

SCENIC DRIVES IN UMBRIA

THE STUNNING MEDIEVAL HILLTOWN of Gubbio in Umbria is the centerpiece for these driving tours. You'll discover that Umbria really is the heart of Italy, a landscape of vineyards and fortified towns rich in Renaissance art and architecture. There are artistic treasures to unearth in the capital city of Perugia and in the towns of Orvieto, Todi, and Spoleto. But these journeys will also acquaint you with the neighboring region of Le Marche. Italians think of Le Marche as delightfully slow paced and a bit old-fashioned, the way Tuscany was two decades ago. You'll have the chance to explore perfect Renaissance towns such as Urbino, drive through fields of lavender and sunflower, and taste the finest truffles in the world. These are delightful drives that will stimulate your eyes and your tastebuds.

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(Before you begin your trip, please note: For space reasons, we could not provide the most detailed map with this brochure.

Please go to ViaMichelin.com for detailed driving directions. We recommend the use of Michelin Map #735 Italy and #563 Toscana-Umbria in conjunction with this guide. To order Michelin maps, call 1-888-610-5122.)

ROME LEONARDO DA VINCI Fiumicino Airport

Pick up your car here at Rome's major airport, just 30 minutes from the city center.

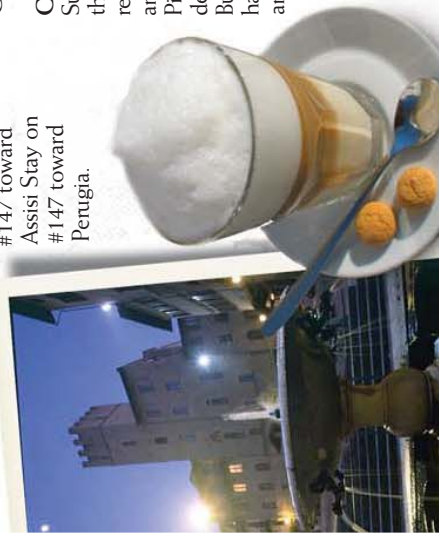
ROME—A visit to the Coliseum, an early morning at the map room at the Vatican, or an afternoon of shoe shopping are all noble pursuits in Rome. Or you could while away your time at the colorful food market at Campo de' Fiori, move on to the ruins on Palatine Hill, and finish with a stroll through the Villa Borghese gardens. When you've had your fill of the Spanish Steps and trattorias in Trastevere, your next destination is Umbria via your first scenic route.

ROME TO GUBBIO—From Rome, take A-1 toward Rieti and Terni

Right (East) on #521 toward Ascoli. At Leonessa take #471 North (left) toward Norcia. At #320 turn west (left) to #209, towards Camerino. At #77 turn west (left) toward

Foligno/Assisi. At Foligno turn north (right) on #147 toward

Assisi. Stay on #147 toward Perugia.



Pick-up #3-bis heading north toward Citta di Castello. The first right is #298 toward Gubbio.

GUBBIO—Gubbio is visually stunning. Its 14th-century architecture epitomizes the very best of medieval hill towns. The Piazza Grande is at the center of town, and you should plan to see the works on display at the Museo Civico e Pinacoteca Comunale. Explore the Palazzo Ducale and the Palazzo del Capitano del Popolo. Wander the twisting alleyways around the Porta Metauro and step inside the museum at the Porta Romana. Gubbio hosts a fine antiques market on the last Sunday of every month, and if you're a shopper, you'll find high-quality majolica on sale every day of the year. Food is also a highlight of any stay here. The highly acclaimed local truffles make it onto every menu, as do Umbrian specialties such as the long pasta strands known as stringozzi. It's a land of pork and lentils, figs and chocolate—not to mention white wines such as Orvieto and the familiar red, Rosso di Montefalco. Settle in and slow down to a pace suitable for residence in a Renaissance town.

THE DRIVES DRIVE NO. 1: UMBRIA, WITH A TASTE OF LE MARCHE

Take #219 West toward Cortona. At the #3-bis, turn north (right) to Citta di Castello.

CITTA DI CASTELLO

Surrounded by 16th-century walls, the town contains some fine medieval reliquaries at the Museo del Duomo and Renaissance painting at the Pinacoteca Comunale. Museo Burri is devoted to a modern artist, Alberto Burri. Shop for truffles, ceramics and hand-woven linen, have an espresso, and then carry on.

Drive to #75-bis. Turn east (right) toward Urbino, stop at Urbana.

URBANIA—The Palazzo Ducale is the highlight of any visit, with its museum of paintings, globes and ancient maps. But certainly the most bizarre attraction in town is the Cimitero delle Mummie in the Chiesaetta dei Morti, where a dozen mummified corpses are on display.

Turn north (left) on #73-bis toward Urbino.

URBINO—This hill top town with its twin towers is a wellspring of great art and architecture. The centro storico of the town is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. And thanks to the patronage of 15th-century Duke Federico of Montefeltro, it looks like the quintessential Renaissance town. Cobble streets, terra cotta roofs and pale brick walls conceal incredible treasures. Begin your explorations at the Ducal Palace of Urbino, a fine example of a Renaissance palace where you can see works by Raphael. Check out the cafés at the Piazza della Repubblica for a light lunch, such as piadina, a flat bread, filled with sausage, cured meat or cheese. Or try Taverna degli Artisti, where you can sample traditional Marchigiani dishes like passatelli, a fresh pasta of egg, breadcrumbs and Parmesan cheese. Lunch should include at least a taste of two of the better regional cheeses, formaggio di fossa and casciotta d'Urbino.

In Urbino go south on #3 toward Cola del Furlo.

GOLA DEL FURLO

When you arrive at this gorge, you're forgiven if you think you're in the American West. There are sheer limestone cliffs that rise up on either side of the deep green waters of the Candigliano river. On the other hand, this is an ancient site, and you can still see the marks of chisels where a tunnel was hand cut here on orders of Emperor Vespasian in AD 76. This



area is now a natural park and home to increasingly rare flora and fauna, including golden eagles.

Continue to Acqualangna.

ACQUALANGNA—Some of Italy's most prized truffles are unearthed in the region around this town. If you're here in November, plan to attend the National Truffle Fair.

In Acqualangna, pick up #257 Southwest (right) to Citta di Castello. Take #3-bis south toward Perugia and stop at Umbertide.

UMBERTIDE—The 14th-century castle is the primary reason to pause here. Explore the dungeons and the tower. If you have time, stop in La Collegiata, also called Santa Maria della Reggia. This octagonal building has paintings by Pomarancio. There are also paintings by Luca Signorelli and others in the de-sanctified Chiesa San Croce.

From Umbertide, take #219 East (left) back to Gubbio.

DRIVE NO. 2: THE VERY BEST OF UMBRIA

Depart Gubbio and take #298 South towards Perugia/Assisi. Cross #75-bis and take #220 South toward Perugia.

PERUGIA—The lively capital of Umbria, Perugia is a charming medieval hill town and the home to one of Italy's favorite products, Perugia chocolates. Begin a tour in Piazza d'Italia, and then stroll down Corso Vannucci, exploring the shops and cafés and getting an eyeful of local color. Culturally, Perugia offers the Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria and the frescoes at the Collegio del Cambio. At the edge of the city is San Pietro, a Benedictine monastery founded in the late 900s. Fortified with chocolate, you're ready to continue.

Continue on #220 toward Citta della Pieve. Turn south (left) on #71 to Orvieto.

ORVIETO— You can enjoy Orvieto from a distance if you choose, since it's such a visual stunner. The entire town looks as if it was sculpted from a single block of volcanic tufa stone. If you feel like an extended visit, you can see the Duomo's Cappella San Brizio, peruse the exhibits at the Musei Archeologici Faina e Civico, and peek into Orvieto's miles of man-made caverns.

Take #79-bis toward Todi.

TODI— A border town that separated the Etruscans and the Umbrians, Todi has been colonized to some extent by expats. What they've discovered is a town that has some of the best of Umbria, from great architecture to a slow pace and fine regional cuisine. You can visit the paintings in the Palazzo del Popolo and see a Last Judgment frescoed by Ferruccio di Faenza in the Duomo. Then visit an osteria like Antica Hosteria De La Valle for regional dishes like porchetta—roast suckling pig cooked with garlic and rosemary—accompanied by the local Grechetto di Todi white wine.

Continue on #79. Cross #3-bis to #418 toward Spoleto.

SPOLETO— The Italian-American composer Gian Carlo Menotti is credited with starting the Festival of the Two Worlds back in 1958. Today it takes over Spoleto from

the end of June until mid-July, drawing international performers in music, dance and theater. But Spoleto is very much worth exploring even if it isn't festival season. Step inside the Duomo, which has frescoes by Filippo Lippi. And the Museo Archeologico has relics unearthed from a 1st-century theater still in use today. Before leaving town, walk across the Ponte delle Torri, an aqueduct and viaduct, which dates back to the 14th-century.

In Spoleto pick up #395 into #209 North (left). Take the first left on #319. #519 ends at #77. Go west (left) toward Foligno.

FOLIGNO— One of the rare Umbrian towns that isn't a hill town, Foligno was built on the plain. You can stroll around the Piazza della Repubblica and the Piazza Duomo and look at the city's Renaissance architecture. But even if you can't stop, the hilly, green countryside that surrounds Foligno, with its olive groves and vineyards, is enchanting.

From Foligno, take #75 North (right) toward Perugia to #3-bis North to #298 East to Gubbio.

DRIVE NO. 3: ANOTHER TASTE OF UMBRIA AND LE MARCHE— From Gubbio, take #3-bis North toward Pieve Santo Stefano and pause at Sansepolcro.

SANSEPOLCRO— The early Renaissance painter Piero della Francesca was born in Sansepolcro, and you can view his work in the town's Museo Civico. You can also visit the house he lived in during the 15th century, the Casa di Piero della Francesca. A stroll down the Via XX Settembre, with its palaces and towers, is also impressive.

Turn right on #258 East toward Novafeltria.

NOVAFELTRIA— You can pause here for an espresso and see the town's architectural highlights—the 18th-century Palazzo Municipale and two fine churches, Santa Marina and San Pietro.

Continue on to Secchiano, where you turn right to Villagrando. Continue to Carpegna.

CARPEGNA— There are terrific views from this hilltop town. And by all means step into a shop and sample the town's famous prosciutto crudo, a cured ham that's substantially different from the more commonplace prosciutto di Parma.

Continue on to Pennabilli.

PENNABILLI— The town is named after the two towns and their castles, Penna and Billi. Pennabilli was unified in 1350, but remnants of both towns remain. The town has evolved into a center for antiques: the National Antiques Market is held every July at Palazzo Olivieri. Lunches tend to be casual, but Piasirino stands out for its simple setting and local food. If you want to taste ciauscolo, the region's famous spreadable salami, or a dish with Le Marche's much-lauded truffles, this is where to enjoy them.

Continue on and go south-west (left) at Ponte Messa on #258 toward Sansepulcro. Go south (left) on E-45. Pass Sansepulcro to the Citta di Castello exit to #3-bis toward Perugia. Before Perugia take #318 North to Gubbio.

HOTELS

Hotel Eden. A luxurious 121-room hotel close to Via Veneto and the Borghese Gardens. The rooftop restaurant and bar offer some of the best views in Rome.
Tel:(39) 06 478 121
www.hotel-eden.it

For reservations in the US: 800-543-4300

Park Hotel ai Cappuccini. Located in a restored and renovated 17th-century monastery, the hotel has 95 rooms and well-appointed public areas. A highlight is the spa and the 24-meter swimming pool. Via Tifernate, Gubbio.
Tel: (39) 075 9234
www.parkhotelaicappuccini.com

Relais Ducale. This 30-room hotel in the center of Gubbio is situated in a former annex of the Ducale Palace. Some rooms boast vaulted stone ceilings. Via Caleotti 19, Gubbio.
Tel: (39) 075 9220157
www.mencarelligroup.com

Bosone Palace. Dante was a guest here back in the 14th century when the 30-room Bosone was a palace that belonged to the Raffaelli family. Palatial is the word for the breakfast room and the stuccoed Renaissance suites. Via XX Settembre 22, Gubbio.
Tel: (39) 075 922 0688
www.mencarelligroup.com

DINING

Taverna del Lupo. Wonderful local cuisine, a terrific wine list and historic dining rooms. Via Ansidei 6, Gubbio.
Tel: (39) 075 9274368

La Fornace di Mastro Giorgio. A converted 14th-century brick factory with a separate wine bar. Via Mastro Giorgio 2, Gubbio.
Tel: (39) 075 9221836

Taverna degli Artisti. Via Bramante 52, Urbino.
Tel: (39) 0722 2676

Antica Hosteria De La Valle. Via Ciuffelli 19, Todi.
Tel: (39) 075 8944848

Il Piasirino. Via Parco Begni 9, Pennabilli.
Tel: (39) 0541 928569

