day 8

Return to **Florence Airport for 1pm** (2 hours). We will also drop off at the train station (Santa Maria Novella) if required.

## Walking

Shortest day: 6km/3.8miles

Longest day: 18km/11miles

There are 6 days of walking on the trip. We walk on strade bianche (gravel roads), on mountain trails, along woodland tracks and quiet tarmac roads. There is always van support with the opportunity to walk a half-day. Most of this part of Umbria is one of rolling hills with some significant ups and downs. The walk on Day 7 is a mountain trail. Sturdy walking boots, with good ankle support, are recommended. Walking poles would be an advantage, especially on steeper sections.

## Weather:

Early autumn is a delightful time to walk in central Italy. We are quite high up at times so can take advantage of the cooler temperatures for walking.

Sept: Max 24° Min 18°. Rainfall 55mm

## Dates:

5th-12th September 2012

**Cost: €2395**

**Single supplement: €150**

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