

The Arts Society Sevenoaks Trip to Umbria and Tuscany with Tailored Travel

Day One Spoleto

On April 20th 2026, our group of 26, flew from Gatwick to Rome and were met by our charming tour guide leader Andrea. We transferred smoothly to the San Luca hotel in Spoleto, a hill town in the south of Umbria. Our rooms were comfortable and the lounge area big enough to accommodate us all. The breakfasts were exceptional and we were well looked after.



Day Two Spoleto and Spello



Using the amazing moving walkways, we ascended easily into Spoleto to meet our Umbrian art specialist, Maura. She showed us around the ancient town and its sights. The Etruscan and Roman city walls, the impressive Ponte Delle Torri and the fabulous Romanesque duomo. Wherein, we studied the work of Fra Filippo Lippi, beautiful and delicate frescoes of *The Life of Mary* and learnt something of his scandalous life as a monk who painted for the Médicis and eventually married a nun who was also his muse.



After lunch we travelled to nearby Spello and explored a maze of cobble streets with hints of the forthcoming flower competitions that the town is famous for. Our destination was the Santa Maria Maggiore and the Baglioni Chapel to see the amazing Pintoricchio version of *The Life of Mary*, whose frescoes were painted in 1500. Maura talked us through this incredibly detailed and beautiful piece and then afterwards there was time for gelato.



Day three Gubbio



Gubbio is a stunning example of Umbrian architecture, bijou shopping and ancient traditions. The spectacular old centre with amazing views from its hilltop setting was a delight. We heard about the race to the higher hillside with the great wooden candles and the excitement that the race was generating in the town. We explored the skyline defining Palazzo dei Consoli and drifted around Piazzas, relaxed and content.

Day Four Sansepolcro and Arezzo



Joining us in Tuscany was our new expert, Deborah who took us through the genius that is Piero della Francesca. In the Museo Civico, in his hometown of Sansepolcro, we saw the gold leaf encrusted *Madonna della Misericordia* as well as “the best picture in the world”: *The Resurrection*. It certainly lived up to its billing, and we spent some time admiring his skills of composition and storytelling. Unusually, the Roman soldiers are asleep, yet to become aware of the miracle that has happened.

The Legend of the True Cross in Arezzo was our next Piero gem, and we loved the dynamic storytelling and wonderful restoration in the thirteenth century Bacci Chapel in the Basilica of San Francesco. Its accurate perspective, engaging imagery and references to the Umbrian landscape were stunning.

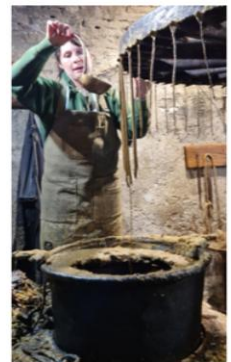
Later, we toured the Casa Vasari, home to the art writer, who was central to the publicity of the early Renaissance painters.



Day Five Montefalco and Bevagna



On another gloriously sunny day, we drove north once more through the rolling Umbrian landscape. Our first stop was the fourteenth century church of San Francesco to study the work of Benozzo Gozzoli (1420-97) a pupil of Fra Angelico. Back under the care of Maura, we learnt about the subject of the frescos: Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone (c. 1181 – 3 October 1226) commonly known as Saint Francis. There was also an opportunity to see the contrasting style of Perugino, teacher of Raphael and irreverent painter of biblical stories. His *Nativity* is shown below left. In the gorgeous town of Bevagna, we got to see how medieval paper and candles were made.



Day Six Orvieto



This was our final day, and we had yet another amazing sight to take in: the Duomo di Orvieto, dating from 1290. According to the city's guidebook, it is "the finest example of Italian Gothic religious architecture" and "halfway between the earth and the sky". The settlement itself predates the Etruscans, and one could see the attraction: the outcrop that the city is built upon rises about 60 metres, high enough to spot

approaching enemies, yet soft enough to be carved out wells and tunnels.

This spectacular cathedral dominated the town and contained the spectacular frescos of Signorelli, vast and theatrical and a message to live a pure and innocent life of good works or face the consequences. Lessons learnt we had an excellent lunch, bought our final souvenirs and one last ice cream. A highly satisfying note to end a brilliant trip.



Our thanks to Tailored Travel and especially Andrea our lead guide and Maura and Deborah, our Renaissance experts; highly recommend.

