



From
\$11,946 NZD

Single Room
 \$13,676 NZD

Twin Room
 \$11,946 NZD

Prices valid until
 30th December 2023

18 days
 Duration

Italy
 Destination

Level 3 - Moderate to Challenging
 Activity

Via di Francesco Walking Tour | Small Group Walking Tours Italy

Sep 10 2024 to Sep 27 2024

Via di Francesco Walking Tour: Following the Pilgrims

Odyssey Traveller's **Via di Francesco** (or the Way of St. Francis) small group walking tour links together places directly associated with the life and sacred travels of St. Francis of Assisi. This 18-day tour traverses Italy **from Florence to Rome** through incredible landscapes, with important stops in Assisi, where St. Francis was born Giovanni di Pietro



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<https://www.odysseytraveller.com.au>

27-Sep-2023

di Bernardone to a wealthy family in 1182 and where he died at the age of 44 in 1226.

The Via di Francesco pilgrimage walk traditionally begins at the Sanctuary of La Verna and ends at the tomb of St. Assisi in Basilica di San Francesco d'Assisi. This tour, especially designed for the active mature or senior traveller, combines comfortable coach rides with enriching walks through verdant forests and valleys. **We will walk up to 15 kilometres per day**, and explore key places of interest on the pilgrimage route with local guides. If you are after a memorable travel experience, this is guaranteed to be an unforgettable walking adventure full of history and culture.

On this tour, we will visit:

- Florence
- Arezzo
- Cita di Castello
- Gubbio
- Assisi
- Terni
- Viterbo
- Piediluco area
- Tivoli
- Rome

St. Francis, patron saint of Italy (with Saint Catherine of Siena) and the patron saint of animals and the environment, chose to leave a life of luxury to devote the rest of his years to the Christian faith. He is remembered as the first person to receive the stigmata, or marks resembling the wounds Jesus Christ suffered when he was crucified, and was canonised only two years after his death. In 2013, Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergogli from Argentina chose to honour the saint by

taking his name, becoming Pope Francis.

Though St. Francis lived a life of poverty and solitude, travellers will be treated to a rich route that passes through historic towns filled with architectural wonders and amazing natural beauty. Even with the walking, you will be enjoying *la dolce vita* and discovering hidden gems along this pilgrimage. As well as taking in important Franciscan sites, you will have the chance to experience delicious Italian cuisine and gain an insight into local culture in each of the towns we visit. Be prepared for an Italian adventure like no other.

For more details, click the 'Top 5' or 'Itinerary' buttons above! If you're keen to experience this tour, [please call](#) or [send an email](#). Or, to book, simply fill in the form on the right-hand side of this page.

About senior walking tours from Odyssey Traveller

Odyssey Traveller offers a range of walking tours each year paced for senior travellers. The collection of walks are for active mature and senior travellers, particularly those who seek out walking tours that are typically off the main circuit. Click through to see the [complete list of small group walking tours offered](#).

Articles published by Odyssey Traveller for Walking and Hiking tours for seniors

To help you prepare for any walking program whether with Odyssey or another company this list of articles is intended to help you prepare for your holiday.

- articles on [Selecting walking shoes for women](#)

- article on [footwear and walking shoes](#)
- article on [what to pack when travelling](#).
- article on [maintaining muscle fitness in senior and mature age travellers](#)
- article on [selecting socks for walking](#)
- article detailing [six great short walks in Britain](#)
- article on [preparing for a walking holiday](#)
- article on [Pilgrim walks in Europe](#)
- article on [walking in there Lake District](#)

Articles about Italy published by Odyssey Traveller

The following list of articles, represents some of the articles published by Odyssey Traveller for mature aged and senior travellers to maximise their knowledge and enjoyment of Italy when visiting;

- [Who where the Roman Emperors?](#)
- [Venetian maps rule](#)
- [Secret Venice](#)
- [Around the world in six coffees](#)
- [History of a city; Florence](#)
- [Ten of the Best art galleries in Europe to visit.](#)

[For all the articles published by Odyssey Traveller, please click through to this link](#)

External articles to assist you on your walk along Via De Francesco way

- [Walking the Via de Francesco way: Italy magazine](#)
- [The life of St Francis](#)
- [Understanding the walk along Via De Francesco way](#)

For more details about this tour, click the 'Top 5' or 'Itinerary' buttons above! If you're keen to experience this tour, [please call](#) or [send an email](#). Or, to book, simply fill in the form on the right hand side of this page.

Other Odyssey Tours

Walking the Via De Francesco way is only one of many of the small group tours offered by Odyssey Traveller to [Italy](#). You can also view the entire collection of tours to [Europe](#) offered to mature aged and senior travellers each year. Odyssey Traveller Via De Francesco small group walking tour is one of many [walking programs](#) offered by us each year. These active tours are designed for the mature traveller to enjoy in a small group holiday and learning environment. If you'd like to learn more about ancient and modern pilgrimages, you can read our [informative article](#) about the many pilgrimage routes in Europe, and [an article focusing on](#) the routes of the Camino and Via de la Plata. The article ends with some helpful tips to prepare you for long walks.

Tour Notes

- A good level of fitness is required for this tour.

Highlights

1. Enjoy enriching walks through serene forests, valleys, and the rural countryside on sections of the Via di Francesco.
2. Visit the mountain sanctuary, La Verna, which served as a place of quiet contemplation for St. Francis.
3. Be in awe of the Basilica di San Francesco d'Assisi, a World Heritage Site which houses the saint's tomb.
4. View the 15th century Renaissance masterpieces such as the "Annunciation" and "The Adoration by the Shepherds" by Pinturicchio in the Cappella Baglioni (Baglioni Chapel).
5. Stroll through the magnificent ruins of Villa Adriana (Hadrian's Villa), a retreat residence built for the Roman emperor in Tivoli.

Itinerary

Day 1

Locations: Florence

Overview:

Upon arrival in Florence we make our own way to our hotel. The remainder of the day is free. In the evening we will meet again as a group for a welcome dinner at a local traditional restaurant.

Accommodation:

Overnight Hotel Rosso 23 or similar

Day 2

Locations: Florence

Overview:

Florence is the capital of the region of Tuscany and is considered the birthplace of the Renaissance. It is home to the awe-inspiring Santa Maria del Fiore (Duomo di Firenze), the Piazza della Signoria near the

city's town hall, Palazzo Vecchio ("Old Palace"), and the medieval Ponte Vecchio, the only bridge across the Arno River left intact in World War II.

Today we will spend the morning walking around the city to view the main sights, and have the afternoon free to spend at our leisure.

Accommodation:

Overnight Hotel Rosso 23 or similar

Day 3

Locations: La Verna - Pieve Santo Stefano - Arezzo

Overview:

A touring coach will be joining us today and stay with us until Day 15.

After breakfast we will transfer to La Verna to visit this peaceful mountain Franciscan sanctuary and the traditional starting point of the Via di Francesco. We will have a guided tour of the Sanctuary of La Verna, which served as a place of quiet contemplation for the saint and where he was said to have received the stigmata, and walk roughly 15 kms through the beautiful Casentino woods to Pieve Santo Stefano. We will enjoy a packed picnic lunch to eat along the way. This trail is of medium difficulty, with a few steep areas on Mount Calvano and Mount Modina.

Upon arrival in Pieve Santo Stefano we will have free time to explore the area. Pieve Santo Stefano is a small village with vestiges of its Roman origins. It is also known as "Diary City" as it is home to the Archivio Diaristico Nazionale, which collects thousands of diaries and other epistolary texts.

After exploring, we will transfer to Arezzo and check in to our accommodation for the night. We will enjoy dinner at a local restaurant.

Accommodation:

Overnight Hotel Continentale or similar

Day 4

Locations: Arezzo - Citerna - Lerchi - Citta di Castello

Overview:

After breakfast we will travel by coach to Citerna, named after its extensive underground system of cisterns, and have some free time to explore this charming Umbrian city. It has two ancient city gates still standing—Porta Romana and Porta Fiorentina, named after the directions they faced (towards Rome and Florence, respectively)—and several churches.

Still in the Citerna area, we will head to Fattoria Montelupo, the only *fattoria* (“farm”) in Umbria producing buffalo mozzarella. We will have a guided tour to learn about the production process and have a tasting.

We will transfer to Lerchi and start our 9 km-walk to Citta di Castello. During the walk, subject to availability, we will have stops at Fondazione Archeologia Arborea, which has ancient local varieties of fruit plants, and Covent of Buon Riposo. This is a relatively walk with a downhill final stretch leading to the Cathedral of Città di Castello.

We will have time to explore Citta di Castello with a guide, and end the day with dinner at a local restaurant.

Accommodation:

Overnight Hotel Tiferno or similar

Day 5

Locations: Citta di Castello - Pietralunga - Gubbio

Overview:

From Citta di Castello we will transfer to Pietralunga, a small town with only around 2,300 inhabitants. It is home to a medieval stronghold and the 7th century Parish Church of Santa Maria, and we will explore the town on a guided tour. We will transfer to the village of Monteieto and walk 7 kms. to Gubbio. The trail will be dotted with hermitages, abbeys, and little villages—plenty of wonderful stops to enrich our walk. Upon arrival in Gubbio we will have lunch (own arrangements) and view the

main sights with a guide.

Our itinerary in Gubbio includes a ride by cable car on the Funivia Colle Eletto to reach the Basilica Sant'Ubaldo on Monte Ingino. The Basilica displays the body of St Ubaldo in a glass coffin above the altar, and has a small museum dedicated to the town festival, Corsa dei Ceri. We will also visit the Antiquarium and Teatro Romano, an archaeological museum and the remains of a 1st-century Roman theatre.

Accommodation:

Overnight Relais Ducale or similar

Day 6

Locations: Gubbio - Valfabbrica - Assisi

Overview:

We are moving ever closer to Assisi. After breakfast at the hotel, we will travel by coach from Gubbio to Valfabbrica and from there walk the 15 kilometres to Assisi. The first stretch of this journey is in the woods with a few uphill areas, but overall this is an easy terrain as the landscape opens up, giving us a view of olive groves and vineyards.

Upon arrival in Assisi we will have lunch (own arrangements) and soak in the beautiful sights on a guided tour of St. Francis's birthplace.

Of course an important stop is the Basilica di San Francesco d'Assisi, a World Heritage Site since 2000 and where the saint's remains are interred. We will also visit the Basilica di Santa Maria degli Angeli (Basilica of Saint Mary of Angels), a huge church built over the small 9th century Porziuncola, the most sacred place for the Franciscans as it was where the Franciscan movement started; and the Basilica di Santa Chiara (Basilica of St. Clare) dedicated to Saint Clare of Assisi, a follower of Saint Francis of Assisi and founder of the Order of Poor Ladies, known today as the Order of Saint Clare.

We will then have dinner in a local restaurant and rest in our hotel.

Accommodation:

Overnight Hotel Fontebella or similar

Day 7

Locations: Assisi - Perugia - Assisi

Overview:

Today we will have a little side trip to Perugia, capital of the Umbria region, and we will have the whole day free to explore on our own before returning to Assisi. Perugia was one of the main Etruscan cities and has a rich artistic tradition. It promises great sights dating from antiquity and the Renaissance.

Accommodation:

Overnight Hotel Fontebella or similar

Day 8

Locations: Assisi - Spello / Bevagna / Montefalco - Assisi

Overview:

From Assisi, we will venture out to surrounding towns and have a full day of sightseeing in a trio of Umbrian hill towns: Spello, Bevagna and Montefalco.

In Spello we will visit the 12th century Chiesa di Santa Maria Maggiore (collegiate Church of Saint Mary Major), which houses the Cappella Baglioni (Baglioni Chapel) filled with 15th century Renaissance frescoes such as the *Annunciation* and *The Adoration by the Shepherds* by Pinturicchio, as well as a self-portrait of the artist himself.

We drive to Bevagna and view the Chiesa di San Michele Arcangelo (Church of Saint Michael the Arcangel) and Chiesa di San Silvestro (Church of St. Sylvester).

Finally in Montefalco we will visit the Chiesa Museo di San Francesco and view the depiction of St. Francis in a fresco by Benozzo Gozzoli, and enjoy a wine and olive oil tasting in a local cantina. After we have our fill, we will return to Assisi for dinner at our own arrangements.

Accommodation:

Overnight Hotel Fontebella or similar

Day 9

Locations: Assisi - Spoleto - Macenano - Arrone - Terni

Overview:

We will bid goodbye to Assisi and travel to Spoleto, a city at the foothill of the Apennine Mountains. We will have a local guide to view the main sights, including the ancient Basilica di San Salvatore which was built before the 9th century and was declared a World Heritage Site in 2011.

From Spoleto, we will transfer to Macenano and walk 10 kms. to Arrone with a local guide, who will take us on a worthy detour along the way to the Abbazia San Pietro di Valle (Abbey of San Pietro in Valle) on the side of the Nera River.

Once we arrive in Arrone, we will transfer to Terni and have the remainder of the day free to rest our legs.

Accommodation:

Terni Overnight Hotel Valentino or similar

Day 10

Locations: Terni - Bomarzo - Viterbo

Overview:

After plenty of walking and sightseeing, we will have a more relaxed day today, with a guided visit to the beautiful man-made waterfall Cascate delle Marmore (Marmore Falls) in Terni followed by entrance to the gardens of Bomarzo, also called Parco dei Mostri (Park of the Monsters) due to its giant stone sculptures.

From Bomarzo, we will transfer to Viterbo for an overnight stay.

Accommodation:

Overnight in a local *agriturismo* or similar

Day 11

Locations: Viterbo

Overview:

Today is a free day to spend at our leisure. We may roam around the city, catch up with our laundry, or simply rest.

Accommodation:

Overnight in a local *agriturismo* or similar

Day 12

Locations: Viterbo - Arrone - Piediluco

Overview:

From Viterbo, we will transfer to Arrone and walk 14 kms. to Piediluco, where we will have a stop at the Sanctuary of St. Francis and enjoy views of the Piediluco Lake. Piediluco is a small village overlooking this beautiful alpine lake.

The remainder of the day is free until we meet again for dinner.

Accommodation:

Overnight in a local *agriturismo* or similar

Day 13

Locations: Piediluco - Poggio Bustone - Labro - Rieti - Piediluco

Overview:

Today we will venture out to Poggio Bustone, which St Francis of Assisi visited in 1208. He reportedly greeted the villagers by saying “Buon giorno buona gente” (Good morning, good people!), his words memorialised on the city’s arched gate. We will visit the the convent he built (San Giacomo Convent) and have some free time to explore the village on our own.

We will move on to Labro to explore the medieval fortress city, and to Rieti where we will have a city tour and stroll through Rieti aboveground and underground, viewing the subterranean passageways dating back

to Roman times.

From Rieti we will head back to Piediluco and enjoy a group dinner at the hotel.

Accommodation:

Overnight in a local *agriturismo* or similar

Day 14

Locations: Piediluco - Monterotondo - Cinquina - Tivoli Terme

Overview:

From Piediluco we head to Monterotondo, and from there walk 14 kms. to Cinquina. This relatively easy trail will take us through the serene rural countryside dotted with oak trees and medieval watch towers, until we reach the urban outskirts of the Eternal City. From Cinquina, we will be transferred to Tivoli Terme and retire for the night.

Accommodation:

Overnight Hotel Tivoli Terme or similar

Day 15

Locations: Tivoli Terme - Rome

Overview:

This morning we will view the World Heritage Site, Villa Adriana (Hadrian's Villa), a large Roman archaeological complex at Tivoli. It was constructed around the second century for Emperor Hadrian to serve as his retreat house from the palace in Rome, and its ruins show the riches and extravagance of the empire.

From Tivoli we will travel to the last city on our tour—the city of Rome.

Accommodation:

Overnight Hotel Ripa Roma or similar

Day 16

Locations: Rome

Overview:

This is a free day to spend at our leisure. Take time to relax, shop, and enjoy the sights of the Eternal City.

In the evening, we will have a farewell dinner as a group in the Trastevere area.

Accommodation:

Overnight Hotel Ripa Roma or similar

Day 17

Locations: Rome

Overview:

The end of breakfast also marks the end of the tour and our services.

Inclusions / Exclusions

What's included in our Tour

- 16 nights of accommodation.
- 16 breakfasts and dinners as listed on the itinerary.
- Transport, field trips and excursions as indicated.
- All travel in modern, air-conditioned coaches.
- Gratuities and tipping.
- Services of a Tour Leader for the duration of tour.
- Detailed information booklet.

What's not included in our Tour

- International flights.
- Comprehensive international travel insurance.

- Items of personal nature such as table drinks, laundry and telephone calls, and medical expenses.

Level 3 - Moderate to Challenging

Participants must be in excellent health, extremely mobile and live an active lifestyle. Program activities may include up to 6 hours of continuous strenuous, moderate to fast paced activity per day over varied terrain.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.