



# HEDONISTIC HIKING

## The Wilds of Abruzzo - 9 Days Stunning Peaks and Silent Valleys

Abruzzo is the only region in Italy which can boast three National Parks and this tour explores all three. Lying to the east of Rome, Abruzzo is a remote and unspoilt region. Beautiful villages perch on the hilltops and are surrounded by the majestic peaks of the Apennine mountains. The parks abound with wild flowers and are home to chamois, deer, wolves and the Marsican bear. The local people are justly proud of this magnificent region and offer a warm welcome to all who visit.

### What is included?

- **8 nights' accommodation** in three wonderful hotels
- **Two experienced and knowledgeable guides** who will look after your every need and bring this stunning area to life
- **All meals** including **excellent local wines**
- **Gourmet picnic lunches** each day and snacks en route
- Dinner in a variety of **superb restaurants**.
- **Support vehicle**, enabling you to walk as little or as much of the trail as you please
- **Transport** in air-conditioned minibus
- Comprehensive **pre-trip information**.

### Itinerary

The tour starts and ends at Rome Fiumicino airport from where there are good international connections. The airport is an easy train journey from central Rome for those people choosing to spend a few days exploring the Eternal City before or after the tour. For a wonderful insight to Rome, we recommend [Rachel Potts](#) as a local guide.



### Day 1

Meet Rome Fiumicino arrivals at 11.15am. We drive 1hr to Tivoli where, after a light lunch, we meet our local guide for a private tour of Villa d'Este. After the visit we continue 1h30mins to Santo Stefano in Sessanio. The hotel we stay in here, Sextantio Albergo Diffuso, is an extraordinary mix of the old and new - a ruined medieval village faithfully restored using traditional techniques into some 30 rooms for adventurous 21st century travellers. Time to settle in before a welcome drink and dinner in the hotel restaurant this evening.

## Day 2



A lovely walk across the high plains, encircled by the peaks of the Gran Sasso National Park, undulating between 1580m and 1780m. There is the opportunity to see wild horses grazing and enjoy an abundance of alpine flowers. Dinner in a village restaurant this evening (16.2km/10.2miles)

## Day 3

We walk out of the village of Santo Stefano and follow small tracks which lead us up to the imposing ruins of Rocca Calascio. Explore the remains of the fort before walking down into the village for lunch. In the afternoon we return to Santo Stefano by foot (or minibus). Later in the day we join a local chef for a cookery class of Abruzzesi specialities and dine on the fruits of our labour. (10.5km/6.6miles)



## Day 4



We depart Santo Stefano after breakfast and drive towards the pretty town of Sulmona, famous across Italy for its sugared almonds, for the start of our walk. Hike along farm tracks to a small church where we have our picnic lunch before climbing to a trail following the hillside, with wonderful views of the fertile glacial basin, which leads us to the beautifully preserved village of Pescocostanzo, at an altitude of 1400m, where we stay for two nights at the hotel Archi San Rocco. (12.5km/7.9miles)

## Day 5

A spectacular walk takes us off the beaten track through woods and open meadows to a remote ridgeline. Enjoy a sense of splendid isolation and emerge with lovely views to the village of Pietransieri where we have our picnic. In the afternoon there is the opportunity to continue the hike back to Pescocostanzo. Dinner in a wonderful local restaurant this evening. (11.2km/7miles am) + (9.2km/5.8miles pm)



## Day 6



We depart Pescocostanzo after breakfast and a short drive takes us to the lakeside village of Barrea where we have a coffee before setting off on our walk to the delightful village of Opi. Stroll around the village before lunch in a small trattoria. In the afternoon we climb up into high pastures populated with wild horses which brings us to the town of Pescasseroli at 1160m. We stay in the beautiful hotel Villino Quintilliani on the edge of town for the next three nights. Dinner in a local restaurant this evening. (13km/8miles)

## Day 7

Today we meet the shepherd and cheese maker, Giuseppe, who introduces us to his livestock and shows us how he makes his cheeses. There is the chance to taste the range of cheeses over lunch. Free afternoon to relax or take a short walk up to Mancino Castle which affords wonderful views over Pescasseroli. Dinner in our hotel this evening. (6.5km/4.1miles)



## Day 8



A magnificent final walk climbs 750m through beech woods to a spectacular ridge at 1800m. We follow this panoramic ridgeline along the regional border of Abruzzo and Molise before descending to mountain pastures and a small refuge where we have our picnic. In the afternoon we descend on shepherd's tracks between ancient drystone walls which lead back to Pescasseroli. Final dinner in a delightful family-run restaurant in the town. (11.4km/7.2miles am) + (5.8km/3.6miles pm)

## Day 9

We return to Rome Fiumicino airport for 12 o'clock

## **Walking**

There are 7 days of walking on the trip including a short optional walk. Abruzzo is a mountainous and remote region, the walking is rugged and spectacular and we are always hiking at an altitude above 1000m therefore it is crucial to be prepared for adverse weather conditions. We walk on forest tracks, farm trails and mountain paths. There are some long hikes on the tour however there is always the opportunity to walk a half-day with van support for those who wish to continue to the hotel earlier. On day 8 we ascend 750m on a forest trail and then on a mountain trail to reach a ridge. Sections of the hike are slightly vertiginous, please contact us if you would like more information about this. There are some stony descents so sturdy walking boots, with good grip and ankle support, are essential. Walking poles are highly recommended.

## **Weather:**

Average daily temperature: 8°-18°

Monthly rainfall average: 170mm

Hours of sunshine: 7hours/day

The area of Abruzzo that we visit is at an altitude of 1100m-1800m so expect sudden changes in the weather. Autumn is a beautiful time to visit with wonderful temperatures for hiking but it can be very cool especially in the mornings and evenings.

**Dates:** 18<sup>th</sup> October – 26<sup>th</sup> October 2016

**Cost:** €2,825          Single supplement: €250

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