

DISCOVERING LE MARCHE REGION

13 Jun – 21 Jun 2017
(9 days/8 nights) AUD \$4,750



The tour provides an excellent opportunity to experience the life in Italy's best kept secret tourist destination: Le Marche Region, nestled between the Apennines and the Adriatic Sea. This tour leads you to fascinating hill towns vibrant with daily life surrounded by beautiful countryside. You will leisurely wander through cobbled streets and magnificent town *piazze*. The relaxed itinerary will allow time to enjoy the life on the Adriatic.

The tour starts in Rome. There will be a relaxed walking tour of some of the main sites of Rome followed by an introductory dinner. Then it is off to the City of Pesaro in Le Marche Region, your home for the next 7 nights. From this base, guided day trips are organised to historical towns such as Urbino, Gradara and San Leo. One of the highlights will be a day in the Medieval town of Urbania for a unique cooking demonstration followed by a degustation lunch in an award winning *osteria*.

You will have the possibility to experience the excellent hospitality of this beautiful Region which rivals its neighbours with its abundance of traditional local food and wine. You will enjoy leisurely lunches and special dinners in traditional restaurants and *trattorie*.

This tour gives you the opportunity to enjoy the summer season when the entire Region is alive with music, markets and life.

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1 Rome (D) Your tour leaders will meet you at the hotel in the centre of Rome at 4.00pm. Introductions and a small talk on the tour will precede an afternoon walk through some of the famous iconic areas of Rome. The guided walking tour will include Piazza della Repubblica, The Fountain of Trevi, The Spanish Steps, Piazza Barberini and Via Veneto. The walk will end with an early dinner in a traditional restaurant.

Day 2 Rome/Ascoli Piceno/Pesaro (BD) After breakfast we leave Rome for Pesaro. We will travel in air conditioned comfort through some of the most beautiful countryside of the Central Apennines. We stop at Ascoli Piceno and before some time for a quick lunch and refreshments we will have a walking tour of the Piazza del Popolo and the other main square Piazza Arringo. We then proceed to Pesaro in Le Marche Region for check-in at our hotel. Pesaro will be our home for the next 7 nights. Dinner will be at the hotel followed by an optional *passaggiata* around the historical part of the city.

Day 3 Pesaro/Gradara (BLD) The City of Pesaro is situated on the Adriatic Coast: a charming town nestled against a backdrop of hills dotted with ancient hilltowns and castles. Today will be devoted to exploring Pesaro and its treasures which include the ancient centre with its Ducal Palace, Piazza del Popolo, the house of Gioachino Rossini and several important churches housing important works of art. A special lunch is organised at one of the oldest *trattorie* in the City just off the Piazza del Popolo serving traditional *marchigiana* cuisine. In the afternoon we visit Gradara: a medieval town dominated by its magnificent castle which overlooks the Adriatic Sea. We will tour the castle and the impressive walled town. Gradara was made famous by the legendary love affair between Paolo Malatesta and Francesca da Rimini as immortalised in the 5th canto of Dante's *Inferno*. Dinner in Gradara with *piadina* and local *Verdicchio* wine.

Day 4 Pesaro/Urbania (BL) Today is a day dedicated to food and wine. We travel to the historical city of Urbania where the group will be guests of Donatella and Giorgio for lunch at their award winning *osteria*. Lunch will be a selection of regional specialties the *osteria* has become famous for, together with local wines. Urbania is also renowned for its Majolica ceramics and after lunch we will visit several local artisans' workshops. Free evening.

Day 5 Pesaro/San Marino/San Leo (BL) After breakfast at the hotel, we travel just over the Le Marche border for a day visit to the tiny Republic of San Marino. San Marino claims to be the oldest state and constitutional republic in the world and is worth a visit for its history, pageantry and its magnificent hilltop setting, which offers excellent views of the surrounding countryside. It is also day for shopping as San Marino is jam packed with duty free shops. In the afternoon we will visit San Leo with its ancient castle perched above sheer cliffs. We will have a rest in the beautiful town square where we will have lunch and taste the delicious *formaggio di fossa*: a cheese walled up in rock caves to mature for months. Free evening.

Day 6 Pesaro/Urbino (BL) Today we start exploring the land once ruled by the medieval lords of Montefeltro. We visit Urbino, which after Florence, was one of the most important centres of the Italian Renaissance and also the birth place of Raphael. There will be a tour of the magnificent Ducal Palace which houses the *Galleria Nazionale delle Marche* with its precious paintings by Piero della Francesca, Tiziano, Paolo Uccello and Raphael. Lunch is organised in a traditional *osteria* serving delicious local produce and wine. Free evening.

Day 7 Pesaro/Colli Pesaresi/Cartoceto (BD) Today will be spent exploring some of the famous local wineries in the Province of Pesaro/Urbino. We will have numerous wine tastings at several wineries in the area. There will also be a visit to the ancient fortified hill town of Cartoceto, famous around Italy and recognised throughout Europe for its 'D.O.P' (Protected Destination of Origin) extra virgin olive oil. We will have a tasting of olive oil at one of the renowned local producers. Dinner in Pesaro at a local Osteria.

Day 8 Pesaro/Fiorenzuola/Novilara (BLD) Today we explore the surrounding hills of Pesaro which are dotted with medieval hamlets and Renaissance towns. We drive through the San Bartolo National Park perched high above the Adriatic stopping at Fiorenzuola for coffee. We then go to Novilara another medieval hilltown with its magnificent views of the countryside. Lunch is organised in a traditional *trattoria* which is famous for its local produce and its *pasta e fagioli* on the menu. After a pleasant afternoon stroll of the township we travel back to Pesaro. Free afternoon. Cocktails followed by a farewell dinner in a local *pizzeria* overlooking the sea

Day 9 Pesaro (B) The tour officially ends after breakfast at the hotel.

Items included in the Tour

- All land travel in air conditioned mini buses
- Accommodation for 8 nights in 3/4 star hotels in Rome and Pesaro
- 8 breakfasts
- 5 dinners
- 5 lunches (Meals include special lunches and dinners in traditional local restaurants and *trattorie* as detailed in the itinerary)
- Regional wines and mineral water served with meals
- Admission to all galleries, museums and historical sites included in the itinerary
- Personally guided tours of all the towns mentioned in the itinerary
- The services of the tour leader throughout the tour

Items not included

- Airfares
- Travel insurance (we strongly recommend you take travel insurance during your travels) Vita Italian Tours can arrange airfares, travel insurance, pre and post tour accommodation and transfers for you if needed
- Admission fees to places other than those specifically itemised in the itinerary
- Meals on tour except when specifically mentioned in the itinerary
- Drinks outside normal meal times or additional wine or other drinks in restaurants
- Personal transport costs, phone calls and other personal needs
- Accommodation Tax

Cost

The cost of the tour is **AUD \$4,750** per person in twin share accommodation. **A deposit of AUD \$500** is required to reserve a place on the tour which is not refundable unless the tour is cancelled. **Single** supplements are available at an additional cost of **AUD \$610**. The full balance is due 90 days before departure. **The tour** is costed on a minimum of 2 people travelling on the tour.

We recommend that you carefully read the conditions applying to Vita Italian Tours

Additional information

The weather in June is warm and humid, but the nights are mild. We recommend light, comfortable clothing with your favourite walking shoes. The countryside is undulating and hilly. Many of the hill towns have their historical centres closed to traffic and therefore lots of walking is required. You should expect to stroll leisurely for up to an hour with many breaks for sightseeing, coffee and a taste of the local produce. **The program** appears to be full, however it is mixed with long restful lunches and leisure time for your enjoyment and comfort.

If you need to, you can always take time off from the organised program.

For further information

Visit the web site **www.vitaitaliantours.com** for the full list of tours.

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