

The Way of St Francis from Florence to Assisi and Rome: Group Tour

The Way of St. Francis links cultural treasures and cherished sites from the life of Francis of Assisi. This tour is ideal for the experienced Santiago pilgrim who seeks a less crowded adventure. The route pauses to enjoy picturesque hill towns in Umbria, then concludes with a climactic arrival at St. Peter's in Rome. Inspired by Francis of Assisi, beloved among saints, the walk allows pilgrims to experience for themselves the places he lived, prayed and worked. In Umbria, the native area of St. Francis, his presence is particularly strong and everything reminds us of the much-loved saint. A highlight of this tour is of course the lovely town of Assisi, where a section of the Via di Roma begins at the St. Francis tomb in the Basilica di San Francesco, one of the most celebrated sacred spots of Christianity.



Period:

- Stretch A (Florence – Assisi):** 1-15 September
(290 km/180 miles, 15 days / 14 nights - 13 stages)
- Stretch B (Florence–La Verna):** 1-7 September
(95 km/59 miles, 7 days / 6 nights - 5 stages)
- Stretch C (La Verna - Assisi):** 6-15 September
(185 km/115 miles, 10 days / 9 nights - 8 stages)
- Stretch D (Assisi - Roma):** 14-27 September
(253 km/157 miles, 14 days / 13 nights– 12 stages)
- Stretch E (Assisi-Rieti):** 14-22 September
(144 km/89 miles, 9 days/8 nights – 7 stages)
- Stretch F (Rieti-Roma):** 21-27 September
(109 km/68 miles, 7 days /6 nights – 5 stages)

Level: 3/4 (medium to difficult)

The daily itineraries pass through moderately mountainous country and hill terrain. On some days the amount of ascent and descent is quite considerable. Daily walking distances are between 15 and 28 km (with an average of 3 – 4 hours walking a day). This route requires a certain amount of experience and familiarity with mountain terrain. A good level of fitness for walking is necessary.

Part 1 is suitable for experienced hikers who can manage steep trails with up to 900m elevation change (Florence-Assisi)

Part 2 is less challenging with less elevation changes

Characteristics:

- o The whole itinerary covers 290 km / 180 miles from Florence till Assisi and 253 Km/157 miles) between Assisi and Rome, following the path of the "Via Francigena di San Francesco", also known as "La Via di Roma". This is one of the ancient pilgrimage routes to Rome, presumably the same followed by Francis of Assisi and his mates in 1212.
- o Walk "from door to door", setting off from your hotel and reaching the new one directly on foot, at the end of each daily stage.
- o The way is marked with special signs; the "pilgrim's passport" (to be stamped daily along the route) is provided to all our clients, along with a road book with detailed maps and useful information.
- o Take the full journey or any part of it: in order to be entitled to the "Testimonium" certificate (min 100 km).



Programme Florence-La Verna-Assisi:

Day 1: Florence

Individual arrival at your hotel in Florence. Meeting with your tour guide and the rest of the group members, handing over of the credential and tour documents.

Day 2: Florence-Pontassieve (22 Km/13,6 miles, medium-easy).

We leave the beautiful town of Florence following the old road "Strada dei Sette Ponti" (road of the seven bridges), which crosses the hills of the Arno. After Settignano with its historical villages. We walk between olive groves e vineyards and follow the river. Our day ends in the fortified town of Pontassieve.

Day 3. Pontassieve-Consuma (19 Km/12 miles, difficult).

Climbing we cross the vineyards of the Chianti Rufina and then the woods of the Abbey of Vallombrosa till we arrive at the pass Passo della Consuma.

Day 4. Consuma-Stia (16 Km / 10 miles, medium).

Today a nice walk crossing the mountains of casentinesi, woods of conifers, oaks and chestnuts. We descend in the high Arno Valley (Alta Valle dell'Arno) and will have an overnight stay in the cosy town of Stia.

Day 5. Stia-Badia Prataglia (21 Km & 13 miles, difficult).

Again we climb up to arrive at the woods of the national park Casentinese that surrounds the hermitage Sacro Eremo di Camaldoli; after a visit we continue through fir and beech woods. We reach the highest point of our journey (1354m) before we descend to the mountain village Badia Prataglia.

Day 6. Badia Prataglia-La Verna (17 Km / 10,6 miles, difficult).

Also today the mountains will accompany us. After the climbing start we have a long descend till we reach Rimbocchi in the Holy Valley "Valle Santa" casentinese- Again we climb towards Monte Penne e we reach the "crudo sasso" on which is built the Monastery of la Verna. Here we end our walk of today and it is also the end of the first stretch.

Day 7. La Verna-Passo Viamaggio (26 Km / 16 miles, difficult).

We start a nice downhill walk into the High Tiber Valley (alta Valtiberina) and we will have a short break at Pieve Santo Stefano. We continue with a hard climb towards the hermitage l'Eremo di Cerbaiolo and the mountain pass Passo Viamaggio.

Day 8. Passo Viamaggio-Sansepolcro (24 Km/ 15 miles, medium).

We cross a mountain top and enter the reserve 'Riserva Naturale dell'Alpe della Luna'. After we have cross a high palin, we walk towards the hermitage 'Eremo di Montecasale', where still lives a small Franciscan community. Then we descend to one of the nicest medieval Italian towns, Sansepolcro.

Day 9. Sansepolcro-Le Burgne (16 Km/10 miles, medium).

The stage of today start with a flat walk crossing the Valtiberina- We climb up the hill on which is built the small village of Citerna, cross a valley and after a last uphill walk we arrive at a hilltop from which we have a nice view over the valley.

Day 10- Le Burgne-Città di Castello (15 Km/9,3 miles, medium).

Today we walk in a typical Umbria landscape, which means a lot of up- and downhill walking on the hills on the west side of the Valtiberina. We pass the hermitage 'Eremo del Buonriposo' and we descend again in the Tiber Valley to reach Città di Castello, the first important town we pass in Umbria.

Day 11 Città di Castello-Pietralunga (30 Km/18,6 miles, difficult).

A long stage, but not to hard. At first we walk through a flat landscape and the we start to climb in the lower pre Apennine mountains to arrive at Passo Candeggio. The we descend slowly passing the old Pieve di Saddi. A last climb and we reach the old medieval town of Pietralunga with its remains of a Lombard Castle.

Day 12. Pietralunga-Gubbio (26 Km / 16,2 miles, medium).

We continue our walk through the woods of the pre-Apennines. We cross Monte Spesce, and start to descend into the high plain of Gubbio. We will reach this lovely medieval town, "città di pietra", at the foot of Monte Ingino and the sanctuary S.Ubaldo. Its is worthwhile to take some time to visit the old centre !

Day 13 giorno. Gubbio-Biscina (22 Km / 13,7 miles, medium).

The last two stages from our walk to Assisi are along the peace path "Sentiero Francescano della Pace". It is a route passing many place connected with the live of Saint Francis. Fits we pass the church Chiesa della Vittorina, where the famous episode of the wolf took place. Then we cross the plain and climb to the low mountains of Valdichiascio We have spectacular views of the Castle of Biscina, today's destination, Mount Subasio, tomorrow's destination and the surrounding mountains. Along our way, we will find the small church of Madonna delle Ripe, the hermitage of San Pietro in Vigneto and the old monastery of

Caprignone. A last climb will bring us to the remains of the castle of Biscina and the holiday farm for our overnight stay.

Day 14. Biscina-Assisi (27 Km / 16, 8 miles, difficult).

Again a long stage, but with great satisfaction. We start with a downhill walk till the bottom of the valley. After the dam we reach the historic farm Barcaccia and after it Valfabbrica. Passed the hill we have the first view of the rocca of Assisi and shortly after of the Basilica di San Francesco. We cross the river Tescio, climb through the woods of Saint Francis, "Bosco di San Francesco" and come to the Basilica di San Francesco, highlight of the tour and the place where we get the well-deserved "Testimonium".

Programme Assisi-Rieti-Rome:

Day 1. Arrival in Assisi

Arrival on your own account at your hotel in Assisi, the starting point of our journey. Attend the briefing with the guide that will accompany the group and meet the other participants.

Day 2. Assisi-Foligno (21 Km/13 miles; difficult)

Begin the 1st leg by setting off directly from the hotel. Get across Mount Subasio, visiting the sanctuary of "Eremo delle Carceri" on the way, then Spello, a beautiful medieval town; continue on flat land to reach our hotel in the thriving city of Foligno.

Day 3. Foligno – Campello alto (22 Km/13.8 miles; medium)

The 2nd leg is flat down to the castle of Sant'Eraclio, then it turns into the hills, covered with olive groves; the next town, Trevi, hanging over the valley, is worthwhile to visit; continue up and down the mountainside and arrive at our new hotel by Castello di Campello.

Day 4. Campello Alto to Spoleto (20 Km/12.5 miles; medium)

The 3rd leg continues up and down the mountainside amid olive groves, passing by little gems like Poretta and its castle, Bazzano and Eggi; arrive at one of the most important historical cities, rich of art treasures, of the entire route, Spoleto.

Day 5. Spoleto –Ferentillo (21 Km/13 miles; difficult)

The 4th leg starts from the massif castle (Rocca di Albornoz) and climb up to the "sacred" woods of Monteluco and the franciscan sanctuary "Eremo delle Grazie". Cross the mountain and descend into the narrow valley of River Nera (Valnerina), passing by the neat little villages of Pontuglia and Ceselli; get across the river and follow it down to another lovely village, Precetto, where we will stop for the night.

Day 6. Ferentillo - Piediluco (22 Km/14 miles; easy)

The 5th leg continues along the bank of the Nera down to Arrone and Castel di Lago, then climb up the steep slopes next to the monumental Marmore Waterfalls to get to the village of Marmore and onward to Lake Piediluco and our hotel.



Day 7. Piediluco - Poggio Bustone (21 Km/13 miles; difficult)

The 6th leg takes you up to the perfectly preserved feudal town of Labro, on a hilltop overlooking the lake. Onward to Morro Reatino and then up into the wild to reach the highest point of the route (1100m/3600 ft) and see the amazing "St Francis beech tree"; then down again to the rural village of Cepparo and on along the mountainside to the Franciscan sanctuary and the town of Poggio Bustone and finally our hotel.

Day 8. Poggio Bustone – Rieti (17 Km/10.6 miles; medium)

The 7th leg starts by descending halfway down to the valley, then along the mountainside to the little village of San Liberato and then Cantalice, hanging on the rocks. Then gradually we walk down to the sanctuary of La Foresta, and onward to another very important historical city, Rieti.

Day 9. Rieti – Poggio San Lorenzo (22 Km/13.8 miles; medium)

The 8th leg leaves Rieti by taking into a narrow side-valley; walk along the bank of a tiny rivulet up to the top, cross a very ancient Roman bridge and start climbing into the hills of the Sabina, covered with woods and olive groves. Pass by Ornaro and Torricella to reach our new hotel near Poggio San Lorenzo.

Day 10. Poggio San Lorenzo – Ponticelli (24 Km/15 miles; difficult)

The 9th leg continues across the hills, through woods, vineyards and olive groves, topped by medieval villages. Monteleone Sabino with the archaeological Roman site of Trebula Mutuesca and the church of Santa Vittoria; further on, the town of Poggio Moiano and the village of Ponticelli; you have to leave the path here to reach our guesthouse on a hilltop, near the Franciscan sanctuary of "Santa Maria delle Grazie".

Day 11. Ponticelli – Monterotondo (30 Km/18.7 miles; difficult)

The 10th leg starts from Ponticelli. Cross hills covered with olive groves and topped by the majestic Orsini Castle, dominating the vast lowland that unrolls in the distance; walking up and down even lower hills, pass the village of Acquaviva di Nerola and the town of Montelibretti, then amid peach trees, vineyards and corn fields, reach the historical town of Monterotondo and our hotel.

Day 12. Monterotondo – Montesacro (18 Km/11.2 miles; easy)

The 11th leg starts by getting down to Valle Ricca and into Parco della Marcigliana; on the other side of the park you are already at the edge of Rome: the last 6 Km/3.8 mi are all on city streets and can be avoided by taking the bus. Our hotel is in the stylish borough of Montesacro.

Day 13. Montesacro –St Peter’s Basilica, Rome (15 Km/9.4 miles; easy)

The 12th and final leg starts by getting across the Aniene River either on a modern bridge or on a medieval one, then take the footpath, away from city traffic, through the elegant boroughs Salario, Parioli and Flaminio, reach the banks of the Tiber River at Ponte Milvio. Follow the footpath along the riverside to Castel Santangelo, then walk down Via della Conciliazione and reach St Peter’s Square. Go to the Pilgrimage Office and claim our certificates.

Day 14. End of our services.

Upon request it is possible to extend your stay in Rome.



PRICES PER PERSON:

Stretch A from Florence to Assisi

€ 2,100.00 in single room

€ 1,780.00 in double room/triple

Group discount (minimum 4 persons): € 100.00

Stretch B: from Florence to La Verna

€ 980.00 in single room

€ 830.00 in double/triple

Group discount (minimum 4 persons): € 40.00

Stretch C: La Verna to Assisi

€ 1,340.00 in single room

€ 1,130.00 in double / triple

Group discount (minimum 4 persons): € 40.00

Stretch D: Assisi to Rome

€ 2,000.00 in single room

€ 1,700.00 in double/triple

Group discount (minimum 4 persons): € 100.00

Stretch E: Assisi to Rieti

€ 1.240.00 in single room

€ 1.050.00 in double/triple

Group discount (minimum 4 persons): € 50.00

Stretch F: Rieti to Rome

€ 980.00 in single room

€ 830.00 in double/triple

Group discount (minimum 4 persons): € 50.00

"EARLY BOOKING" (bookings at least 4 months before departure): discount 3%

You can join/leave the group at any point along the itinerary: please consult our office for quotations and other details.

Included in the tour:

- An expert guide, fluent in English and other languages will accompany the group.
- Accommodation in Hotel of 3/4 stars or Guesthouses (Agriturismo, Convents).
- Half board treatment (water and wine included)
- Baggage transportation (1 piece per person)
- "Pilgrim's Kit" with "pilgrim's passport"
- road-book and maps
- Medical/luggage insurance