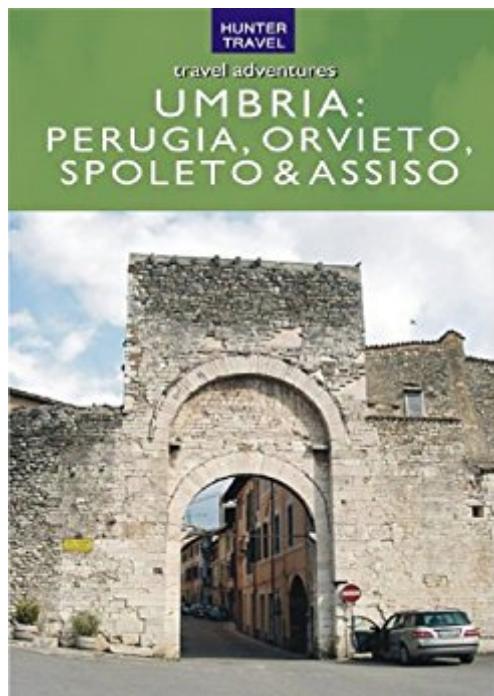


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Umbria - Perugia, Orvieto, Spoleto & Assisi



Synopsis

Umbria, "the green heart of Italy," may not completely match Tuscany's geological variation, but it comes close. This small, hilly and fairly untouched region occupying Italy's core (Narni is the country's geographical center) is crammed full of walking, rafting, caving, hang-gliding and climbing opportunities, not to mention a rich artistic and architectural heritage left over the centuries by Etruscans, Umbrians, Romans and then by scholarly monks. Umbria has played a strategic role in Italy's busy history. Numerous archaeological finds have unearthed a human presence in Umbria dating back to Palaeolithic and Neolithic periods; flints and arrowheads have been found on several river plains and around the shores of Lake Trasimeno; burial chambers close to Spoleto date to the time between the Bronze and Iron Ages. The main settlers, however, arrived around 1000 BC. This tribe, thought to be of Indo-European origin, became known as the Oscan-Umbrians and is credited with establishing the towns and cities of Terni, Todi, Spoleto, Assisi, Gubbio and Città di Castello. The Umbrians arrived soon after, building an astonishing legacy of tombs, monuments and cultural artifacts, and leaving almost as suddenly with the arrival of the Romans about 309 BC. To the Etruscan remains - the necropolis and Tempio Etrusco at Orvieto, the extraordinary Etruscan Tablets in the Museo Civico at Gubbio, traces in Todi, Betton and Perugia - the Romans added amphitheaters, arches, aqueducts, temples and walls, from Città di Castello to Todi and from Perugia to Orvieto. Hikers seek out the Apennines, which in Umbria's eastern margins, become more rugged and soar to great heights in the savage peaks of the Monti Sibillini. Close by lie Piano Grande's prairie-like expanse, and the plush green of the Valnerina, home to the Marmore Falls (the highest in the country) and an eerie labyrinth of canyons cut out over centuries by the Nera River. Water sports are best at Lake Trasimeno, the largest body of water on the Italian peninsula. This guide is based on our much larger Adventure Guide to Tuscany & Umbria. Here, we zero in on Umbria alone. This history-rich region offers some of Italy's classic landscapes - pole-straight cypress trees lining dusty farm roads, rolling hills that stretch as far as the eye can see, fields of vibrant sunflowers, medieval villages perched on rocky spurs above crashing surf. Visit them all with this comprehensive guide that helps you explore the very best places. A largely untouched coastline and protected wild areas only add to the appeal of this top vacation destination. Regional chapters take you on an introductory tour, with stops at museums, historic sites and local attractions. Places to stay and eat; transportation to, from and around your destination; practical concerns; tourism contacts - it's all here! Detailed regional and town maps feature walking and driving tours. Then come the adventures - fishing, canoeing, hiking, rafting, llama trips and more. Never galloped along a beach on horseback, trekked up a mountain, explored ancient sites? Also includes extensive lists

of recommended outfitters, with all contact details - e-mail, website, phone number and location. Adventure Guides are about living more intensely, waking up to your surroundings and truly experiencing all that you.

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