



ITALY: ROME, UMBRIA & FLORENCE

UMBRIA IS THE HEART OF ITALY, a landscape of vineyards and medieval hill towns redolent of the Renaissance. There are rich troves of art and architecture to explore in the capital city of Perugia and in Assisi, birthplace of Saint Francis. On this drive, you'll discover the attractions of Orvieto, Todi and Spoleto. Then you'll enter Tuscany, a landscape of dome-smooth verdant hills with perfect lines of tall cypresses and fields of wild poppies. You may stumble upon a Fra Angelico fresco and Etruscan ruins, or discover the best bottle of Chianti Classico you've ever uncorked. There are art treasures in Siena and Slow Food restaurants in Greve to visit. Count on seeing half-forgotten villages with medieval churches and landscapes that seem little changed for centuries. And with the grand cities of Rome and Florence as bookends, this promises to be a true immersion in the best of Italian life, food and culture.

ROME, UMBRIA & FLORENCE

(Mileage is estimated from each preceding city or site. Before you begin your trip, please note: For space reasons, we could not provide the most detailed map with this brochure. 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—Rome is the grand prize of Italian travel, a melange of culture, tradition and 21st-century energy. Plan on exploring the Coliseum and the Forum, pausing at lively, café-filled squares like Piazza Navona. Make the obligatory stops at the Spanish Steps and the Vatican. Stroll down Via Condotti to the showplaces of Gucci and Ferragamo. And explore the ancient streets of Trastevere, home to chic restaurants and nightclubs. Now you're ready to head north, through Umbria and Tuscany to Florence.

Cardinal Ippolito d'Este, the son of Lucretia Borgia. The palace was built for entertaining on a grand scale, but the gardens are the highlight, a riot of fountains and other water features. Then wander through Villa Adriana, the dream of Emperor Hadrian, a town-sized complex with lakes and fountains, temples and gardens.

79 miles

ORVIETO—Orvieto appears to have been sculpted from a single block of volcanic tufa stone. Visit the Duomo's Cappella San Brizio in this hilltop town, take in the exhibits at the Musei Archeologici Faina e Civico, and tour Orvieto's miles of man-made caverns before relaxing in a trattoria.

26 miles

TODI—A border town between the Etruscans and the Umbrians, Todi is now something of a haven for American expats who've come for the good life. Step inside the Duomo, where highlights include a Last Judgment frescoed by Ferruccio Faenza in 1596 and a central rose window. Do see the 16th- and 17th-century paintings in the Museo inside the Palazzo del Popolo. And then settle into a café chair in Piazza del Popolo and enjoy a glass of the local Grechetto di Todi white wine.

27 miles

TERNI—The name *Terni* is derived from a Latin phrase that means "between two rivers." The rivers in question are the Nera and the Serra. Terni sits in a natural amphitheater that has been the site of settlements since prehistoric times. The birthplace of the emperor Marcus Claudius Tacitus and St. Valentine, Terni harbors the ruins of a Roman amphitheater and medieval quarters, but also the modernist architecture of Mario Ridolfi.

20 miles

SPOLETO—Back in 1958,

the Italian-American composer Gian Carlo Menotti came up with the idea of a festival that would gather international performers in music, dance and theater. Now every June, Spoleto comes alive with the Festival of the Two Worlds. But come anytime to explore Spoleto's Roman ruins and medieval buildings. And no visit is complete without a walk across the Ponte delle Torri, an aqueduct and viaduct that dates back to the 14th century.

29 miles

ASSISI—Assisi is much loved and much visited by centuries of pilgrims paying homage to native-born St. Francis, the patron saint of Italy. But Assisi is also a stunning hill town with marvelous medieval alleyways and terrific Renaissance art. At the Piazza del Comune, you can see the Tempio di Minerva, the portico of a Roman temple. In the Basilica di San Francesco are incredible works by Pietro Lorenzetti, Simone Martini and Giotto. But arrive early or late in the day to avoid the throngs of tourists.

16 miles

PERUGIA—This medieval hill town is the capital of Umbria. Begin your exploration at the Piazza d'Italia, and then head down Corso Vannucci. This street is where you'll see Perugia on parade, with inviting cafés that offer the best people-watching in the city. When you come to the Palazzo dei Priori, you'll find the Galleria Nazionale dell'Umbria and the frescoes of the Collegio del Cambio. And in a city whose major export is Perugia, Italy's finest chocolate, your sweet tooth will be delighted you visited.

26 miles

GUBBIO—A classic medieval hill town with steep stone alleys, Gubbio

clings to the slopes of Mt. Ingino. The best of its austere architecture dates from the 14th century. It's a town known for producing high-quality majolica and for the Corsa dei Ceri. Every May 15, three teams race from the main square in front of the Palazzo dei Consoli to the Basilica while carrying a 16-foot statue of a saint. Regardless of when you visit, plan a lunch that centers around the white truffles that grow in the fields above the town.

30 miles

CITTA DI CASTELLO—The walls that surround this town date back to the 16th century. Pause here to visit the Museo del Duomo, which contains some fine medieval reliquaries. At the Pinacoteca Comunale are paintings by Signorelli and Ghirlandaio. The town itself is a trove of Renaissance buildings, but it's also home to Museo Burri, which houses a collection of works by Alberto Burri, one of Italy's contemporary artists. You'll find more white truffles on trattoria menus here, as well as shopping for ceramics and hand-woven linen.

12 miles

SANSEPOLCRO—You come to Sansepolcro to visit the Museo Civico, housed in a 15th-century building, which displays the work of native-born Piero della Francesca, one of the great artists of the early Renaissance. The Duomo has a Romanesque-Gothic interior, with frescoes by Bartolomeo della Gatta, Niccolò di Segna and Raffaello del Colle. Sansepolcro's main square is the Piazza Torre di Berta, and you can catch up on your window shopping along Via XX Settembre.



24 miles

AREZZO— Arezzo has one of Italy's liveliest antiques market, held in the Piazza Grande on the first Sunday of every month. But do see Piero della Francesca's frescoes in the Bacci Chapel. Visit Casa del Vasari, the home of one of the great Renaissance architects and painters. And walk through the Museo Statale d'Arte Medievale, with its collections of majolica and medieval sculpture. Then settle in for a long Tuscan lunch.

14 miles

MONTE SAN SAVINO— A handsome walled hill town with medieval and Renaissance buildings, Monte San Savino overlooks the Val di Chiana. The town has been famous for ceramics for many centuries. Of note are works by Renaissance master Andrea Sansovino in the church of Santa Chiara, especially his altarpiece of the Madonna and Child with Saints. If you're a dedicated shopper, inspect the ceramics and majolica that has been made here for centuries.

17 miles

CASTELNUOVO BERARDENGA— Located in the south of Chianti, in the Ombrone Valley, Castelnuovo means "new castle" and dates back to 1366 when Siena Republic ordered its construction. Climb the tower of Poggio ai Castelli to view the surrounding area, once ruled from this town. Before a lunch that should include a taste of the excellent local Chianti, note that there are two exceptional villas here—the Villa Chigi, which is surrounded by a large park, and the Villa di Ceggiano, well worth visiting for its gardens alone.

15 miles

SIENA— At the center of Siena is the Piazza del Campo, shaped like a scallop shell and walled in by noble palazzi. It's a marvelous space when empty in the early morning and an

5 miles

FLORENCE— There's enough to keep a curious visitor to Florence busy for a lifetime. You could

profitably spend a week in the Uffizi Gallery, which has a wealth of works by Leonardo Da Vinci, Giotto and Fra Lippo Lippi, not to mention masterpieces by Piero della Francesca, Uccello and Botticelli. But you probably won't, because the rest of Florence is so enchanting. You can go a little crazy at the leather shops and the paper shops. Or you can sample different flavors of as you stroll across the medieval bridge known as the Ponte Vecchio. Go to the Duomo early one morning to take in the dome by Brunelleschi. Have a look at Galileo's telescope in the Museo di Storia della Scienza. Examine the Vasari frescoes at the Palazzo Vecchio. Then settle down to peruse a classic Florentine menu in an alfresco restaurant and watch the city's glorious street life.

3 miles

AMERIGO VESPUCCI AIRPORT— Florence's airport is just outside the city center and is ideal for connections to Milan, Rome or other European cities for the flight back home.

HOTELS

Villa San Michele. This former monastery on a hillside has painterly views of distant Florence. The facade was designed by Michelangelo, and the 45 rooms are simple yet elegant. Via Doccia 4, Fiesole. Tel: (39) 055 567 8200

www.villasanmichele.com
For reservations in the US: 800-237-1236

Westin Excelsior.

This refurbished 165-room grand dame occupies two houses that overlook the

Arno River. Impeccable service matches the interiors, a riot of marble, grand staircases and stained glass windows. Piazza d'Ognissanti 3, Florence. Tel: (39) 055 27151

www.westin.com
For reservations in the US: 800-937-8461

Borgo San Felice.

Set on a hilltop, close to Castelnuovo Berardenga, this hotel is a classic Italian hamlet or *borgo*. Now a Relais & Chateaux property, it's been impeccably restored and offers 43 luxurious rooms in the heart of Chianti. San Felice, Castelnuovo Berardenga. Tel: (39) 0577 3964
www.relaischateaux.com
For reservations in the US: 800-735-2478

Hotel Eden. Ideally situated next to Borghese Gardens and walking distance to the Spanish Steps, this 121-room hotel is a haven of elegance. And its rooftop restaurant offers one of the best views in Rome. Tel: (39) 06 478 121
www.hotel-eden.it
For reservations in the US: 800-543-4300

Hotel Certosa di Maggiano. A 14th-century Carthusian monastery transformed into an elegant 17-room retreat. Stunning views of Siena with all the comforts of a resort. Strada di Certosa, 82, Siena. Tel: (39) 0577 288180
www.relaischateaux.com.
For reservations in the US: 800-735-2478

DINING

Enoteca Pinchiorri. A jewel box courtyard in this three-star Michelin restaurant. The genius of Annie Feolde and Giorgio Pinchiorri is at work here, so the food is sublime, the wine list staggering. Via Ghibellina, 87 Florence. Tel: (39) 055 242777
www.enotecapinchiorri.com

when jammed with spectators who've come for the Palio. This bareback horse race dates back to 1283. Tuscany's most spectacular festival, it's held twice yearly on July 2 and August 16. If you can't make it, enjoy the Piazza, and by all means visit the Duomo and the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. Then escape the crowds by wandering Siena's narrow, hilly medieval streets.

14 miles

CASTELLINA IN CHIANTI—

A slow pace is the rule in this walled hilltop village, which is one of the major wine centers of Chianti. A major pastime here is tasting local wines and olive oils at any number of tasting rooms. The armies of Siena and Florence once fought in the surrounding hills, though the sounds of cuckoos are about all you're likely to hear today.

12 miles

GREVE— The center of Chianti Classico country, Greve is home to Chianti's largest wine fair every September. But it's also a beacon for the Slow Food movement, as well as the Slow City movement. Slowing down shouldn't be a problem in Greve, as it offers delightful cafés and restaurants.

20 miles

FIESOLE— A glorious hillside settlement just outside of Florence, the town has views of that city and the surrounding greenery that appear to be a Renaissance landscape come to life. In quiet Fiesole, you feel as if you're in a small Tuscan town, not a suburb of Florence.

