

La Verna to Assisi on the Way of St. Francis: With Russ and Jane Eanes



Russ Eanes is a writer/walker/cyclist from the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia and author of several books on pilgrimage, including the bestselling *The Walk of a Lifetime: 500 Miles on the Camino de Santiago*. Since 2019 he and his wife Jane have focused their time and energy on another pilgrimage route, the Way of St. Francis, between Florence and Rome. This inspiring route links places of significance in the life of St. Francis as it courses its way through the lush scenery of Tuscany and Umbria, passing famous Franciscan hermitages, hilltop towns and mountaintop castles, a walking experience that is unmatched in both beauty, culture, history and spirituality.

Continuing his journeys and writing, in 2023, Russ wrote and *published Pilgrim Paths to Assisi: 300 Miles on the Way of St. Francis*, a memoir of his life-long devotion to St. Francis and his love for pilgrimage. He followed it up in 2025 with *Good Morning, Good People!*, stories from the life of Francis that go with the pilgrimage.

Out of his love for pilgrimage and an enthusiasm to share the experience, his books led him next to leading groups. In 2026, for the fourth season, Russ and Jane will lead a group along a portion of the pilgrimage route to Assisi, a 13-day itinerary that allows pilgrims to drink in the wonder of the experience without having to deal with arranging all the details.

Russ and Jane hope that you can join them!

Itinerary

MAY 10, 2026 – FLORENCE - Meet in Florence at the hotel in the afternoon. It is possible to reserve one or more extra nights on your own before the group's arrival. Group orientation dinner at the hotel. (Dinner)

MAY 11: FLORENCE – LA VERNA (Dinner) - Group transport to La Verna. After breakfast, take a private bus transfer to La Verna. Upon arrival, meet your Italian English-speaking guide. Visit the Convent and the mystical wood below. It's possible to get a guided tour with a friar. Stay in the historic Foresteria, the guest house of the monastery. (Dinner)

MAY 12: LA VERNA – CAPRESE MICHELANGELO - **17 km**

This is a beautiful day of walking as we descend into the upper Tiber Valley. Dinner in the hotel in Caprese Michelangelo, which is the birthplace of the famous Tuscan artist. Along the way we will stop at the famous Franciscan chapel Eremo della Casella. (Breakfast-Box Lunch–Dinner)

MAY 13: CAPRESE M. to SANSEPOLCRO - **12km**

Transport from Caprese Michelangelo to La Montagne, where we walk to Montecasale. Montecasale is still a Franciscan convent associated with two legends of St. Francis. Walk from there down to Sansepolcro, a delightful town, the last in Tuscany before we head into Umbria. (Breakfast-Box Lunch–Dinner)

MAY 14: SANSEPOLCRO – CITERNA - CITTA' DI CASTELLO - **12 km**

This is an easy day along the valley floor of the Tiber River. Citerna has a church with an historic, early sculpture by the famous artist Donatelli. Private transfer by bus from Citerna to Città di Castello for the night. Dinner at the hotel in Città di Castello. (Breakfast-Box Lunch–Dinner)

MAY 15: CITERNA – CITTÀ DI CASTELLO – **20 km**

Citerna to Città di Castello. Another delightful day walking, ending in an historic, walled medieval city which is worth exploring. Dinner in hotel or a local restaurant in Città di Castello (Breakfast-Box Lunch–Dinner)

MAY 16: CITTA' DI CASTELLO – PIETRALUNGA - **15 km.**

Transport from Città di Castello to Candeggio, where the group will start to walk to Pietralunga through undulating hills, as we leave the Upper Tiber Valley. We stop for a picnic lunch at Pieve di Saddi, a restored 6th-century church, now open as a simple pilgrim hostel. Originally founded by the Lombards, Pietralunga is famous for its truffles. Accommodation in hotel and dinner in a local restaurant with a black truffle menu (Breakfast-Box Lunch–Dinner)

MAY 17: PIETRALUNGA – GUBBIO - 16 km

Pietralunga to Gubbio, with pick-up after Loretto, though it's possible to walk all the way to Gubbio, making a total of 26 km. Another day of undulating trails. No box lunch provided by the hotel, but it is possible to purchase food and drinks in the local market or bar in Pietralunga. (Breakfast-Dinner)

MAY 18: GUBBIO

Rest day in Gubbio, with lunch or supper on your own. Explore the dramatic and medieval town of Gubbio. Take the funicular to the top of the mountain and get a view of the valley, including Assisi and Mt. Subasio in the distance. Visit the church which houses the burial remains of the famous Wolf of Gubbio, tamed by St. Francis. (Breakfast)

MAY 19: GUBBIO - SAN PIETRO IN V. – GIOMICI- 16k

Gubbio to San Pietro in Vigneto. Arrival in San Pietro in Vigneto and transfer to the accommodation, Castle of Giomici. Dinner at the restaurant of the Castle. (Breakfast-Box Lunch-Dinner)

MAY 20: BISCINA – GIOMICI - 15 km

After breakfast, transfer to Biscina to start the hike to Giomici. Assisi gets closer as we head up and down over hills and cross streams as we make our way above the Chiascio river. (Breakfast-Box Lunch - Dinner)

MAY 21: VALFABBRICA – ASSISI - 16 km

Short transfer after breakfast to Valfabbrica from Giomici. Hike 16 km. We climb out of the Chiascio valley and head uphill towards Assisi. Halfway, we glimpse our first sight of the famous Basilica of St. Francis. We make our way into the city through a small forest conserve, along a path that takes us directly to the Basilica. Accommodation in Assisi and dinner in a local restaurant. (Breakfast-Box Lunch-Dinner)

MAY 22: Tour the lovely and historic city of Assisi on your own, or with a group. Farewell supper in a local restaurant. (Breakfast-Dinner)

MAY 23: Depart Assisi or stay for your own exploration. It is possible to arrange a private transfer to any airport or extend the stay in Assisi or anywhere.

Pricing and details

What's included:

- Tour hosting and storytelling, by Russ and Jane Eanes
- All accommodations: 13 overnights including breakfast, in hotels
- 11 dinners as well as 8 box-lunches as mentioned in the itinerary
- Italian English-speaking hiking guide from the arrival in La Verna to the arrival in Assisi
- Luggage transfers everyday (1 suitcase per person max 20 kg),
- Pilgrim credential,
- All the private transfers included in the program by private bus/minibus with driver, including transportation to the starting point in La Verna.

What's not included:

- Airfare/flight to and from Florence
- Transportation from Assisi back to Florence (or Rome, if you prefer)
- Travel insurance, which is highly recommended

PRICE PER PERSON IN DOUBLE ROOM € 4165 (\$4825)

SUPPLEMENT SINGLE ROOM € 480 per person (\$556)

(Pricing in USD is based on exchange rate of \$1.16/eruro)

An initial deposit of 35% is due upon registration. Deposits can be paid via check to Russ or Jane Eanes or via Venmo (@russ-eanes)

Our group host services:

1. We have created this itinerary and walked it multiple times. We contact the ground operator and with them, hire a guide and transport.
2. Our goal as a host is to help you have the best experience that you can and that everyone reaches our destination at the end, to celebrate together!
3. We emphasize keeping safe and healthy.
4. We are experienced travelers, trekkers and pilgrims. We work as a team.
5. This is an historic pilgrimage path. We will emphasize that and tell stories along the way. Russ points out historic sites each day. We know the route and know what to expect.
6. Besides his own books, Russ has guidebooks that can be made available to the group at a discount.

7. We will assist with:
 - Travel planning, including flights and ground transportation.
 - Suggested packing list and other travel tips
 - Questions about footwear and outerwear
 - Pre-trip training plan
 - Overseas phone plans
 - Training to walk long-distances
8. On the ground:
 - Help and advice on getting to the departure point and for returning at end of the journey.
 - We'll meet you at the airport and help you with your luggage
 - We give insights into local culture, history, and cuisine
 - We meet with the group each evening ahead of the following day's walk to prepare the everyone for what is ahead.
 - We coordinate logistics for supper and lodging, and any transportation needs and give Google Maps locations for each
 - We walk with the group, and one of us is always walking "sweep" or is aware of the needs of the last walkers in the group. No one gets left behind and we are always in communication with the group.
 - We are the liaison with the tour company (local, from Umbria) and Italian guide
9. We will be in touch quarterly, up until 90 days out. Then monthly, or even more often as necessary. We will gather your travel plans and flight itineraries.
10. We are always available via phone or email before the tour.