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## Guide to cycling routes

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### #destinationmarche Cycling holidays

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**PARCHI E NATURA attiva**

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**REGIONE MARCHE**  
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**HOW TO GET THERE**



**MOTORWAY**  
 A 14 Bologna-Taranto  
 www.autostrade.it

**ROADS**

SS 3 Flaminia - Roma - Fano (PU)  
 SS 4 Salaria - Roma - Porto d'Ascoli (AP)  
 SS 16 Adriatica - Padova - Otranto (LE)  
 SS 73 bis di Bocca Trabaria - San Giustino (AR) - Fano (PU)  
 SS 76 Val d'Esino - Fossato di Vico (PG) - Falconara Alta (AN)  
 SS 77 Val di Chienti - Foligno (PG) - Civitanova Marche (MC)  
 ex SS 360 Arcevese - Senigallia (AN) - Scheggia - Pascalupo (PG)  
 ex SS 361 Septempedana - Ancona - Nocera Umbra (PG)



**TRAIN**  
 Linea Milano-Lecce: Milano, Bologna, Ancona, Lecce  
 Linea Roma-Ancona: Roma, Falconara M., Ancona  
 www.trenitalia.com



**BUS**  
 The extra-urban transport system connects Marche to 12 Italian regions  
 en.turismo.marche.it



**AIRPORT**  
 "Raffaello Sanzio" Airport of Marche  
 Ancona/Falconara M.  
 www.marcheairport.com



**PORT OF ANCONA**  
 Connections to: Albania, Croazia, Grecia, Montenegro  
 www.doricaportservices.it



**DISTANCES FROM ANCONA**  
 Milano 430 km, Firenze 280 km, Roma 300 km  
 Torino 540 km, Bologna 220 km, Venezia 365 km, Napoli 390 km

**VISIT MARCHE**



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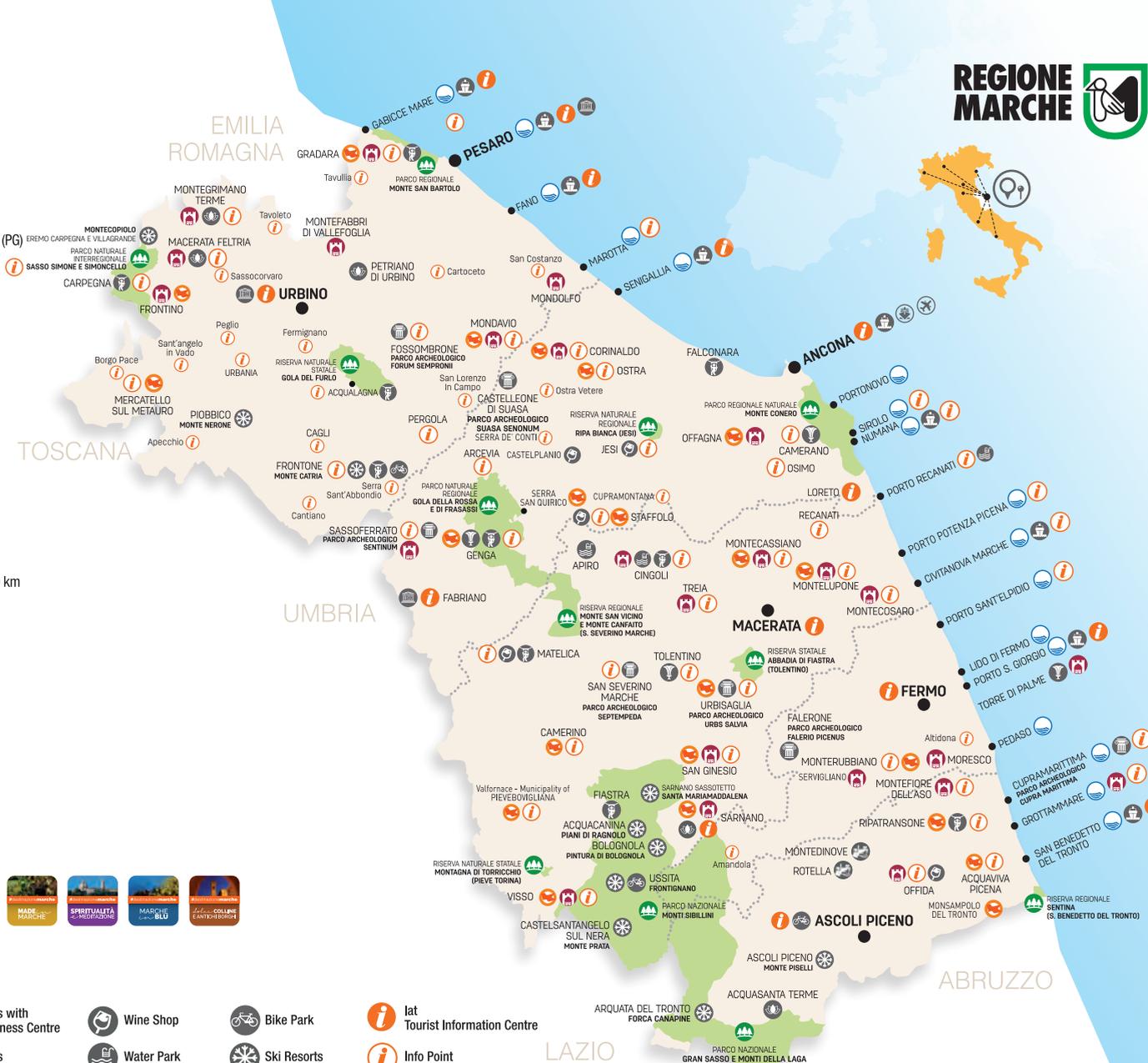
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**REGIONE MARCHE**



ABRUZZO

LAZIO

# #destination**marche**

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*Guide to cycling routes*



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*"The first ride is like a newly-gained independence, a romantic escape (...) In just a few moments the closed horizon begins to open up, the landscape moves. I am elsewhere. I am another person. Yes, I am another person, yet I am myself as never before; I am what I discover".*

**Marc Augé "Eloge de la bicyclette"  
("In praise of cycling")**

The Marche have plenty to offer: cities of art, villages resting on gentle hills, lively coastal resorts overlooking a crystalline sea, and unique panoramas on the slopes of the Apennines.

A multifaceted territory with a variety of different landscapes ideal for the discovery on your bike saddle. **To those who enjoy the more challenging and inaccessible bike routes, and also to those who are holidaying in the Marches – enjoy your ride!**



# PESARO URBINO

## **A unique land:** discovering towns and villages

*For anyone who wishes to explore a unique land by bike, the province of **Pesaro and Urbino** has surprising routes from town to town, village to village and hill to hill. From itineraries that include the Courts of the Dukes to the discovery of the Italian **Renaissance**, to the food and wine itineraries to be enjoyed on the hills around the **Metauro Valley**, to the exquisite green protected areas of **San Bartolo** or **Sasso Simone and Simoncello**.*

PU 01

CYCLING HOLIDAYS

68 Km

DIFFICULT

## ON THE BANDIT ROUTES AMIDST THE FORTRESSES OF THE MONTEFELTRO

MACERATA FELTRIA - SAN LEO - MONTE CERIGNONE

The path leads to **Romagna** crossing impressive fortresses lodged in the **Montefeltro hills** and to the protected areas of the **Parco del Sasso Simone and Simoncello**. The route starts out from **Macerata Feltria**, an ancient village of Roman origin located in this landscape that undulates between basins, crags and meadows. Following the direction of **Carpegna**, climb up as far as Romagna and the cliff of **San Leo** with its **fortress**, where the **Count of Cagliostro** was imprisoned. Back to the saddle again, pedal towards **San Marino**, once traversed by raiding bandits, and your next stop will be **Monte Cerignone**, a village on the river dominated by a twelfth-century Castle which, every year in July, comes alive with ladies, knights and jesters at the historical pageants.

Macerata Feltria Info: (+39) 0722.74244; Monte Cerignone Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0541.978552

PU 02

CYCLING HOLIDAYS

83 Km

DIFFICULT

## WINE ROUTE IN THE HILLS OF BIANCHELLO DEL METAURO

MAROTTA - ORCIANO DI PESARO - SANT'IPPOLITO - MONTEMAGGIORE AL METAURO

Up and down hills adorned by the vineyards of **Bianchello**, a DOC wine produced only in this stretch of the Marche region which ascends from the sea up to the **hills of the Metauro** area. Leave from **Marotta** and, moving along the waterfront, ascend in the direction of **San Costanzo** to reach **Orciano di Pesaro**, a town gathered around its castle in the centre. Take a break to visit this village and its Renaissance **Church of Santa Maria Novella**, then continue on to the next stage: **Sant'Ippolito**, a fortified village and **home to the stone cutters** who work the sandstone of the ancient quarries nearby. Begin your descent towards **Fossombrone** until you reach **Montemaggiore al Metauro**, a town of chrysanthemums from whose city walls you can enjoy an expansive view extending from the **valley of Metauro** right over to the coast. We are at the end of our route, take a pause and enjoy a snack with cheese, accompanied by a bottle of **Bianchello**.

Orciano di Pesaro Pro loco (+39) 0721.977071; Sant'ippolito Pro Loco (+39) 0721.728329;  
Montemaggiore del Metauro Pro Loco (+39) 0721.895312.





# Wandering in the courts of the Dukes

URBINO - URBANIA - SANT'ANGELO IN VADO - PIANDIMELETO - URBINO

This route begins from **Urbino**, capital of the **Duchy of Montefeltro**, and winds its way through villages that were once part of the ancient Duchy of Urbino.

**Urbino** is one of the most important cultural and artistic centres in the world, **recognised as UNESCO World Heritage Site**. It was at its heyday during the Renaissance when it was ruled by the **Duke Federico da Montefeltro**. There is always something more to discover in **Urbino**, and returning to your bicycle will not be easy, but other stages await you.

The descent towards **Urbania** begins from here. Nowadays it's renowned for the **Chiesa della Morte** (Church of Death), where you can see **sixteenth-century mummies** in a crypt. They're perfectly preserved thanks to an antibiotic fungus in the soil.

From here, go towards **Sant'Angelo in Vado**, the brothers **Taddeo and Federico Zuccari's** birthplace, famous painters who worked in Rome in the sixteenth century.

In the Sant'Angelo in Vado area you can also visit the waterfall - the **Cascata del Sasso** - of the river Metauro, 12 meters high and 60 meters wide which makes it of the most **important** waterfalls in Italy. Then continue towards **Piandimeleto**, a village nestled in the verdant nature of the **Valle del Foglia**; the fifteenth-century **Castle of the Counts Oliva** stands as a symbol of this place.

After this stop you are ready to return to **Urbino**, following the direction of Pesaro.

*Urbino Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0722.2613;*

*Urbania Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0722.313140;*

*Sant'Angelo in Vado Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0722.88455;*

*Piandimeleto Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0722.88455.*



Type:  
**Cycling**

Length:  
**74 km**

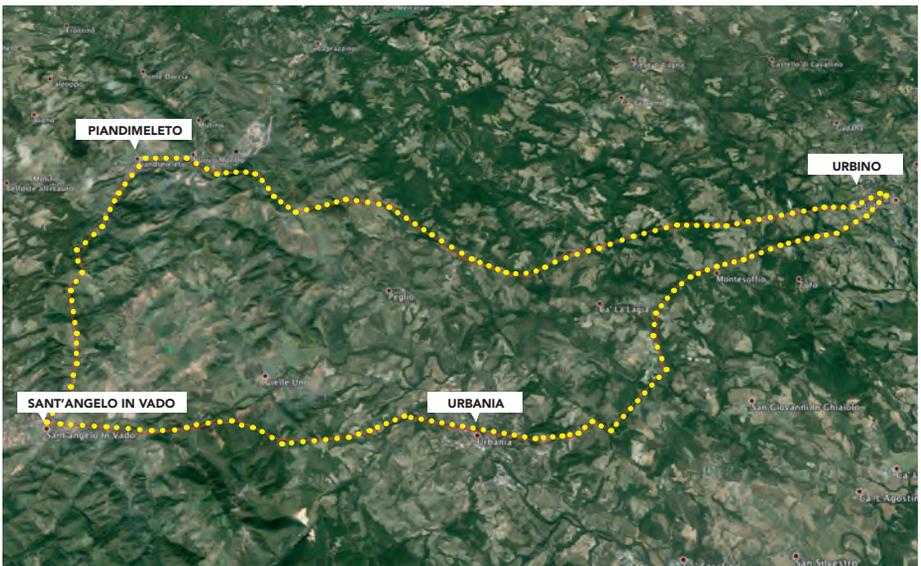
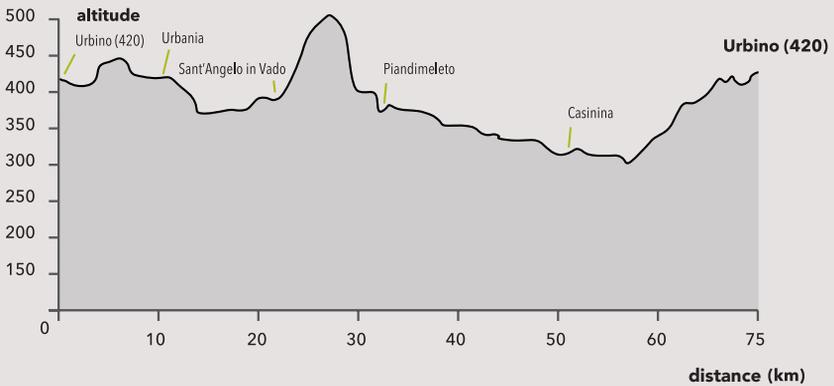
**MEDIUM**

Surface:  
**Asphalt**

Slope medium:  
**10 %**

Slope max:  
**30 %**

Difficulty  
Level



PU 04

CYCLING HOLIDAYS

62 Km

DIFFICULT

**EXPLORING THE HILLS OF THE VALLE DEL CESANO**

ORCIANO DI PESARO - MONDAVIO - SAN LORENZO IN CAMPO - PERGOLA

Cycling amidst the **hills of the Cesano and Tarugo Valleys** you will discover charming little villages off the beaten track where you can enjoy nice meals by tasting the organic delicacies on offer. Reset your mileometer in **Orciano di Pesaro**, off on your bike in the direction of **Mondavio (Orange Flag)** which, with its mighty Roveresque fortress, dominates the landscape in the **Cesano valley**. Inside the fortress is a **Museum of Living History** and an **armoury**. Take the route towards **San Lorenzo in Campo**, which originated from the ancient Roman Abbey of the same name and which today is a small village clustered around its castle. The "Padella" square will bring immediately face-to-face with the austere **Palazzo della Rovere** which houses three museological collections. At **San Lorenzo** you can enjoy a full spelt-based menu or you can try out the sweet **Suasa onion**, finishing up with a **taste of chestnut or honeydew honey**. Afterwards, go in the direction of **Pergola**, a medieval village with typical stone buildings and the only place in the world that has gilded bronzes from ancient Roman times.

Mondavio Local Tourist Bureau (+39) 0721.977331; Pergola Local Tourist Bureau (+39) 0721.736469;  
San Lorenzo in Campo Local Tourist Bureau (+39) 0721.776479.

PU 05

CYCLING HOLIDAYS

63 Km

MEDIUM

**THROUGH VILLAGES AND CASTLES IN THE METAURO VALLEY**

FANO - MOMBAROCCIO - CARTOCETO - SALTARA - FANO

The path winds its way through the **hills of the Metauro and the castles** that dominate them. You start out from **Fano**, an ancient Roman strategic village on the **Via Flaminia**. **Fano** is a cheerful seaside resort (**Blue Flag**) with many tourist attractions as well as excellent cuisine ranging from a quick *piadina* (unleavened flat bread) to the more sophisticated soup - *brodetto alla fanese* - which will include fresh fish. Continue in the **direction of Pesaro** and, passing alongside steep hills you will reach **Mombaroccio**, protected by sturdy wall escarpments. After passing through the two imposing towers at the entrance, you can discover this village to your heart's content, visiting the **Palazzo Del Monte** and the eighteenth-century parish church. Back to the saddle again, the next obligatory step is the **Sanctuary of Beato Sante**, a treasure of art and spirituality surrounded by woods of oaks, holm oaks and chestnut trees. After this cooling pause, go back down to **Cartoceto**, where you can climb up steps and steep lanes to its castle. Olives have been cultivated since 1178 in **Cartoceto**; the oil produced is of excellent quality. Continue the descent and you arrive in Saltara with its massive escarpment; not to be missed is the **Museo del Bali, an interactive science museum** which houses one of the **most prestigious planetariums in Italy**. This tour of the **villages of Metauro** is coming to an end and it's time to return to the road towards Fano.

Mombaroccio Information (+39) 0721.471103; Cartoceto Local Tourist Bureau (+39) 0721.898437;  
Museum of the Bailiff (+39) 0721.892390.

PU 06

CYCLING HOLIDAYS

79,5 Km

MEDIUM

## THE ASCENT TO MONTE NERONE FROM TOWNS AND VILLAGES TO THE MYSTERIES OF THE GROTTOS

URBANIA - PIOBBICO - CAGLI - CERBARA - URBANIA

**Monte Nerone** is part of the Apennine chain that delineates the **Marches** from **Umbria**.

There are two different versions on the origin of the mountain's name: according to one, it derives from the consul **Gaius Claudius Nero** who during the **battle of Metauro** repulsed the Gauls and chased them to the top of the mountain. According to the other version, the mountain and the dense network of caves that run through it gave refuge to **Domitius Nero** to save himself from lightning cast by **Jupiter**.

However - legends or otherwise - we are ready to leave **Urbania**, a centre of ceramic crafts, and cycle to **Piobbico**, the estate of the Brancaloni family whose 130-room castle still dominates the village.

From the village, following the **direction of Monte Nerone**, ascend the path to **Cagli** and here you should take time to discover at least one of the **routes crossing the mountain overground or underground**. **Monte Nerone** is fascinating, particularly for its network of underground paths where you will make some unexpected geological discoveries.

The path leads downwards, then up again to **Cerbara** and you arrive at the **Gola di Gorgo** gorge, carved by the **Metauro** river between the **Nerone and Montiego** mountain walls.

From here, passing through woods and pastures, return to the road and go back in the direction of Urbania.

*Urbania Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0722 313140; Piobbico Information (+39) 0722.986225; Monte Nerone Environmental Education Centre (+39) 0722.985455.*



# From the massif of the Furlo Gorge amidst magnificent scenery and history

## GORGE FURLO - FOSSOMBRONE - URBINO

The **Furlo Gorge Nature Reserve** comprises 3,600 hectares of uncontaminated forests, meadows and peaks populated by **golden eagles, wolves, deers and roe deers**. **Furlo Pass** has been the scene of a number of historical events which - from the Etruscans to the Italy of the Savoy Royal Family - made it an important transit route on the **ancient Via Flaminia**.

Going along Via Flaminia again you reach **Fossombrone**, a village of very old origins divided into two parts by the mountain: the medieval part facing the mountains and the seventeenth-century part facing the valley.

Back to the saddle once again, go towards **Urbino** and, passing through the pine forests of **Monti delle Cesane** you can admire the panoramas stretching **from Romagna to the Metauro Valley**.

These mountains boast one of the **most important centres of organic products**, and a stop is recommended in order to taste the food of this area.

Once in Renaissance **Urbino**, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** and home of the **painter Raphael**, you are free to lose yourself in the discovery of history, art and culture.

When returning we recommend an intermediate stopover in **Fermignano**, a village in the **Metauro valley** where the Romans defeated the Carthaginians led by Hasdrubal.

*Furlo Gorge (+39) 0721.700041; Fossombrone Local Tourist Bureau (IAT) (+39) 0721.716324;*

*Urbino Local Tourist Bureau (IAT) (+39) 0722.2613;*

*Fermignano Local Tourist Bureau (IAT) (+39). 0722.330523.*



Type:  
**Cycling**

Length:  
**70 km**

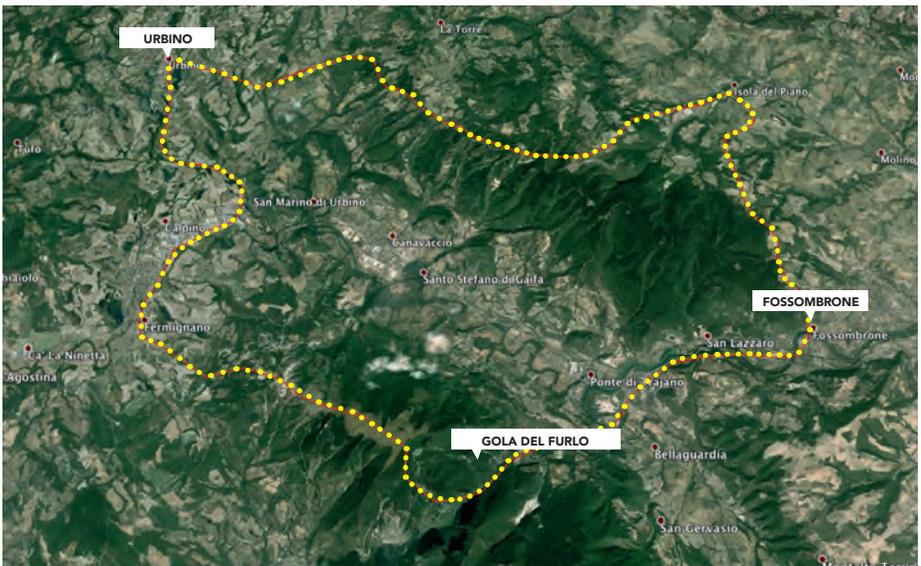
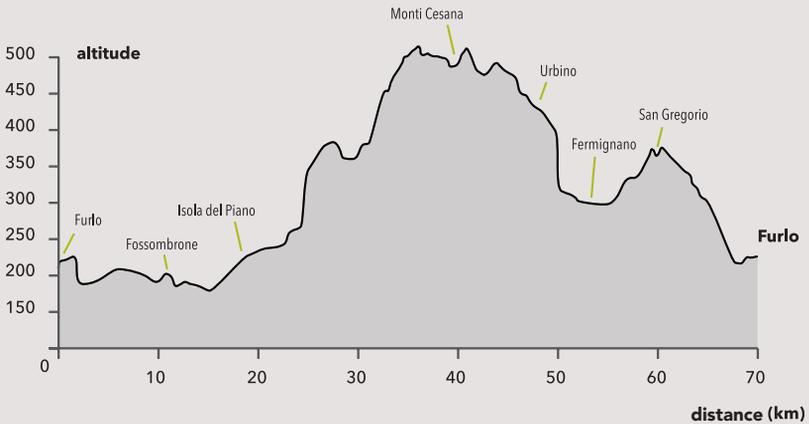
**MEDIUM**

Surface:  
**Asphalt**

Slope medium:  
**12 %**

Slope max:  
**45 %**

Difficulty  
Level



## MONTE CATRIA AMIDST NATURE AND SPIRITUALITY

CAGLI - SANT'ABBONDIO - CANTIANO - CAGLI. BIKE PARK ON MONTE CATRIA

You will recognise **Monte Catria** (1,701 m) by the imposing “cursed” cross at the summit, and this route starts out at the foot of the mountain from **Cagli**, a village on the ancient Via Flaminia. Cycle in the direction of **Fano**; after passing the centre of **Pergola**, known for its famous “golden bronzes” head towards **Fonte Avellana** and **Sant'Abbondio**.

You are at the foot of **Monte Catria**, where the **hermitage of Fonte Avellana** is located – cited by Dante in *Canto XXI* of his *Paradiso*. The Hermitage, founded by **San Romualdo**, father of the **Camaldolesi**, is one of the most important monasteries in the Marches where you can find some peace and time to recover. There is a **bike park** on the Monte Catria, with free ride and downhill tracks. A **Kinderland** - a snow playground - is located in a tranquil part of Monte Catria, where children from three years and upwards can play and take their first steps in the snow, in ideal harmony with the mountain; from 2015, Kinderland is also open in summer with trails for children. After our refreshing, spiritual time out, take the road towards **Cantiano**, where you may visit the **Collegiate Church of St. John the Baptist**, the **Church of St. Augustine**, the **Paleontological Museum** and the **Roman bridge**. Continue, with a pause at the **Tecchie Forest**, which covers 180 hectares of oak and beech trees. From here, go back down towards **Pesaro**.

*Cagli Information (+39) 0721.780773 Cagli Local Tourist Bureau (IAT) (+39) 0721.787457;*

*Hermitage of Fonte Avellana (+39) 0721.730261; Bosco di Tecchie (+39) 0721.788321;*

*Mountain Communities of Catria and Nerone (+39) 0721.7877521.*



PU 09

CYCLING HOLIDAYS

45 Km

EASY

**IN SAN BARTOLO PARK EXPLORING LORDLY RESIDENCES AND MAJESTIC FORTRESSES**

PESARO - GABICCE MONTE - GRADARA - PESARO

**San Bartolo Park** is a protected area with its mountains plunging into the sea, thus breaking the flat monotony of the **Adriatic Riviera**. On this route you will follow the cliffs that mark the boundaries of the park, starting out from **Pesaro**.

Up and away!

There are two unmissable stops in the surroundings of Pesaro within the **protected areas of San Bartolo**. One is the seventeenth-century **Villa Caprile**, today an agrarian institute, but it is enchanting in the summertime with its **magnificent botanical gardens** and for the **satirical engineering of its fountains**.

The other one is **Villa Imperiale**, the fifteenth-century home of the Sforza dynasty, with its majestic terraced gardens. After visiting these marvels, go back to the route towards **Gabicce Monte (Blue Flag)**, the fortress of the **territories of Focara** and continue towards **Gradara (Orange Flag and Most Beautiful Town in Italy)**, dominated by its imposing fortress, the backdrop to the tragic **love story of Paolo and Francesca**.

The adventure in the **territories of San Bartolo** has ended, and you will cycle back towards Pesaro.

*Villa Caprile (+39) 0721.21440;*

*Villa Imperiale visits upon reservation, Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0721.69341;*

*Gradara Local Tourist Bureau (+39) 0541.964115.*





**DISCOVERING THE SASSO SIMONE AND SIMONCELLO PARK**

SASSOCORVARO - BELFORTE DELL'ISAURO - CARPEGNA - SASSOCORVARO

The **Sasso Simone** and **Simoncello** are the two giant "rocks" which help cushion this protected area which encompasses several Municipalities in the **Marche** and in **Romagna**.

The route begins in the Municipality of **Sassocorvaro** and ascends to a height of 1,000 m.

Its **Renaissance fortress** dominates the **Foglia Valley**, reflected in waters of **Lake Mercatale**. Built around 1475 under the project of **Francesco di Giorgio Martini**, the fortress was used during the Second World War to protect over 10,000 works of art that were hidden to prevent their theft by the retreating Nazis or destruction by bombs. Therefore the fortress is also called the **Ark of Art**: the **Ark of Art Museum** systematically documents all of the works protected here in the Ubaldinesque fortress. To pay tribute to the extraordinary commitment of Pasquale Rotondi, the **Rotondi Prize** for protectors of art was established under the auspices of the Ark of Art. Continuing the route, descend in the direction of Mercatale to **Belforte dell'Isauro**, a village situated on a rocky spur on two streams, and you are now on the border with Tuscany.

From here you can continue towards **Carpegna**, a town not only famous for its **excellent prosciutto** - it is also the starting point for the **ascent of Marco Pantani**, "the Carpegna pass". This challenge is for the fittest ones, otherwise you can enjoy the typical produce of this mountain village before taking the road back.

Sasso Simone and Simoncello Visitor Centre (+39) 072275350;  
Sassocorvaro (+39) 0722.76873; Belforte dell'Isauro Information (+39) 0722.721101;  
Carpegna Mountain Community of Montefeltro (+39) 0722.770073.

**MBT**

**FOR THOSE WHO PREFER DIRT PATHS**

**Sasso Simone and Simoncello Park**

**For Modern Bike tracks in the Sasso Simone and Simoncello Park**

**FROM PIAN DEI PRATI TO CARPEGNA**

15,50 km - EASY

Inside the park there are various tracks for mountain biking.

From **Pian dei Prati** cross a forest of turkey oaks along the vast grasslands hunting ground of many birds of prey.

Ascending along mule tracks where you can see the signs of rummaging by wild boars, you will reach **Cerreta dei Sassi**, an imposing forest of turkey oaks. Densely packed maple, beech and ash trees and an undergrowth rich in fragrant blooms of snowdrops, irises and lilies will lead you to the point where you take the State road for a short stretch as far as **Carpegna**.

**FROM CARPEGNA A TOUR OF SASSO SIMONE AND SIMONCELLO**

20 Km - MEDIUM

Start from **Carpegna** towards **San Sisto**, after about 2 km turn right for Camping Pian de Prati where the steepest ascent of the route begins. Cycling along fairly steep inclines and easy descents you'll reach seemingly flat ground that leads to the **slopes of Sasso Simone**.

Take a breath to enjoy the wonderful view, then resume the steep route through a forest until you reach the pass that leads to **Simoncello**.



## PESARO, A CITY TO DISCOVER BETWEEN ART AND MYSTERY BIKE PATHS

**Pesaro** is a seaside resort with a long tradition of hospitality (**Blue Flag**). It's not only a seaside resort but also an art town: not to be missed are the **Civic Museums** - the **Art Gallery** that houses the **Coronation of the Virgin by Giovanni Bellini** and the **Museum of Ceramics**. **Gioachino Rossini**, born in **Pesaro**, is remembered here and also highly regarded, as witnessed by the **Rossini Foundation** and the **Rossini Opera Festival**.

You can discover Pesaro and its surroundings by bike on the bike track network that branches off from the city.

Below are a number of suggestions for your bike rides:

- One route along the course of the Foglia river on the **cycle/pedestrian path "Umberto Cardinali"** will lead you to discover marvellous flora and fauna. Along the way are information panels that will guide you to your destination.
- **Viale Liberazione/Risorgimento**: a route that can also be enjoyed on bike, with **tactile guide for the visually impaired**.

**In Pesaro, there are other paths for cyclists: Via Pasolini, Via del Novecento, Via del Cinema, the Ponte vecchio, Via Rossellini and Viale Trieste.**





# ANCONA

A province to be discovered,  
**exploring sea, hills and mountains**

*The province of Ancona is rich in tourist attractions, including cities, seaside villages, parks and rolling hills.*



ANCONA 01

CYCLING HOLIDAYS

32,4 Km

MEDIUM

## FROM THE SEA TO THE WILD CONERO

ANCONA - PORTO RECANATI

This route, which is not particularly difficult, begins and ends at the sea crossing the dense vegetation of **Mount Conero**.

Starting from **Ancona** and going along the Viale della Vittoria, take a while to enjoy the view from the **Passetto**, with glimpses over the sheer cliffs overlooking the sea. Further on you will come to **Portonovo Bay (Blue Flag)**, a beach of sand white pebbles, woods that give way to limestone rocks. The **Church of Santa Maria of Portonovo** is located in this heavenly place, hidden among the olive trees, giving an artistic and spiritual dimension to your route.

Again on the road to the **Park of Monte Conero**, the great promontory vertically overhanging the sea, with dense scrubland on the western side and open limestone on the opposite side. Going down you will see the wild beaches of **Sirolo (Blue Flag)**, with its white pebbles and clear sea, one of the most picturesque beaches of the Riviera del Conero. Continuing in the direction of **Numana (Blue Flag)** and **Marcelli di Numana** you will reach the beaches of **Porto Recanati**, an old fishing town that still retains the distinctively coloured fishermen's houses. The vibrant waterfront beaches are typical. In Porto Recanati it is worth visiting the chapel the Chiesetta della Banderuola to which, according to legend, the angels carried the Holy House before it was placed in Loreto. After having stretched your legs for a while, go on your bike to the outskirts of Porto Recanati. Here you will find the settlement of Potentia, where the ruins of the ancient Roman village can still be seen today.

Ancona Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 071.358991;

Porto Recanati Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 071.9799084.

ANCONA 02

CYCLING HOLIDAYS

46 Km

EASY

## THE RIVIERA DEL CONERO FROM COASTLINE TO HILLSIDE

NUMANA - SIROLO - OSIMO - CASTELFIDARDO - LORETO - OSIMO

The **Conero Riviera** extends from **Ancona** down to the province of **Macerata** and includes town lands facing the sea but also the villages in the hinterland which cling to the hills surrounding **Monte Conero** like a crown. This territory is a microcosm - all within just a few kilometres - of everything waiting to be experienced, and biking may well be the best way of discovering all that this area has to offer. The bike ride starts out from the coastal "village of the turtles" - **Numana** - and climbs to the neat, elegant village of **Sirolo** nearby, and thereafter passes through the village centre in the direction of **Osimo**. **Osimo** is an elegant town located on a hill; its twelfth/thirteenth-century **Cathedral of San Leopardo** is in the historic centre; don't miss the **Grottos of Cantineone**, the fascinating network of caves and tunnels dug into the sandstone, which stretch for several kilometres beneath the village.

Resume the road to **Castelfidardo**, the **town of the accordion**, then to go to **Loreto**, where the **Basilica della Santa Casa** is located. Continue towards **Numana**, where the path ends.

Numana Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 071.9330612; Sirolo Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39)

071.9330611; Osimo Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 071.7836088; Castelfidardo Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 071.7822987; Loreto Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 071970276.

# The Rosso Conero wine route

SIROLO - PORTONOVO - CAMERANO - SIROLO

**Rosso Conero** - a full-bodied and aromatic wine produced in the Monte Conero area - is the theme of this route that takes you between fishing villages and hillside villages. Start out from **Sirolo**, a seafront village with its charming beaches, and ascend along the **Conero** State Road towards **Portonovo**.

**Poggio** is the first village you come to, and from here – following a series of sharp turns – you will arrive at the junction leading to the bay of Portonovo. One recommendation: if you take a small detour to the right you will come upon a bay which opens out into the Adriatic Sea with its wild beaches and picturesque coves. Return on your bike towards **Varano** and descend from here towards the hills of **Camerano**, a hill village well-known for its **Rosso Conero** wine festival.

En route towards Camerano a visit to the **Grottos** is much recommended – these is a dense network of tunnels that run underground, filled with symbolism and mystery. Back to your bike to return to Sirolo, this time going up past the wide-open hilly expanses of the Svarchi area and returning to **Sirolo** along this route.

Ancona Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 071.358991;

Sirolo Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 071 933 0611;

Camerano Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 071.7304018.



Type:  
**Cycling**

Length:  
**34,8 km**

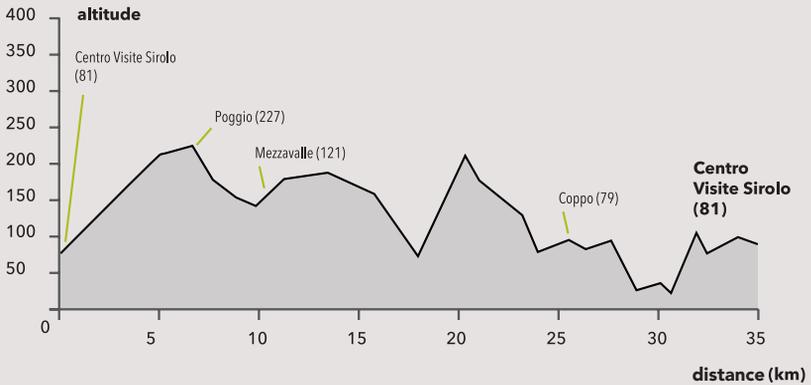
Surface:  
**Asphalt**

Slope medium:  
**6 %**

Slope max:  
**13 %**

**EASY**

Difficulty  
Level



# Exploring the hills of Val Nevola

SENIGALLIA - MONTERADO - CORINALDO BARBARA - ARCEVIA - SERRA DE' CONTI  
OSTRA VETERE - OSTRA - SENIGALLIA

This route of approximately 120 km starts out from **Senigallia (Blue Flag)** and takes you to the towns and villages of the hilly hinterland of the **Val Nevola** full of castles, stories and legends. From the **Senigallia** bike path, go in the direction of **Cesano** district as far as the pine grove which you will pass on the way up to **Monterado**, a village of very ancient origins. Ascend to the little square where ancient houses are to be seen as well as the castle, built on the remains of an ancient church from the year 1000 A.D., renovated and designed by **Luigi Vanvitelli**.

This castle, surrounded by a pine forest, ancient oaks, laurels and viburnum trees will provide respite from the summer heat, before you leave for the next stage.

Traversing the district of Croce, make your ascent and descent to the picturesque villages of **Tre Castelli**.

At **Ripe, the crafts town**, you will be intrigued by the craftsmen in their workshops. Back to the road of the **Valle del Nevola**, cycle gently up and down the landscape until you reach **Corinaldo (Orange Flag, Most Beautiful Town in Italy)**, a delightful town enclosed within ancient walls of up to 18 meters in height; the streets are imbued with the most fascinating and extravagant stories that you will hear in the Marches.

The **Sanctuary of Santa Maria Goretti** is in the heart of the village, and nearby is the the saint's birthplace.

Continue to **Barbara**, a distinctive village with ancient walls, and from here you can access **Arcevia** and its fortress. Back to the saddle, at the Conce roundabout junction take the second right and ascend steep slopes until you reach **Serra de 'Conti**, with its medieval walls, the imposing **Monastery of Santa Maria Maddalena** and the **Museum of Monastic Arts**; from here take the steep descent between the hills and you will arrive at **Ostra Vetere** first, and then **Ostra (Orange Flag)**, which dominates the **Misa Valley** with its imposing walls and its interesting historic centre.

Return to the road to **Senigallia**, with its **velvet beach**.

*Senigallia Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 071.7922725; Monterado Info (+39) 071.7957135; Ripe Local Tourist Bureau (+39) 071.7959019; Corinaldo info (+39) 071.67782; Serra de' Conti (+39) 0731.871711; Ostra Vetere (+39) 071.965053; Ostra Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 071.7989080.*

Type:  
**Cycling**

Length:  
**120 km**

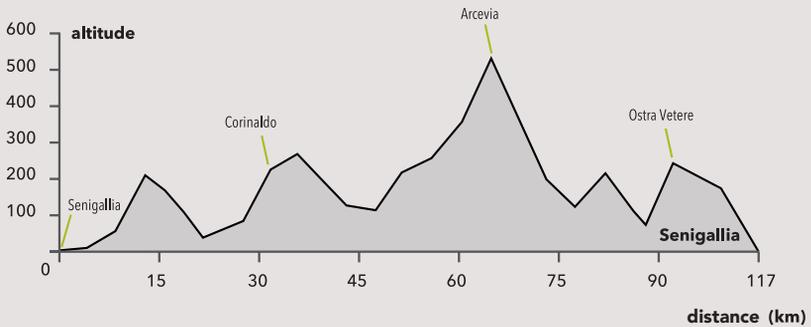
**DIFFICULT**

Surface:  
**Asphalt**

Slope medium:  
**6 %**

Slope max:  
**13 %**

Difficulty  
Level



MBT

IF YOU PREFER DIRT TRACKS

### CYCLING IN THE PROTECTED AREAS OF THE CONERO PARK

15,50 km - EASY

**Monte Conero** is traversed by a dense network of paths suitable for mountain bike, passing through holm oak forests. Access the top of the promontory to ascend the wider road - the **Stradone Sant'Andrea**, and from there take the gravel road that leads to the heart of the Park: the **Pian di Raggetti** panorama.

From this point you can choose one of the many paths that work their way into open nature, depending on their level of difficulty. Off-road bikers can enjoy a veritable gymnasium of paths of all sorts in this nature park: stony ground, beaten tracks, animal tracks, single tracks.

***For information tours and maps Forestalp Sirolo: (+39) 071.9330066***



## ARCEVIA AND ITS CASTLES

ARCEVIA - CAUDINO - PALAZZO - SAN PIETRO IN MUSIO - NIDASTORE - LORETELLO  
MONTALE - PITICCHIO - CASTIGLIONI - AVACELLI

**Arcevia** is the main town of this magical land which, fortress by fortress, will lead you to the discovery of the **Misa and Nevola valleys**.

The route begins from **Arcevia** which still retains its surrounding walls that can be cycled along, enjoy the village centre and visiting the **Collegiate Church of San Medardo** and **Palazzo Anselmi**, then visit **Leopardi Garden** and take a selfie from the panoramic lookout point over the Apennines!

The bike ride begins amidst rolling hills that lead you on a path of discovery of **nine castles**: the first is **Caudino** with its fifteenth-century walls. Ascend from here towards **Palazzo**, possibly the most distinctive in the entire circle as it still maintains its ancient medieval structure. Crossing these rural landscapes amidst hedges and oak trees, dotted with Madonnas in their shrines, you will happen upon the small fortress hamlet of **San Pietro in Musio**; continue towards **Nidastore**, the "nest of the goshawk", the hunting falcons of mediaeval times. Continue on to **Lorello**, the oldest of the ten castles whose walls are considered among the best examples of the military architecture of the Marches.

We are approaching the border with **Serra de' Conti** and we come upon the village of **Montale**, which rests on a circular knoll.

We return to the road as a number of important stages still remain, such as **Piticchio** which hosted a Dutch edition of Big Brother and has since become synonymous with Italian lifestyle for the Dutch, who visit this village every year on holiday.

Descending in a south-easterly direction from **Piticchio** you will reach **Castiglioni**, thus ending the tour to **Avacelli**, whose castle dates back to 1400.



# From the Frasassi Caves to Falconara on the sea

GENGA - SAN VITTORE ALLE CHIUSE - SERRA SAN QUIRICO - ANGELI DI MERGO  
CASTELBELLINO - RIPA BIANCA DI JESI - FALCONARA

The meeting point of this route is the station of **Genga (Orange Flag)**, where the **Frasassi Caves** are located. Rich in charm and attractiveness, the Frasassi Caves are the largest underground complex in Europe, in the heart of the Regional Nature Park of **Gola della Rossa** and Frasassi.

In the district of **San Vittore alle Chiuse** you can admire the eponymous limestone abbey and visit the **speleo-paleontological and archaeological Museum** of Genga in the monastery of the Abbey of St. Victor, which preserves the famous **ichthyosaur of Genga**. Nearby are thermal baths – the **Terme di San Vittore**.

Continuing on, around 15 km from Genga you will reach the medieval settlement of **Serra San Quirico**, a town perched on a rocky ridge at the entrance of the **Gola della Rossa Regional Nature Park**, where from 2015 also the new **Frasassi Adventure Park** is to be found.

After a stop in **Angeli di Mergo**, continue on until you arrive at **Castellinello**, one of the fourteen castles in Vallesina. The route ends in **Falconara Marittima**, and the **Priora Fortress** is situated nearby. It is well worth stopping at the WWF Oasis at Ripa Bianca di Jesi, a protected area traversed by the river **Esino**, where trees and reeds can be admired in one of the few treeland marshes in the Marche region and, in spring, you can enjoy the spectacle of herons nesting and breeding.

*Genga Frasassi Consortium (+39) 0732.97211;*

*S. Vittore Terme Information Office (+39) 0732.90080;*

*Gola della Rossa and Frasassi Nature Park (+39) 0731.86122;*

*Angeli Mergo Local Tourist Bureau (+39) 0731.814820;*

*Castellinello Local Tourist Bureau (+39) 0731.70165; Jesi Oasis Ripa Bianca (+39) 0731.619213;*

*Falconara Marittima Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 071.910458.*

Type:  
**Cycling**

Length:  
**54.07 km**

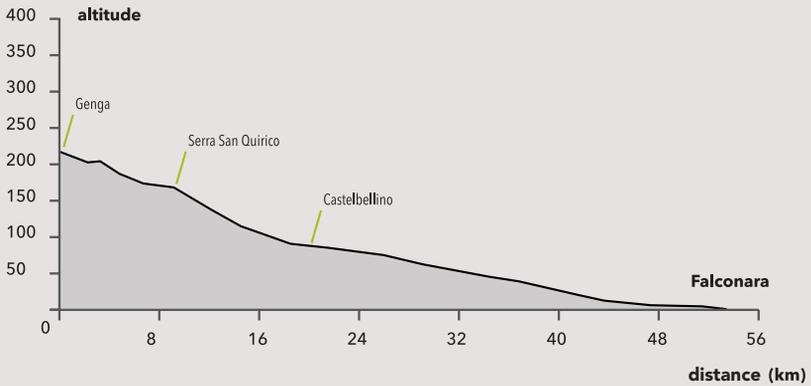
Surface:  
**Mixed**

Slope medium:  
**0,4 %**

Slope max:  
**29 %**

**EASY**

Difficulty  
Level



# Exploring ancient abbeys, woods and rocky mountains

## SERRA SAN QUIRICO - GOLA DELLA ROSSA NATURE PARK

The scenic route you will take is a favourite ride among cycling tourists. The main attraction is **Gola della Rossa**, in the Gola della Rossa Nature Park.

Start out from the **Serra San Quirico** Nature Park, where you can visit the **Abbey of St. Elena**, a beautiful Romanesque-Gothic building on the Esino Valley, which still preserves its ancient Benedictine monastery. Go towards **Gola della Rossa** and cross the **Nature Park**, which is one of the most beautiful protected areas of the Marche region. The park is a natural oasis where streams, sulfur springs, underground caverns and rocky cliffs create an unrivalled natural spectacle. If you are lucky, you will see a bird of prey such as the peregrine falcon amidst the uncontaminated verdant nature of this area, or you will run into a hedgehog - the symbol of the nature park. Continue on to **Albacina**, the ancient Roman "*Tuficum*", and you will reach **Cerreto d'Esi**, where the Verdicchio di Matelica wine is produced.

Cycle on to **Poggio San Romualdo**, a district of the Municipality of Fabriano, located on the summit of the mountain of the same name. St. Romuald lived in the underlying valley (Val di Castro), where he founded the Benedictine abbey. And return finally to the Abbey of Sant'Elena where the tour ends.

Fabriano Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0732.625067.



Type:  
**Cycling**

Length:  
**51,3 km**

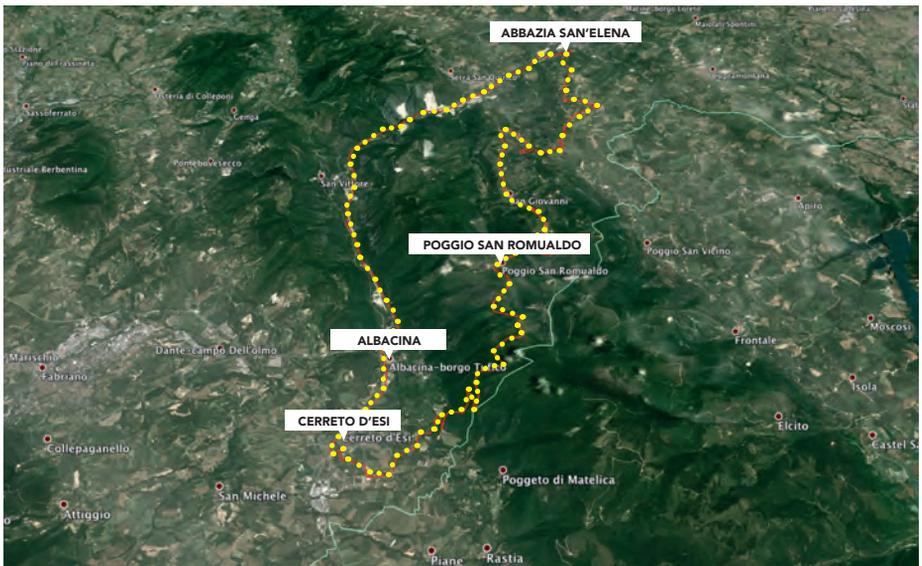
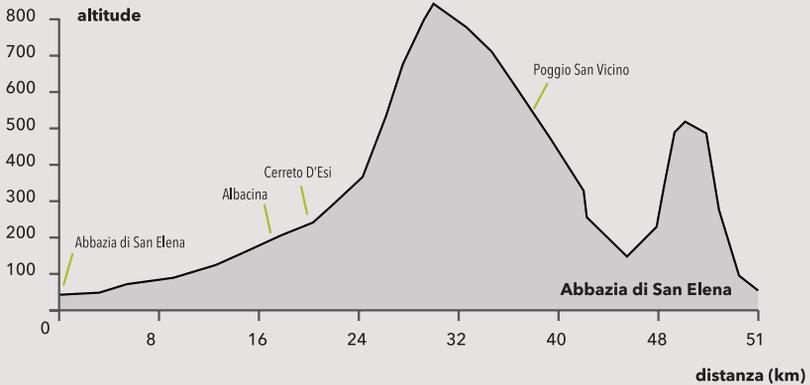
**MEDIUM**

Surface:  
**Asphalt**

Slope medium:  
**1,6 %**

Slope max:  
**22 %**

Difficulty  
Level



## EXPLORING WOODS AND MYSTIC SPIRITUALITY AT VALLEREMITA

FABRIANO - VALLEREMITA

Begin your bike ride from the ancient churches and Benedictine cloisters of **Fabriano**, a town extended over the valley straddling the Umbria-Marches Apennines, and famous for its high-quality paper. Fabriano is a medieval town that owes its name to blacksmiths, as shown in the coat of arms. It belongs to the list of **UNESCO creative cities**, in the category "Handicrafts, arts and popular traditions".

There is much to see: the Cathedral of San Venanzio, the imposing Palazzo del Podestà, located in the typical medieval square, and the Sturinalto Fountain. Cycling along the hills, prepare yourself for the ascent into the **Valleremita** area. The **hermitage of Santa Maria di Valdisasso** is located in this isolated, almost forgotten area.

Legend has it that St Francis came to this hermitage. You'd better leave your bike aside for a while to visit this intriguing place.

*Fabriano Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0732.625067*



ANCONA 09

CYCLING HOLIDAYS

21,2 Km

DIFFICULT

**EXPLORING MEDIEVAL VILLAGES AND MOUNTAIN PATHS**

FABRIANO - MONTECUCCO

Leaving from **Fabriano**, you will need a strong mountain bike to cross the summit of **Monte Cucco**, a protected area that marks the border with Umbria, where you can cycle on adventuresome dirt tracks amongst beech forests. A dense network of paths, mule trails and cart tracks offers a wide variety of potential routes.

Now, after the long climb, take a break at the **Hermitage of San Girolamo**, an isolated residence at the top of the mountain and stands on a limestone rocky base overhanging dense woods and vegetation.



# WHERE THE MOUNTAINS MEET THE CLOUDS

ALBACINA - POGGIO SAN ROMUALDO ELCITO - SAN VICINO

The route is suitable for bike tourists who are really fit and like challenges, especially in the last stretch towards Elcito, where the climb is quite steep. Still, the spectacular scenery will boost your energy while you ride.

Starting out from Albacina, cycle in the direction of Fabriano right up to the top of **Poggio San Romualdo**, where you will find the village of the same name nestled in the greenery. The view is spectacular and the clouds seem to rest gently on the surrounding mountains. Continuing on, you can decide to take a deviation to **Pian dell'Elmo**, passing by **Val di Castro** where the **Abbey of San Salvatore** is located, founded by San Romualdo. Going up to the San Giovanni area, stop to visit Precicchie Castle, a remote fortress that still retains intact all of the fascination of a medieval castle.

Crossing **Apiro**, a delightful village located in the mountains of the Macerata region, stop at **Lake Castreccioni** of Cingoli, the ideal place to recharge your batteries before the long climb up to **Elcito**. A very moving landscape awaits you here on **Mount San Vicino**, in the charming hillside town of Elcito overlooking the timeless atmosphere of the entire Valfucina area. This town is rich in history, and it still has the mysterious air of the prison centre that it used to be.

Your tour has ended. With your mountain bike, you can now turn off towards Pian dell'Elmo and rejoin Poggio San Romualdo, at the point where you began.



Type:  
**Cycling**

Length:  
**67,4 km**

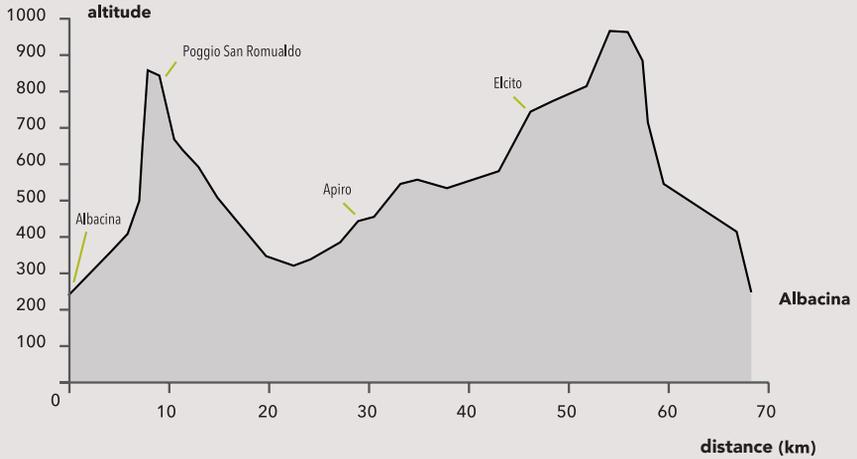
**DIFFICULT**

Surface:  
**Asphalt**

Slope medium:  
**1,3**

Slope max:  
**27 %**

Difficulty  
Level



**JESI: THE LAND OF VERDICCHIO AND CASTLES**

JESI - CASTELBELLINO - MAIOLATI SPONTINI - CUPRAMONTANA

This route goes up and down the gentle hilly slopes, past historic castles and fortifications, geometric fields and **Verdicchio** vineyards.

Start out from the village of **Jesi** and travel through the land famous for its Verdicchio wine and its castles - the Castelli di Jesi. Fourteen castles surround **Jesi** in a horseshoe, each nestled tenderly and unobtrusively in the hills. Ascending the middle valley of the Esino, the first castle you come to is **Castellbellino**, enclosed in its imposing walls, which on December 8 of each year lights up the biggest Christmas tree in the Marche. From here you can return to the road towards **Maiolati Spontini**, the famous composer **Gaspere Spontini's** birthplace where the **Casa Museo** (museum house) is located, where the musician spent the last years of his life, as well as the house where he was born, the large nineteenth-century Colle Celeste Park, and the Church of San Giovanni where his remains are laid out. Back on the saddle, return in the direction of **Cupramontana**, famous for its grape festival – the **Sagra dell'Uva** – which attracts many people in October every year.

*Jesi Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0731.538420; Castellbellino Local Tourist Bureau (+39) 0731.701651; Maiolati Spontini Info (+39) 0731.702972; Cupramontana Info (+39) 0731.786811.*



ANCONA 12

BIKE TRAIL

11 Km

**THE VIA DEI TESORI**

FROM MOIE TO JESI

The Via dei Tesori (“treasure route”) is a bike and walking route alongside the **river Esino**, and will bring you on a voyage of discovery of this valley of hidden gems in the tidy countryside of the **Vallesina**.

Start out from **Moie**, a town of quietly stated elegance whose monuments and churches tell its history. The town’s emblem is the **Abbey of St. Mary** built in the middle of a forest on the left bank of the river Esino and on a typical *moja* (wetland) from which the village’s name derives. The **Abbey of Moie**, built in yellow sandstone with its Greek-cross plan, is one of the most important Romanesque monuments in the region.

Go alongside the irrigation channel parallel to the river until you reach **Pantiere** and, from here, take the local road, and then return to the bike trail as far as **Jesi**, the **Emperor Frederick II of Swabia’s** birthplace where important artistic and architectural treasures are preserved - see the **Pinacoteca Civica** (art gallery), the **Palazzo della Signoria** and the **Teatro Pergolesi**.

The route along the ploughed, geometric fields will reveal the striking *rotoni* interspersed around the countryside, a legacy of the ancient system of irrigation.

Moie Info (+39) 0731.70751;

Jesi Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0731.538420.



## ANCONA 13

## BIKE TRAIL

15 Km

**CYCLING ALONG THE RIVER MISA TO THE BORDERS OF OSTRA**

On your mountain bike equipped with sports kit and full water bottle, you are ready for an enthralling tour of the **Senigallia** hinterland! Start out from the Della Rovere port of Senigallia, after taking a nice souvenir snapshot near the statue of Penelope, standing erect at the far extremity of the east pier. Created by the sculptor **Gianni Guerra** in 2004, the statue evokes distant stories, dreams, myths and legends: it portrays a graceful and charming Penelope awaiting the return of her Ulysses, and she will be waiting for you too! It is an easy route, even though a mountain bike is still recommended due to the slightly arduous paths that wind their way through the flora and fauna along the banks of the **river Misa**, before ending in Senigallia.

Cycling inland for about 14 km, **Ostra (Orange Flag)** will come into view, located on a distinctive, charming hill overlooking the Misa valley. This village is well-known for its "Sprengoli Night" held annually during the Halloween period of late October: it has dramatic appeal and, occasionally, also re-enacts "horror" scenarios associated with certain popular traditions. If you happen to be in Ostra during those nights, you might chance to meet the *sprengoli* - the spirits that disturb people's sleep and whose presence is banished thanks to the festive rituals.

Senigallia Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 071.7922725;

Ostra Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 071.7989080.

## ANCONA 14

## BIKE TRAIL

5,8 Km

**SEA BREEZE ON THE CESANO WATERFRONT NORTH OF SENIGALLIA**

If you wish to enjoy a long, relaxing bike ride with a friend or fellow adventurer on two wheels, then go along the Senigallia waterfront, which has consistently received the **Blue Flag** for its beautiful velvet beach.

Cesano district lies about 4 km north of **Senigallia**, and is a popular tourist resort for those who choose to spend their summer holidays on the Adriatic coast. **Cesano di Senigallia** has a beautiful paved promenade that is ideal for cycling. If you're not sure how many kilometres you've travelled along the coastal route, the special tablets located every 500 meters will help you, indicating the distance from the tourist port **Della Rovere di Senigallia**.

Senigallia Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 071.7922725.

## ANCONA 15

## BIKE TRAIL

11,8 Km

## FROM SENIGALLIA, SOUTHBOUND

Take a coastal bike tour leaving from Senigallia, a tourist resort famous for its velvet beach. The meeting point for bikers is the **Rotonda a Mare**, an elegant, casino-like structure built on the sea, with a wonderful view out onto the open sea.

Cycle southwards for twelve kilometres along the coastline and passing through the district of **Marzocca**, a lively summer tourist resort with a stony beach.

Further on is the small village of **Gelso of Montemarciano**, 54 m above sea level. Pedalling for a further 2 km roughly, you'll reach **Marina di Montemarciano**, an old Roman settlement as evidenced by the discovery along State Road 16 of the **Mandracchio** - a structure dating back to the fifteenth-century which was used as a staging post and horse-changing station.

*Senigallia Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 071.7922725;*

*Montemarciano Tourist Office: (+39) 071.9163316.*

## ANCONA 16

## BIKE TRACK

74 Km

## FROM FALCONARA MARITTIMA TO CHIARAVALLE

Take a healthy bike ride along the bike path that starts out from an attractive green area of twelve hectares along the left bank of the river Esino: the **Cormorano Park**. This tranquil oasis of greenery, rich in flora and fauna, belongs to the municipality of Falconara Marittima, not far from **Ancona**, in a northerly direction towards Senigallia. It will be a pleasure for cyclists to stop briefly at the two small lakes in the park, to observe all the fishing enthusiasts in action.

Just inside the **Cormorano Park** is a bike trail about 6 km long which ends close to the viewing point of the Via La Retta in Chiaravalle, the birthplace of Maria Montessori, the physician and educationalist famous worldwide for her educational methods. But before arriving at **Chiaravalle**, you could always stop off in the district of **Rocca Priora**, about 4 km up from **Falconara Marittima**, which has a visually impressive medieval castle complete with drawbridge and inside gardens. This fortress was a genuine bulwark for the village of **Ancona** for centuries. Then continue in the direction of **Chiaravalle**: following the bike path you will reach the vicinity of the historic Tobacco Factory, one of the most important industries of the region that gave Chiaravalle the status of tobacco industry homeland as far back as 1759.

If, after your bike ride immersed in verdant nature, you wish to dip into art and particularly music, then you should visit Teatro Valle in the very central Corso Matteotti in **Chiaravalle**, before returning to **Falconara Marittima**.

*Falconara Marittima Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 071.910458;*

*Chiaravalle Local Tourist Bureau (+39) 071.9499283.*



# MACERATA

Exploring the territory of Macerata  
**amidst ancient villages,  
mountains and coastline.**

**Macerata Province** offers some of the most charming and picturesque itineraries. From the **Sibillini** mountains, which have always attracted bike tourists with their stunning natural scenery, to the history, **art and culture of the medieval towns and villages, to the lively coastal resorts.** Some of the routes will be very challenging, but the marvels which await discovery will reward you for all of your efforts.



MACERATA 01

CYCLING HOLIDAYS

24 Km

DIFFICULT

## ASCENT FROM THE TYRRHENIAN ADRIATIC BIKE ROUTE

SAN GINESIO - SARNANO - SASSOTETTO

The route you are about to take is one the most challenging – a classic trophy any cyclist would want to have on his prize record.

It starts from **San Ginesio**, () an ancient village surrounded by the verdant nature of the Sibillini, also called “**Balcony of the Sibillini**” due to its panoramic position. This is an **Orange Flag** and **Most Beautiful Town in Italy** municipality. Continuing towards **Sarnano (Orange Flag)**, you will be uplifted by the beauty of its medieval centre and its distinctive brick buildings. From here you get to Sassotetto along an arduous slope: one well-known climb is the one which ascends from the village of Sarnano, or you can choose the even more arduous path that goes past the **convent of San Liberato**. In any case, don't be overconfident in embarking upon this climb, as it has proved challenging even for the cyclists of the Tyrrhenian Adriatic.

*San Ginesio Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0733.652056;*

*Sarnano Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0733.657144.*

MACERATA 02

CYCLING HOLIDAYS

24 Km

EASY

## EXPLORING THE RIVERS AND WOODS OF THE UPPER MACERATA AREA

SEFRO - PIORACO - FIUMINATA

For enthusiasts of verdant nature, **Sefro** offers astonishing landscapes. Trouts, which are characteristic of this area, populate the river **Scarsito** that runs through the Sefro valley to the **plateau of Montelago** and the **Scurosa Valley**.

While cycling along the river, you will happen upon two villages immersed in the tranquillity of the valley, at the point where its waters flow into the river Potenza: **Pioraco** and **Fiuminata**. The forests which reveal the fortresses and medieval fortifications make these places popular amongst vacationers for their beautiful scenery.

From here the road starts to climb gently up to **Fonte Brescia**, where you can interrupt your pedalling and go on foot as far as the mouth of the river Potenza.

*Pioraco Municipality (+39) 0737.42142; Fiuminata Municipality (+39) 0737.54128.*

# In the heart of the Sibillini Mountains

## VISSO - CASTELLUCCIO - CASTELSANTANGELO SUL NERA USSITA BIKE PARK

The route is among the most challenging of the Macerata highlands, but they will reward you with landscapes that are spectacular, to say the least. You access the heart of the Sibillini Mountains starting out from Visso.

Leave **Visso**, (**Most Beautiful Town in Italy**) a mountain town with a vaunted historic centre where some of the most important Leopardi manuscripts are preserved including the *Infinity*. Take a break from your bike to taste the *Ciauscolo*, a typical salami from the Marches, produced in Visso. The view from **Forche Canapine** offers stunning views including the plains of Castelluccio. The landscape of **Pian Grande** and **Pian Perduto** has an unforgettable beauty in the springtime flower season, where poppies, cornflowers and daisies lend their bright colour tones to the flat highland plain. Opposite is the highest peak in the Marches, **Monte Vettore**, which encloses **Lake Pilato** near the top. Captivating, too, is the **Grotto of the Sibyl** which was inhabited, according to legend, by a sorceress. The route concludes in **Castelsantangelo sul Nera**, where you can quench your thirst at the mouth of the Fiume Nera. You are in the heart of the **National Park of the Sibillini Mountains**.

The **Bike Park** is open from 2015 onwards in Frontignano di Ussita.

In summer the ski slopes of Frontignano turn into pleasant routes for freeriding and mountain biking enthusiasts in general. The Selvapiana chairlift takes you up as far as the Cristo delle Nevi *rifugio*, or hostel. From this point you can choose from the three routes traced and reserved exclusively for biking. The paths are equipped and are suitable for all levels.

Visso Municipality (+39) 0737.9386; Castelluccio Information (+39) 0743.71147;  
Castelsantangelo sul Nera Municipality (+39) 0737.970 039.



Type:  
**Cycling**

Length:  
**78,98 km**

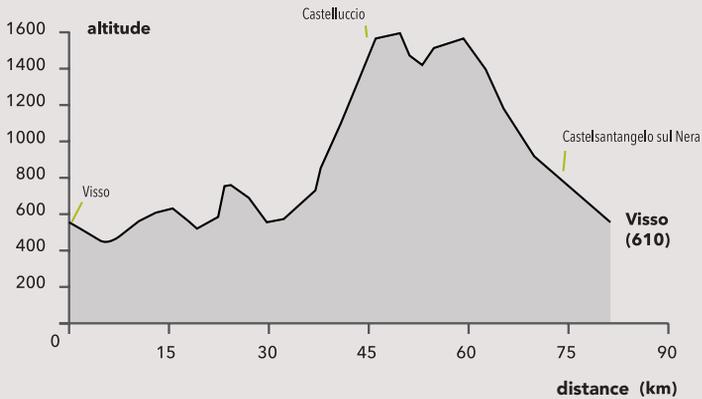
**DIFFICULT**

Surface:  
**Asphalt**

Slope medium:  
**1,9 %**

Slope max:  
**28 %**

Difficulty  
Level



# The breathtaking scenery of the Macerata highlands

## TREIA - CINGOLI - ELCITO

A charming as well as arduous route that begins in Treia – a village set in gentle rolling hills – and finishes in Elcito, one of the most picturesque villages of the Macerata highlands.

It starts out in **Treia (Most Beautiful Town in Italy)**, a municipality situated in the Macerata countryside that consciously preserves its history as an ancient Roman village, and proceeds towards Chiesanuova di Treia across a seemingly flat stretch of land with little traffic.

Ascending towards **Grottaccia**, a challenging ascent begins in the direction of the town of **Cingoli (Most Beautiful Town in Italy)** called the “**Balcony of the Marches**” due to its stupendous views. On sunny, clear days you can view from the Cingoli lookout point the entire territory of the Marches from Montefeltro to the province of Ascoli Piceno. Apart from the wonderful view, Cingoli embraces squares, churches and palaces of great beauty inside its castle walls.

Cycling towards San Severino, a steep climb begins which will take you to a remote village perched on the slopes of the **Monte San Vicino - Elcito**. What makes this place particularly attractive are the breathtaking landscapes of the Val Fucina, visible from high up, and the form of the village itself which looks as if it was carved out of the rock. After the initial climb, the long descent to Treia begins.

Treia Local Tourist Bureau (+39) 0733. 215,919; Cingoli Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0733.602444; San Severino Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0733.638414.



Type:  
**Cycling**

Length:  
**83 km**

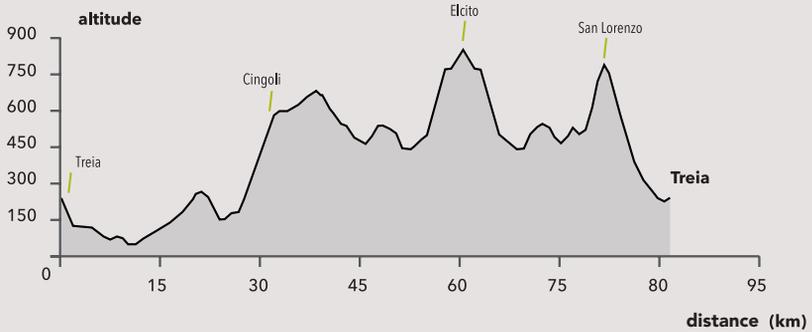
Surface:  
**Asphalt**

Slope medium:  
**2 %**

Slope max:  
**16 %**

**DIFFICULT**

Difficulty  
Level







## MACERATA 05 CYCLING HOLIDAYS

40 Km

MEDIUM

**A PANORAMIC CYCLE RIDE IN THE MONTI AZZURRI**

RIPE SAN GINESIO - COLMURANO - CAMPOROTONDO DI FIASTRONE - BELFORTE DEL CHIENTI

In **Ripe San Ginesio**, an ancient village of Picene origin, cycle towards the impressive Rocca Leonina, symbol of the village. Continuing towards **Colmurano**, with its terrace overlooking the Sibillini Mountains, you can stop over in **Camporotondo of Fiastrone**, a secluded, tranquil location immersed in the **Monti Azzurri** where the Fiastrone river flows, after which the town is named.

This provides a perfectly tranquil setting for a visit to the Franciscan monastery of **Colfano**. Descending towards **Belforte del Chienti**, you will be immersed in the hills overlooking the river of the same name. Here, step off your bike and visit the **Polyptych of Giovanni Boccati**, a jewel of the Renaissance art of the Marches.

*Ripe San Ginesio Municipality (+39) 0733.656 022; Colmurano Municipality (+39) 0733.508 287.*

## MACERATA 06 CYCLING HOLIDAYS

60,5 Km

MEDIUM

**EXPLORING NATURE, ART AND ARCHITECTURE**

FIASTRA - CALDAROLA - PIEVEBOVIGLIANA

The route encircling the lakes of the Macerata highlands is ideal for very fit bikers. It is a demanding route but of significant beauty from the landscape point of view.

It starts out from **Fiastra**, a village known for its lake of the same name and for some of the most delightful nature trails of the Sibillini Mountains. Stop to admire the unmissable scenery of the **Lame Rosse**, ancient rocks with massive pinnacles and a distinctive pink tint. Back on your bike in the direction of **Caldarola**, an area of castles and ancient fortresses which, besides offering exceptional landscapes, boasts a stunning historical and artistic heritage thanks to the works of the famous painter and sculptor Simone De Magistris, which adorn the many buildings of the town. Returning to Fiastra, stop over in **Pievebovigliana**, on the border of the Sibillini Mountains National Park, which boasts unique Romanesque churches.

*Caldarola Municipality (+39) 0733.905 529; Fiastra Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0733.205042; Pievebovigliana Municipality (+39) 0737/44126.*



# Exploring vineyards and hills with autumnal perfumes

MATELICA - SERRAPETRONA - SAN SEVERINO MARCHE

Cycling amidst the charming, hilly hinterlands of the Macerata, you will be entranced by the autumnal scents of well-known Marches vine varieties. The first section of the journey is challenging, but it becomes easier on the final stretch.

**Matelica**, a village of Picene origin situated at the mouth of the river Esino, boasts many monuments and places of historic and artistic interest (**Most Beautiful Town in Italy**), as well as the **Verdicchio**, a native wine renowned throughout Italy. Cycling out of the village towards Gagliole, prepare for a challenging ascent towards Crispiero, a district of **Castelraimondo** which has approximately 200 inhabitants. You can proceed at a more relaxed pace in this small rural village, which has preserved its original distinctive features.

From **Crispiero** there is a very steep descent which will take you from **Monte d'Aria** (highest peak along the route, at 750 m) to **Serrapetrona**. Cycling towards Villa D'Aria along the plateau, we would recommend a visit to the *Padre Francesco de Vico* astronomical observatory. Once arrived in **Serrapetrona**, you can admire the large vineyards; the **Vernaccia** DOCG is a red sparkling wine, produced exclusively in this area. Going downhill you will arrive in **San Severino Marche** with its charming thirteenth-century square. The tower of the Medieval Castle inside the historic centre is worth visiting, a symbol of the city rising up to 40 meters in height, and slightly inclined.

Matelica Local Tourist Bureau (+39) 0737.85671; Serrapetrona Municipality (+39) 0733.903417; San Severino Marche Local Tourist Bureau (+39) 0733.638414.



Type:  
**Cycling**

Length  
**40,3 km**

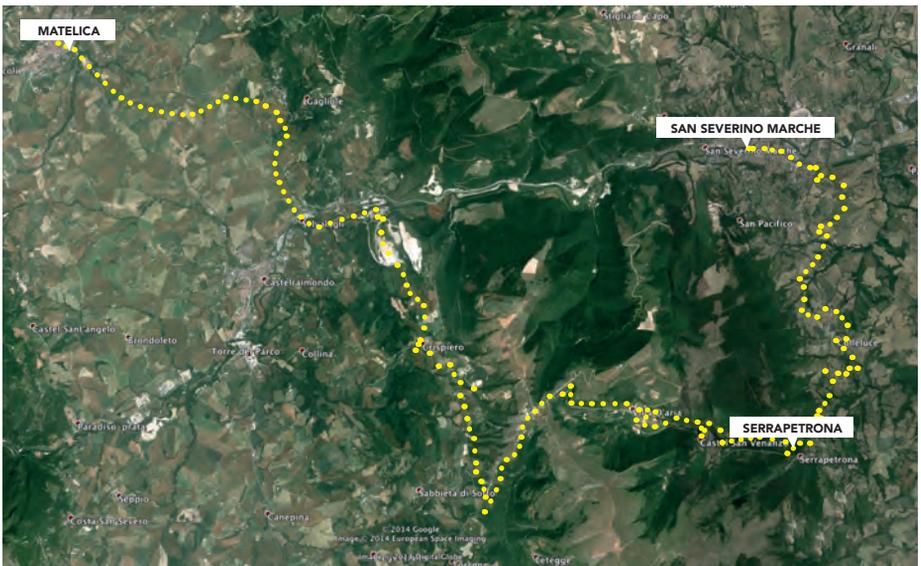
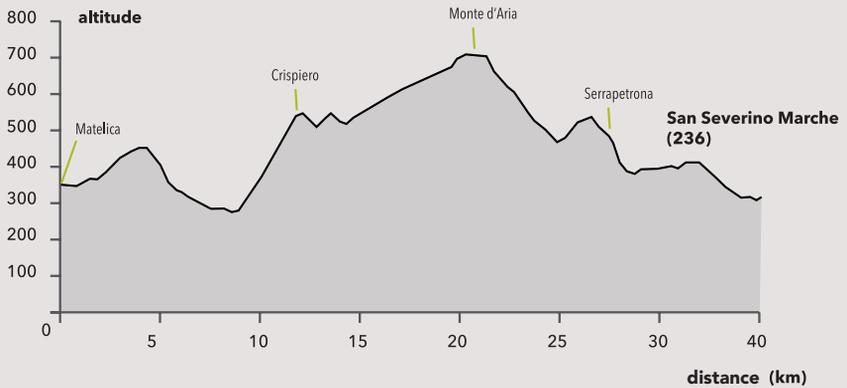
**DIFFICULT**

Surface:  
**Asphalt**

Slope median:  
**2 %**

Slope max:  
**15 %**

Difficulty  
Level



# A travel to the sea through history and poetry

TOLENTINO - POLLENZA - MACERATA - RECANATI - PORTO RECANATI

In this medium-difficulty route you will find charming villages that are rich in history, art and poetry. The route alternates upwards and downwards, with a challenging climb halfway up. But in the end you will enjoy the descent to the blue sea of the Adriatic coast.

The first place to discover is **Tolentino**, a city of art and culture. Its historic centre is adorned by the **Basilica di San Nicola** with its extraordinary, extensive fourteenth-century frescoes. The route to Pollenza is all uphill. This town, which is engaged in the trade of antique furniture restoration, boasts **Rambona Abbey** - the oldest monument in this place which dates back to the Langobardic era.

After a number of ascents and descents on the outskirts of **Macerata**, you will be stunned by the art and history of this wonderful city. Its alleyways reveal museums, monuments and majestic palaces: the Carriage Museum at Palazzo Buonaccorsi, the Palazzo dei Diamanti, Palazzo Ricci and the **Arena Sferisterio**, a big arena where the Macerata Opera Festival is held. If you are a poetry enthusiast, **Recanati** gives the right cadence to your route! The birthplace of Giacomo Leopardi invites you to visit the residence where the famous poet was born. Not far from the Leopardi house, you can admire the horizon from the hill which inspired Leopardi in one of his most famous pieces, "Infinity."

Descending from the hills around Recanati, you will arrive in **Porto Recanati**, a delightful seaside resort with its distinctive colourful fishermen's dwellings. Here, after a long bike ride, you deserve to splash out on a typical fish-based dish: the **Brodetto**, a kind of fish stew whose recipe has yet to be disclosed by the townsfolk.

*Tolentino Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0733.972937; Pollenza Municipality (+39) 0733 548 711; Macerata Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0733.234807; Recanati Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 071.981471; Porto Recanati Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 071.9799084.*

Type:  
**Cycling**

Length:  
**65,4 km**

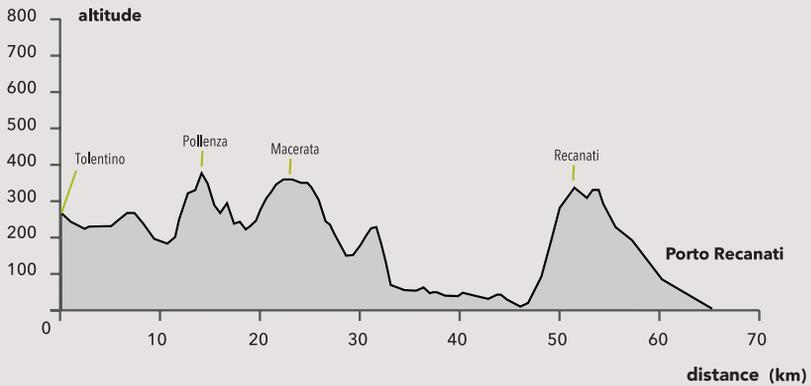
**MEDIUM**

Surface:  
**Asphalt**

Slope medium:  
**1,8 %**

Slope max:  
**16 %**

Difficulty  
Level



# History, nature and relaxation

## TOLENTINO - URBISAGLIA - ABBADIA DI FIASTRA

The route that takes you past the monuments of the Chienti and Fiastra valleys is hardly challenging for bikers, but it is compelling from the point of view of history and natural heritage.

The first stop is **Castello della Rancia**, an imposing fortress on the plain of Chienti not far from Tolentino.

Here you can visit the **Urbs Salvia Archaeological Museum**, which contains important exhibits from the Picene era.

After riding the traffic congested route in the direction of **Urbisaglia**, you will arrive at the 40-hectare Archaeological Park of Urbs Salvia, one of the largest and best-preserved archaeological zones in central Italy.

Urbisaglia boasts such an immense historic heritage, that the great Dante Alighieri himself mentioned its ancient ruins. Besides the museum, you must visit the reservoir of the Roman aqueduct, the Urbisaglia Fortress and the **Amphitheatre** where you can still attend ancient theatre performances during the summer.

Peddalling gently along the plain you will happen upon the **Abbey of Santa Maria di Chiaravalle di Fiastra**, the old twelfth-century Cistercian monastery nestled in the **Abbadia di Fiastra Nature Reserve**. In this natural oasis where flora and fauna harmoniously coexist, you can leave your bike and spend some time lying on the grass in the sun, in complete relaxation.

*Tolentino Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0733.972937;*

*Fiastra Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0733.205042; Urbisaglia Local Tourist Bureau (+39) 0733.506566.*



Type:  
**Cycling**

Length:  
**16,5 km**

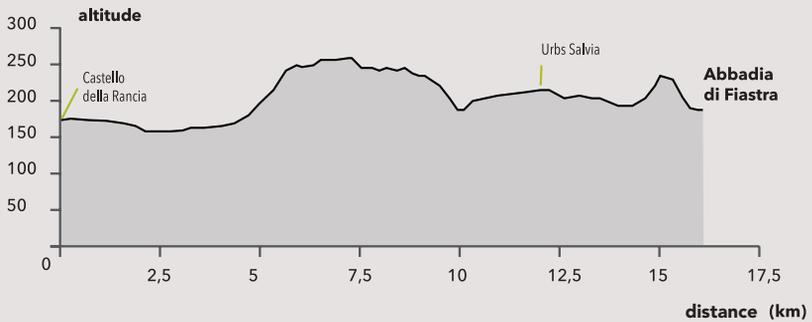
Surface:  
**Asphalt**

Slope medium:  
**6 %**

Slope max:  
**20 %**

**EASY**

Difficulty  
Level



## MACERATA 10 CYCLING HOLIDAYS

83,8 Km

MEDIUM

## EXPLORING VILLAGES AND UNIVERSITIES

MACERATA - MOGLIANO - LORO PICENO - SAN GINESIO - CALDAROLA - CAMERINO

The journey of discovery of the Macerata region is somewhat difficult because of the number of climbs and the continuous series of ups and downs. So don't embark on this route lightly. The first stop is **Macerata** where, in Piazza della Libertà, you will find the University of Law, the oldest and most prestigious of the Marches. Continuing towards **Sforzacosta**, passing the **Abbey of Santa Maria di Chiaravalle di Fiastra**, follow the signs for Petriolo, a town quite close to **Mogliano**, a village of artisans, and **Loro Piceno**, the homeland of the sweet cooked wine, the *vino cotto*. After the steep climb to **San Ginesio (Orange Flag and Most Beautiful Town in Italy)**, take a break in **Caldarola** on the shores of Lake Caccamo. After just a few kilometres you will reach **Camerino**, a town with a glorious history (**Orange Flag**) whose University, among the oldest in Italy along with that of Macerata, is its main attraction.

Macerata Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0733.234807; Mogliano Municipality (+39) 0733.557771; Loro Piceno Municipality (+39) 0733.509112; San Ginesio Municipality (+39) 0733.656 022; Caldarola Municipality (+39) 0733.905529; Camerino Local Tourist Bureau (+39) 0737.632534.

## MACERATA 11 CYCLING HOLIDAYS

14,4 Km

EASY

## DISCOVERING ANCIENT ABBEYS AND HIDDEN TREASURES

CORRIDONIA - MORROVALLE - MONTECOSARO

The itinerary which takes in the ancient abbeys is very pleasant for the easiness of the route and also for its historic treasures waiting to be discovered. From **Corridonia**, cycle down towards the nearby **San Claudio** where, pedalling along the attractive avenue of cypress trees, you will reach the gem that sets it apart: the **Abbey of San Claudio al Chienti**.

The abbey is a magnificent architectural treasure in Romanesque style, and one of the most important and well preserved of the Marches. The place becomes even more intriguing if you take into account the recent archaeological findings which suggest the presence of the **Charlemagne's tomb**. Back on your bike, cross the fields of Morrovalle, a tranquil hilly area with ancient springs and typical farmhouses. Cycling up the hills of Montecosaro, you may become intrigued by the history of the abbey - **Abbazia di Santa Maria a Pie' di Chienti**, one of the most interesting religious monuments in Italy.

Corridonia Local Tourist Bureau (+39) 0733.492937; Morrovalle Local Tourist Bureau (+39) 0733.222913; Montecosaro Local Tourist Bureau (+39) 0733.1870642.

**EXPLORING THE WALLS OF MACERATA AND ITS ROLLING HILLS**

MACERATA - APPIGNANO - MONTEFANO

From the walls of **Macerata** to the fields of the surrounding villages, prepare yourselves for a route that is far from being easy. From the walls of Macerata, slowing down on your descent, you will come to **Villa Potenza**, the ancient Roman village of **Helvia Recina**.

Continuing into the hinterland, there are many different climbs before you reach **Appignano**. An industrial and handicraft centre, this place is well-known for its vegetables and its raiding bandit bands of the late nineteenth-century. After several climbs up and down you will arrive at **Montefano**, a very scenic area from where you will glimpse Recanati and Loreto. Just outside the residential zone, you will be struck by the imposing tower of the castle of **Montefiore**.

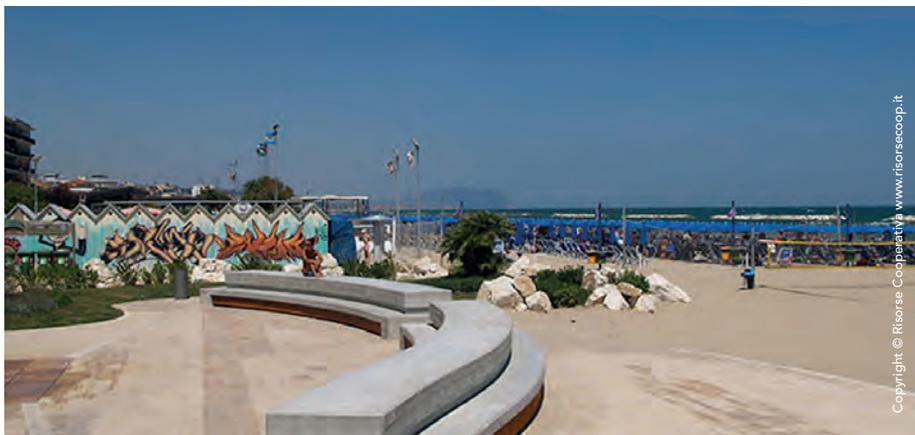
Macerata Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0733.234807;

Appignano Local Tourist Bureau (+39) 0733.57212; Montefano Local Tourist Bureau (+39) 0733.851169.



# For bike paths lovers

If you wish to enjoy the pleasant, hilly and maritime landscape pedalling in total relaxation, the bike paths of Porto Recanati and Civitanova Marche may be ideal for you.



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## MACERATA 13 BIKE TRAIL

10 Km

**FROM THE BEACH OF SCOSSICCI TO THE SANTA CASA DI LORETO**

PORTO RECANATI - LORETO

From the bike path, start out from the parking area for campers at **Porto Recanati**. Penetrating into the countryside of Scossici, located on the northern shore of the fishing village, you cannot fail to enjoy the hilly landscape and its rustic floral perfumes. Arriving at the small church the **Chiesetta della Banderuola**, continue on towards Loreto. When you reach the town - an important Marian pilgrimage destination - you'll be tempted to abandon your bike, for it is worth ascending the holy steps - the **Scala Santa** - to visit the **Basilica della Santa Casa**.

## MACERATA 14 BIKE TRAIL

13 Km

**RIDING ALONG THE RIVER POTENZA AS FAR AS THE ABBEY OF SAN FIRMANO**

PORTO RECANATI - MONTELUPONE (DISTRICT OF SAN FIRMANO)

There is a relaxing route between the windy hills of the Recanata area which goes from **Porto Recanati** alongside the river Potenza to the small village of **San Firmano**, located at the foot of Montelupone. Cycling on the bike path you will reach - through a dirt road - the village of **Chiarino** di Recanati. Proceeding towards **Montelupone (Orange Flag and Most Beautiful Town in Italy)** stop at **San Firmano Abbey**, a jewel of Romanesque architecture that has a unique steep central staircase.

## MACERATA 14 BIKE TRAIL

15 Km

**CIVITANOVA MARCHE: FROM THE BEACH TO THE HILLS**

PORTO CIVITANOVA - CIVITANOVA ALTA

**Civitanova Marche** is a lively town (**Blue Flag**) which despite the busy traffic is easily explored by bike or on foot. There are several bike paths available. One route connects the northern waterside to the centre and has lovely views of the sea and the busy beaches. Another bike path is that of Castellaro, which gently rises from the centre towards **Civitanova Alta**, a medieval village with a cultural atmosphere, that includes within its walls important historic buildings. If you are keen on doing more, take the bike-pedestrian path that leads from the stadium to the **Chienti river park**, and enjoy the peace and quiet of the river area.

*Civitanova Marche Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0733.813967;*

*Porto Recanati Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 071.9799084;*

*Montelupone Municipality (+39) 0733.224911.*



# FERMO

## Discovering the fermano area amidst **sea, mountains and hills**

*Fermo province is a genuine jewel that offers the beauty and refinement of precious artistic and architectural works, stupendous and enchanting panoramas and magnificent works designed by nature. Have a great trip amidst all of the views, towers and belltowers!*



## FERMO 01

## CYCLING HOLIDAYS

32, 5 Km

**EXPLORING SHOEMAKERS' WORKSHOPS AND UNIQUE PANORAMAS**

MONTEGIORGIO - MONTE SAN PIETRANGELI - TORRE SAN PATRIZIO - MONTEGIORGIO

**Montegiorgio** is a town straddling a hill with extraordinary views sweeping from the **Sibillini mountains** as far as Abruzzo.

In the words of a local poem in dialect "*...E' un paese che piace a prima vista, chi non ci à la salute ce la quista*" - in short, you are in one of those towns where there is still a hearty, intimate family atmosphere.

From **Montegiorgio** climb towards **Torre San Patrizio**, the shoemakers' town – a footwear tradition that began in the Fermano area inside sheds attached to homes which subsequently became workshops, and that has contributed to the renown of Italian style worldwide. In **Monte San Pietrangeli** you should visit the church of **Santi Lorenzo e Biagio**, designed by the architect **Valadier**.

Return in the direction of **Montegiorgio** pedalling through fields of sunflowers, and enjoy the peace and quiet of these places.

*Montegiorgio Info (+39) 0734.952011; Torre San Patrizio (+39) 0734.510151.*

## FERMO 02

## CYCLING HOLIDAYS

62,3 Km

**EXPLORING THE CASTLES OF THE FERMO AREA**

FERMO - S. ELPIDIO MORICO - MONTOTTONE - FERMO

Leaving from **Fermo** descend towards **Caldarette d'Ete** along bends and roads that cross underneath the open sky amidst bright yellow fields of sunflowers.

First stop **Monsampietro Morico** and then **Sant'Elpidio Morico**, villages named after Morica the wife of Malugero Melo, son of Dragone D'Altavilla as a tribute to the birth of her three children.

Continuing your steep climb up to **Montottone**, a picturesque town perched on a hill with a view of the wide expanses of the Marches countryside and, after taking a refreshing breather in this place where time seems to stand still, you will be ready to return to **Fermo**.

**Fermo.**

*Fermo Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0734.227940; Montottone (+39) 0734.775135.*

# Exploring rustic villages and discovering authentic tastes

PEDASO - CAMPOFILONE - MONTALTO - PEDASO

It's a route through various villages, each perched on a hill, built in defence against the banditry from the valleys. And as it was for the bandits of former times, achieving each stage is just as tiring for you bikers!

Start out from the village of **Pedaso**, a seaside resort in the Fermano area with a **Blue Flag** and, following a fairly quiet road lined with chestnut trees, head in the direction of **Campofilone**. This village is a maze of narrow streets that weave their way underneath barrel vaults and then unexpectedly open up into the enchanting panorama that sweeps **from the sea to the Sibillini Mountains**.

Here you can enjoy the ancient culinary tradition of **Campofilone macaroni** – a fine pasta of *tagliolini* noodles seasoned with duck or fish sauce. During the month of August you can enjoy them at the *sagra* (festival).

The route continues towards **Montefiore dell'Aso, Most Beautiful Town in Italy**, where the San Francesco Museums house a valuable altarpiece by Carlo Crivelli and, after a short breather, cycle up towards **Carassai** where a brief stop is recommended to visit the eleventh-century fortress of **Montevarmine**.

Continuing towards **Montalto**, you'll be fascinated by an aristocratic village where Pope Sixtus V was born. The cathedral is worth a visit, as is the water mill on the Val d'Aso.

Then continue in the direction of **Pedaso** to arrive at **Ortezzano**. Here you may wish to extend your route by visiting the historic centre, the arrival point of a stage of the well-known **Tyrrhenian-Adriatic cycling race**: 700 m with a 12% gradient and a further 400 m at 20%!

Arriving in the vicinity of **Pedaso** you will begin to glimpse the sea, and at this point an exciting day of discovery on your bike will nearly be over.

*Pedaso Info (+39) 0734.931319; Campofilone Info (+39) 0734.932798; Montalto Info (+39) 0736.828002.*



Type:  
**Cycling**

Length:  
**67,4 km**

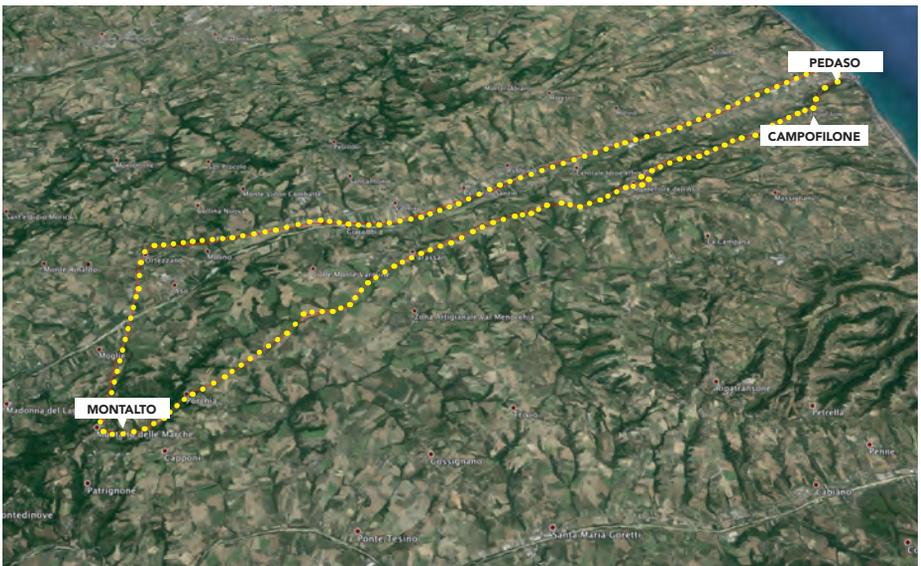
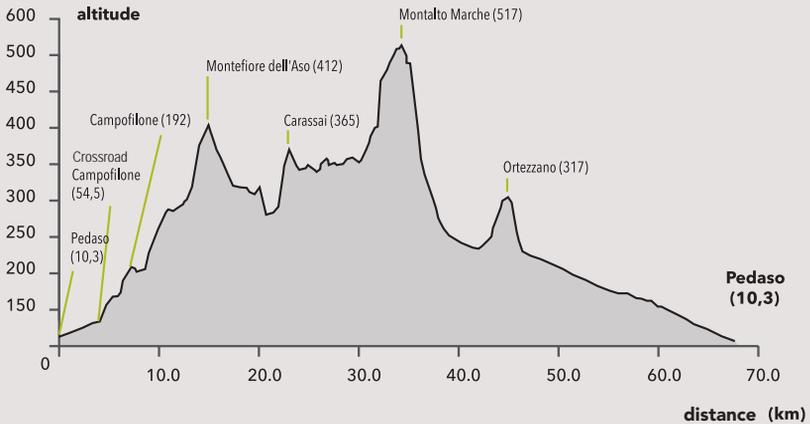
**MEDIUM**

Surface:  
**Road**

Slope medium:  
**2,53 %**

Slope max:  
**25 %**

Difficulty  
Level



# A cycle amidst green and blue

PORTO SAN GIORGIO - TORRE DI PALME - PETRITOLI - PORTO SAN GIORGIO

*A route that begins from the sea and rises into the emerald green hills of the Fermano region before descending again to the sea, passing through small quiet, intimate towns and villages in a wondrous atmosphere.*

Start out from **Porto San Giorgio, (Blue Flag)** from the newsstand located on the Adriatic State Road, up and away for a bike ride on the plain far distant from traffic.

After about 5 km, the ascent begins towards the beautiful **Torre di Palme**, one of the coastal castles of the Fermano region.

Take a break at the viewing point, and snap a selfie with this magnificent view in the background.

Pass through the narrow streets of the village and then, if you wish, you can penetrate the **Bosco del Cugnolo** forest, a protected area for flora, and visit the **Grotta degli Amanti** (Lovers' Cave), the backdrop to an early twentieth century love story with a tragic end.

Now you are ready to return to the route leading to **Moresco** which – as the welcome sign announces – belongs to the Club of the “**Most Beautiful Towns in Italy**”. Let your gaze drift over the beautiful scenario ranging from the emerald green of the fields to the intense blue of the sea. **Entering** Moresco is like stepping into a dreamworld, with its brick houses, towers, chimneys and colourful flowerpot window displays.

Your next destinations will be **Monterubbiano, Montegiberto** and then **Petricoli**.

Along the road during the summer, on the eve of the feast of hay, you will come upon many scarecrows made of hay which evoke scenes of rural life.

Then return to the road that brings you back to **Porto San Giorgio**, stop to visit the **Church of San Marco** on the way down towards **Ponzano**.

The last few kilometres will prove to be the most challenging, but it was certainly worth it!

Porto San Giorgio Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0734.678461; Petritoli (+39) 0734.658141.



Type:  
**Cycling**

Length:  
**46,6 km**

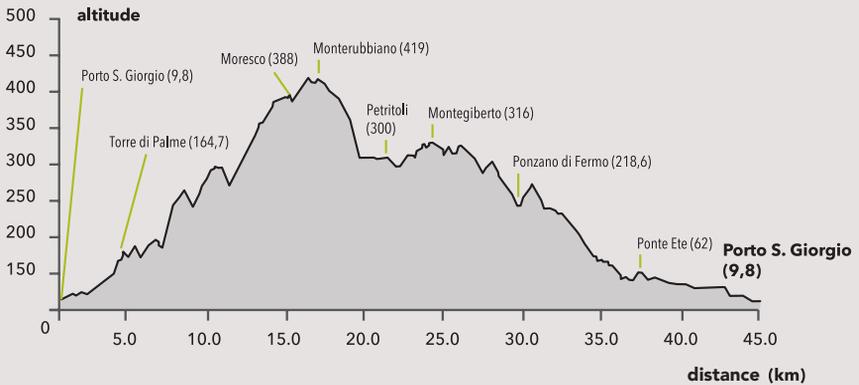
**MEDIUM**

Surface:  
**Road**

Slope medium:  
**2,74 %**

Slope max:  
**19 %**

Difficulty  
Level



## THE ENCHANTMENT OF THE SIBILLINI MOUNTAINS ON THE FERMANO SLOPES

*Amandola, resting on a hill and surrounded by the **Sibillini Mountains**, is a village with the scents of mountainside and of the flavours of traditional cuisine. So after a long cycle ride, why don't' you sit down in one of the many restaurants in this village and taste some of the local mushroom and truffle dishes, without forgetting about the many wild boar recipes.*

*Amandola is mentioned as one of the gateways to the **Sibillini Park** – the eastern gateway – and our journey of discovery begins here: the revelation of tradition, good cuisine and of the relaxing views of the Apennines.*

*There are three itineraries in or around the town of **Amandola**, for cycling tourists as well as for the better-trained bikers.*



## UP AND DOWN ROUTES STEEPED IN HISTORY, TRADITIONS AND MIRACLES FROM AMANDOLA TO AMANDOLA PASSING THROUGH MONTEMONACO

Starting out from the entrance gate of the town of **Amandola** ... and up and away – your journey has begun! Oaks, holm oaks and maple trees mark the contours of these roads which descend rapidly, leaving the classic mountain pastures behind you. The first stop of the route is **Montefortino** with its crown of mountains rising up to a height of 2,000 meters, where you should spend some time. Take a stroll through the narrow streets with their distinctive houses with the stables on the ground floor, the living area on the first floor and the pigeon-breeding area in the attic, for the production of fertiliser for the fields.

This village has always had a special vocation for agriculture and sheep breeding. Spend a few hours in **Montefortino** visiting the **enchanted forest** where the Virgin Mary appeared to the small Saint, a girl who was unable to speak since birth but who received the gift of speech as a result of her devotion. The **Madonna dell'Ambro Sanctuary** was built on the rock where the apparition occurred, and is now a place of prayer and peace surrounded by woods. There are so many similarities with Lourdes, that **Montefortino** has been called "**the Lourdes of the Apennines**"

Back on the saddle again, after this breath of fresh air, the route ascends towards **Montemonaco**. This place's renown is associated with the mythological prophetic, the Apennine Sibyl, whose cave is located within the confines of the town. It was a combination of the literary work *Guerrin Meschino* by Barberino together with the later tale of the Frenchman de la Salle - that turned the Sybil into a kind of diabolical enchantress. In fact, according to local tradition, the **Sibyl** and her maids are benevolent creatures like the fairies of old that would descend into the valleys to teach girls to spin. Take a tour of this magical place, then set off in the direction of **Amandola** where the route concludes - now you can sit back and enjoy some of the local dishes.

*Amandola Info (+39) 0736.84071; Montefortino Info (+39) 0736.859101;  
Montemonaco (+39) 0736.856141; Monti Sibillini Park (+39) 0737.9727.*

## EXPLORING GEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES AND NATURE

AMANDOLA - SMERILLO - S. VITTORIA IN MATENANO - AMANDOLA

From **Amandola**, go down towards the sea and in just a few kilometres you will see signs for **Smerillo**: follow these and you will arrive in this unique place, a town clinging to a rocky ridge overlooking a unique panorama ranging from the sea to the **Sibillini mountains**, from Abruzzo to Conero ... an unmissable sight!

**Smerillo** is full of charms. Its geological configuration suggests that there was once a river here that flowed directly to the sea. Visit the local museum, or the **Fessa** (a deep cleft in the rock which allows only one person to pass at a time) and you will see evidence of the Marine origins of the rock on which this hinterland village was built.

We leave now and cycle towards a new valley, where the views change and open up to **Monte Ascensione** and, amidst bends and extensive sunflowers fields, you will arrive at **Santa Vittoria in Mantenano**. Once an important Farfensa centre, don't miss the **Collegiate Church** where the remains of **the martyr Santa Vittoria** are still preserved. After a brief tour of the old village, get ready to return to **Amandola**.

Amandola Info (+39) 0736.84071; Smerillo Info (+39) 0734.79454.



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### MBT

#### FOR THOSE WHO PREFER DIRT TRACKS

For those who wish to penetrate the verdant nature of the **Sibillini Park**, there are many mountain bike routes leaving from the **Gola dell'Infernaccio** in the direction of the **hermitage of San Leonardo**.

Seek out the mysterious **Apennine Sybill** on the route from **Montemonaco** to the **Grotta delle Fate**.

All mountain bike routes in the **Sibillini Park** may be found in the section of the guide dedicated to the Park.



# ASCOLI PICENO

From the town to a discovery of the landscape **treasures** of woods **and breathtaking views**

**Ascoli Piceno** is the starting point for these itineraries that bring you from villages to rustic places where you can still immerse yourself in the delightful peace and tranquillity, and appreciate the magnificent grandeur of nature. The charming and elegant attractions of **Ascoli Piceno** deserve to be savoured by visiting the town centre, which was built almost completely from travertine marble, which offers the majestic architectural detail of its Piazza del Popolo, and the towers and palaces that give the village its distinctive shape. But there are many places concealed in the tranquil and gentle mountain landscape, just a few kilometres from the town.

ASCOLI 01

CYCLING HOLIDAYS

30, 5 Km

MEDIUM

**DISCOVERING THE MOUNTAINS AROUND ASCOLI PICENO**

ASCOLI PICENO - SAN MARCO - SAN GIACOMO - SAN VITO

Starting out from **Ascoli Piceno** you will arrive at the **hill of San Marco**, in the vicinity of the **Ascoli Natural Bike Park** - which is particularly useful for the various mountain biking disciplines - then cycle up towards the **Montagna dei Fiori**. The first village you come to is **Piagge**, where you can visit the characteristic chapel amidst the woods. Don't miss the **Hermitage of San Marco** which clings to the side of a mountain and can be reached by a staircase suspended above a ravine.

Monks and hermits have always found this the ideal place to withdraw in solitude, thanks to the special configuration of the territory.

Back on the saddle, cycle towards **San Giacomo** passing chestnut woods, marble quarries and pine forests; the ascent is constant but soon you will see the upper reaches of **Monte Vettore** amidst the **Sibillini Mountains**, and the view will open up towards sea.

From here you can choose to take the steep descent towards **Ascoli Piceno** or continue towards **San Vito**, passing through the wildest and most uninhabited area of the **Montagna dei Fiori**. Road signs in dialect written on wooden planks lead you to a huge white marble staircase with 230 steps, that takes you to a lookout point enthroned by a statue of the Madonna.

From here, you can return again to the village and to the sea with your imagination filled with these magnificent places.

ASCOLI 02

CYCLING HOLIDAYS

46,9 Km

MEDIUM

**ASCENT INTO THE MONTAGNA DEI FIORI**

ASCOLI PICENO - RIPE - SAN GIACOMO - ASCOLI PICENO

This time the route ascends up the left slope of the **Montagna dei Fiori**, that of **Ripe**, going along the **Piceno-Aprutina** State Road that leads beyond the borders of the **Marches** towards Teramo.

Cycling along, you will have a magnificent view of the **Monti Gemelli (Montagna dei Fiori and Monte Foltrone)** until the turn towards **Ripe**. Up high on the left you a glimpse the fortress of **Civitella del Tronto** that was once an insurmountable defense bulwark between the Kingdom of Naples and the Papal States.

Peddalling steadily uphill on the ridge of a mountain consisting of gorges, waterfalls and chapels of rock carved into grottos where the hermits withdrew in retreat.

This is a long, difficult route with straight lines broken by frequent bends, but the picturesque view of the **Tronto valley** alone makes this route worthwhile, and it ends up where began - **Ascoli Piceno**.

*Ascoli Piceno Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0736.253045.*





# Cycling in bandit territory

## ASCOLI PICENO - CASTEL TROSINO

**Castel Trosino**, a uniquely atmospheric village suspended on a cliff of travertine marble, became a refuge for bandits who were raiding the villages of the valley during the war for the conquest of the Kingdom of Naples.

The village, with its distinctive stone houses, has only one access point - a wooden gate.

Start out from the station of **Ascoli Piceno**. The climb starts at kilometre 2, you pass the last houses, then go beyond the Palombare junction, under the overpass of the new Salaria and from here take the direction of the Castellana Valley.

There are a few awkward transitions initially: first under the bridge of the aqueduct and then the following two turns.

In the locality of **Lago** the road becomes somewhat easier and to your right you can admire **Castel Trosino** perched high and, behind it, the hermitage of San Giorgio.

The steep inclines recommence at kilometre 5.9, and to the left you will get a glimpse of the peak of the **Montagna dei Fiori**.

About a kilometre from the arrival point you will see signs for a necropolis (which should not be missed).

This takes you back to the start, and now you are ready to visit this magical village where time seems to have come to a standstill.

*Ascoli Piceno Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0736.253045.*



Type:  
**Cycling**

Length:  
**7 km**

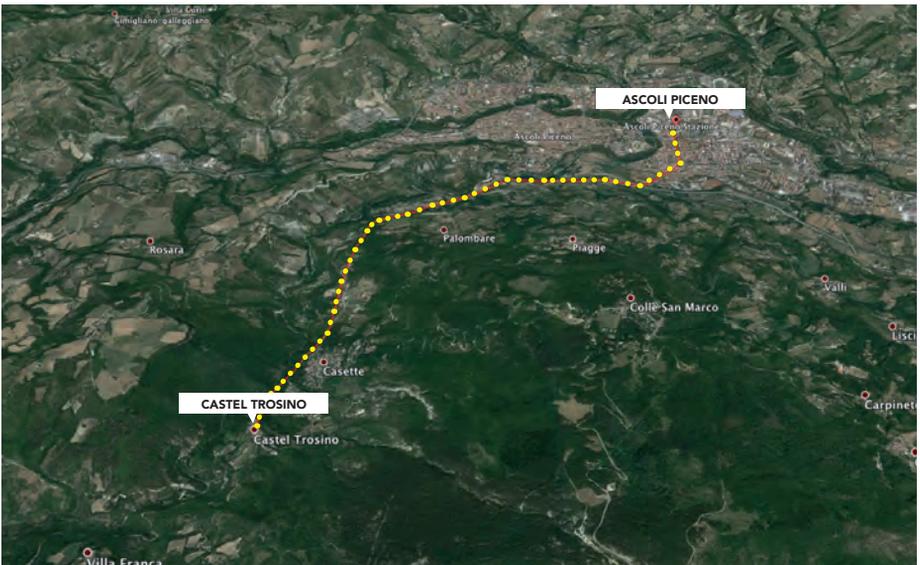
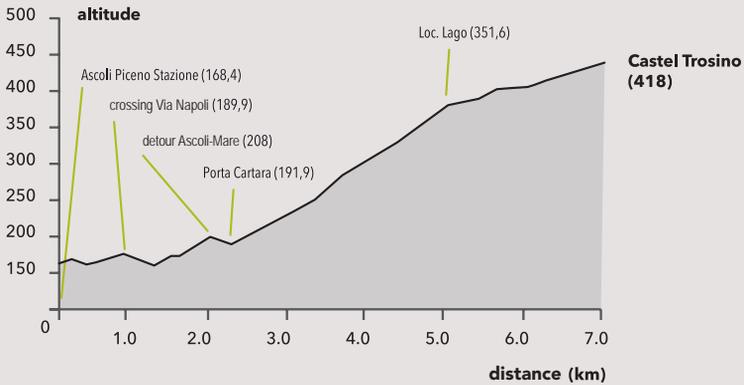
Surface:  
**Asphalt**

Slope medium:  
**6 %**

Slope max:  
**35 %**

**EASY**

Difficulty  
Level



# Going along the ancient Via Salaria

The ancient **Via Salaria** was built by the ancient Romans to connect **Rome** and **Porto d'Ascoli** and thus facilitate the transportation of salt to the capital from the **Adriatic**. Today your enjoyment of this section of the **Via Salaria** in the Marche will not be impeded, as nearly all of the traffic has been diverted to elevated roads and interconnections. The Via Salaria - in the stretch **between Ascoli Piceno and the mountain** - will enable you to discover a different province still in touch with its origins, where towns and villages are cut off from the main routes and where friendly locals greet tourists who venture here on their bikes.



ASCOLI 04

CYCLING HOLIDAYS

28 Km

MEDIUM

## ON THE TRAIL OF PARTISANS IN THE MOUNTAINS OF ASCOLI PICENO

FROM ASCOLI PICENO TO UMITO

Starting out from **Ascoli Piceno**, go along the **ancient Via Salaria** in the direction of Rome accompanied only by the sound of your wheels on the asphalt.

The ascent begins fairly suddenly about 19 km after the start, in the **Santa Maria area**.

**Pozza**, 665 meters high, is the highest point of this route; from here, cycle downhill past the partisan cemetery immersed in its eternal peace.

It was here amidst the snow, in the early hours of March 12, 1944, when the German attack came. The partisans had hidden themselves in local peasants' homes, and the surprise gunfire killed both civilians and partisans. Now they reside in their quiet resting place in the woods. The silence will accompany you as far as **Umito**, the final stage of the tour from which the descent begins, after the long ascent back in time in commemoration of these places.

ASCOLI 05

CYCLING HOLIDAYS

70 Km

DIFFICULT

## TOUR OF THE GALLUCCIO AREA AMIDST NATURE AND LEGEND

ASCOLI PICENO – ARQUATA DEL TRONTO (DISTRICT OF PRETARE) -  
MONTEGALLO - ASCOLI PICENO (TOUR OF THE GALLUCCIO AREA)

Cycling along the **ancient Via Salaria** will bring you up into the wilderness of the **Sibillini Mountains** until you reach **Arquata del Tronto** in the district of **Pretare**, the "Town of the Fairies." During night-time festivals, the fairies would come down to the town to dance with the men until the latter put them to flight, on discovering that they had acquired cloven feet. This legendary flight of the fairies is the origin of the present day "*path of the fairies*".

Next, take the route towards the **Galluccio Pass**, at 1147 m; stop before the last bend in the pass and drink from the fountain where you can quench your thirst from the best water in the Sibillini.

The descent now begins, behind **Monte Vettore**; in the distance you will see **Monte Ascensione** and your view will stretch out towards the sea.

Proceed still further in the direction of Ascoli Piceno through the valley of the river Fluvione with its restored mills, which are worth a visit. The mountain route descends gradually and turns slowly into countryside, merging gently into the Via Salaria and bringing you back where you started out from.

Ascoli Piceno Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0736.253045.

# From the Marches to Abruzzo amidst tranquil mountain scenery

ASCOLI PICENO - CEPPO - ASCOLI PICENO

A route for the better-trained bike enthusiasts seeking to discover this forgotten mountain scenery which, once upon a time, was the foundation of the local rural economy, of which today there are only the melancholy remnants in the abandoned cottages you will encounter along the route.

**From the Marches to Abruzzo**, starting out from the **ancient Via Salaria** you will ascend to an altitude of 1,303 m.

You'll pass through the **valley of the river Tronto** leaving it to your left and then you will climb again - as we warned this route is for trained cyclists - and find yourself amidst oaks, ferns and the music of silence itself.

Pause to fill your water bottle in the little square in the **Paggese** district of Acquisanta Terme commune, and return to the road and penetrate even deeper into the heart of the mountain, while underneath the valley becomes more and more distant.

The Sibillini mountain chain closes and Castellana Valley in Teramo province awaits you.

Ride along **Lake Talvacchia** and the road returns in the direction of Ascoli Piceno, but now the last pitfall on the route awaits you: a path that rises almost vertically in front of you.

After this final obstacle, the route is more or less over and the descent resumes towards **Ascoli Piceno**.

Ascoli Piceno Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0736.253045.5.



Type:  
**Cycling**

Length:  
**82,3 km**

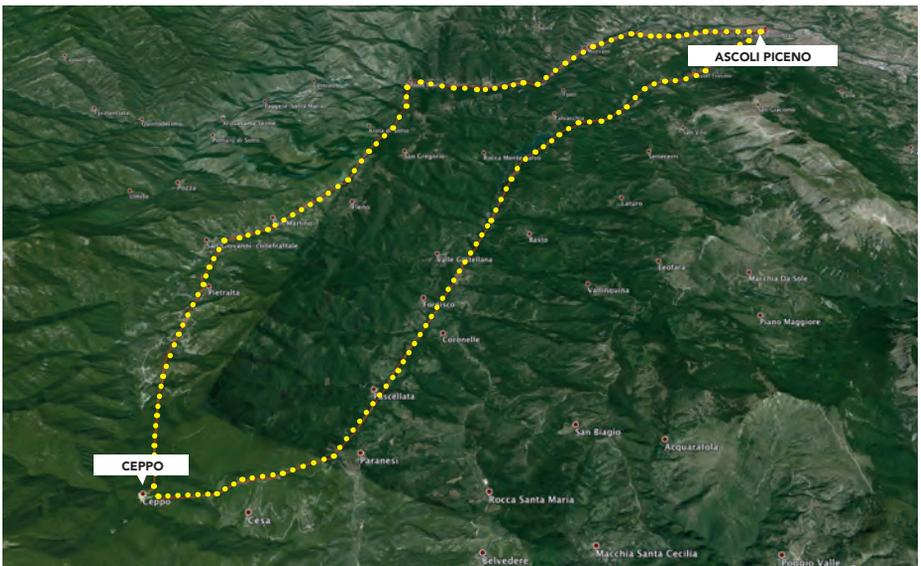
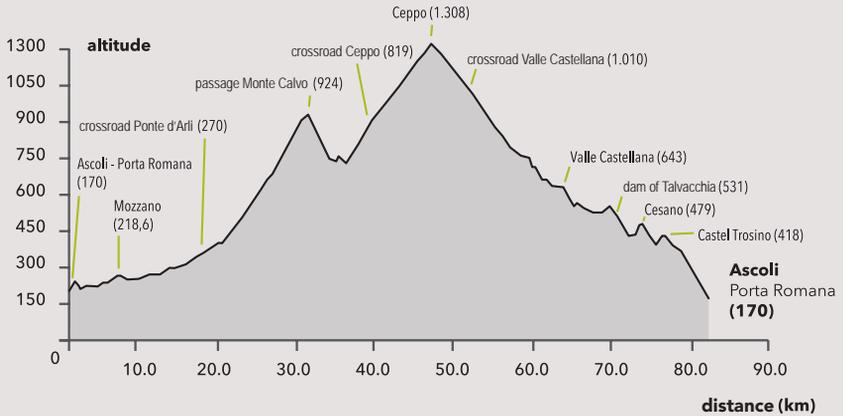
**DIFFICULT**

Surface:  
**Asphalt**

Slope medium:  
**12 %**

Slope max:  
**45 %**

Difficulty  
Level



## IN THE LOCALITY OF THE APPENINE SYBILL

ASCOLI PICENO - MONTEGALLO - ASCOLI PICENO

Start out from **Ascoli Piceno** and ride upwards slowly towards the **Sibillini** with the majestic peak of **Monte Vettore**, cycling past villages where you will frequently be greeted by the encouraging smiles of old women sitting at their front doors.

First stop **Montegalloy**, a town on the foothills of the Vectottore which only seems to come alive in summertime when the tourists arrive; the woods surrounding the town conceal genuine gems such as the **Church of Santa Maria in Lapide**, the **Church of the Sibyls** with its frescoes dedicated to the fascinating and mysterious **figure of the Sibyl**.  
The tour ends upon return to **Ascoli Piceno**.

*Ascoli Piceno Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0736.253045;  
Montegalloy Info (+39) 0736.806122.*

## THE SIBILLINI "TAPPONE"

TRISUNGO (DISTRICT OF ARQUATA DEL TRONTO) - FORCA CANAPINE - CASTELLUCCIO - TRISUNGO

This is the lengthy route or "*tappone*" that rises and falls amidst **the most beautiful mountains of the Picene region** – an area encompassing expansive green meadows and stark mountain peaks. Your ascent begins almost immediately after setting off from **Trisungo**, a village of sixteenth-century origins on the ancient **Via Salaria** that is closely set in between the peaks of **Monte Vettore**. The **fortress of Arquata Tronto** is still in view, an imposing and majestic sandstone building which for centuries has stood mute witness to the passing life of these mountainside villages.

The Via Salaria brings you next to **Pescara del Tronto**, where a brief ride through the streets is recommended, and you will be curious to notice front doors bolted with snake-shaped bolts and portals with griffins. Refill your bottle from the unique **six-tap water fountain**, and return to your bike. Ascend to **Forca Canapine**, where the greenery changes from beech to pine and, at increasingly high altitudes, to the wide-open expanses of green meadows. The **Norcia plain** opens out beneath, and the descent begins towards **Castelluccio** amidst the blue flowering lentil vegetation. Take a breather, as the ascent resumes without respite, but soon you will be surrounded by the enchanting views of this unending landscape of green and blue. You are about to break the tape, entering the centre of Castelluccio. Your arduous trip has finally ended.

*Sibillini Park (+39) 0737.972711; Trisungo (+39) 0736.809122.*

## CYCLING UP HIGH WHERE TIME SEEMS TO STAND STILL

FROM COMUNANZA TO FOCE

**Comunanza** is a village of ancient origins going back to the Neolithic period, but many vicissitudes have led to its current configuration, not least the presence of the Knights Templar in 1200 and the phenomenon of banditry, and its ultimate defeat. The village still centres around crafts such as clothing and dyeing.

**Foce**, at 932 m, is a small village inhabited by about 9 people during the winter, but more people live here during the summer. The route climbs to **Monte Vettore** and **Lake Pilato** (1,949 m) where a whole other series of legends, myths and suggestions comes into play, but the route proceeds towards **Lake Gerosa** and **Monte Vettore** which is reflected in its waters. You find yourself on a flat road which, moving through various junctions, passes through small and sparsely populated towns and villages with very unusual names.

In the central square you will be greeted by the friendly one-liners of the local population and you can relax, because you have been brought back to a simple time and place where the only real trade is at the Taverna della Montagna, where you will eat like a prince!

*Comunanza Info (+39) 0736.84381; Sibillini Park (+39) 0737.972711.*



# Exploring vineyards and ancient towns and villages with map

CASTEL DI LAMA - OFFIDA - CASTIGNANO - SAN BENEDETTO

This route includes a train ride to **Castel di Lama** from **Ascoli Piceno** or **San Benedetto del Tronto**.

**Castel di Lama** - named after the river **Lama** that runs through it and the ancient castle overlooking the valley - is the starting point from which you will connect up with the **Via Salaria** and cycle towards **Offida** past vineyards and oak woods. The outline of the **Church of Santa Maria della Rocca** tells you that you are approaching the first stage: this is an imposing brick building that pokes its head out on a cliff. Going along the streets in the centre of **Offida**, (**Most Beautiful Town in Italy**), you will see women engaged in **lacemaking on lace pillows**, yes, you are now in the capital of handmade lace based on the ancient tradition handed down from mother to daughter since 1400.

The route continues in the direction of **Castignano**, a town that preserves an ancient italic inscription a memorial sandstone. The **Templars** built the **Church of Santa Maria del Borgo** in this place, which was a crossroads for pilgrims in the days when people took the long boat journey to the **Holy Land**.

Next, the route descends to the sea in a symphony of yellow sunflower fields, taking the pressure off your legs, which have been put to the test by this steep hilly landscape.

*Castel di Lama (+39) 0736.81871;*

*Ascoli Piceno Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0736.253045;*

*San Benedetto del Tronto Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0735.781179.*



Type:  
**Cycling**

Length:  
**65,6 km**

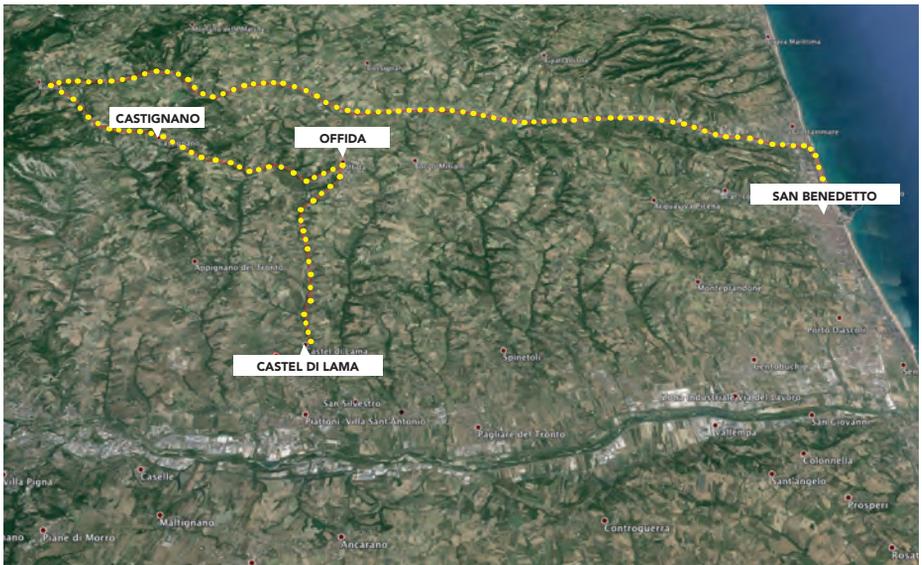
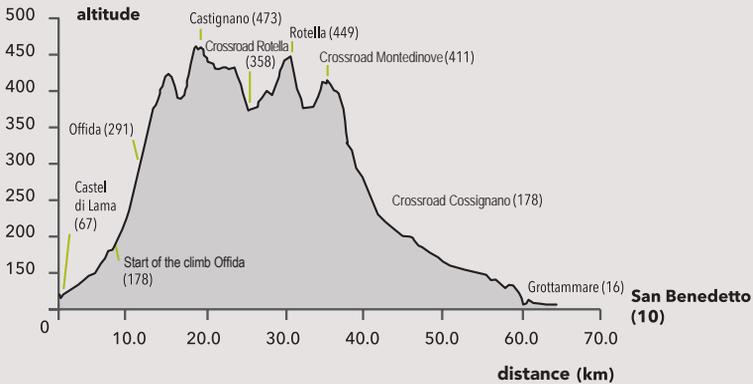
**MEDIUM**

Surface:  
**Asphalt**

Slope medium:  
**12 %**

Slope max:  
**45 %**

Difficulty  
Level



ASCOLI 11

CYCLING HOLIDAYS

17,5 Km

MEDIUM

**ON THE VIA DEL ROSSO PICENO SUPERIORE**

SAN BENEDETTO DEL TRONTO - ACQUAVIVA PICENA - SAN BENEDETTO DEL TRONTO

From **San Benedetto del Tronto (Blue Flag)** the route ascends towards the fortress of **Acquaviva (Orange Flag)** along the **Via del Rosso Piceno Superiore**. This wine has very ancient origins. It can age to over 8 years, is ruby red in colour and has an intense, warm aroma. Along the way you can visit the local producers of wine and oil for a tasting session.

You are in **Acquaviva Picena**, with its imposing fortress. According to legend, the fortress walls are haunted by the ghost of its Captain who became corrupted by **Giosia di Acquaviva** into massacring the garrison and all of its inhabitants. The locals maintain that the captain still wanders in search of his family and hurls people against the walls, demanding answers. After leaving behind you the dark and evocative atmosphere of **Acquaviva Picena**, your descent towards the sea will be all the easier and more tranquil.

*San Benedetto del Tronto Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0735.781179;  
Acquaviva Info (+39) 0735.764005.*

ASCOLI 12

CYCLING HOLIDAYS

62,9 Km

MEDIUM

**FROM THE SEA TO THE MOUNTAINS TAKING IN THE BELVEDERE OF RIPATRANSONE**

SAN BENEDETTO - RIPATRANSONE - OFFIDA - SAN BENEDETTO

A very challenging ascent from the sea at **San Benedetto del Tronto (Blue Flag)** up past hills dotted by fields of sunflowers and vineyards as far as **Ripatransone, (Orange Flag)**, the first stop on this route.

Pause to enjoy the spectacular view as far as **Conero** to the north and **Gargano** to the south.

**Ripatransone** is a medieval town whose streets conceal many architectural jewels from the Renaissance and Baroque period. The route continues downhill to **Offida**, famous for its ancient pillow lace craft; its old town is definitely worth a visit (**Most Beautiful Town in Italy**). Back on the saddle again, you will descend towards the sea and before long arrive at the seafront at **Porto d'Ascoli**.

*San Benedetto del Tronto Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0735.781179;  
Ripatransone Info (+39) 0735.9171; Offida (+39) 0736.88871.*

ASCOLI 14

CYCLING HOLIDAYS

61 Km

EASY

**CYCLING IN THE VALLE DEL SOLE**

GROTTAMMARE - SANTA MARIA GORETTI - PONTE TESINO - ROTELLA

This route runs alongside the **river Tesino**, arriving in the **Valle del Sole**. You will pass green hills, fields of trees rich in arboreal essences and palm nurseries. An unusual feature of this area are the small mud volcanoes still active in the vicinity of **Rotella**.

From **Rotella** and **Capradosso** you can make excursions to **Monte Ascensione**, which has a long history shrouded in myth and legend, and its forests have always been the scene of pagan celebrations and festivals; even today the **feast of the Ascension of Christ** is celebrated on the mountain with dancing and bonfires.

*San Benedetto del Tronto Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0735.781179.*



**CYCLING ALONG THE RIVIERA DELLE 12,000 PALME (BIKE PATH)**

SAN BENEDETTO DEL TRONTO - CUPRA MARITTIMA

A route along the **bike path** that leads from the roundabout of **Porto D'Ascoli**, will take you to **Cupra Marittima**, ending in the vicinity of the **Mostra Mondiale di Malacologia** (World Malacological Exhibition).

This route is absolutely flat, and shaded by palm trees **of over 13 different varieties**, hence the name given to this coastal stretch of Riviera. They include the world's largest palm tree, also mentioned in the Guinness Book of Records, with a base circumference of 4.74 meters. It is in **San Benedetto del Tronto**, a **Blue Flag** award beach where the route begins, and continues towards the mediaeval village of **Grottammare (Blue Flag and Most Beautiful Town in Italy)**, where you can visit its numerous churches, and finally ends in **Cupra Marittima**, where flies the **Blue Flag**; here you can visit the largest exhibition of shells from around the world.

*San Benedetto del Tronto Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0735.781179;  
Cupra Marittima (+39) 0735.77671.*



ASCOLI 14

BIKE TRAIL

17 Km

VERY EASY

**THE BIKE PATH OF TRONTO**

PORTO D'ASCOLI (AREA: SAN BENEDETTO DEL TRONTO) - SPINETOLI - CASTEL DI LAMA - ASCOLI PICENO

A bike route along the **north bank of the Tronto** which leads from **Porto d'Ascoli** to **Ascoli Piceno** through a verdant green landscape of fields and streams.

At **Spinetoli** we recommend a small detour to visit the "La Valle" natural oasis. The route continues towards **Ascoli Piceno** passing through **Castel di Lama**.

*Ascoli Piceno Tourist Information Centre (IAT) (+39) 0736.253045;  
Spinetoli Info (+39) 0736.890298.*



A section of the Marches region borders with Abruzzo in a place with a very evocative name: the **Macera della Morte**, where Hannibal is reputed to have passed with his elephants. There are numerous mountain bike paths in these areas of the **Parco della Laga**.

For info: (+39) 0862.60521 ente@gransassolagapark.it

The ascent to **Monte Piselli** from the Ascoli slope of the **Montagna dei Fiori** is a not-to-be-missed stage for people from these areas; it is a part of a family lore, an experience made from generation to generation by fathers and children. Do not forget the firebreak route that ascends from Castel Trosino to Rifugio Paci.

For all itineraries in the vicinity of Montagna dei Fiori - Rifugio Paci: (+39) 333.2980252 info@rifugiopaci.it

For itineraries in the Monti Sibillini Park, consult the special section in the guide.



# National Park of the Sibillini Mountains

Exploring **nature, magic and  
gastronomy** in the enchanting  
Sibillini Mountains

***The Monti Sibillini Park** is an expansive area of over seventy thousand hectares comprising 18 towns, where nature and man have learned to coexist in mutual harmony.*

*This area is so varied that the Park is generally subdivided into 4 different sides, each one with its own particular theme: the flowered, the historical, the magical and, finally, the sacred.*



# MAGICAL SIDE

(Amandola, Arquata del Tronto, Montegallo, Montefortino, Montemonaco)

This area of the **Sibillini** has been known since mediaeval times as the kingdom of legends and demons – from the **Sybil** to **Lake Pilato**, without forgetting the **Gola dell'Infernaccio**, where the delights of verdant nature combine with the magic atmosphere of this locality.



SIBILLINI 01

CYCLING HOLIDAYS

16,8 Km

MEDIUM

## THE INFERNACCIO, SAN LEONARDO AND CAPOTENNA

The **Gola dell'Infernaccio** ("Gorge of Hell"), located near the river Tenna in a cone of shade illuminated only from above, is one of the most evocative gorges in central Italy.

Approaching the gorge, you can hear the sound of the "**Pisciarelle**" waterfalls.

There is scarce illumination, but it gets brighter when the road opens up to the valley - **Val Tenna**. After reaching the **beech forest of San Leonardo**, you should stop at the hermitage of the same name.

Completely rebuilt by **Padre Pietro**, "God's builder", the **Hermitage of San Leonardo** is located at the intersection of roads traversed in the wintertime only by wolves; here you will find peace and quiet to be inspired by a mystic atmosphere.

Ascend the river valley on a crushed stone path as far as **Capotenna**.

SIBILLINI 02

CYCLING HOLIDAYS

34,4 Km

DIFFICULT

## FROM LAKE PILATO TO THE PLAINS OF CASTELLUCCIO AMIDST LEGEND AND MYSTERY

One of the most popular paths among Alpine bikers is the one that takes you from **Lake Pilato Forca di Presta** through the plains of **Castelluccio**.

A challenging ride, but the effort is rewarded by the magnificent views.

Remember you are still on the "**magical**" **slope of the Sibillini**, and **Lake Pilato** has its own legend – indeed it has many. According to one of these legends the body of **Pontius Pilate**, after his execution, was dragged by oxen to the lake's interior, which can occasionally be seen turning red.

Apart from legend, this place is highly evocative, and the lake basin seems to change shape from season to season until it regains the shape for which it was re-baptised: the "Lake with Glasses". And the red colour? **The lake's waters do in fact turn red** during certain periods of the year - during the hatching season of the small "Fairy Shrimp" that has its habitat here - the **Chirocefalo Marchesoni**.

# Historic side and sacred side

The area north of the **Sibillini Park** is called the “flowered” side because here, especially in the summer, nature reflects the floral colours of the orchids, lilies and daffodils and there is a wide variety of scents.

The other side of the Sibillini is the historical one, in the Macerata area; there’s a route which twists and turns through a territory where cities and villages have taken shape amidst ancient castles and watchtowers.

## THE GRANDE ANELLO OF THE SIBILLINI MOUNTAINS

The **Grande Anello (Big Ring) of the Sibillini** is a 124 km circular route which, with **9 stages**, crosses the provinces of **Macerata**, **Fermo** and **Ascoli Piceno** and reaches as far as **Umbria**. Taking this route, you’ll be charmed by a feeling of intense calm.

It starts out from **Visso**, (**Orange Flag** and **Most Beautiful Town in Italy**), the headquarters of the **Park**, and, ascending the slopes of **Monte Careschio**, you reach **Cupi** and then penetrate into the pasturelands at the head of **Campobonomo Valley** as far as **Monte Caglia**.

Now you are ready to descend once again in the direction of **Fiastra** with magnificent views of **Lake Fiastrone**.

Here, the route passes across valleys and ditches such as **Rio Bagno** and **Rio Fessa** with spectacular views over the wide **Fiastrone Valley** and the **Abbey of Fiastrone**.

From **Monastero**, the route continues towards the delightful wide open fields of **Ragnolo**, and the springtime flowers along this route will persuade you to stop frequently to take photographs.

You are in the **Ambro Valley** where canyons are carved into the rock, and from here you climb towards the district of **Altino**. You should visit the **Church of Santa Maria in Pantano** with its evocative frescoes dedicated to the Sibyls, before you get back on your bike and head for **Colle Montegallo**.

From here continue on the eastern slope of **Monte Vettore** until you reach the pine forest at the foot of the mountain.

If you cycle on the grass following a path marked out by stakes, you will find yourself on the “**Reapers’ trail**”, once used by these harvesters to access the plain of **Castelluccio**.

You are now on the flatlands of **Umbria**, the point from which you return down to the **Visso Valley** on the historic route between **Visso** and **Norcia**.



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