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TASTE

Collection of thematic routes

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1. The TASTE project

The proposal of the TASTE – Rural development through Experiential trekking project was generated by the growth of several types of niche tourism in recent years, such as adventure tourism, slow tourism, food and wine tourism, experiential tourism and the need to contribute to the sustainable development of European rural areas.

Project partners have observed the need to equip associations, NGOs and local entities with specific skills needed to grasp the huge potential of sustainable tourism and outdoor sports.

The overall objective of TASTE is to build the capacity of local communities and stakeholders to be able to promote their cultural and natural heritage through sustainable outdoor offers while encouraging the practice of health-enhancing activities. Specifically, there will be a focus on experiential hiking and rural landscape enhancement. The natural and cultural heritage will become the raw material to design and shape excursions, and outdoor activities more generally in order to make them attractive to tourists and enthusiasts thus increasing participation in outdoor sports and more in general in physical activities.

TASTE is based on the creation and dissemination of a participatory methodology and community-based approach aimed at encouraging sustainable and responsible types of tourism and mobility, compatible with the economy and the environment.

The aim of the project is in fact to contribute to the capacity building of the staff of participating organizations, as well as future beneficiaries of the project results, in terms of sustainable rural tourism development and promotion of environmental-friendly practices and sports activities.



2. Collection of thematic routes



Hiking in Europe offers an incredibly diverse range of landscapes, trails, and experiences. From the rugged terrains of the Alps to the coastal paths of the Mediterranean, Europe boasts an extensive network of hiking routes suitable for all levels of hikers. Whether you're seeking mountainous landscapes, coastal views, cultural immersion, or a mix of everything, Europe's hiking trails have something to offer for every hiker's preference. Hiking in Europe isn't just about exploring nature; it's also an opportunity to indulge in the rich and diverse culinary heritage of each region, adding an extra layer of enjoyment and cultural immersion to the hiking experience. Combining hiking trails with a focus on gastronomy, olive oil, and wine provides a rich sensory experience through nature, culinary delights, and cultural exploration. Based on all of these elements the project partners have defined some new itineraries or made some already existing itineraries compliant to the TASTE Guide. The itinerary collection is a roadshow of the implementation of the elements defined by the TASTE Guide.

Based on the presumptions and suggestions taken into consideration by the project partners it was agreed to produce an itinerary collection with new identified itineraries produced by project partners or itineraries that do already exist but are not compliant with the lines of the defined TASTE Guide. For the already existing itineraries not entirely compliant with the suggested lines from the TASTE Guide the important point was to find the missing elements and try to add them to the already existing itineraries created outside this project.

The Croatian and the French partners mapped 10 thematic routes (5 each), the Italian partner mapped 8 itineraries.

This collection is going to list all of them and underline all the important aspects of the itineraries according to the definitions given in the TASTE Guide. The Itinerary collection can be used as a tool for creating new European TASTE itineraries.

3. Thematic routes in Croatia



1.

MEDIEVAL ROADS



Along this path you will immerse in the medieval period of the istrian peninsula. Along the path you will encounter the ruins of the old church of St. Cecilia and the church of St. Simeon.

The church of St. Cecilia is located about 600 m northwest from the old settlement of Guran. There is a bigger rectangular building about 20 m to the north of the church, the walls of which are covered with pink lime, and a bit further on, other stone structures can be found.

The church is a single-nave rectangular building with a two-apsidal sanctuary. The apses are semicircular in shape. The base of the altar is preserved as it was in the south apse. This church has also lived through a few of the building phases, the first one of which can be dated to Carolingian period. The church was functional to, at least, the end of the middle ages.

The foundation, made from bigger stone blocks, is preserved in the length of 4 m, starting in the southeastern corner of the church and extending in a westerly direction. There are two constructions older than the church by its western side, of which the walls are still partially visible. Prior to the construction of the church, there was a villa rustica on the same location; the church was actually built on top of the villa that was probably built during the 1st century.

The Church of St. Simeon is located about 350 m to the south of the three-aisled basilica and early medieval settlement. It is positioned at a crossroads of three old roads bordered with a dry wall, one of which leads to the settlement. It is a Romanesque church, with a plain rear wall that has three built-in apses. The presbytery zone is divided from the nave by a continuous altar screen. The walls are preserved up to a height of 2 – 3 m.

There is a narrow extension correlated with a privileged burial on the southern side of the church.

During the second building phase, the church was transformed into a three-nave building. It had a burial function, and the graves were found by the southern broadside, behind the rear and by the northern wall. The trapezoidal space in front of the church had a funeral function and was bordered with drywall.

According to the ceramic fragments and coins found, dated to the 4th century, the church had two earlier building phases, prior to the final structure.

At Stancija Guran you can try some of the istrian typical products. For lunch or dinner they prepare typical Istrian dishes (various pasta such as fuzi, gnocchi, ravioli, pasta with various sauces and stews, and various meat plates with our products, cheese, prosciutto). Guests and visitors can taste and purchase our local products (seasoning salt, dried tomatoes, natural fruit jams, aromatic herbs and oils, etc.) and unique souvenirs, and participate in the creation of their own products.

There is no official parking place, but you can park the car on the start/end point along the local road 5101.



TOTAL DISTANCE: 6,8 km

TOTAL ALTITUDE DIFFERENCE: 84 m

DIFFICULTY: easy

SOIL: Asphalt, gravel

[ITINERARY GPX](#)





2.

MOJ KAŽUN – LA MIA CASITA



Moj kažun - la mia casita is an already existing hiking itinerary. The trail is circular and continues on a macadam road along dry stone walls, kazuns (casitas) and beautiful olive groves. It passes by Lokva Fontana and continues along the field road all the way to the church of St. Tome. There are no safety issues along this hiking trail, it is a little bit out of the reach by public transportation but there is a big parking place.

Along the itinerary you will discover the unique construction of a one room small structure Kažun. A kažun is a traditional round stone structure found in the Istrian region of Croatia. These small, domed huts were historically used by farmers and shepherds as shelter from the weather or as storage for tools and supplies. Typically made of dry stone walls without mortar, kažuns have a distinctive appearance and are considered a cultural symbol of the Istrian peninsula. They're often found in rural areas and olive groves, showcasing the region's historical heritage and rural life. Visiting OPG Chiavalon you will have the possibility to try one of the world's best olive oils. OPG Chiavalon is a family farm specialized in growing olives and producing high quality extra virgin olive oil. Currently they cultivate 30 hectares of olive groves in the area of Vodnjan with more than 9.000 olive trees at an altitude of 80 – 180 m.a.s.l. There are as well plenty of other typical istrian products you can try and buy. On the road you will get to the church of St. Toma, an abandoned early romanesque church from the 14th century.

The itinerary is 8,3 km long with an altitude difference of 92 meters in total. Except for the late spring/beginning of summer season with the possibility of encountering snakes, there are no potential security issues along the path.



TOTAL DISTANCE: 8,3 km

TOTAL ALTITUDE DIFFERENCE: 92 m

DIFFICULTY: easy

SOIL: Asphalt, gravel

ITINERARY GPX





3.

AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN FORTIFICATIONS



As the main military port, Pula was an important military and strategic centrepiece of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy of that time. To defend Pula, a dynamic system of fortification structures was built, which extended from the western to the eastern coastline of Istria, and included the island of Lošinj too.

On this route you will encounter the Kusten Maritime mortar battery and 2 fortifications: Fort Punta Christo and Fort Grosso. The Punta Christo Fortress is the biggest Austro-Hungarian fortification. Although having been long abandoned, it is the present day site for numerous concerts, exhibitions and other cultural events. The fort Grosso was built in 1836. than half turn with the former Martello tower as a redoubt on the hill overlooking the Valmaggione at an altitude of 67 m. The Fort has about 18 cannon. In the second period of construction next to the fort were built two mortar batteries, each with four 21 cm coast mortars M 80.

This is a beautiful path where trekkers could witness the rich legacy of the surroundings of Pula from the austro-ungarian time. The path could easily be extended to the base of hidroplanes when one of the local wine producers has a wine bar. Furthermore there are possibilities to add an extra 5 km an visit 1 olive oil producer and put on the path a very popular restaurant „Alla Beccaccia“.



TOTAL DISTANCE: 6,2 km

TOTAL ALTITUDE DIFFERENCE: 107 m

DIFFICULTY: easy

SOIL: Gravel

ITINERARY GPX





4.

OLIVE OIL AND WINE



The path starts at the parking place of one of the most popular Istrian ham producers, the Buršić Family, known for production of traditional Istrian prosciutto and cured meat products for over 30 years: Istrian prosciutto, bacon, boneless pork loin, pancetta, sausages and other meat products, as well as Easter delicacy Spaleta. The path leads to the church of St. Blaise. One of the most impressive structures in Vodnjan and entire Istria is certainly the parish church of St. Blaise, well-known to pilgrims from all over the world. Apart from the relics of St. Blaise, Vodnjan's parish church also keeps 370 relics belonging to 250 different saints. In addition to one of the thorns from Jesus' crown, fragment of the Holy Virgin's veil, particle of Jesus' Cross and many others, a special attraction are the desiccated remains of saints whose bodies or body parts have been completely preserved: St. Sebastian, St. Barbara, St. Mary of Egypt, St. Leon Bembo, St. Giovanni Olini and St. Nicolosa Bursa. Through the picturesque streets with unique murals of the historical centre of the city of Vodnjan we continue to the Medea winery, next to the train station. The MEDEA winery was founded in 1956 by merging farmers' co-ops that had existed in the countryside between Rovinj, Pula and Barban. Today, they own 48 hectares of vineyards. Despite the winery's size, it produces only 30,000 bottles a year of high quality wine while the rest still finishes as table wine.

The visit to the park of Kažuni follows. A kažun is a traditional round stone structure found in the Istrian region of Croatia. These small, domed huts were historically used by farmers and shepherds as shelter from the weather or as storage for tools and supplies. Typically made of dry stone walls without mortar, kažuns have a distinctive appearance and are considered a cultural symbol of the Istrian peninsula. They're often found in rural areas and olive groves, showcasing the region's historical heritage and rural life.

Next stop is the water spring from the Roman time, the Laco fountain. Shortly after, the path reaches the famous olive oil producers, the Chiavalon family. OPG Chiavalon is a family farm specialized in growing olives and producing high quality extra virgin olive oil. Currently they cultivate 30 hectares of olive groves in the area of Vodnjan with more than 9,000 olive trees at an altitude of 80 – 180 m.a.s.l.

Our entire production is under certified ecological supervision. We are extremely proud to say that our extra virgin olive oil bears the Organic Label, as well as the Protected Designation of Origin, which both guarantee and ensure that this is certified 100% organic extra virgin olive oil from Istria.

The path ends passing by the Kažuni park returning to the starting point at the parking place. Here the hikers can enjoy the ham products of the Buršić family and enjoy the rest of the day.



TOTAL DISTANCE: 8,9 km

TOTAL ALTITUDE DIFFERENCE: 22 m

DIFFICULTY: easy

SOIL: Gravel, asphalt, stone

ITINERARY GPX





5.

THE SARDINE STORY IN FAŽANA



Salting sardines in Fažana, Croatia, is a traditional method that involves preserving sardines with salt to enhance their flavor and prolong their shelf life. Fažana, located in Istria, is known for its rich fishing heritage and delicious seafood.

The process typically involves cleaning the sardines, removing the heads and guts, and layering them in a container with generous amounts of salt. The salt helps draw out moisture, which aids in preserving the fish. After salting, the sardines are left to cure for a period of time, allowing the flavors to intensify.

Once they are properly salted and cured, these sardines can be enjoyed in various ways. They can be grilled, fried, or even eaten raw as a delicacy. They are often served with olive oil, garlic, herbs, and accompanied by fresh bread or served as part of a seafood platter.

The traditional method of salting sardines in Fažana has been passed down through generations and remains a cherished culinary practice in the region, showcasing the local flavors and expertise in preserving seafood.

The gastro offer is based mostly on local fish and sardines, so passing along the sardine road in restaurants and taverns you will have the opportunity to taste many salted fishes, fish on savor, fried fish, sardines in marinade, fried sardines, grilled sardines.

On the main square at the lowest altitude of only one meter there is a church of St. Kuzma and Damian. It was built in the 15th century in the late Gothic style.

On the promenade, there is an open-air sculpture museum with audio benches dedicated to one of the most famous croatian composers Antonio Smareglia.

Along the way you will encounter the statue of Mate Parlov, the most famous croatian boxer to win all possible titles, amateur European and world champion, Olympic champion and professional European and world champion.

Continuing furthermore the path leads to the Balija family, famous for olive oil production. Here hikers can stop for the tasting of preciuos olive oils produced just accross the National Park of Brijuni islands.

Next stop is the Marčeta family, famus for winr production. The family farm of the Marčeta family is located in the south of Istria, near Pula, in the small town of Valbandon across from the Brijuni islands.

The visiting can end at the small restaurant Konoba Alla Beccaccia. Lost in this space of absolute tranquility, you will be surprised to see a pool and small apartments, and the cosy traditional restaurant with an open fireplace. The service is friendly. The cured ham and homemade pasta with truffles are recommended. In season, game birds are the specialty of the house.



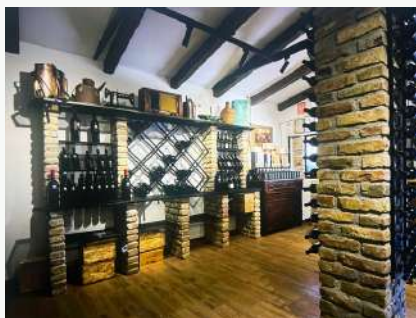
TOTAL DISTANCE: 9 km

TOTAL ALTITUDE DIFFERENCE: 36 m

DIFFICULTY: easy

SOIL: Gravel, asphalt, stone

ITINERARY GPX



4. Thematic routes in France



1.

WATER PATH AROUND SAINT CHAMAS



A very nice, easy hike around the pretty fishing port of Etang de Berre. We will cross the village and its troglodyte dwellings, we will pass by the Flavian Bridge: named after Lucius Donnius Flavius, a wealthy Roman notable, who had it built at the end of the 1st century B.C. It was the only bridge over the Touloubre for 20 centuries on the road between Arles and Marseille.

The Touloubre rises north of Aix-en-Provence and passes through several villages.

Note the 74 arches of the railway viaduct under which it weaves, before flowing into the Étang de Berre in the "Petite Camargue".

Figures in the space of the quarries were carved; Look for them!

Note numerous buildings, washhouses, chapels and aqueducts along the entire route.

On the port, there is a small fish auction in the morning when the fishermen return, and in the village, many traders selling handicrafts (olive oil in particular).



TOTAL DISTANCE: 15,88 km

TOTAL ALTITUDE DIFFERENCE: 100 m

DIFFICULTY: easy

SOIL: Hills

ITINERARY GPX





2. TOUR OF MONT GERBIER DE JONC AND SOURCES OF THE LOIRE



The high mountains of the Ardèche represent a particular entity, because of their geology; Indeed, they are ancient volcanoes, locally called "sucs" that dot an immense horizon, particularly well cleared, at the level of the Sources of the Loire and Mont Gerbier de Jonc.

The agricultural land is of volcanic origin and therefore very rich. There are many pastures, and cattle and sheep find plenty of grass throughout the summer. In addition, the rains are abundant as in most of the Massif Central.

Another characteristic of these mountains are the large forests, on the route of the hike of the generous beech forests, further down in the valleys of the chestnut groves.

The sources of the Loire, a legend and a beautiful geography lesson since we are on the watershed between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. Three springs that can be the subject of a small additional 3km route.

Gastronomy question: of course chestnuts (candied chestnuts from the Ardèche for Christmas), mushrooms in the autumn, small goat cheeses (picodons), everything related to pork and beef "fin gras du Mezenc" (beef raised in winter with hay from the region eaten at Easter. A whole range of peasant gastronomy to be consumed preferably in the country's bistros, the ambassadors of local specialities.



TOTAL DISTANCE: 15,95 km

TOTAL ALTITUDE DIFFERENCE: 721 m

DIFFICULTY: medium

SOIL: mountains

ITINERARY GPX





3.

MARSEILLE, BETWEEN CULTURE AND DELICACIES



If you have decided to take some time to enjoy Marseille, keep your cultural guide in your bag, the proposed itinerary will take you to some emblematic places of this city, of 850,000 inhabitants, built around its Old Port, without ever an urban plan, but according to the arrivals of migrants from its origin until now.

Today, we offer you a varied itinerary between the sea and the hills, between the converted industrial or commercial buildings of the Cours Estienne d'Orves and the villas of Roucas Blanc and the Corniche.

Nothing very difficult, but climbs and descents that may seem steep for an urban hiker; And a few beautiful flights of stairs tumbling down the Big Blue.

In terms of delicacies and cuisine, everything that is based on local products, seafood first, but also products from local market gardening (plains of Aubagne), wine (until the end of the nineteenth century, there were vines on the hills), all the traditions brought by the newcomers, garlic and wild herbs collected nearby and the love of Marseille for its olive oil! After an aperitif in the sun, enjoy some gourmet dishes, fish soups or bouillabaisse (expensive) or garlic, the oil pump if it's soon Christmas or the dovecote if it's Whitsun, and the Pieds et Paquets, a tripe recipe born in the Pomme district.

And don't forget the Christmas tradition: a big lean 7-course supper and, after Midnight Mass, the 13 desserts.

Have a great gourmet hike!



TOTAL DISTANCE: 10,80 km

TOTAL ALTITUDE DIFFERENCE: 125 m

DIFFICULTY: easy

SOIL: asphalt, stone, cement

[ITINERARY GPX](#)





4.

LANDSCAPES OF THE CAMARGUE FROM ARLES TO SAINT GILLE BY THE WAY OF SAINT JAMES RETURN TO THE BANKS OF THE PETIT RHONE - RICE PADDIES AND BULLPENS



This hike is physical since the distances are important, but it is particularly rich culturally and naturally. If you have time, you can take 2 days for this route, sleeping in Saint Gilles (several accommodations possible).

We depart from Arles, a city of art and history, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which was the birthplace of the famous painters Van Gogh and Gauguin. You have to stroll through the city, taste the Provençal atmosphere, on the banks of the great Rhône.

Then we will take the pilgrims' path to Santiago de Compostela, by small roads, near beautiful properties, with farms, farmhouses, which protect themselves from the wind, the mistral, which can be very violent.

Note the cypress hedges that protect the crops on windy days.

The distance of the stage testifies to the notion of pilgrimage, a path over a long distance.

Then visit the small town of Saint Gilles, in the Gard department, whose abbey is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. (Accommodation available).

Return by following the Petit Rhône, on its dikes (the Rhône can be very violent and cause significant flooding).

On the last half of the journey, there are beautiful views of the river, then of the city, the barges along the water.

Arles is an important publishing city: the Actes Sud publishing house was born in 1978, today the titles are those of novels, French and foreign, but also children's titles, also of the humanities and poetry. Don't hesitate to stroll through the bookshop: Librairie du Méjean, Place Nina-Berberova13200 Arles, or 47 Rue du Dr Fanton.

Arles was also the birthplace of the music publisher harmonia mundi, Médiapôle Saint-Césaire Impasse de Mourgues: founded in 1958 by Bernard Coutaz, harmonia mundi is now considered throughout the world as one of the most prestigious classical music labels. With 50 new releases per year and more than 2000 recordings in the catalogue, his production covers the entire repertoire from the early Middle Ages to the present day.

Arles is of course a city of art with a Van Gogh pedestrian circuit and a foundation.

And don't forget the Departmental Museum of Ancient Arles and the Museon Arlaten, a departmental museum of ethnography created at the end of the nineteenth century by the poet Frédéric Mistral, a "place of memory" of Provençal society.

Finally, from afar, you can see the Luma Tower designed by Frank Gehry and which hosts a famous photography festival throughout the summer.

And the Camargue: famous for its rice, its landscape changes throughout the year, whether the rice fields are flooded, growing or harvested. Some organic rice producers where you can stop and even taste.

Finally, the Camargue bull or "biou" is at the origin of many traditions. He lives in the heart of the manades in the Camargue and becomes the king of the arena during the Golden Cockade in July and the Camargue races. The farms are made either for meat (stew or gardiane) or for Camargue races (bulls and horses), or for bullfights (in Arles, feria during the Easter weekend with a big rice festival).



TOTAL DISTANCE: 41,9 km

TOTAL ALTITUDE DIFFERENCE: n/a

DIFFICULTY: easy - distance demanding

SOIL: miscellaneous

ITINERARY GPX





5.

THE BEE WALLS OF PROVENCE



Honey has been known since prehistoric times and humans have always consumed it. The only sweetening product known for a long time (apart from a few sweet fruits such as grapes, dates, figs), honey has always been part of traditional agricultural production before it was dethroned by the use of cane sugar with the discovery of America and competed in the nineteenth century by beet sugar.

The first bee walls were made by nature itself. The insects build their wax combs in the crevices of the rocks where they find the ideal conditions for their installation. Such walls have been found in caves dating back to the Neolithic period in Spain, Rhodesia and Nepal. Closer to home, this is the case of the Rocher de Cire near Monieux, the Nesque gorges, the Barre des Abeilles in the cliffs of the Tallagard ravine in Salon-de-Provence.

If the Neolithic period is characterized by the transition from gathering to agriculture, from hunting to breeding, it is also marked by the invention of beekeeping, which replaces the wild harvesting of honey that our ancestors found in natural cavities or hollow trees. The bee shepherd was born and with him the care of the hive.

And first of all, we had to find a new habitat for the bees. Quite naturally, man reproduced the natural habitat of bees (the trunk of a hollow tree) by building a hive made of a tree trunk or, in regions where the cork oak grew, a cylinder of cork plates grouted with clay and closed with a cork lid. This device is called brusc in Provence.

In areas where cork oaks were not available, beehives were made of woven rye straw, bound together with wicker strands or broom stems. In Provence, this type of hive is called palhous. It was not until the end of the nineteenth century that wooden beehives were built with movable frames inside for the bees to make their wax combs.

Why a wall? But bruscs and palhous are fragile. Also, the beekeeper, concerned about the comfort of his bees, seeks to protect the hives from bad weather (rain, wind, snow, cold or excessive heat), from the wanderings of wild animals (foxes, wild boars) or domestic animals (dogs, sheep, goats). The idea is to place the hives in niches dug into the rock or built into dry stone walls.

From a simple shelter in a retaining wall (bancaù), the apier evolved into the construction of larger and larger walls as the demand for honey increased. Bee walls can be found in most parts of France and even in England where they are the privilege of stately homes.

But it is in Provence that they are the most numerous and the largest. The ideal location is half shade, half sun in a quiet place away from the passage of people and animals. The land should be healthy away from marshy areas but close to a water source, river, pond, drinking trough. It must also be free of weeds so as not to hinder the flight of bees. The best orientation is South/South-East so that the bees can get active as soon as the first rays of sunlight appear. It is also a protection against the Mistral. It should also be located in the vicinity of large uncultivated areas with abundant flowering.

Most of the niches are covered with a lintel made of either a lauze (1) or ashlar (in rare cases bearing the date of construction) but some are barrel-vaulted (2). Mullions and supports are very varied: slates, cut stones, blocks, stonework, tiles. The supports are slightly inclined outwards to allow rainwater to drain away and are located 30 cm to one metre from the ground to protect the hives from moisture and to clear their entrance from tall grass that hinders the flight of bees. The average height of the hives is 50 to 80 cm, the width 60 to 70 cm, the depth 30 to 50 cm. Most of the bee walls are rustic in construction, but some show obvious aesthetic and architectural concern. Like dry stone huts, bee walls are of a wide variety. Family apiaries are made up of a maximum of ten hives placed in retaining walls or fences. Sufficient to meet the needs of a single family, they provided supplementary agricultural production that contributed to the self-sufficient consumption characteristic of an agro-pastoral economy in the same way as the farmyard, the vegetable garden and the orchard. They were therefore located near the main house. Then come the monastic apiaries where it can be assumed that the beehives provided, in addition to the honey for the monks' consumption, the beeswax necessary for the making of candles and candles. Finally, the large walls with 20 to 60 niches testify to commercial activity. Mainly distributed in the Bouches-du-Rhône and Vaucluse, they probably date from the XVIII and XIX centuries.



TOTAL DISTANCE: 12 km

TOTAL ALTITUDE DIFFERENCE: 125 m

DIFFICULTY: easy

SOIL: asphalt, gravel

ITINERARY GPX



5. Thematic routes in Italy



1.

THE LAST JOURNEY OF SAINT FRANCIS



The route winds along various paths, retracing the last earthly journey of the “poverello” (poor man) from Assisi and the mysticism of the Angel's Cave and the Michaelmas cult, also paying attention to the discovery of the flora and fauna of the Apennines and also rediscovering an ancient lost profession , that of the charcoal burner.

The starting point of the excursion is easily accessible by private means of transport: following the local road to Monte Pennino, you reach the starting point. Here it is possible to observe a table that shows us what we are going to discover in the first section of the route: in 2014 from a project of the Università Agraria di Bagnara (Community of original families) a path thematic, dedicated to the knowledge of an ancient profession that has now almost disappeared, but was once very widespread in these areas: the charcoal burner.

Thus was born the "Sentiero delle Carbonaie", in which the various phases of construction of the charcoal pile were reconstructed. To complete the enjoyment of this splendid walk among the memories of this ancient profession, students of the “F. Sbarretti” of the Omnicomprensive Institute “D. Alighieri of Nocera Umbra, who illustrated, with various tables along the entire route, the specimens of flora and fauna present in this area of the Apennines. Having undertaken the first climb along path 302, accompanied by the tables drawn by primary school children, we reach a first point of interest: on the left it is possible to see a series of wall structures called "bridles": these structures were built in 1957, after that the water coming from Monte Pennino ended up creating a sort of "weirs" of water, debris and trees in the village of Bagnara below. Continuing at the crossroads following the signs for path 302 (E1-SI), we arrive at the first stage of the "Sentiero delle Carbonaie": the first step in the construction of the charcoal pile is the choice of the so-called "square" and the laying of the "rocchina ” (the small castle), i.e. the four poles that will constitute the heart of the charcoal pit. We then reach the second stage: with wisdom, the charcoal burner begins to arrange the wood around the "rocchina".

This activity is called "involgitura" (wrapping) and requires a lot of experience to be carried out correctly.

In the third stage it is possible to admire the coal pit in section, admiring all the wonderful engineering of this structure built with extreme wisdom by simple men, who dedicated their lives to preserving this wise art. The charcoal burner is ready in the fourth stage: all that remained for the charcoal burner was to light it and watch over it for days. The color of the smoke signaled when the coal was ready and when the charcoal burner stopped smoking it was time for "sommondatura" (winnowing). Left to cool, at the first light of dawn, the coal was discovered, the precious fruit of this patient art.

To better enter into the magic of this ancient profession, in the last stage it is possible to visit the reconstruction of a typical charcoal burner's home and his tools and instruments: the charcoal burner spent days and days in the woods, to carefully watch over the charcoal burner: the forest it thus became not only the setting of his work, but of his life itself. Once this immersion in a distant past is over, the journey continues: you go back on the path already travelled, until you reach the intersection with path 302B: after the climb you can enjoy some refreshment in a small area Pic-nic, before continuing the journey towards the most mystical destination of this excursion.

We finally reach the "Grotta dell'Angelo" (Angel's Cave): the cave, which in its features resembles the most famous and largest cave in the Gargano, is also known as "Grotta Sant'Angelo in Apennino" or "Grotta di San Michele". It is precisely to the Archangel Michael, the warrior Angel symbol of eternal protection in the battle against evil, that the cave is dedicated. Its ancient history originates around the 6th century when a group of hermits decided to found a sanctuary dedicated to the Archangel. It then welcomed Benedictine monks, appearing in numerous historical documents and becoming a place of particular devotion, also linked to the properties of the water coming from it, used both for the therapy of men, especially against malarial fevers, and for the care of animals, returning from the Maremma infested by malarial anopheles. But it was in the summer of 1226 that the Grotta (cave) was the scene of one of the most noteworthy historical and mystical moments: Saint Francis of Assisi, now seriously ill, decided to retire to the hermitage of the Grotta dell'Angelo (as attested by numerous historical sources including the Franceschina of Frate Oddi from the 14th century), to find relief from the summer heat, refreshment in the water of the Grotto and its beneficial properties, but above all to heal body and soul in prayer and contemplation that the Hermitage ensured, relying on the protection of the beloved San Michele.

However, once the news of his worsening reached Assisi, the city organized a group of knights (the so-called "knights of Satriano"), with the task of bringing the "Poverello" back to his native city, avoiding that the remains of the Saint could be seized by death in a different city.

The knights arrive precisely at the Hermitage of Grotta Sant'Angelo, setting off again towards Assisi with a now extremely suffering Francis: thus the last journey of Francis of Assisi begins from the Grotta dell'Angelo, the saint who perhaps more than any other another manages to inspire so much devotion throughout the world, but also one of the greatest walkers in history, a mystical revolutionary, an extraordinary example of humanity, peace and brotherhood.

After the stop in the mystical atmosphere of the Cave, we continue the route. Retracing part of the outward path, you reach the intersection with path 69 (path present in the Monte Subasio Map and marked by red signs), which, after a short stop in a very panoramic point, where it is possible to admire Bagnara, the Piano di Collecroce and M. Subasio, takes us up to Fonte Murata: the toponym is evidently connected to the wall structure that we face when we reach the place. In fact, you can clearly observe the structure to ensure the watering of the flocks of the underlying village of Bagnara: expanded in 1957, already in 1700 there was news of repair of the old fountain, probably of Roman origin. From here, taking path 302A, you descend towards the starting point.



TOTAL DISTANCE: 5,9 km

TOTAL ALTITUDE DIFFERENCE: 305 m

DIFFICULTY: easy

SOIL: stone

ITINERARY GPX





2.

FROM MARMORE WATERFALLS TO PIEDILUCO LAKE



The starting point will be in Marmore Waterfalls's parking area next to the lower viewpoint's ticket office. The excursion will start on the "Green Way" trail that will join a path leading to Mazzelvetta Mount. While walking to Rocca di Alborno a bridge will be crossed. From there it will be possible to see the Medio Nera channel flowing into the Lake. This channel takes the water 42 km upstream from the Nera river, from there it travels through the mountains to the lake. The channel was built to increase the flow of the lake that powers Galleto's hydroelectric power station. The path continues until Rocca di Alborno and Piediluco Lake will be reached. The excursion will take a stop in Piediluco where the trekkers will be able to enjoy a lakeside lunch in Baraonda Restaurant, here they'll have the opportunity to taste little fishes called Carbonaretti, typical of the lake. After lunch a ferry will be taken in order to cross the lake. From the boat it will be possible to imagine Galileo Galilei doing some experiments about Relativity proving that all objects fall with the same acceleration. To reach Marmore, a path will be taken joining itself with trail number 6 leading back to Marmore Waterfalls's parking area, the initial starting point.



TOTAL DISTANCE: 15,6 km

TOTAL ALTITUDE DIFFERENCE: 1121 m

DIFFICULTY: E

SOIL: stone, gravel, asphalt

ITINERARY GPX





3.

ALONG THE PATH FROM BOLSENA TO ORVIETO



The route that links Orvieto to Bolsena has very ancient roots and dates back to the protohistoric era, when the Gran Carro settlement dominated the Volsiniese territory in the 9th century BC. It is a village now submerged by the waters of the lake which was at the time at the center of a vast agricultural plain and which also exploited resources obviously linked to the lake, sheep farming, harvesting and breeding. Of particular interest are the grape seeds recovered in the excavation campaigns which demonstrate the practice of viticulture. It can be said that a cultural swing was created between Bolsena and Orvieto which saw, from the archaic era, Orvieto prevail again, until 264 BC, when the Romans deported the Etruscans from the city of Velzna/Orvieto again to Bolsena, the who lived on the shores of the lake until the 4th century AC, and then returned to the cliff following the arrival of the barbarian populations.

Along the road that connected the two centers there is therefore a whole series of valuable emergencies.

Two important roads passed through the Roman Volsinii, the Cassia and the Traiana Nova, the latter commissioned by the emperor in 108 AD. to reduce the distance needed to reach the "fines clusinorum", the borders of the Chiusi territory. Large paved sections of the two routes can still be seen near the town of Bolsena, upstream from it, although partly covered by vegetation and landslides. In the Umbrian territory, in the municipality of Castel Giorgio, near the Alfina and Fanello farms, the discovery of a lithic base and two column drums was carried out, structures pertaining to buildings of a certain thickness: we are near one of the ancient routes identified on the basis of the remains of paved sections and on the emergencies that characterize the limits of the Alfina plateau towards Orvieto, for example Monte Tigno and Casalunga; for the route, the relevance to the consular road Cassia, or to one of its numerous diverticula, was hypothesized. The Via Cassia developed on pre-existing routes, evidenced, for example, by Etruscan necropolises in relation to settlements pertaining to the territory of the Etruscan Velzna - Orvieto - as in the case of Lauscello. In this locality, in 1889, the first regular excavation campaign was carried out, on the estate of the Faina Counts, on the basis of the previous accidental discovery of an Etruscan tomb.

They were identified approximately 15 underground tombs, dug into the volcanic deposit and partly collapsed. The recovered items allow us to date the deposition to the Hellenistic age; characteristic is the presence, for the Volsini area, of silvered pottery, for which a local manufacture has been assumed and which allows us to place the tombs in question in the second half of the 4th century. B.C. or in the first of III.

Some of the graves featured a low platform on three sides and niches corresponding to the short dromos; the presence of an important axis road, which will then be reaffirmed by the passage of Via Cassia, allows us to hypothesize the presence of routes precise on the Alfinia plateau already starting from the Hellenistic era, and, very probably, already from the classical and archaic. The presence also of Capuchin tombs (simple Roman era tombs built with the use of tiles and tiles to cover the body of the deceased, almost always without funerary objects), found in a second time, they highlight the continuity of frequenting the area, for the which one must therefore think of as an important settlement placed under control of the communication route and for the agricultural exploitation of fertile natural lands volcano of the plateau. The same indication comes from the necropolises of Casa Perazza and Ponte di Tavole, the latter much closer to Orvieto and the passage called Sasso tagliato. Also testifying to the correctness of the historical direction is the discovery at pod. S. Giovanni, by Gamurrini, of a stone votive altar serene (trachyte?) with dedicatory inscription to Hercules: *HERCULI SANCTO / L(UCIUS)VIBIUS / LEGITIMUS / V(OTUM) S(OLVIT) L(IBENS) M(ERITO)*. The location of the supposed place of discovery which, according to Gamurrini, was precisely corresponding to a fork in the Via Cassia, could be particular meaning placed in correlation with the figure of Hercules, often in relation to the streets and wayfarers, due to his mythical epic. The location of the stone element is no longer known today. In proximity of so-called "sasso Tagliato" – the boulder that would open to let the procession pass brought the corporal from Bolsena to Orvieto, in reality a cut from the Etruscan era for the Alfinia plank - a paved stretch was visible, with a width varying between 3 and 3.50 meters ; the same street then continues along the Tamburino road, where other paved sections are preserved, in the direction of the Porta Maggiore of Orvieto, which probably constituted the only ancient access to the city, the *μικροεισοδοξ* to which Procopius refers of Caesarea (Bell. Goth. II, 20, 7-12). The Tamburino pavement still constitutes a bisector today significant part of the landscape around Orvieto and along its route you can notice a series of important historical-cultural elements: from the church of Santo Spirito degli Armeni, to the cemetery monumental, to arrive at the Ponte del Sole, near which one of the most important areas is located

Archaeological sites linked to the Etruscan civilisation: the fanum voltumnae, the federal sanctuary of the Etruscans, linked to religious, civil and political-economic ceremonies. The climb towards Porta Maggiore leads to Via della Cava, the steep and fortified access road to the city with the Etruscan wall halfway up, demonstrating the composite series of defensive elements that made Orvieto an impregnable stronghold.



TOTAL DISTANCE: 18,2 km

TOTAL ALTITUDE DIFFERENCE: 600 m

DIFFICULTY: easy

SOIL: gravel

ITINERARY GPX





4.

MOUNT SIBILLA AND ITS MAGIC



Opening the books we find numerous places marked by fairy legend. The Cave of the Sibilla (Grotta della Sibilla), the Fairy Sources, the Fairy Paths and the Fairy Road, and in Pretare, in the province of Ascoli Piceno, there is still a representation-the Descent of the Fairies that evokes the presence of these fascinating and mythological creatures in these localities.

The Cave of the Fairies, known by many simply as the Cave of the Sibilla takes its name from the legend of the Apennine Sibyl according to which this location, was nothing more than an access point to the underground realm of Queen Sibyl. Sibyl was an ancient priestess capable of predicting the future.

Digging even deeper into the legend we learn that, Sibyl, was a good fairy seer and enchantress, a connoisseur of medicine and astronomy- who issued her responses in a very polished language and at times difficult to interpret. However, over the centuries, in the period of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, writers, poets and men of letters from every place in the world with their imaginations have indulged in describing the fantastic world of the Sibyl, often neglecting even her benevolent personality and turning her into a diabolical sorceress.

The priestess Sibyl is said to have been surrounded by numerous handmaidens, who used to go out through the mountains in the course of the night and had to retreat to the kingdom by sunrise so as not to be excluded by Sibyl. The fairies, according to legend, frequented the lake of Pilate, the villages of Foce, Montemonaco, Montegallo and were stationed between Pian grande, Pian Piccolo and Pian Perduto of Castelluccio di Norcia and Pretare.

The magical ring of Mount Sibilla, a magical experience with a touch of fantasy that takes you back in time many centuries.

Arriving at the Sibilla Refuge (1540m asl) with your own vehicle, take the path that goes up behind the refuge on the RIGHT (CAI155) that in good pendency leads towards the fork of Mount Zampa (1848m asl).

From there the trail follows the entire ridge of the Sibilla massif with views of the Infernaccio Gorge to the RIGHT and Foce and the Vettore to the LEFT. We arrive at the Sibyl Belt where a small, equipped trail allows you to climb the rock belt and eventually arrive at the Sibyl Cave.

You finally reach the summit (2173m asl) and from here you can continue along the ridge downhill. Arrived at the lay-by where the carriage road ends you turn left and continue along it (CAI156). With a short deviation you can reach Rifugio Mazzaroni (Banditella) where you can have one last break. Then you can go back to the main road until you reach the refuge Sibilla from where you started.

It is an excellent loop on the symbolic mountain of the Sibillini mountain range, easy comfortable and very impressive.



TOTAL DISTANCE: 11,62 km

TOTAL ALTITUDE DIFFERENCE: 1270 m

DIFFICULTY: medium

SOIL: gravel

ITINERARY GPX





5.

CALVI - OTRICOLI TWO FARMING COMMUNITIES AT THE GATES OF UMBRIA



The proposed itinerary runs through country routes touching various points of cultural and enogastronomic interest.

It starts from Calvi dell'Umbria, a community of around 1800 souls, perched on tufo walls, encompassing the medieval nucleus with its alleys, steps and small piazzas that open on to an impressive panorama with Monte Soratte in the background.

The town, although small, is full of places of cultural and artistic interest such as churches, important buildings and the former Monastery which now contains the offices of the local council and a museum with an important collection of paintings.

From Calvi's main square the main road leads down to La Corte, home to the Molino Oleario Frezza.

The Frezza's, oil producers for several generations, offer an excellent extravergin olive oil made from 100% Italian olives of moraiolo and leccino varieties, cold pressed and unfiltered within 24 hours of picking, and naturally decanted in underground vats at a constant temperature of 13°C.

From the Mill one proceeds ,along country lanes, to the second enogastronomic point of interest: Veneri the cheese makers. The firm, also a family business, has been raising sheep and producing cheese for several generations, offering exquisite ricotta, caciotta and various other artisan sheep cheeses.

Crossing the main road, small country lanes will take you through a panorama of green hills and olive groves, to two farm holidays.

Here as well as receiving a warm welcome, can taste various homemade sweets and jams.

The last point of interest of the food and wine experience is the Santo lolo vineyard. Sculpted into the side of a hill, you're presented with 3 stoned arches and a large portico. In these small and lovingly cared for vineyard, modern technology lives alongside traditional mods of production, creating a variety of high quality wines. The whole chain of production takes place on the premises,from looking after the vines to the bottling of the wines and sales. You can book guided tours and tasting in the company of Irene, oenologist and sommelier.

Our itinerary ends in Otricoli, where we are able to visit the town centre and other points of historic interest.

In the old town, passing through the impressive medieval gate, you come across ancient buildings with bits or Roman architectural salvage incorporated in the walls. At the highest point of the town, sits the Church of the “Collegiata”, an important example of pre-roman 7th century architecture. Going out of the external gate of the medieval town, you can see the well preserved remains of walls of various different eras.

This leads down to the plain of the river Tiber, where you reach the ruins of the old city of Oricolum whose harbour on the river Tiber was the point where goods were transferred to the Via Flaminia. The ruins which you can visit through footpaths, includes a Theatre, a Spa, a large Ninfeo, the Anfiteatro and some of the old Via Flaminia.



TOTAL DISTANCE: 16,18 km

TOTAL ALTITUDE DIFFERENCE: 574 m

DIFFICULTY: easy

SOIL: gravel, asphalt

ITINERARY GPX





6.

VALTOPINA, THE SMALL VILLAGE ON THE ANCIENT VIA FLAMINIA



Historical-cultural circular path that starts from the town of Valtopina, an Italian municipality of 1,300 inhabitants in the province of Perugia located close to Mount Subasio along the Topino river valley, and climbs through a dense pine forest until reaching the hamlet of Casa Tommaso, where the inhabitants are still dedicated to agriculture and livestock breeding. The typical activity of the area remains, however, the extraction of truffles, with various agricultural companies selling not only typical products such as cheeses and honey, but also truffles extracted from their truffle fields.

After a short stretch of cart track, you arrive at the Serra Castle (10th century), which, together with the castle of Poggio and Pasano, was one of the most important settlements during the Middle Ages: the ruins of the powerful and evocative walls they are still visible, as well as the remains of two of the four towers, one facing south and the other east. We continue through an olive grove, up to the ancient medieval village of Armenzano, located on the slopes of Mount Subasio, in a still uncontaminated park. It stands on a hill dominated by its Castle and its name derives from the Latin "armentum", herd, because it was a town of breeders; during the Christmas period the village comes alive with a splendid living nativity scene.

Immersed in a forest of centuries-old oaks, you arrive at the Buccilli Mill, better known as "Valentino's Mill". It is the only mill still active, located on the slopes of Subasio, between Spello and Valtopina, born in the mid-nineteenth century, founded and always managed by the Buccilli family; it has a small lake, fed by an artificial canal, into which the Anna ditch and the Grande ditch converge, with ducks and swans; the milling activity, strictly with stone millstones, of wheat and corn provides a quality production but limited in quantity, also due to the complex and ancient mechanism that regulates the mill; the flour is sold or used in the preparation, artisanal and according to ancient recipes, of bread, Easter cakes and traditional local desserts, in the attached oven, traditional and wood-fired, but managed with precautions that make it compliant with the law.

Finally, you travel along a stretch of paved road, coasting the Fosso dell'Anna, a small stream that flows into the Topino river and which has a source of sulphurous water along its bed, to conclude the circular path and return to the starting point.



TOTAL DISTANCE: 15 km

TOTAL ALTITUDE DIFFERENCE: 590 m

DIFFICULTY: easy

SOIL: gravel, asphalt

[ITINERARY GPX](#)





7.

MENOTRE WATERFALLS



Historical-naturalistic circular path that starts from Belfiore, a town in the Municipality of Foligno, known in the Middle Ages with the name of Fragnano: it constituted a "slope castle", i.e. a watchtower, for the road that led from Foligno to the plateau of Colfiorito. It is said that the current name was coined by Queen Christina of Sweden who, passing through the Via Lauretana and staying in nearby Pale, found the old unpleasant name for such a beautiful place.

Once you arrive at the Altolina car park, take the uphill path of the waterfalls formed by the Menotre, a high hill river that flows entirely in the territory of Foligno mountain area; at Pale the river falls into the valley below forming a whole series of suggestive waterfalls surrounded by thick vegetation; the first waterfall, called "bride's veil", is the largest and on the right there is the entrance to a cave that passes behind it and which communicates with a further opening on the left side at the top.

At the end of the climb, you arrive directly at the village of Pale, a mountain hamlet in the municipality of Foligno, which is located along the state road 77 Val di Chienti in the direction of Colfiorito and develops near Menotre river, a small river, but with a good constant flow, whose waters are partially captured for the production of hydroelectric energy and which in the past constituted the wealth of the town, powering several paper mills. Here there are many interesting sites to visit: the Castle (15th century), the Church of S. Andrea (17th century), with its terracotta façade, the Church of SS. Biagio and Margherita (12th century), which inside preserves a wooden group from the 14th century and paintings by Felice Damiani, a 16th century painter, the Villa Elisei (1268), which also welcomed Queen Christina of Sweden and Cosimo III de' Medici and which was later abandoned and used as a paper mill (from inside you can access the "Abbadessa caves", which also contain stalactites, stalagmites and columns).

In addition to visiting the main sites of interest, in the town of Pale you also have the opportunity to stop and taste the typical products of the area expertly cooked in local restaurants (trattorie).

Leaving the town, you walk along a stretch of olive groves, then go up to visit the Hermitage of Santa Maria di Giacobbe, reachable by following a steep path along the mountain wall. Tradition says that Mary of Jacob, one of the pious women, retired here in penance. Inside there are frescoes dating from the 13th to the 16th century: in one of these the cup of the Holy Grail also appears. In the past the place was guarded by a hermit (hence the name Eremo di Pale), while now it is entrusted to the care of the Santesato Institute. The building is so well excavated and built on the rock that only a careful look allows it to be identified by those traveling along state road 77, even though it is only a short distance away.

Once the visit is over, you descend towards the town of Belfiore, along a path surrounded by olive trees, thus returning to the starting point.



TOTAL DISTANCE: 5 km

TOTAL ALTITUDE DIFFERENCE: 330 m

DIFFICULTY: easy

SOIL: gravel, asphalt

[ITINERARY GPX](#)





8.

THE ANCIENT HERMITAGE PATH



Historical-religious circular path starting from the Hermitage of San Giuliano, 5 km on the road that goes up from Spoleto to Montelucio. It belongs to the 12th century but its origins are linked to the hermit movement on Montelucio which occupied the slopes of the mountain between the 5th and 6th centuries; according to tradition, Isaac, originally from Syria, arrived in Spoleto around 528, fleeing from the persecution of the emperor Anastasius, and chose Montelucio as a natural place of isolation and prayer; he was soon followed by other hermits who occupied cells and natural caves scattered across the mountain; a virgin named Gregoria offered Isaac her lands located on the hill, to find a monastery and a church dedicated to San Giuliano martyr, which would be a reference for the hermit colony.

Through a path immersed in a holm oak forest, you go along the old aqueduct that supplied the city of Spoleto, until you reach the so-called Sasso Forato, a short tunnel dug in 1856.

Walking along a cart track, you reach the villages of Le Aie and Le Porelle, small clusters of houses belonging to the Municipality of Spoleto, where time stopped after the Second World War and the inhabitants are still dedicated to rural life. Here, there are several agricultural companies that sell their typical products: cheeses, ricotta, eggs, poultry, vegetables and fruit.

We continue, descending into an holm oak forest, up to Montelucio, a hamlet in the Municipality of Spoleto, whose name derives from *lucus* (sacred forest), as since ancient times it has been a place of pilgrimage for various hermits, including Saint Francis. The Sacred Forest, with the Hermitage of San Francesco inside, is a Site of Community Interest according to EEC directives.

Finally, you return to the starting point through a very panoramic path from which you can observe the entire Spoleto valley from above.



TOTAL DISTANCE: 8 km

TOTAL ALTITUDE DIFFERENCE: 400 m

DIFFICULTY: easy

SOIL: gravel, asphalt

ITINERARY GPX





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