

Assisi

One day tour includes Assisi and Santa Maria degli Angeli

Assisi is a very beautiful town about 3 hours away from Rome

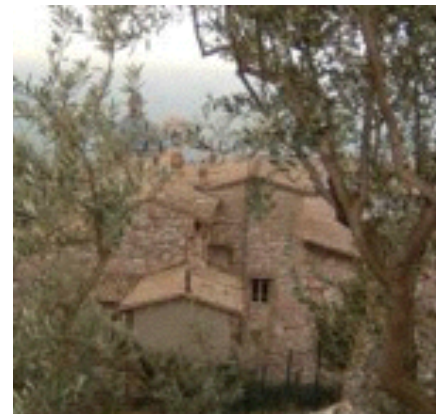
Assisi is a good town for wandering and exploring. Its narrow and steep lanes are picturesque and conceal plenty of surprises: a hidden restaurant, a faded fresco, a stunning view. Occasional olive groves are dotted among the stairways and rooftops, where shy cats creep out of sight of passers-by. After the earthquake it suffered in 1997, Assisi has been carefully rebuilt and restored; the town has a well-kept and well-off feel to it. There are still repairs being carried out, and work on some of Assisi's frescoes will go on for years, but most of the buildings, streets and monuments are restored and open for business.

You don't have to be a pilgrim to appreciate Assisi, but it helps if you have some interest in churches. For hundreds of years Assisi has been dominated by the unpretentious figure of St. Francis, whose followers filled the little town with churches, monasteries and shrines. Everywhere you look in Assisi, you'll find another fine church, mostly built in the pretty pink stone which defines the town's appearance, and mostly containing fine artworks and a few Franciscan relics. The grandest of these, of course, is the **Basilica di San Francesco**, the important double-decker church built to honour the humble saint, who lies in the crypt. The lower level The Inferior Basilica is the older, and the more atmospheric, with stained glass windows, and frescoes attributed to Giotto, Cimabue and Simone Martini. The upper Basilica was damaged more severely by the earthquake, but it is bright and airy and its colourful frescoes by Giotto, Cimabue and others can still be admired.

Assisi's other attractive churches are numerous; among the finest are the **Basilica di Santa Chiara** (St. Clare's); the seventeenth-century **Chiesa Nuova**, a small church built over St. Francis's presumed birthplace; and **San Pietro**, which has an interesting underground museum with varied exhibits and some Roman remains. The ruins of another Roman house can be seen in the crypt of **Santa Maria Maggiore**. Wallpaintings from these excavations can be seen in the town's little **museum**, just off Piazza del Comune, which is well worth a visit. As well as archeological finds from the area, the museum gives access to a long tunnel running right under the modern piazza. Here you can walk on the original surface of the town's Roman Forum, and see the base of the Temple of Minerva which still dominates the heart of the town (its columns are now the facade of **Santa Maria sopra Minerva** church, which has a pretty blue-and-gold gallery).

The town's attractive main street is the Via San Francesco, which runs from the Basilica up to Piazza del Comune. There are many interesting buildings along the way, including the frescoed **Oratorio dei Pellegrini** (Pilgrims' Oratory), and the town's art gallery, the **Pinacoteca Comunale**. The latter contains a number of interesting paintings and frescoes, many of which decorated the walls and gateways of the town.

For the best view over the town, follow signs to the **Rocca Maggiore**, the large fortress towering above Assisi. As well as the town itself, there are spectacular views over the surrounding plains, hills and valleys. Close to the Piazza Matteotti you can also visit the little curved street which traces out the form of Assisi's old Roman Amphitheatre.





Santa Maria degli Angeli, is described as a suburb of Assisi, but it's really a distinct settlement. Pleasant town has a couple of sights of interest. The **Basilica di Santa Maria degli Angeli** is an important stop on the St. Francis trail. Enclosed within the huge church is a tiny chapel, the **Porziuncola**, an ancient Benedictine place of worship that St. Francis took over, and the Capello del Transito, marking the spot where the saint died. Following the signs to St. Francis's rose garden (*roseto*), you pass the surprising and sweet sight of doves nesting on a statue of St. Francis.

There are plenty of places to **eat and drink** in Assisi. If you don't fancy the most obvious (and expensive) tourist options, walk further from the Basilica di San Francesco.

Our English speaking driver will give you basic information about places and attractions but he is not allowed to get into the attractions if you wish to have a guided tour let us know. Pick up time according to your need can be between 7.00 /8.30 am. It takes about 3 hrs to get there. Our driver and vehicle must be back in Rome maximum at 10 pm. Pick up and drop off in Rome is at your accommodation / hotel/ B&B. Meals and tickets to attractions are not included; Suggesting restaurants is not our priority we do it only upon request. For any further information or you wish to personalize your Assisi tour do not hesitate to contact us !