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UMBRIA REGION ORVIETO AND CIVITA DI BAGNOREGIO FROM ROME PRIVATE DAY TOUR



TOUR DESCRIPTION

Dear friends, you will be met by an English speaking driver and taken to the fabulous Umbria region. It's a small region of central Italy, it represents the heart of the Peninsula. It is the only region of Italy peninsular not bathed by the sea and that is why its natural heritage is highlighted to proclaim it "**the green heart of Italy**". It is crossed by the Tiber river, the same that crosses the city of Rome, the third largest in Italy, and includes Lake Trasimeno, Lake Piediluco, the rivers Chiascio, Nera, Corno, Nestòre and Topino, the Marmore Falls. Its territory is almost entirely mountainous with steep mountains on the border with the Marche region and with soft hilly undulations that intersect the entire valley covered by the Tiber. Umbria is also a land rich in traditions, legends and great inventions; it is the birthplace of the patron Saint of Italy San Francesco, of Pinturicchio. It is the home of sugared almonds, it is famous for its chocolate and ceramics manufacturing. Located where the Apennines lose their ferocity and are transformed into an expanse of soft hills with a sublittoral or temperate Mediterranean climate of altitude, with typical summer drought, while in the mountain areas it is of the sub-continental temperate type. At higher altitudes, cool temperate, with often considerable rainfall, especially in spring and autumn.

-CIVITA DI BAGNOREGIO-

This charming little town was founded by Etruscans around 2500 years ago on top of a hill formed by "tufah" stone. The area must have been really different in those days. **The natural erosion and earthquakes** have really changed the town with a lot less space on the hilltop than it originally had.

Civita is situated in the valley of the badlands, valle dei calanchi (gullies), consisting of two main valleys: the Fossato (ditch) del Rio Torbitto and the Fossato del Rio Chiaro. Originally these places might have been easier to reach and were crossed by ancient roads which linked the Tiber Valley to Lake of Bolsena.

--Badland are a type of dry terrain where softer sedimentary rocks and clay-rich soils have been extensively eroded. They are characterized by

steep slopes, minimal vegetation, lack of substantial regolith, and high drainage density. Ravines, gullies, mounds and other such geological forms are common in badlands--

The morphology of this region was caused by erosion and landslides. The territory is made up of two different formations of rocks, different in chronology and in constitution. The most ancient formation is that of clay; it comes from the sea and it forms the base layer which is particularly subject to erosion. The top layers are made of tuff and lava material. The fast erosion is due to the water streams, to atmospheric agents but also to deforestation.

In 1695 one of those earthquakes destroyed the sort of natural bridge that linked Civita to the bigger nearby town of Bagnoregio. The natural erosion hasn't stopped and the sides of the hill keep crumbling down and therefore it came to be called “ **the dying city**”. Despite these uninviting names, Civita di Bagnoregio is considered one of the most beautiful villages in Italy and every year it is visited by hundreds of thousands of people who come from all over the world to admire its timeless appearance and the magical atmosphere that it can be perceived by walking through its narrow alleys.

As soon as we get the parking spot, we can recognize a preetty old building that was built on the remains of a **Franciscan Convent**, severely damaged by the earthquake of 1764.

Few meters forward, we enter the Belvedere park, beautiful view, that opens up to a breathtaking view over the village.

Just below the site, there is a cave, where, according to tradition, the young Giovanni Fidanza, then Saint Bonaventura, still a little child, was miraculously healed by Saint Francis during one of his trip to Civita.

Civita, like an island, is connected to reality and to the surrounding countryside by a narrow walkway ; it takes us faraway, not so much in distance as in time...

The strip of land that connected Civita to Bagnoregio has been subjected to continuous landslides over the centuries. The construction of an arched

stone bridge started in 1923; after being damaged by landslides and by the retreating German army in 1944, it was demolished in 1963 to make space for the new bridge in reinforced concrete, that was opened in 1965.

There is a feeling that one is leaving the real world, and this feeling becomes stranger after entering the ancient **City Gate called S. Maria or del Cassero**, the only one survived city gate; this medieval entryway incorporates an ancient Etruscan gate, dug in the tufah stone.

The main street leads to **Saint Donato Square**, maybe it is the place of the ancient **Forum** (market). There stands the **church of St. Donato, Cathedral** of the bigger town Bagnoregio until 1699; medieval edifice with a nice bell tower of the XII century and XV hundreds façade. Inside you can admire an inlaid **wooden crucifix** from Donatello school (XV cent.); under the lateral altars the **bodies of St. Vittoria, Vergin and Roman Martyr and St. Ildebrando**, bishop of the city between 835 and 873 are carefully kept.

Noteworthy also is the renaissance palace **Mazzocchi-Alemanni** with its beautiful bossed gate.

It is worth "getting lost" in the narrow streets and exploring the most secret ravines to admire the most evocative views without following a precise itinerary, letting the beauty of this place guide you to discover it. At the end of the main avenue that crosses the city, a small platform opens your sight towards an ocean of earth erosions of every kind of tonality and every kind of shape. This makes your view breathtaking.

Tripadvisor Restaurants in Civita di Bagnoregio

Restaurant Alma Civita, via della Provvidenza

Phone 0761 792415

Restaurant L'Arco del Gusto, via Santa Maria del Cassero.

Phone 0761 792524

-ORVIETO-

The countryside between Civita and Orvieto is really charming, with olive trees, vineyards and farmhouses.

Orvieto appears to us from the distance sitting on its plateau formed by the volcanic "tufah" stone!

Founded by the Etruscan around the VII century b.C. it was originally called VELZNA and it was the seat of the main religious shrine. Known by the Romans with the name VOLSINII, it was conquered by the latter in 264 b.C. Risen during the beginning of the middle ages became a free and rich city during the XII and XIII centuries until the catastrophe of the pestilence in 1348. Became part of the Vatican State and fortified by Cardinal Albornozi who built the fortress in 1364 and changed little in appearance over the centuries that followed.

The Orvieto undergrounds guided tour is one of the main attractions and local guides lead visitors to discover this web of subterranean galleries created by ancient inhabitants over about 3000 years of uninterrupted digging. These are cellars also built in recent times and which thanks to an in-depth study have allowed the discovery of ancient Etruscan, medieval and even Renaissance cisterns. In addition, a labyrinth of tunnels dug by the Etruscans to collect water and which were then used in the middle ages as landfills were brought to light. It is an extraordinary voyage in the past-time, an exciting itinerary that takes you, with a minimum of effort, to the roots of the city, and where the memories of its past are still alive.

-The Duomo-

Symbol of the city of Orvieto itself, the Duomo is one of the most beautiful cathedrals in Italy and the world. Begun in 1290 by Pope Niccolò the IV, the construction work was strongly supported by both the Church State and the Municipality, with the intention of creating a single large cathedral for the city to replace the two dilapidated churches that pre-existed on the beautiful square (the episcopal church

of S. Maria, rather run down, and the parish church of S. Costanzo, officiated by the canons who owned houses and shops adjacent to the attached cloister). The suggestive theory that indicates the Miracle of Bolsena as the propitiatory event for the construction must therefore be excluded. The Duomo presents itself as a magnificent construction that brings together different architectural styles. In particular, it can be defined as a wonderful example of balance and mixture of Gothic styles (especially for the façade with the slender spiers) and Romanesque, even if the cathedral maintains its own unique peculiarities.

Inside the black and white building are worthy of interest the **Capitals**, the **Chapels** and the **Holy Water Font**. Among the masterpieces is the **Chapel of the Madonna di San Brizio**, one of the four Patron Saints of the city, frescoed by the friar painter Beato Angelico, so called because of the spirituality emanated from his paintings, with the help of Benozzo Gozzoli starting from the summer of 1447, and completed, with other frescoes on the walls, by Luca Signorelli.

-The interior-

It is divided into three naves by columns and pillars characterized by alternating bands of basalt and travertine stone reflected on the side walls of the central nave and on the outer walls; inside there are ten small apses in which baroque altars were built and then destroyed at the end of the 19th century due to the desire to restore the Cathedral to its original structure.

The pink color of the floor is given by the red marble from Prodo, a small town not far from Orvieto.

The **Organ**, designed by Ippolito Scalza and Cesare Nebbia in 1584, is among the largest in Italy and allows it to support concerts of all kinds.

Notable is a beautiful **Holy Water Font** by Antonio Federighi of the 1450 that is found at the beginning of the central nave and on the wall of the left aisle of the first bay, a fresco by Gentile da Fabriano representing the **Madonna and Baby Jesus** of the 1425 as well.

There are marble statues of great beauty and importance such as the twelve **Apostles** carved between the 16th and the 17th c., the four **Patron Saints** of the city, in the transept is found "**The Pietà**" (1579) by Ippolito Scalza, a work that is influenced by the echoes of Michelangelo's Pietà, and the "**Annunciation**" sculptural group executed by Francesco Mochi between 1603 and 1608 representing the Arcangel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary.

All of these statues have been brought back to the original location on 2019 after 122 years, removal due to an attempt to give back the Duomo its original features.

-Luca Signorelli and the Finimondo (end of the world)-

On the walls of the **Chapel of the Madonna of San Brizio** there is the fascinating cycle of frescoes which narrates the events related to the apocalypse and which was carried out between 1499 and 1502 by Luca Signorelli. The artist here proposes the themes of the Last Judgment- the End, the Preaching of the Antichrist, the Resurrection of the Flesh, the Damned of Hell, the Advent of Heaven, the Anti-hell and the Call of the Elect- blending dynamism and sapient harmony in a synthesis of the central-italian art of the period. In the lower band there are the portraits of a series of famous poets and writers of antiquity: Dante, Tibullo, Ovidio and Sallustio. The plasticity and the energy emanating from the bodies of the characters enhance the drama of the myth and anticipate what Michelangelo painting will be.

-Chapel of corporal-

The chapel houses a panel by Lippo Memmi representing "La Madonna dei Recommended" of the 1320 and the frescoes by Ugolino di Prete Ilario with the Miracle of Bolsena – A Bohemian priest, during a trip to Rome he stopped in Bolsena. There in a small local church, while he was saying mass, he had a moment of doubt about the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. As soon as he was preparing to break the host, small drops of blood fell on the corporal staining it with the blood of Christ – This miracle also gave rise to the feast of Corpus Domains and the construction of the Duomo itself. Inside the chapel itself we find the reliquary which preserves the stained linen vestment.

-The façade-

One of the most beautiful romano-gothic façade of the world, balanced and harmonious in its style and decoration.

It is divided in three sectors by four vertical buttresses with spears.

From the bottom, the four pillars are decorated with fine bas-relief which, according to tradition, have inspired Michelangelo for the decoration of the Sistine Chapel.

From left we have: 1) stories from the old testament with references from the Genesis, **the creation**; 2) old testament with references from the **arrival of Messiah**; 3) stories from the new testament, **nativity and annunciation**, 4) last Judgement, **the damned, the blessed and the resurrection of deads**

The four fine bas-reliefs are crowned by the symbols of the Evangeslist.

-The mosaics-

The mosaics were executed by several maestros between the 14th and 16th century.

-Just Above the three dorways from the left we have; the Baptism of Christ and the Annunciation on the slices; the Assumption of Mary in Glory and Apostles in ecstasy on the slices; the Nativity of Mary and Gioacchino and Anna on the slices.

- Then above, on the three cusps we have; the marriage of Mary, the Incoronation of Mary at the center and on the right Presentation to the temple.

-The Rosone (big Rose)-

It's the work of Andrea di Cione called Orcagna, 14th century.

At the four corners we have mosaics representing the four doctors of the Church, St. Augustine, St. Gregory the great, St. Geromy and St. Ambrogio. On the sides of the Rosone are 12 niches occupied by statues of the 12 Prophets and the 12 Apostles on the above band.

Along the perimeter of the square, there are 52 heads depicting prophets and apostles.

-Tower of the Moor-

It owns its name to the figure that adorns the crest of the Pucci family, bankers. It dates back the '200 and once inside, with a reasonable amount of money is possible to climb up all the steps that lead to the top: the view is really breathtaking!!!

-St. Patrik well-

The well of San Patrizio is a structure built by Antonio da Sangallo the young between 1527 and 1537, at the behest of Pope Clement VII who survived the sack of Rome and eager to protect himself in the event of a siege of the city where he retired. Designed to provide water in the event of a calamity or siege, the construction works of the well were completed during the papacy of Paolo III Farnese (1534-1549).

Access to the well, an engineering masterpiece, is guaranteed by two one-way helical ramps, completely autonomous and served by two different doors, which allowed to transport the extracted water with the mules, without hinder one-self and without having to resort to the only one road that went up to the village from the valley floor.

The well, 54 meters deep, was built by digging into the tuff of the plateau on which Orvieto stands, a fairly hard stone, that is suffering, after several centuries, from the sewage drains.

It has a cylindrical shape with a circular base with a diameter of 13 meters, 40 feet.

The steps are 248, and the windows that provide light are 70.

Perhaps for the aura of sacred and magical that accompanies the deep cavities, or for pure imitation of cinematographic models, modern tourists throw coins in the hope of returning.

The well took the name of St. Patrick, probably, because it was used as a place of expiation for sins in the same way as a cave, existing in Ireland called "St. Patrick's Purgatory"

After all this, you can stroll down Orvieto's quaint narrow streets crammed with its colourful shops selling beautiful ceramics.

Orvieto produces one of the most famous Italian white wines and the wine shops all round offer the opportunity to taste some of the local wines and cold cuts and cheese locally produced.

Michelin Red Guide Restaurants in Orvieto

La Palomba, via Cipriano Manente 16, Orvieto- from €18 to €50

True and authentic restaurant in the historic center, managed by the same family for more than 50 years: they have always offered guests Umbrian cuisine with homemade pasta, game and the proverbial pigeon!

Phone +39 0763 343395

Da Gregorio, sp 136, 05018 Morrano Nuovo- from €25 TO €45

Simple family-run restaurant, which with the renewed energy of the second generation improves day by day; the sober atmosphere accompanies an Umbrian cuisine rich in taste and flavor. It is worth going a little way to reach it.

Phone +39 0763 215011

Tripadvisor Restaurants in Orvieto

Bottega Vera Enoteca Degustazione, via del Duomo 36,38 Orvieto

Phone +39 349 295 5112

Local cuisine, Tagliere menù. Da Gregorio, sp 136, 05018 Morrano Nuovo- from €25 TO €45

Simple family-run restaurant, which with the renewed energy of the second generation improves day by day; the sober atmosphere accompanies an Umbrian cuisine rich in taste and flavor. It is worth going a little way to reach it.

Phone +39 0763 215011

Trattoria Pizzeria San Michele, via dei sette martiri 62, Orvieto.

Phone +39 333 6972918

