

HIKING JOURNEY

# Epicurean Walk in Italy

ALONG THE AMALFI COAST, GARGANO PROMONTORY, ABRUZZO  
MOUNTAINS, MONTE SIBILINI NATIONAL PARK IN THE APENNINES AND  
THROUGH UMBRIA

16 DAYS



**WALKABOUT**  
GOURMET ADVENTURES

## Journey Overview

Our tour begins in Sorrento – the gateway to the stunning Amalfi Coast. This 25 km long peninsula, rising to more than 1,400 metres, has an extensive web of magnificent paths, many of ancient origin. Well above the busy coastal towns, we walk through hamlets, citrus orchards and vineyards on the mountainside. A highlight is our magical walk on the enchanted island of Capri. It is also possible to visit the famous Vesuvio, which entered the history books when it erupted in 79AD. In the space of two days the Roman settlements of Pompeii, Ercolano, Stabia and Oplontis were wiped out. Today the volcano's reputation as a merciless destroyer has been greatly diluted and you can walk in Vesuvio National Park which was established in 1991. On your free day you can visit Pompeii where you can find the richest insight into the daily life of the Romans.

We move onto Peschici on the Gargano Promontory. It offers dramatic scenery and its high rocky spur plunges into the Adriatic Sea, broken here and there by small beaches.

In the Abruzzo Mountains the wild landscape exerts a strong influence. They are dominated by the Appennines and the hinterland forms one of Italy's last remaining wildernesses. At 2,912 metres, the highest peak is Gran Sasso. A particularly beautiful area is the Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo. It is one of Europe's most important nature reserves with a rich landscape of high peaks, rivers, lakes and forests. Once hunted almost to extinction, the park now boasts 100 brown bears.

Our route continues to Umbria – the "Green heart of Italy". This region contains some of Italy's most outstanding medieval hill towns – Orvieto, Assisi, Spello and Spoleto are just a few. They also house some of Italy's oldest churches along with Roman and Etruscan remains. Such countryside yields many delicacies – trout, olive oil and the prized truffles.

Norcia, our base for the next 3 nights, is located in the heart of the Appennines and the Monte Sibillini National Park and was founded 600 years before Rome. It bares the mark of a long and colourful history – ancient city walls which are still standing, major monuments and a wealth of art. Our walk takes us through the Sibillini National Park which was founded in 1993 in the land of the mythical Sibyl tribe. Wolves, golden eagles, pilgrim falcons and many other native species are the most evident signs of

a varied and rich fauna. The charm of abbeys and medieval villages, scattered in the form of a crown at the foot of the mountains, have created an ancient and evocative world. Even today, time seems to have stopped to pay homage to such extraordinary beauty.

On our way to Florence we travel through Assisi and spend the morning visiting this famous town. Our walk ends in Florence where you have excellent rail connections in many directions.



## Journey Schedule

### DAY 1

Sorrento - Punto Campanella

### DAY 2

Capri

### DAY 3

Free Day

### DAY 4

Amalfi - Bomerano - The Path of The Gods - Nocelle - Positano

### DAY 5

Amalfi Coast - Ravello - Atrani - Amalfi

### DAY 6

Amalfi - Gargano Promontory - Peschici

### DAY 7

Peschici - Umbra Forest

### DAY 8

Peschici - Madonna Di Loreto - Old Telegraph Station - Torre Sfinale

### DAY 9

Peschici - Free Day - Baia Di S. Nicola

### DAY 10

Peschici - Monte Sant'angelo - Pescasseroli

### DAY 11

Pescasseroli - Opi - Pescasseroli

### DAY 12

Pescasseroli - Val Campitelli - La Meta Ridge - Val Pagana - Le Forme

### DAY 13

Pescasseroli - Norcia

### DAY 14

A Circuit around the Last Forest - Forca Di Presta - Colle Le Cese - Forca Di Presta

### DAY 15

Castelluccio & the Balcony of the Piano Grande

### DAY 16

Norcia - Spello - Monte Subasio - Assisi - Florence

## Journey Itinerary



### DAY 1

#### Sorrento - Punto Campanella

We meet at 10.00 a.m. directly at our hotel in Sorrento:

Hotel Continental  
Piazza della Vittoria, 4  
80067 Sorrento (NA)  
Ph: +39.0818072608  
[www.hotel.continentalsorrento.com](http://www.hotel.continentalsorrento.com)

After we have settled into our hotel we visit some local shops to buy our picnic lunch. We then drive to Termini from where we start our walk up to Monte San Constanzo.

This hill, topped by the chapel of San Costanza, dominates Termini and can be seen from much of the peninsula. This is hardly surprising as it offers a stupendous panorama, taking in the mountainous spine of the Lattari Mountains and the bays of Naples and Salerno.

After lunch we follow a small track down to the ruins of the lighthouse that marks the extreme tip of the Sorrento Peninsula. On the way we have splendid views of Capri, just a few kilometres out to sea. The entire area is archaeologically very interesting. Punta Campanella, named also Promontorio Ateneo after the temple in honour of Athena, dominated the surrounding area where temples and Roman villas were built.

In the afternoon we return to our lovely hotel in one of the most beautiful locations on the Sorrento coast and have time to relax before dinner. Many dishes in our restaurant are based on fish, seafood and fresh salads but there are also lamb and grains. The mozzarella di bufala, the real mozzarella cheese, puts any other cheese of the same name to shame! It's most memorable way to be eaten, apart from pizza, is in Insalata Caprese, with tomato, basil and just a touch of olive oil. Spaghetti never tasted quite like this before eaten in an environment where it was invented. The delicious Limoncello is a sublime lemon liqueur to drink.

 **4 ½ HOURS**

 **SORRENTO, ITALY**



## DAY 2

### Capri

Today we take the ferry to the enchanting island of Capri in the Gulf of Napoli. As we approach, we have a lovely view of Capri with the dramatic slopes of Monte Solaro (589 metres), hiding the village, Anacapri. The island's breathtaking caves, luxuriant vegetation and the beautiful rugged landscape, make it an ideal place for some walking. From the Marina Grande we take the funicular, which takes us to the upper town of Capri. Capri was already inhabitable in the Stone Age and was eventually occupied by the Greeks. Rome's Emperor, Augustus made it his private playground and his successor, Tiberius retired there in 27AD.

We begin our walk with the ascent to Villa Jovis. Jupiter's villa was the residence of the Emperor Tiberius. Excavations have uncovered servants' quarters, the cisterns that supplied the baths and the Imperial apartments with a loggia overlooking the sea. From the esplanade we have a lovely panorama of the whole island. We take the stairway behind the church and enjoy the view of Tiberius' Leap, the impressive cliff from which the emperor is said to have had his victims thrown.

After lunch we continue to the Arco Naturale. The sea has created this gigantic natural rock arch, although it rises well above sea level. On our descent we pass the Grotta di Matromania, a cave where the Romans venerated the goddess Cybele. We reach the coastal path and from the Punta di Tragara we have outstanding views of the famous Faraglioni. They are rocky islets, which have been eroded into fantastic shapes by the waves.

We reach Capri and spend some time wandering through the narrow Moorish-looking alleyways, past little white houses and villas.

In the late afternoon we take the ferry back to Sorrento and our hotel.

 **4 HOURS**

 **SORRENTO, ITALY**

## DAY 3

### Free Day

A day to reflect on our experiences and the rich history of this country. Our hotel is the perfect setting for those wishing to have a quiet day on the roof terrace or at the beach.

If you don't want to venture out too far, just take a stroll into town. You can also visit Napoli and Pompeii and from there it is not far to Herculaneum. According to the legend, this Greek settlement was founded by Hercules, hence the name. It was a less important and more peaceful town than Pompeii.

Fishing boats frequented its port. There were numerous craftsmen and many rich and cultured patricians were drawn to the resort of Herculaneum because of its beautiful setting, overlooking the Bay of Naples. The five quarters of the town were divided of dwellings, all of which were overwhelmed by the sea.

The fate of the city paralleled that of nearby Pompeii. Destroyed by an earthquake in 63 AD it was completely submerged in the 79 AD eruption of Vesuvio. The only difference was that Herculaneum was buried by a river of volcanic mud not the tufa stone and ash that rained on Pompeii.

The mud helped preserve it for prosperity. When the town was rediscovered in 1709, amateur excavations were carried out intermittently until 1874 and much of the material found was carted off to Napoli to decorate the houses or end up in museums. Serious archaeological work was begun in 1927 and excavation continues today.

Of special interest is that all timber structures (frameworks, beams, doors, stairs and partitions) were preserved by a hard shell of solidified mud, whereas at Pompeii they were consumed by fire.

From Herculaneum it is possible to catch a local bus to Monte Vesuvio in the Parco Nazionale del Vesuvio. This still active volcano dominates the landscape, looming ominously over Napoli.

The last eruption in 1944 blasted open the cone and the plume of smoke that had long been a constant reminder of the peril, also disappeared.

Its name is probably derived from the Greek besubios or besbios, which means fire. The volcano erupted with such ferocity on 24 August 79AD that it all but destroyed the towns of Pompeii and Herculaneum under a 54 metre thick layer of ash and stone. It is believed that 2,000 people died in Pompeii and Herculaneum. Eruptions have exterminated the vegetation on Vesuvio more than once but recolonisation begins immediately after the lava cools with the settling in of a silvery-grey lichen.

Over the past decades, vegetation like the colourful broom, ginestra and valerian have re-settled and reforestation has accelerated the comeback of the wooded areas. There are holm oaks, cluster pines, Aleppo pines and silver birch.

In the late afternoon we leave Sorrento and drive to our lovely hotel in Amalfi where we stay for the next 3 nights.

### AMALFI, ITALY



## DAY 4

### Amalfi - Bomerano - The Path Of The Gods - Nocelle – Positano

After breakfast we take the local bus and travel up innumerable hairpin bends to Bomerano, a small village close to Agerola, high above the Amalfi Coast. Here we join our walking track - "The Path of the Gods" which lives up to its name with dramatic views of a rugged coastline and distant sightings as far as the island of Capri. Until today the path is used by farmers, wood workers and shepherds.

We pass through the bizarre rocky cliffs of Grotta del Biscotto and admire the mesmerizing views. The ruins of an old farmhouse are witness to the work of men who, throughout the ages, have been able to colonize even the most impracticable places on the Amalfi Coast.

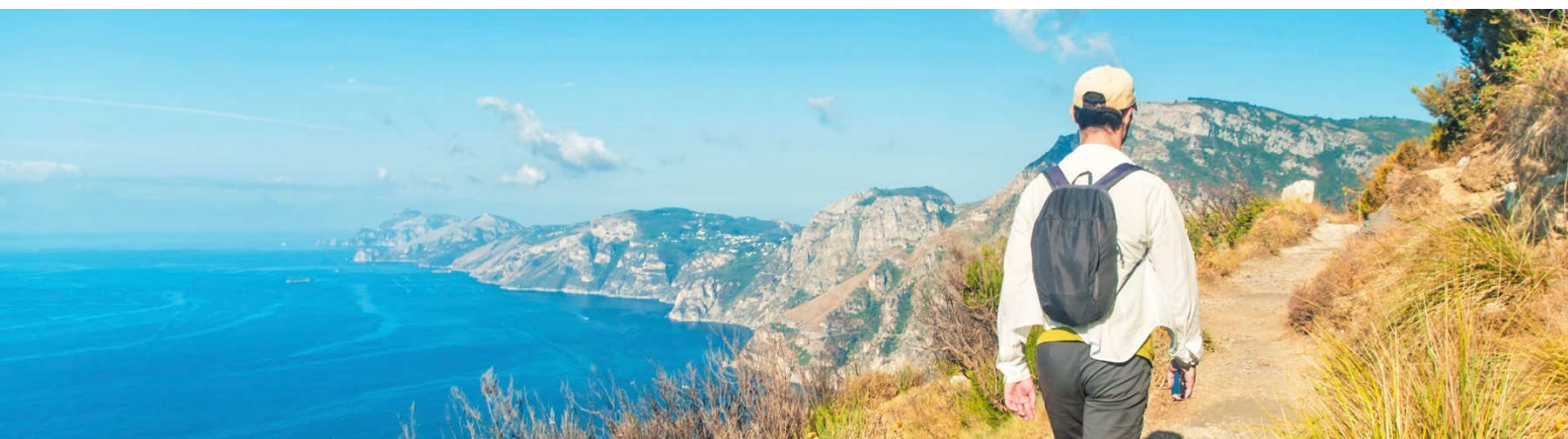
Following a winding route, with several ups and downs, we cross the imposing Vallone Grarelle and eventually reach the tiny village of Nocelle (440 metres).

From here we continue to Montepertuso. Zigzagging down, we can see the roofs of Positano and the beach as in an aerial photograph, with extensive panoramas to the Lattari mountain range. Besides admiring the views, we can enjoy the orchids, rosemary, broom and many other flowers beside the path. In Positano we have time to cool down with a drink or a lemon granita in one of the marvellous cafés.

After visiting Positano, with its characteristic square houses and luxuriant gardens, descending in steep steps to the sea, we shall return to Amalfi by ferry.

 **5 HOURS**

 **AMALFI, ITALY**



## DAY 5

### Amalfi Coast - Ravello - Atrani – Amalfi

After our breakfast we drive to Ravello, a picturesque hilltop village just above the coast of Amalfi. It is one of the most beautiful coastlines in Europe and was formed by the jagged fringe of the Lattari Mountains – a deeply eroded limestone range. A narrow asphalt ribbon bends and winds along cliffs that drop into crystal-clear blue waters, connecting the beautiful towns of Positano, Amalfi and Ravello. We allow time for a leisurely stroll around this pretty village and to buy our lunch. The best vantage points are the gardens of Villa Cimbrone – a perfect lunch spot and Villa Rufolo. The majestic views from Villa Rufolo inspired the German composer Wagner to write the third act of Parsifal.

After lunch our track leads us through citrus orchards, olive groves and vegetable gardens, past villas and vineyards. This small path, like many others, once connected the coastal towns with mountainside villages. The views on our descent are truly spectacular and there are wildflowers in abundance. In spring, the scent of the lemon blossom is almost overpowering! We enter Atrani through a maze of alleys, stairways and roofed passages before we reach the main square near the sea.

We continue to Amalfi and then return to our hotel.

 **4 HOURS**

 **AMALFI, ITALY**



## DAY 6

### Amalfi - Gargano Promontory – Peschici

Today we leave Sorrento and travel to the Gargano Promontory. This spur of the Italian boot is made up of limestone mountains, ancient forests and beautiful beaches. For centuries it has been an important destination for religious pilgrims. Right above our hotel, as in a fairytale, Peschici overlooks the clear bay from the top of a cliff, which drops down to the sea.

The small town was founded by the Schiavoni family and has a castle of medieval origin on top of the cliff. The older part of the town is made up of small houses with domed roofs of oriental origin. Around Peschici, archaeologists have uncovered prehistoric settlements.

Tonight, we enjoy the warm hospitality of Arcangela and her family. We have some excellent home cooking and the fish soup alone is worth the visit!

#### PESCHICI, GARGANO PROMONTORY, ITALY



## DAY 7

### Peschici - Umbra Forest

Today we leave the shores of the Adriatic Sea and drive up to the famous Umbra Forest. The ancient beeches and oaks of the “Foresta Umbra” in the promontory’s mountainous interior make up one of Italy’s last remaining original forests. It is the national park’s most important and delicate area in terms of ecology, wildlife and natural scenery. It is a wild place, where rocks, trees, flowers and animals are left alone and allowed to evolve naturally.

We start our walk near Lake Umbra and are soon surrounded by tree, which are more than 1,000 years old. This environment plays host to many species of plants and animals. Just listen carefully and you might hear the calls of various birds that live in this forest – the blackbird and the falcon or the tapping sound the woodpecker makes as it explores the bark of trees in search of insect larvae.

Beech leaves, falling to the ground year after year, form a litter that gradually decomposes and eventually turns into fertile humus. It helps to protect the ground, preventing it from freezing in winter and drying out in summer.

We come to a clearing and shortly after we arrive at Murgia. Once a forest-lodge, it now belongs to the national park. In spring and summer there is a carpet of flowers of which the Gargano bellflower and the many varieties of orchids are the most famous.

After lunch we return to our path and continue our walk through the forest until we come to Lake Orti. Having arrived at this point, we leave the trail and follow a small lane which brings us back to our buses. Before we return to Peschici and time permitting, we shall have a brief visit to Vieste.

At our hotel we have time for a relaxing swim and another delicious dinner.

 **5 HOURS**

 **PESCHICI, GARGANO PROMONTORY, ITALY**

## DAY 8

### Peschici - Madonna Di Loreto - Old Telegraph Station - Torre Sfinale

After purchasing our picnic lunch in Peschici, we leave the town in the direction of the coastal road and turn off to the small church of Madonna di Loreto, dating back to the 17th Century. We soon leave traffic and noise behind us and climb on a small forest road up to Coppa del Nuvola. From the old telegraph station we have splendid views towards the Umbra Forest and Vico del Gargano. On the other side we look down into the Sfinale Valley with wonderful views across the blue sea and the superb coastline with its interesting towers.

The continuous raids by pirates and attacks by the Ottoman fleet, which inflicted terrible damage on the coast of the Kingdom of Naples in the last decades of the 15th century, made it necessary to build a complex defensive system of observation towers. They were placed along the coast in such a way that one could be seen from the other. The alarm was given by firing small calibre firearms such as the "masco". A small force of soldiers, commanded by a Spanish corporal, guarded the towers.

After lunch under some magnificent umbrella pines, we make our descent before reaching the sea near Grotto dell' Aqua. We walk along Sfinale beach and allow enough time for a refreshing swim. We continue to walk along the fabulous coastline until we reach Torre Gusmay where we end our walk. We re-join our buses and drive back to our hotel.

The evening is at your own leisure.



**5 HOURS**



**PESCHICI, GARGANO PROMONTORY, ITALY**

## DAY 9

### Peschici - Free Day – Baia Di S. Nicola

A day to reflect on our experiences and the rich history of this country. You can stroll into Peschici and explore this picturesque village, perched above a rocky cliff. The whitewashed houses certainly remind one of the Greek islands and it is fascinating to walk through the old cobbled alleyways.

There are also many sea caves, which can be visited by ferry. They are embedded in a coastline that is very interesting for its various geomorphologic phenomena and surrounded by wild Aleppo pinewoods as well as superb Mediterranean marquis.

We meet at 7.00 p.m. and drive the short distance to Baia di S. Nicola. Here we visit Mario and his family who are still operating a “Trabucco” – a historically monumental symbol of the fishing activity. The “Trabucco” is an elegant wooden structure jutting out over the sea and sitting on timber piles driven into the rock. The system consists of large nets held on long poles that move up and down thanks to a series of cables, ropes and pulleys. It could be raised or lowered from the bridge by the “Trabuccelante” (Fisherman). This romantic setting is the ideal place for an aperitif and antipasti, followed by a sumptuous dinner.

#### PESCHICI, GARGANO PROMONTORY, ITALY



## DAY 10

### Peschici - Monte Sant'angelo – Pescasseroli

Today we leave our comfortable hotel and follow the rugged coastline of terraced hillsides and olive plantations to Monte Sant'Angelo. It is believed that at the end of the 5th century, San Michele Arcangelo chose the town for his home. For many years it has been the destination of pilgrimages. The large cave of the Archangel is impressive with its splendid marble altar and the statue of San Michele.

We continue to Manfredonia and Foggia from where we follow the S645 and the S17 to Isernia. In the late afternoon we arrive in Pescasseroli, our base for the next 3 nights. It is the main town of the valley and in the centre of the Parco Nazionale d'Abruzzo. Located in the very heart of the central Apennine chain, this vast park with its rich landscape of high peaks, rivers, lakes and forests, is one of Europe's most important nature reserves. Until 1877 it formed part of a royal hunting reserve. Today it provides refuge for over 40 species of mammal, 30 types of reptiles and 300 species of birds – royal eagle, the Apennine wolf, the brown bear, the Abruzzo chamois, the wild cat, roe deer and red deer to name just a few.

Our accommodation is in an art nouveau country house, set in a large park with lawns and century-old trees, not far from the centre of Pescasseroli. It was the former residence of the family of the well-known Italian philosopher and politician, Benedetto Croce (1866 - 1952). In the evening we meet in the cosy bar for our aperitif before we enjoy our first meal in the hotel restaurant. It boasts a choice of classic cuisine or traditional regional specialties.

#### **PESCASSEROLI, ABRUZZO MOUNTAINS, ITALY**

## DAY 11

### Pescasseroli - Opi – Pescasseroli

Spring and autumn are the most peaceful and enjoyable times in the Abruzzo mountains. In spring the meadows are ablaze with wildflowers; in autumn the forests of the park are coloured in a dazzling display of varied shades of yellow, red, orange and brown.

We leave Pescasseroli and walk south out of town where our trail begins. The first stretch of the path is lined with hedges of blackthorn, dog rose, bramble and elderberry. We head now towards the magnificent beech forest and the scenery is starting to become quite unusual, with immense boulders assuming a variety of strange forms. Lichens and mosses have coloured these karst formations and made them even more suggestive.

The roots of the old beech trees cling to the rocks and the area is full of caves and ravines that provide shelter for numerous animals. Higher up, the panorama is sweeping and majestic – a perfect place for our picnic lunch and time to observe the sky with your binoculars for a glimpse of the golden eagle.

Leaving our splendid picnic spot, we continue to Opi, a small but delightful medieval hillside town of just some 500 inhabitants, where daily life is still very much connected to the mountains.

After a welcome drink and enjoying Opi's lofty views, we return to Pescasseroli.

 **5 HOURS**

 **PESCASSEROLI, ABRUZZO MOUNTAINS, ITALY**

## DAY 12

### Pescasseroli - Val Campitelli - La Meta Ridge - Val Pagana - Le Forme

Today's walk takes place in the Mainarde, in the Molise sector of the park.

This is quite different from the Abruzzo sector –not only from the point of view of scenery, wildlife and ecology, but also in terms of history, archaeology and culture.

We begin our walk in the Campitelli Valley, situated at the foot of the spectacular Meta mountain chain. Looking carefully along the path, we may well see signs of the Marsican brown bear and the red deer (droppings, tracks, broken branches, etc) which are present in the area at all times of the year. Onto the La Meta ridge where you could catch sight of some chamois grazing high up in the mountains as well as bears and wolves.

We descend into the wooded Val Pagana with its beautiful trees and abundant wildlife and finish our walk at the plain of Le Forme, where we re-join our buses.

In the late afternoon we return to our lovely country house in Pescasseroli.

The evening is at your own leisure.

 **6 HOURS**

 **PESCASSEROLI, ABRUZZO MOUNTAINS, ITALY**



## DAY 13

### Pescasseroli – Norcia

Today we leave our cosy hotel and travel to Umbria, “the green belt of Italy”. It is in the middle of the Italian peninsula and without any coastal areas. It is crossed by the Apennines, sloping into gentle hills, which vary and soften the countryside. Its towns, artistic gems, which have maintained their original aspect, are at a short distance from each other. Together with many other historical centres they make a “town-region” of Umbria, which is perhaps unique in the world. They are all of medieval origin, set in dominating positions and preserve the antique network of streets, offering endless panoramas. They also recall the stories in which they played a part with the Etruscans, the Romans and the Longobards. Together they watch over noteworthy works of art, in the churches, in the art galleries and in the characteristic squares. They all preserve the mystery of the Etruscan stones, the boldness of the Roman works, the pureness of the Christian architecture and the mildness of the Renaissance paintings. In the afternoon we arrive in Norcia in the Apennines. The town was already founded 600 years before Rome and it bears the mark of a long and colourful history. The ancient city walls are still standing as well as interesting, historical buildings. St Benedict, who is the patron saint of Europe, was born here in the 5th century. We settle into our hotel, which dates back to the 16th century. It is right in the historical town centre and has been in the Bianconi Family for the last 200 years. The hotel restaurant is considered one of the best in the region and it is mentioned in many of the culinary food guidebooks of Italy. Strong flavours predominate and although few spices are used, saffron appears in many recipes. In the old days, saffron was widely grown in this area and was therefore quite common. Ingredients were few but of excellent quality – meat, above all pork, cured and made into sausages for preservation; cheese, mainly made from sheep’s milk; black truffles – their smell inebriating and flavour unrivalled; mushrooms of every kind known to scholars, but chiefly the delicious “porcini”; honey for the most refined palates and for making cakes and the lentils from Castelluccio are the most tasty of pulses.

 **NORCIA, MONTE SIBILLINI N.P, ITALY**

## DAY 14

### A Circuit around the Last Forest - Forca Di Presta - Colle Le Cese - Forca Di Presta

Macchia Cavaliera is one of the most beautiful beech woods in the Sibyllines. Its 1,100 hectares are the remnants of an ancient forest which covered the whole area up to the Adriatic coast.

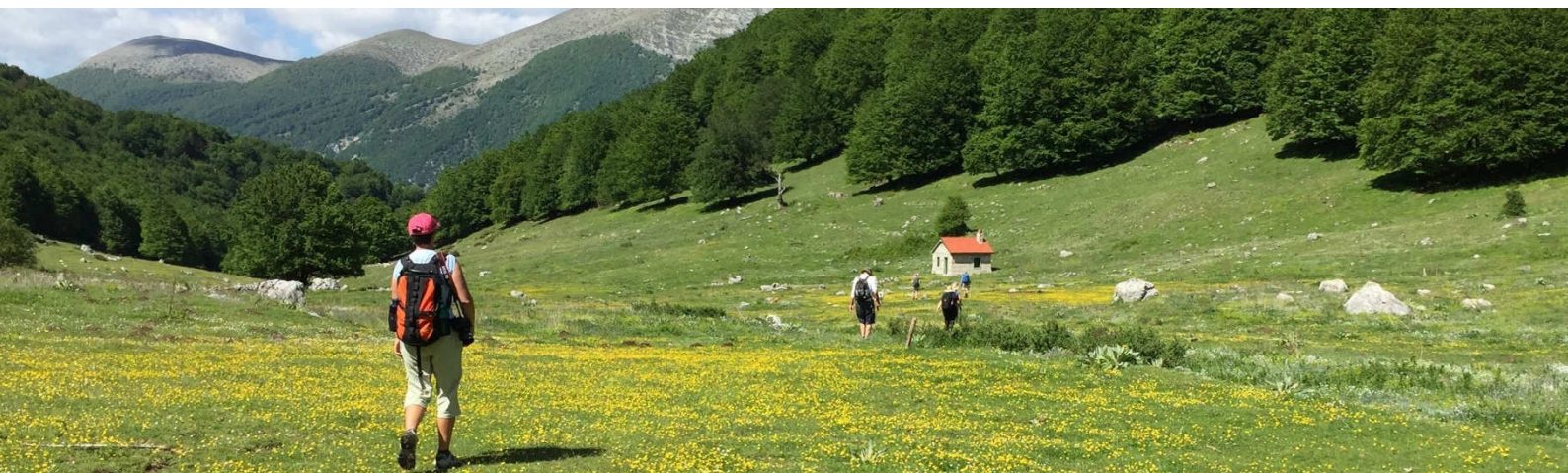
The ancient need to watch the plains from above, in order to prevent animals from being stolen and to forestall enemy attacks, was the reason for constructing fortifications at high vantage points.

Our walk begins at the Ascoli Refuge from where we walk up to the wide ridge to Colle Cardisciana. From here we have wonderful vistas across the age-old beech wood of Macchia Cavaliera and Monte Vettore. Our track undulates to M. Forciglieta before it descends diagonally and leads us right to Rifugio degli Alpino where we stop for our lunch.

In the afternoon we walk the short distance to Forca di Presta from where we follow a track downward with lovely views of the plains and M. Vettore. We continue past the Casale along the track which follows the old "Strada Doganale" to Il Laghetto. This remnant of a large lake once filled the whole area. After a short climb through some bends we return to Colle le Cese, coming out right in front of the Ascoli Refuge. Here we re-join our buses and return to Norcia.

 **5 HOURS**

 **NORCIA, MONTE SIBILLINI N.P., ITALY**



## DAY 15

### Castelluccio and the Balcony of the Piano Grande

Castelluccio is the most remarkable village in the Sibylline, perched high above the plateau on its hill. The village was founded in the 12th century but there was a castle on the site long before that. Its garrison manned the boundaries and controlled the communications with neighbouring valleys, as well as defending the communal pastures from animal theft.

The Plains of Castelluccio are situated in a rift valley, which was created when the ridges of M. Vettore and M. Vetica were pushed upwards. In the past there was a lake in which sediments from the surrounding mountains were deposited. Its emptying appears due to the reactivation of the faults, which border the basin during some seismic event.

The flowering of Piano Grande is a fascinating and a celebrated spectacle. The green of the grass varies like a mosaic, according to time and place, with displays of neapolitan gentian, alpine poppy, cornflower, wild tulip, dog violet, pheasant's eye narcissus, various orchids and innumerable other species. In addition, the cultivated squares give a deliriously colourful effect.

Our walk is amongst the most varied in the western part of the Sibyllines. Near M. Ventosola we begin with our ascent to Poggio di Corce from where we have stupendous views across the verdant "Pianos". On our descent, the small village of Castelluccio looks magnificent, especially when it is rising from a sea of mist.

Tonight we enjoy our final dinner at Granaro del Monte, a mediaeval style restaurant in our hotel. Here, our chef allows us to rediscover the most authentic flavours of Norcia's gastronomic traditions.

 **5 HOURS**

 **NORCIA, MONTE SIBILLINI N.P, ITALY**

## DAY 16

### Norcia - Spello - Monte Subasio - Assisi – Florence

Today we leave magnificent Palazzo and travel to Spello. From here we drive up to the very pretty grassy upland of Monte Subasio and have sweeping views over the surrounding countryside. We leave the upper slopes of Monte Subasio and from here descend to the Eremo (Sanctuario delle Carceri). This forest hermitage is set in a remarkably secluded and peaceful spot, nestled in a ravine covered with thick woods of ilexes and oaks. It is said that, having been blessed by St Francis, a huge flock of birds flew out of one of the trees, symbolising the spread of the Franciscan Order throughout the world. St Bernard of Siena (1380 - 1444) founded the hermitage here. The spot derives its name from the fact that it was here where St Francis and his followers liked to retire from the world. After our visit we drive the short distance to the centre of Assisi. This famous medieval town has retained its beautiful rural setting with olive trees and cultivated fields reaching right up to its walls. St Francis of Assisi, one of the most fascinating characters in history, founded his Order here. Work on the great Basilica began two years after his death. The story of his life provided inspiration to some of the greatest painters of his time, including Cimabue, Giotto, Simone Martini and Pietro Lorenzetti. The impressive and moving frescoes here are among the most important works of art in Italy. Last century Assisi became one of the most famous religious shrines in the world. In the afternoon we travel to Florence where our journey ends at approximately 6.00 p.m. at the charming hotel Bencista in the hills of Fiesole, just 20 minutes by bus or taxi from the centre of Florence. Please book direct (and early!!! - mention Gabriela Clarke from Walkabout Gourmet Adventures)

#### **Pensione Bencista**

**Via B. da Maiano,**

**4 50014 Fiesole (Firenze)**

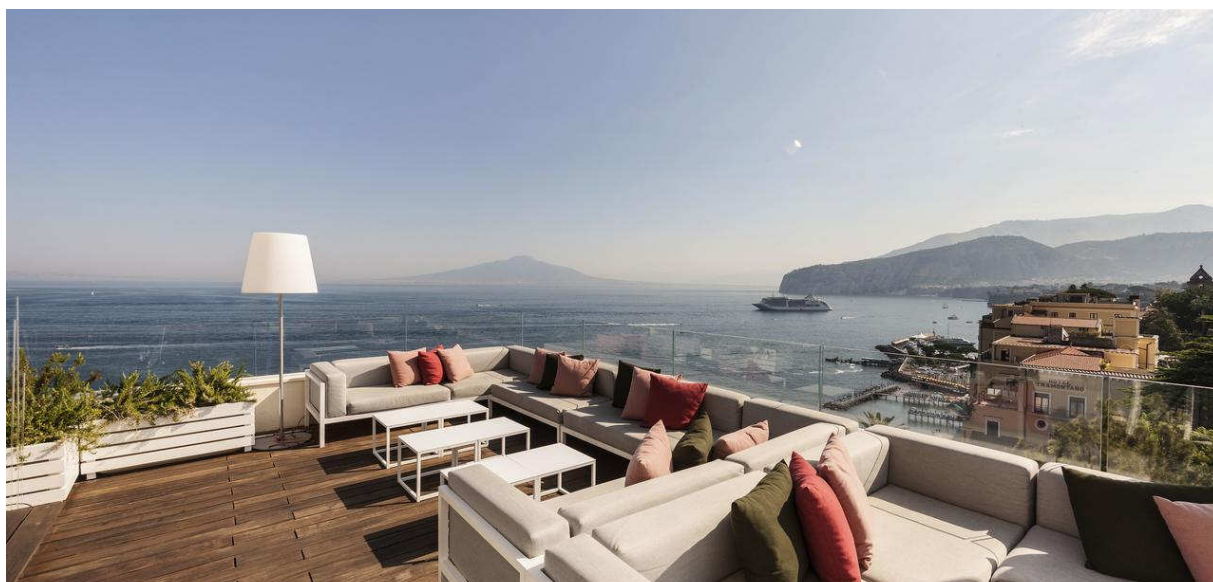
**Tel/Fax 0011 390 55 59 163**

**Email: [info@bencista.com](mailto:info@bencista.com)**

# Journey Accommodation

Hotel Continental, Sorrento

**NIGHT 1 - 2**



Hotel La Bussola, Amalfi

**NIGHT 3 - 5**



Hotel Elisa, Peschici

**NIGHT 6 - 9**



Albergo Villino Quintiliani, Pescasseroli

**NIGHT 10 - 12**



## Relais &amp; Chateaux Palazzo Seneca, Norcia

**NIGHT 13 - 15**

## Journey Notes

**PRICE INCLUDES**

- Experienced guides.
- Meet at 10.00 a.m. at Hotel Continental in Sorrento on Day 1 and drop-off at approximately 6.00 p.m. at Pensione Bencista on Day 16.
- Transport between Sorrento on Day 1 and Florence on Day 16.
- Twin share accommodation from Day 1 to Day 16, including 15 breakfasts and 12 dinners.

**NOT INCLUDED IN TRIP COSTS**

Transport before and after “the walk”, lunch, 3 dinners, evening drinks, in-between meal snacks, personal clothing, laundry, medical expenses and items of a personal nature.

**WHAT TO BRING**

Daypack: walking boots (runners not suitable), thick socks, waterproof raincoat (Gore-Tex), sun hat, sunglasses, sun cream and bathers. We can also recommend telescopic walking sticks as being useful. Please RESTRICT your luggage to a maximum of 20kg.

**PRE-WALK PREPARATION**

We suggest that prior to your walking holiday you prepare yourself to obtain a level of fitness that will allow you to enjoy your walking holiday.

This, of course, is dependent upon your existing fitness level. Remember, the fitter you are, the more you will enjoy the holiday!

- Start with some short walks, which include stairs or hills and increase the length of walks over a couple of months.
- We suggest you carry a backpack with water, camera, jacket, snacks, etc. to assist you with your preparation and allow you to get used to the extra weight on your back.
- We also ask that your boots are comfortable and well-worn in.
- Perhaps enjoy some walks through our local national parks and over uneven surfaces to gain confidence with your boots or new walking shoes.

**PLEASE NOTE**

All accommodation on tour includes private facilities (toilet and shower/bath).

Single rooms can usually be arranged for this tour for a supplement – please ask for details. We will endeavour to match people together if they would like to share a twin room with another guest to avoid paying the single room supplement.

However, as this is not always possible, 'single' clients will have to pay the supplement. All walks during the 16-Day tour are optional. Guests can choose to have more free days than the two already included in the itinerary.

The walking pace on all walks is leisurely. Guests do not have to be experienced, although a good level of fitness is necessary.

To get the best out of this itinerary, the order of days is interchangeable.

The walking pace on the walks is leisurely. Guests do not have to be experienced, although a good level of fitness is necessary.

# Get in touch and book your journey today.



0461 277 612



info@walkaboutgourmet.com

## Follow the journey.



### Quality Practices

Committed to exceeding your expectations with great customer service and the highest standards of quality practices, Walkabout Gourmet Adventures complies with the National Tourism Accreditation Program (ATAP).



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