

UMBRIA REGION SPIRITUAL TOUR, ASSISI AND SAINT FRANCIS FROM ROME PRIVATE DAY TOUR



TOUR DESCRIPTION

Dear friends, this tour has been programmed for those who wish to spend a day among the most significative places of Italian Christianity, where Francis, Patron Saint of Italy, was born, lived and in the name of Jesus gave up to all his belongings, for a life made of austerity, poverty and great sacrifices.

You will be met by an English speaking driver and taken to Umbria Region through a romantic and luxuriant natural context made up by soft rounded hills, medieval villages and farmhouse.

-ASSISI-

The city was founded in roman time, but its fame and importance dates back to the middle ages of communes and when in the 13th century the basilica of St. Francis was built outside the city center, the town of Assisi had already been built by using the pink and white local stones from the Subasio mountain.

San Francis died in 1226 and one year later Pope Gregory IX gave order to construct a church in memory of Francis.

-St. Francis's Basilica-

The first church to be built was the inferior, then the superior superimposed the first.

The church was consacrated in 1253 by Pope Innocenzo IV, and the overall work ended in 1367.

The greatest painters of the time were summoned there to decorate the walls and the ceilings of the building.

The **sepulchre of San Francis in the crypt**, was discovered only in 1818 but the Saint had already been buried in the church in 1230 before the inauguration. The right location of the tomb had never been revealed to prevent the barbarians and pirates from stealing the holy remains.

-The inferior Basilica-

On the sidewalls we have frescoes relating *Scenes from the life of Francis and from Jesus' Passion* made sometime in 1260 by a certain painter called Master of Francis.

In the Spandrels above the altar is the apotheosis of Francis by the same painter.

The works of the famous and celebrated **Giotto** can be detected in the right transept which displays frescoes concerning the *Life of Jesus*, while the left transept was decorated by **Lorenzetto**.

-Superior Basilica-

It is characterized by its pictorial decorative scheme divided in two principal sections:

the frescoes in the Apse and Transept are by **Cimabue** and his workshop, and the frescoes on the main nave and vaults are by **Giotto**.

The sidewalls of the main nave are divided in three strips; *Francis's life* in the lower side, then in the central and upper bands we can detect scenes depicting the *Old and New Testament*.

The elegant wooden choir, the work of **Domenico Indovino**, leans against the wall of the apse, which is characterized by paintings regarding *Virgin Mary's Life*.

The façade of the church is made of local stones and it is decorated with the big double rose evoking the renowned Cosmati style. It is a clear example of Italian-Gothic style.

The upwarded inner space characterized by one single nave, is typical of monastic architecture, which recalls the French-gothic and symbolizes the spirituality of the Saint.

-SANTA MARIA DEGLI ANGELI CHURCH-

It was one of the most significant places in the life of San Francis.

Built by the end of 16th century, the church, the 7th world's largest building, was conceived to house and unite the structures of the famous convent called **PORZIUNCOLA**, where the Saint choose to live, where he founded his Religious Order, and where he died in October 3th 1226.

Pope Pius the IV commissioned the construction of this magnificent edifice, whose project plan was entrusted to **Galeazzo Alessi** and completed one century later with the construction of the huge cupola.

Inside the enormous church, exactly beneath the vast cupola, is the old oratory called **Chapel of Porziuncola**, while the right transept is called "**Chapel of the Transit**", where behind the still original door, the stretched down lifeless body of the Saint was found.

Noteworthy is the "**Chapel of the Roseto**", whose name comes from a legend in which Francis would have made a plunge in a rose field and the thorn would have suddenly disappeared.

Inside the convent of the Porziuncola there is a **painted crucifix** (13th c.) and a portrait of Francis made by an unknown painter who then later came to be called "master of San Francis".

-SHRINE OF SAN DAMIANO-

This is another significant place in the life of Francis, the church of San Damiano. Here, in 1205 the Saint would have heard a voice which said :<< Francis, go and restore my church which is threatening to fall>>.

According to the reporter of the time, these words were uttered by the crucifix today held in the church of Saint Claire.

The edifice indicated by the wooden crucifix was that of the future church of San Damiano, then restored by Francis and his companions.

Here too, Claire founded the convent where Francis would compose the Cantico.

Apart from the spiritual value of the site, the shrine is worth visiting from an artistic-architectural point of view, due to the splendid oratory of Claire, the cloister frescoed by Eusebio da San Giorgio, and by the dining room.

-SAINT CLAIRE CHURCH-

The second biggest church of Assisi, was built in 1257 and consecrated 8 years later by Pope Clement IV: the body of the Saint had already been buried in 1260.

The façade is simply adorned by a main portal surmounted by a gothic rose, while the right flank is supported by 3 enormous brick buttresses.

The edifice is featured by alternating pink and white local stone.

Internally, in the right transept, there are beautiful frescoes relating “*scenes from the life of Claire*” dating XIII c.; other interesting frescoes are found in the left side and date XV century. The chapel of “**Holy Relics**” holds the famous **Crucifix** of the XIII c. which comes from San Damiano church and which, according to ancient chronicles, would have ordered Francis to restore that church.

-ST. RUFINO-

From Santa Chiara Church, a steep hill with steps leads to the Cathedral of **Saint Rufino**, medieval church built in the middle ages on a *sacred roman*

area and then rebuilt in the 11th c. by the archbishop Ugone upon a lengthy building site ended in 1253, year in which the church was consecrated by pope Innocent IV. Less famous than the others but, it is worthy of visiting for the splendid façade, an umbra-romanico artwork, framed by three horizontal orders:

- in the first lower one there are the three portal gates decorated by lions and surmounted by bas-relief lunettes;

- in the second one there are three big roses with the symbols of Evangelists;

- the third one is a pediment with Gothic arch. On one side stand out the bell tower with double arched window, part of the old church.

The interior, with a basilica-floor plan, re-done in the 16th c., still preserves the **Baptismal Font** where Claire and Francis were baptized, and yet a **Wooden Choir** of the 15th century and the **Franciscan Underground Oratory**, where the Saint would withdraw before preaching to pilgrims.

Adjacent to the church is the “**Museo della Cattedrale**” which preserves architectural elements from the previous church, a series of frescoes from the “Oratory of St. Rufinuccio”, and painting from various churches.

On the left side of the church are ruins of a roman **Theatre** and **Anphitheater**.

On the churchyard, a plate indicates the place where the **house of Claire** rose.

From the cathedral you can easily get to the heart of the city, **Piazza del Comune** as it was in the shape of its last restoration. It develops around the roman **Temple of Minerva** built during the first century a.D. and transformed into a church sometime in 15thc.

The square is also enclosed by two important edifices: **the Palace of the Captain of People and the Palace of Priori (1300)**

On the right, the **Arch of Volta Pinta** opens up with its frecoes of the 15th C. Then a little down hill through the **Arco dei Priori** leads in front of the **Chiesa Nuova** built with a greek floor plan in the 1615 by Filippo III of Spain in the site where the birth house of Francis arose. It is right here that Francis, taking off all his clothes off, would make his famous sacrifice in the name of poverty and in the name of Jesus Christ!!!

Restaurant selected by Michelin Guide

La Locanda del Cardinale, Piazza del Vescovado 8, Assisi. From €45 to 90- Stone arches of a medieval house and suspended on the remains and mosaics of a Roman domus already make the experience unforgettable. If - then - we add a modern and refined cuisine where the territory is enhanced, we just have to book!

Phone +39 075 815245

Buca di San Francesco, via Eugenio Brizi 1. From €25 to 40- Since 1970 one of the cornerstones of the city's catering, the flag of Umbrian catering has since been a constant and, judging by its success, also a guarantee.

Phone +39 075 812204

Restaurant selected by Tripadvisor

Ristorante Bibenda Assisi, vicolo Nepis 9, Assisi.

-Italian, Healthy, Wine Bar-

Phone +39 075 8155176

Chiosco Vamos, via Fra Francisco Remon Jativa Parcheggio San Giacomo,
100metres from the Basilica St. Francis.

-Italia, Bar, Fast Food-