

## Italy: Umbria, Spello, Montefalco & Assisi

### Bike Vacation + Air Package

With VBT's deep Italian roots, we've found the most scenic, low-traffic cycling routes in Umbria and Le Marche. Join us on an epic spin through the "green heart" of Italy—including the stunning hilltop city of Assisi and many hidden gems with authentic local flavor. During a three-night stay in gothic Spello, you'll explore this verdant city of hanging gardens—and pedal to the walled village of Montefalco, where you'll discover its exquisite vintages. Spin along green valleys to the pristine medieval village of Sant'Anatolia di Narco, perched above the River Nera, and pedal to the charming town of Scheggino—famous for its black truffles. Pedaling through the scenic landscape of Le Marche, you'll enjoy quiet roads with little traffic as you explore this pastoral region. Here, you'll discover the dramatic limestone gorges of Pioraco, enjoy a special lunch at a local farm, and learn to make regional specialties during a cooking class with a local chef.

### Cultural Highlights

- Discover Assisi and learn about native son Saint Francis from our local expert.
- Explore medieval Montefalco and Bevagna.
- Taste fresh baked bread and focaccia, during a home-hosted lunch at a cozy *agriturismo*.
- Experience the friendly ambiance and pampering service of a spa hotel.
- Savor a delicious dinner with perfectly paired wines at a famous enoteca.

### What to Expect

This tour features a combination of easy terrain and moderate hills, making it ideal for both beginners and experienced cyclists. Our VBT support vehicle is always available for those who may need assistance on the hills. Accommodations on this tour include one countryside retreat, one stay in a tiny village, and another in a small town. The roads are paved, though some stretches may have rough tar or occasional potholes. Approximately 10% of the route follows well-beaten, unpaved bike paths.

**Tour Duration:** 10 Days

**Average Daily Mileage:** 7-45 miles

**Average Cycling Time:** 1-5 hours

**Group size:** 22 max

### Climate Information

### **Average High/Low Temperature (°F)**

May 72°/49°, June 79°/54°, September 80°/54°, October 65°/44°

### **Average Rainfall (in.)**

May 2.9, June 2.8, September 2.7, October 3.7

## **FLIGHT DAY: Depart for Your Vacation**

Your vacation is about to begin! Spend your first night aloft and arrive ready for an unforgettable trip.

## **ARRIVAL DAY: Arrive in Rome / Pre-Tour Hotel Night: Orvieto**

Upon arrival at the Rome Fiumicino Airport, you are greeted by a VBT representative in the arrival terminal. A complimentary car service will whisk you to Orvieto and your elegant and centrally located hotel. Today you'll take it easy and have the rest of the day free to explore, using VBT's city information as your guide.

Perched atop a 500-foot-high tufa cliff, Orvieto is easily explored on foot. Its most striking monument is the cathedral, with a distinctive striped façade of white and green stone and remarkable sculptures. Inside, don't miss the Chapel of San Brizio, adorned with Luca Signorelli's masterful *Last Judgment* fresco—an inspiration for Michelangelo's later work. You may also wish to visit the ingenious Saint Patrick's Well or join an optional guided tour of the city's underground caves.

You'll find many opportunities to shop for fine pottery and crafts, and to enjoy delicious local cuisine—especially dishes featuring regional truffles—at traditional trattorias.

Use VBT's included city information to enhance your discoveries.

## **DAY 1: Your VBT Vacation Begins / Travel to Spello / Warm-Up Ride / Welcome Reception and Dinner**

After an included breakfast, meet your driver in the lobby and be ready to depart by private motorcoach at 10:30 a.m. You will arrive in Spello at approximately 12:30 p.m., where your VBT trip leaders will welcome you at your hotel.

Perched at the highest point in Spello, Hotel La Bastiglia offers panoramic views of the Umbrian

countryside. After a brief introduction, follow your trip leaders' recommendations for lunch on your own in town, or dine at the hotel's restaurant. Hotel check-in begins at 2:00 p.m. Once settled in, change into your biking clothes and be ready at 3:00 p.m. for a safety briefing and a warm-up ride through the scenic countryside surrounding Spello.

As the sun sets, gather with your fellow travelers on the hotel terrace for a welcome reception. Dinner is served at the hotel this evening, featuring *strangozzi spoletini*—a traditional handmade pasta—and other Umbrian specialties.

### Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Warm-Up Ride — 11 km (7 miles)

### What to Expect:

Your warm-up ride is a scenic loop from your hotel, following quiet country roads south of Spello. The route begins with a steady downhill and finishes with a gradual climb back to the hotel.

Cumulative Distance Range: 11 km (7 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 2: Montefalco and Bevagna / Dinner at a Renowned Enoteca in Spello**

Today's longer and easier bike route, partly along bike paths, takes you into the heart of the Valle Umbra—an expansive valley cultivated with vineyards, grains, and olive trees. First the Romans, and later Benedictine monks, drained the plain, which in antiquity was covered by shallow lakes.

From the bike path, you'll admire the hilltop towns of Trevi and Pissignano before beginning a gradual climb to the arched gate of the walled city of Montefalco. Completely encircled by 13th- and 14th-century walls, the city retains much of its medieval character. Worth a visit is the Church of Sant'Agostino, which you'll pass as you walk up to the Piazza del Comune—the highest point in town and once the center of civic life. Continue along the main street to its end and you may discover why Montefalco is known as the "balcony of Umbria." Wine bars, cafés, and restaurants line the way—take your pick for lunch on your own, perhaps accompanied by a glass of the excellent Sagrantino di Montefalco DOCG red wine.

A scenic country road leads downhill to the next highlight of the day: Bevagna, classified as one of the most beautiful villages in Italy. Located along the ancient Via Flaminia, it was once a major Roman trading settlement. Crossing the spectacular bridge into town, you'll first see the ancient city wash house with its scenic waterfall. As you enter the city walls, you're welcomed by Filippo Silvestri Square, the medieval heart of the city. Admire the 1889 fountain, designed to complement the surrounding Romanesque architecture, including the Basilica of St. Sylvester, the collegiate church of St. Michael Archangel with its beautiful portal and spired bell tower, and the Palazzo dei Consoli.

For dinner in Spello tonight, your host Luca and his family draw on eight generations of tradition to present a *degustazione* menu of truffles, bruschettas, and local specialties, paired with carefully curated wines for an unforgettable culinary experience.

### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Spello to Montefalco — 38 km (24 miles)

Afternoon: Montefalco to Spello — 33 km (20 miles)

### What to Expect:

Leaving Spello, you may encounter some traffic, but you'll soon transition to quiet, green country roads. Continue past small villages popular with cyclists, then prepare for an uphill climb into Montefalco. In the afternoon, enjoy a long downhill coast followed by gently rolling country roads leading to Bevagna. As you leave this medieval city, the route follows a peaceful road and a mostly unpaved bike path to Cannara. From there, return to Spello via country roads.

Cumulative Distance Range: 71 km (44 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## DAY 3: Assisi

Enjoy a hearty breakfast this morning, then take a short ride to Assisi—one of the most beautiful cities in Italy, if not *the* most. The birthplace of Saint Francis, founder of the Franciscan Order and Italy's patron saint, as well as of Santa Chiara, one of his earliest followers, Assisi is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Guided by our local expert, Maura, you'll walk along cobblestone alleyways and picturesque squares, learning

about Francis's life and exploring key city landmarks. Among these is the Basilica of San Francesco, renowned for its paintings by Cimabue and Giotto, along with other artworks and lesser-known highlights such as the ancient Roman arena.

Afterward, return to Spello, where you may choose to relax by the hotel pool or hop back on your bike to ride along the flanks of Monte Subasio and take in the beautiful countryside.

Lunch and dinner are on your own today. In Spello, you'll find plenty of cozy restaurants serving delightful Umbrian specialties.

### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Spello to Assisi — 13 km (8 miles)

Afternoon: Assisi to Spello — 12 km (7 miles) | Assisi Walk — 3 km (2 miles)

### What to Expect:

Your ride today is a scenic loop from your hotel, tracing the foothills of Mount Subasio along quiet country roads lined with olive trees. It begins with a steady but manageable 0.62-mile (1 km) uphill climb—easily handled with an e-bike—followed by a long, scenic downhill glide on paved terrain (watch for occasional rough patches of tar). The route loops back on peaceful, traffic-free roads and concludes with another gentle uphill stretch before a smooth coast back to the hotel. Part of the day is dedicated to visiting Assisi, including a guided walking tour through cobbled streets with some hills, so we recommend packing comfortable shoes. Later in the afternoon, you may opt for a more challenging independent ride from the hotel up Mount Subasio along a well-paved, panoramic road. It's a steady climb, and you can ride as far as you like—perhaps to the hilltop hamlet of Collepinò—before turning around and returning the same way.

Cumulative Distance Range: 12 – 25 km (7 – 15 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast

## **DAY 4: Cycle to Scheggino / Truffle Museum / Tour Your Convent Hotel**

After breakfast, you leave the hotel to cycle along easy country roads that quietly cross the Valle Umbra. Pedal through the small medieval village of San Giacomo, located along an ancient pilgrim route to Rome, before reaching a local *agriturismo*. Pause here for a tour of the historic olive mill, followed by a lunch of homemade bruschetta and frittata with fresh vegetables from the garden.

Just outside the town of Spoleto—easily recognized by the massive Albornoz Fortress rising high above it—you join an easy, scenic bike path leading into the Nera Valley. See for yourself why this region is renowned for its breathtaking gorges.

Leave the bike path at a mountain pass reaching 2,100 feet in elevation and enjoy an exhilarating descent into Sant'Anatolia di Narco, where another Umbrian treasure awaits: the Abbey of Saints Felice and Mauro. Tucked into a tranquil hamlet, this 12th-century former monastery is built on the legendary site where a Syrian refugee is said to have slain a dragon. Admire its beautiful rose window, ancient frescoes, and dramatic views.

Back in the saddle, continue the final miles into Scheggino, a quiet and picturesque village perched above the Nera River. You'll have time to stroll this picture-postcard town before visiting the Truffle Museum. Umbria—particularly the Nera Valley—is famous for its truffles, and here you can learn all about this prized delicacy.

Later, shuttle to your hotel, Relais Borgo Campello, nestled in the tiny hilltop village of Campello Alto and composed of a medieval castle and a convent. These two iconic buildings once served as beacons and places of rest for pilgrims walking the Via Francigena to Rome. Campello Alto, perched high on a hill, has retained its medieval charm. Our gracious hosts will guide you on a short walking tour of the convent, where you'll see frescoes restored in part thanks to the VBT Travelers Fund. From the bar terrace, gaze out across thousands of olive trees and spot the trails once walked by ancient pilgrims. Later, enjoy your included dinner at the hotel's restaurant.

#### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Spello to Lunch Stop — 36 km (20 miles)

Afternoon: Borgo del Rio to Scheggino — 31 km (19 miles)

#### What to Expect:

Leaving Spello, you may encounter some traffic but soon transition to an easy and safe bike path.

Continue on mostly flat or gently rolling country roads until your lunch stop. In the afternoon, the route follows a gradually climbing, well-worn unpaved bike path. If you prefer, you can bypass the path and ride the parallel paved road. Around the halfway point, the group shifts to a well-paved, traffic-free main road. From there, enjoy a descent nearly all the way to the hamlet of Sant'Anatolia di Narco. The final stretch follows the Nera River for a couple of miles along a state road with minimal traffic—especially at the time of our ride. A 20-minute shuttle completes the trip to your hotel.

Cumulative Distance Range: 31 – 67 km (19 – 39 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 5: Cycle into Le Marche / Relaxing Spa Time

A short shuttle takes you to the start of your route. From there, follow a shaded, rolling path into Rasiglia, a hamlet of medieval stone homes set in a lush, green valley. Sometimes called the “Little Venice of Umbria” for its waterways and bridges, Rasiglia was renowned for wool production during the 16th century, when heavy looms were powered by mills fed by the rushing waters. Delight in the town’s picturesque network of waterfalls, brooks, and ponds.

Continue to a higher plateau near the border of Le Marche. Here, at 2,000 feet, you’re rewarded with panoramic views of the Apennines, where the rolling hills and fertile soil are ideal for growing regional staples like barley, spelt, lentils, and chickpeas. Roll through this protected regional park to a local *merenderia*—a combination restaurant and grocery shop—where the owner, Gemma, serves a hearty soup and *tagliere di salumi*.

Afterward, your route follows the flat plateau before descending gently into Le Marche, an unspoiled rural region where you can cycle through rolling hills for miles without seeing a single car.

Continue on to your countryside retreat, where you can bask in the revitalizing energy of the resort’s award-winning spa, take a dip in the indoor or outdoor pool, or enjoy an evening *passeggiata* through the lush grounds. Dinner tonight is at the hotel restaurant, where your hosts have prepared a tasting of locally produced, zero-kilometer olive oils to accompany your meal.

Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Vene to Colfiortio — 30 km (19 miles)

Afternoon: Colfiorito to Borgo Lanciano – 36 km (20 miles)

What to Expect:

A short shuttle takes you to the start of the route in Vene. The morning ride features gently rolling terrain with minimal traffic, followed by a steady two-mile ascent to Colfiorito, reaching an altitude of 2,500 feet. After taking in the views across the wide-open plateau, descend a winding road into Serravalle di Chienti—a route favored by local cyclists. A short climb then leads through the charming hamlets of Gelagna and Raggiano before descending into Castelraimondo, where light traffic increases as you approach the hotel.

Cumulative Distance Range: 30 – 66 km (19 – 39 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## **DAY 6: Pioraco / Home-Hosted Lunch with Fresh-Baked Bread / Cooking Class**

Wake up to a hearty breakfast before setting off on a stunning loop through the rolling hills of Le Marche. Often called the “New Tuscany,” this region remains blissfully undiscovered, with quiet roads where you’ll share the route with little more than a few local cyclists.

Your first stop is Pioraco, a small town nestled between dramatic limestone gorges. Though the 2016 earthquake left its mark on some historic buildings, the town retains its charm, with winding paths alongside a rushing river that has powered local paper mills for centuries.

Back on your bike, continue toward Il Casato Agriturismo, a family-run farmhouse where Andrea, the charismatic owner, will welcome you warmly. The scent of freshly baked bread and warm focaccia drifts from the kitchen, setting the stage for a leisurely, rustic lunch.

After your meal, the ride continues along a panoramic route with sweeping views of the Sibillini mountain peaks in the distance. Coast downhill to your countryside retreat, where you’ll have time to unwind.

This evening, trade your cycling gear for an apron during a hands-on cooking class, where you’ll learn to make handmade pasta and meatballs—a beloved regional specialty.



## Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Borgo Lanciano to Il Casato – 34 km (21 miles)

Afternoon: Il Casato to Hotel – 7 km (4 miles)

### What to Expect:

Start the day on smooth country roads with a gentle ascent into the historic village of Pioraco. From there, the route flattens briefly before leading to the day's main challenge—a two-mile climb with a steady six percent gradient. After reaching the summit, enjoy a long, relaxing descent, followed by a final scenic climb to Il Casato, where stunning views of the Sibillini Mountains await. The afternoon ride is short and rewarding, following rolling, traffic-free country roads straight to the hotel.

Cumulative Distance Range: 7 – 41 km (4 – 25 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## **DAY 7: Your VBT Vacation Ends / Post-Tour Hotel Night: Bologna**

After an included breakfast, complimentary transportation is provided to Bologna, where you will arrive at approximately 11:30 a.m. Your room may not be ready upon arrival, but you can store your luggage at the hotel reception. Located in the lively city center, your hotel offers easy access to a wide variety of lunch options on your own. Back at the hotel, meet your local guide at 3:00 p.m. to begin discovering this medieval town—its pedestrian alleyways and piazzas, mouthwatering food shops, and covered markets that have made Bologna famous around the world.

Included Meals: Breakfast

## **DEPARTURE DAY: Departure**

After an included breakfast\* this morning, complimentary transportation to the Bologna Airport will be provided (approximately a 20-minute drive, depending on traffic) for your departing flight.

Included Meals: Breakfast

## Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

### Hotel Palazzo Piccolomini (Arrival Day)

Two palaces—one with a medieval tower—have been lovingly restored and converted into a welcoming hotel that respects this history while offering contemporary comforts. This respect for history and architecture is married to art appreciation, with beautiful Renaissance, medieval, and Etruscan appointments inside and out. In your room, enjoy a flatscreen TV, minibar, air conditioning, and free WiFi. Or relax in the reading lounges or lounge bar. You'll also appreciate the prime location of the Hotel Palazzo Piccolomini, which is set in the heart of Orvieto and offers easy access to local attractions.

### Hotel La Bastiglia (Days 1-3)

Located in a former 16th-century grain mill in the walled, medieval town of Spello, this elegant hotel boasts a wide terrace with panoramic views overlooking the Chiana Valley. Well-appointed rooms include WiFi, satellite television, and air conditioning. Indulge in the hotel's spa services including a private hammam, massage chairs, a choice of massage offerings. Or, perhaps, relax with a dip in the outdoor swimming pool.

### Hotel Relais Borgo Campello (Day 4)

Time seems suspended at the Hotel Relais Borgo Campello, a former castle and convent complex set in the medieval village of Campello Alto. In the restaurant, ancient recipes are given an innovative, contemporary twist, with an emphasis on slow cooking to develop the delicious flavors of each dish. Vegetarian and gluten-free options are available. Take advantage of the many treatments available at the wellness center.

### Borgo Lanciano (Days 5-6)

Borgo Lanciano, a 4-star wellness hotel in the heart of Marche region, is picturesquely surrounded by the Sibillini Mountains and offers guests a serene experience in a private environment. Located just steps from the Lanciano Castle, this hotel holds great historical value, with 16th century architecture, medieval rooms, and ancient stone. Fusing luxury accommodations with the natural landscape, this secluded

resort features one of the largest spas in central and southern Italy, a large outdoor pool, pergolas, high quality dining, and superior lodging options. Of the 53 rooms, from ancient to modern, complimentary WiF and air conditioning are provided.

### **Hotel Royal Carlton (Day 7)**

Ranked among the highest class of hotels in Bologna, the Hotel Royal Carlton is best known for its close proximity to the Bologna Train Station and great local attractions, including Torre Prendiparte and Basilica di San Petronio. Great for families and tourists looking for a pedestrian friendly location, this 4-star hotel is centrally located near shops, restaurants, and notable landmarks. Boasting well renowned architectural designs, this historic yet modern establishment consists of 236 rooms, a convention center, Monrif Spa, large Technogym training facility, sprawling gardens, and indoor pool. The on-site restaurant provides a unique and welcoming environment with local to international cuisine. Rooms are equipped with complimentary WiFi, air conditioning, a mini bar, flat-screen TV, and private balcony.