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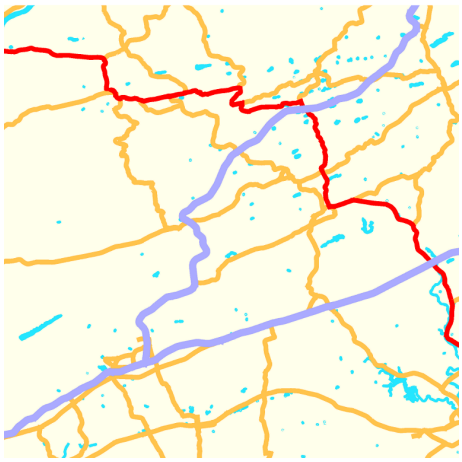


CAMINOS CLASSIC ROUTES

type :	Caminos Hiking Tours Self-Guided
level :	
duration :	46 days
period:	Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct
code:	ITSM490

The complete Southern Via Francigena, from Rome to Santa Maria di Leuca - Italy

46 days, Price On request



930 km between **Lazio, Campania, Basilicata and Puglia**. From Rome to Santa Maria di Leuca: **a spectacular journey among ancient consular roads**, archaeological and naturalistic areas, **castles** and **abbeys**, and boundless horizons where land sky and sea come together. From the Parco dell'Appia Antica to Terracina, Gaeta, Sessa Aurunca and Benevento, a strategic junction between the Via Appia and the Via Traiana, and then off **along the Gargano and Salento** to the destination, to the historic ports of embarkation for the Holy Land.

Route

Day 1 Arrival in Rome

Here you are in the **Eternal City**. We recommend a visit to **St Peter's Square**, **the starting point of your journey** and the arrival point of the entire northern Via Francigena. Don't forget to take a triumphant photo in front of the **Basilica**, before celebrating the start of your journey by feasting on abbacchio, pecorino romano and maybe a nice maritozzo alla con la panna... buon cammino!

Day 2 From Rome to Castel Gandolfo, 26 km

Leaving the ancient Roman walls at Porta San Sebastiano, we find ourselves on **the ancient paving stones** of the **Appia Antica**, which will accompany us for the next few kilometres as we leave Rome. For the next 10 km or so we proceed through ancient **vestiges of Rome's glorious past**: Geta's Tomb, Priscilla's Tomb, Cecilia Metella's Mausoleum, etc. until we reach Frattocchie, where the route leaves the ancient consular road and proceeds in the direction of **Castel Gandolfo**, **the summer residence of the Popes** and today's stage of arrival.

Day 3 From Castel Gandolfo to Velletri and transfer to Cori, 21 km

Leaving Castel Gandolfo we follow a cycle path to Albano Laziale, where we enter **a dense wooded area bordering Lake Albano**. Taking another path through the woods, we continue in the direction of **Nemi**, a town on the lake of the same name. We continue south along the provincial road on an easy pavement, turn left at Clivo Formello and **walk through the woods** for 5 km until we reach Velletri. From here a short transfer will take you to **Cori**, a village rich in history and culture.

Day 4 From Cori to Sermoneta, 19 km

Today's stage begins with a steep dirt track and then a long tarmac section that leads into one of the most interesting areas of Lazio, on the edge of the **Monti Lepini** and the plains of Lazio. After a brief visit to the ancient city of Norma, we leave Norma following an ancient path that first descends and then climbs the hill to **the beautiful medieval village of Sermoneta.**

Day 5 From Sermoneta to Sezze, 11 km

From the pretty historic centre of Sermoneta, we follow a dirt road through the hills of Latium with beautiful landscapes covered in sunflowers and herds of grazing cattle. From the route towards the centre of Sezze, there is **a wonderful view over the Latium plains** as far as the mythical promontory of **Circeo**.

Day 6 From Sezze to Fossanova, transfer to Terracina, 20 km

Leaving the town of Sezze, we take a dirt road that runs along the slopes of the mountain. All around us we can contemplate the landscape of the plains of the province of Latina, as far as the Tyrrhenian coast. We cross the villages of Colle Rotondo and Ceriara, following a path that runs alongside a canal until we reach the town of Priverno. From here a path runs along the canal for the next 6 km to **the abbey of Fossanova**, its majestic presence visible in the distance to the approaching traveller. A splendid example of Gothic architecture, the Cistercian abbey of Fossanova has its roots in the 12th century.

Day 7 From Terracina to Fondi, 22 km

Today you can embark on a captivating panoramic journey from the Cathedral of San Cesareo in Terracina towards Fondi. Along the way, you'll encounter the **ancient paving of the Via Appia** in certain sections. The scenic route is complemented by **the natural beauty of the Monti Ausoni Park**, leading you to the enchanting Monastery of San Magno. This monastery houses a remarkable cycle of frescoes depicting the life of San Benedetto.

Fondi, renowned by Pliny the Elder for its **exceptional wine production**, still bears witness to its ancient grandeur from Roman times.

Day 8 From Fondi to Itri, 16 km

During this stage, you'll traverse a significant stretch of the historic Appian Way, covering 6 kilometers on the Roman-era basalt, following in the footsteps of the earliest travelers. A more contemporary landmark is **the Sant'Andrea fort**, erected on the site of an ancient temple dedicated to Apollo, serving as a strategic post to monitor the border of the Kingdom of Naples. Integral to the journey is the genesis of **Itri**, believed by some to be derived from the Latin word "iter," meaning journey. The city's emblematic structure is the esteemed **castle**, distinguished by three towers of varying shapes and historical periods.

Day 9 From Itri to Formia, 22 km

During this leg, you revisit the **coastal views** as you pass through **Gaeta**, a city of significant importance to Virgil and Dante Alighieri. The prominent landmarks of Gaeta are situated **on the ridge of Monte Orlando**, where the **Angevin Castle** stands majestically, commanding views of the sea and the entire coastline. Proceeding onward, you reach Formia, the concluding city of the tenth stage, as narrated by Homer in his Odyssey. Notable attractions in **Formia** include the **Roman Amphitheater** and the Tomb of Cicero, a grand mausoleum commissioned by Augustus.

Day 10 From Formia to Minturno, 20 km

This leg unfolds predominantly against the azure backdrop of the **sea** along the Lazio coastline. Similar to Formia, **Minturno** also presents its visitors with remarkable remnants from the Roman era, including the Republican Forum and the **Imperial Forum**.

Day 11 From Minturno to Sessa Aurunca, 25 km

Amidst quaint hamlets and **cultivated fields**, your journey will lead you through the **Monte Ofelio forest**. Upon reaching the historic medieval enclave of Castelforte, a delightful experience awaits: within its formidable walls stand the evocative Church of Santa Maria in Pensulis and the ancient thermal baths, renowned since the era of the historian Pliny.

Day 12 From Sessa Aurunca to Teano, 16 km

Depart from Sessa Aurunca and ascend through **a picturesque valley intersected by a flowing stream**. Reach Teano, the site of the **momentous encounter between Garibaldi and Vittorio Emanuele**. Noteworthy attractions include the splendid Temple Theater dedicated to Apollo and the Teanum Sidicinum Archaeological Museum, both deserving of exploration

Day 13 From Teano to Pietramelara, 18 km

This leg is predominantly on asphalt, yet it weaves through numerous **undiscovered small hamlets**, providing a captivating journey into history. Following your departure from Teano, the first village encountered is Riardo, boasting a **Lombard castle**. Subsequently, Pietramelara unfolds with its winding streets surrounding the imposing Lombard tower.

Day 14 From Statigliano to Alife, 18 km

A short morning transfer will take you to Statigliano from where you begin your walk. In today's leg, you'll journey towards the renowned **Alife**, a city that, in comparison to its Roman heyday, still preserves **relics of its utmost glory**, including the **amphitheater** and **cryptoporticus**. Beyond the Roman fortifications, don't overlook the Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta and the Archaeological Museum showcasing the ancient history of Allifae.

Day 15 From Alife to Faicchio, 20 km

The route meanders through charming and captivating **rural lanes**, leading you almost imperceptibly to the commanding **Norman Castle of Gioia Sannitica** that presides over the encompassing valley. Beyond the formidable city walls and beneath the imposing square tower, you'll approach the town of Faicchio. Notable in this area is the Quinto Fabio Massimo Bridge, a historical structure dating back to the Republican era, deserving attention.

Day 16 From Faicchio to Telese Terme, 13 km

A brief stage allows exploration of the **village of San Salvatore Telesino**, renowned for housing the ancient Benedictine Abbey of the Santissimo Salvatore. This abbey once hosted Anselm of Canterbury, the eminent theologian of the Middle Ages. Meanwhile, **Telese Terme**, as indicated by its name, is celebrated for its **spa complex** inaugurated in 1883. Nestled on the slopes of Mount Pugliano, it constitutes a striking naturalistic and archaeological area marked by sinkholes, formed through the collapse of ancient water-carved caves, serving defensive purposes for the Samnites.

Day 17 From Telese Terme to Vitulano, 16 km

This stage poses increased difficulty due to **variations in altitude**, guiding you **from the thermal springs to Solopaca**, renowned for its **DOC wines** and the exquisite Mother Church of the Holy Body of Christ. Notably, the church boasts a substantial bell tower characterized by bold lines, a creation attributed to the renowned Campania architect Luigi Vanvitelli, famed for his design of the magnificent Royal Palace of Caserta.

Continuing through refreshing avenues, you reach Vitulano, which overlooks a section of the regional park. The origins of this ancient town remain uncertain, though the oldest edifice is the Convent of the Santissima Annunziata, established in the 1400s.

Day 18 From Vitulano to Benevento, 18 km

Your journey commences in Foglianise, a town that captivates with its urban layout dating back to the Lombard era. After traversing the municipality, the only obstacle before reaching today's destination is the **Oasi Zone Umide Beneventane**. Encompassing 900 hectares, this area holds significant scientific value, providing a fitting prelude to the splendors of Benevento. The arrival in Benevento is heralded by the passage beneath **the majestic Arch of Trajan**.

Day 19 Transfer from Benevento to Buonalbergo, walk to Malvizza, 11 km

You have some time in the morning to visit Bevenento before a short transfer will take you to Buonalbergo from where you start your walk to the village of Malvizza.

The **Bolle della Malvizza** are the largest mud volcanic complex in the southern Apennines which still has emissions of gaseous hydrocarbons.

Day 20 From Malvizza to Celle di San Vito/Castelluccio Valmaggiore, 20 km

Once you traverse the region, still enveloped in numerous legends, your destination will be **Aequum Tuticum**, an ancient village renowned in antiquity as a crucial crossroads, with the Via Traiana passing through it. Your final stop is Celle di San Vito, historically overseeing the Via Traiana. Today, it houses the Museum of Franco-Provençal Rural Civilization. A short transfer will take you to your accommodation in Castelluccio Valmaggiore.

Day 21 From Celle di San Vito to Troia, 18 km

Transition from the **Campania** region **to Puglia** plain, a renowned area historically recognized as the **"granary of Italy"**. Explore the town of Troia, notable for hosting four Councils in the 12th century. The historic center is marked by the Cathedral, showcasing an exceptional blend of styles and civilizations that have influenced this region over time. Notably significant is the inaugural Hospital del Cammino, situated within the monumental structure of the former Convent of San Domenico, destined to play a crucial role in the establishment of the Southern Via Francigena

Day 22 From Troia to Castelluccio dei Sauri, 24 km

The presence of **Daunian stelae** serves as a reminder of the enduring habitation of this land since the Copper Age. Presently, **Castelluccio** still preserves the characteristics of a medieval village, with its focal point being the Church of the Madonna delle Grazie. The artwork inside is thought to be crafted by a student of the renowned painter Raffaello Sanzio, maintaining a connection to the artistic legacy of the past.

Day 23 From Castelluccio dei Sauri to Ordona, 20 km

Vast stretches of fields accompany your journey to the present-day destination, Ordona, which was once a Roman city. The remnants of the ancient Herdonia, referred to as the **"Pompeii of Puglia"**, were unveiled through archaeological excavations in the 1960s. There is optimism that it will soon transform into an Archaeological Park.

Day 24 From Ordona to Stornara, 21 km

Stornarella marks the commencement and conclusion of today's journey. This region is wholly devoted to agriculture, with a notable production being **tomatoes**, often referred to as **red gold**. The epochs of this area were once dictated by the ancient Clock Tower, standing in the shadow of the Church of Santa Maria della Stella.

Day 25 From Stornara to Cerignola, 18 km

Cerignola, the final city on today's route, continues to safeguard **a Roman milestone**—a limestone column positioned along the historic path of the Via Traiana. To comprehend why Puglia earned the title "granary of Italy," one can explore the Piano delle Fosse Granarie. This area features over 600 bell-shaped cavities, ingeniously utilized by farmers for the storage of grain.

Day 26 From Cerignola to Canosa di Puglia, 20 km

Today's halt brings us to one of the pivotal hubs along the Via Francigena: **Canosa di Puglia**. The rationale? A visit to the magnificent Basilica of San Leucio and the Mausoleum of Beomondo of Antioch provides a clear understanding of its paramount significance during Roman times.

Day 27 From Canosa di Puglia to Andria, 25 km

Starting from the St. Sabino Cathedral in Canosa, you'll soon come to a local road that takes you out of the city and guides you **among the olive groves and vineyards** that characterise the countryside here; this is the kind of landscape that will accompany wayfarers all the way to Andria. Immersed in the DOP Terra area of Bari where one of the most prized extra virgin olive oil is produced, you will arrive in **Andria** welcomed by **its thousand-year-old olive trees.** Worth visiting once you arrive in the city is the Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta where the relic of the Sacred Thorn of the Crown of Jesus is preserved.

Day 28 From Andria to Corato, 14 km

Embarking on today's adventure, the route meanders through rustic regions and tree-lined boulevards, ultimately guiding you to Corato. Commencing from the Andria Cathedral, you will swiftly encounter a "contrada" pathway (Macchia di Rosa), transitioning into an unpaved trail that **meanders amidst olive orchards**, vineyards, and **quaint dry stone boundaries.** This area is abundant with **Coratina olives**, a distinctive and prized local variety flourishing across the northern Bari region.

Day 29 From Corato to Ruvo di Puglia, 13 km

Continuing amidst the **majestic ancient olive trees**, your journey leads you to **Ruvo di Puglia**, where the Jatta National Archaeological Museum houses significant displays of Greek and indigenous ceramics. Don't overlook the must-visit **Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta**, constructed atop an underground foundation, and in close proximity, the Church of Purgatory.

Day 30 From Ruvo di Puglia to Bitonto, 14 km

This uncomplicated leg of the journey provides an opportunity to explore the **historic Norman town of Terlizzi**. Wandering through the narrow streets of the old town will guide you to the Cathedral of San Michele Arcangelo and the medieval settlement of Sovereto, where remnants of the Crusades era are carefully preserved.

Day 31 From Bitonto to Bari, 22 km

Reaching the capital of Apulia, you'll encounter **a cultural hub boasting a captivating artistic and architectural legacy**. One standout is the **Basilica of San Nicola**, a pilgrimage site dating back to the Middle Ages, making its exploration nearly a mandatory journey. Another noteworthy attraction is the grand Petruzzelli Theatre, situated in close proximity to the Cathedral of San Sabino.

Day 32 From Bari to Mola di Bari, 24 km

Depart from **the expansive plains of Tavoliere** and inhale the **sea breeze** as it guides you **towards the Brindisi coastline**. En route, you'll traverse coastal hamlets near Bari, like Torre a Mare, a relatively recent development surrounding the Torre Pelosa. The **charming Mola di Bari,** with its impressive castle, and the adjacent Church of San Nicola di Bari, harken back to the Angevin era, offering a picturesque journey.

Day 33 Train from Mola di Bari to Polignano, walk to Monopoli, 12 km

A remarkable segment **along the Apulian coast** unfolds against the backdrop of a crystal-clear sea, with **the enchanting Coast of Trulli** captivating every pilgrim. The journey from **Polignano a Mare** presents **an irresistible coastal vista**, framed by the Church of Santa Maria Assunta. Tied to its harbor is the historic town of **Monopoli**, historically a central hub for crusaders and pilgrims drawn to **the charm of the narrow streets in the old town.** Today, this area is enhanced by landmarks such as the Carlo V Castle, Palazzo Martinelli, and the Old Port.

Day 34 From Monopoli to Savelletri, 20 km

A pathway abundant in the legacies of bygone pilgrims and locales steeped in tales and age-old customs unfolds, including the Santo Stefano Castle, once a repository for the relics of the Holy Martyr and San Nicola. Just a short distance away, you'll encounter the rock-hewn San Giorgio church, carved into limestone and distinguished by its distinctive rose window. Approaching Savelletri, explore **the Archaeological Park of Egnazia**, a site of paramount importance in the entire region.

Day 35 From Savelletri to Torrecanne, 10 km

An enchanting leg of the journey unfolds amidst the expanse of ancient olive groves, harboring the densest collection of millennia-old olive trees in the Mediterranean. The route then proceeds to **Torre Canne, a renowned coastal retreat** celebrated for the remarkable therapeutic qualities of its thermal springs.

Day 36 From Torre Canne to Ostuni, 20 km

The journey progresses along the **sandy shores of the coastline**. Noteworthy is the Masseria Ottava Grande, a rocky settlement featuring three subterranean oil mills and a devotional crypt. A short distance away, the Dolmen of Montalbano stands, serving various interpretive purposes. Culminating in **Torre Santa Sabina, an age-old fishing hamlet** derives its name from the tower's distinctive "priest's hat" structure, which commands views of the coastal expanse.

Day 37 Transfer Santa Sabina-Torre Guaceto and walk to Brindisi, 30 km

This leg provides a chance to explore the **Torre Guaceto State Nature Reserve**, encompassing an 8 km coastline adorned with the largest watchtower in the entire historic Land of Otranto. Reaching **Brindisi** signifies a captivating intersection, as it served as the ancient gateway to the Via Appia, marked by the grand Roman columns. Wandering through the narrow streets of the old town unveils the splendid Church of Santa Maria del Casale and the petite temple of San Giovanni al Sepolcro.

Day 38 From Brindisi to Torchiarolo, 25 km

Veering inland from the coast, your path leads you to the Bosco di Cerano regional nature reserve, distinguished by **dense Mediterranean vegetation**. The Valesio archaeological site, **an ancient Messapian city** renowned for its **spa complex**, marks your approach to Torchiarolo.

Day 39 From Torchiarolo to Lecce, 23 km

The journey is enhanced by the captivating visit to the Abbey of Santa Maria di Cerrate, showcasing **exquisite Byzantine frescoes**, along with an ancient oven and an underground olive mill. **Lecce** welcomes you in the **resplendence of its Baroque charm**. A stroll through the historic center unfolds a narrative of styles that glorify the renowned Lecce stone, with the magnificent Basilica of Santa Croce standing as the pinnacle. The Charles V Castle serves as the emblem of Spanish influence in the city, while the Cathedral of Maria Santissima Assunta and the Church of Saints Niccolò and Cataldo vividly display the papal connection and ties to Rome.

Day 40 From Lecce to Vernole, 18 km

Commence your walk from the ancient Roman column that commands **Piazza Sant'Oronzo**. This column, formerly signifying **the culmination of the Via Appia**, serves as your starting point for the onward journey. Once you depart the city, a few kilometers will usher you into the aromatic embrace of the captivating Mediterranean scrub, adorned with dry stone walls and intriguing pajare structures. Your path leads you to the charming town center of Vernole.

Day 41 From Vernole to Caprignano, 17 km

Today's journey holds significant symbolism as you traverse **the heart of Grecìa Salentina**. Your path leads through the enchanting town of Martano, and you'll follow the traces of an age-old cart road, ultimately arriving at the entrance of Carpignano Salentino. Nestled in this small village is **an extraordinary Hypogean Sanctuary** renowned for housing the oldest Byzantine frescoes in Puglia.

Day 42 From Caprignano to Otranto, 26 km

Embark on today's leg of your journey to uncover the historical roots of **the enchanting Salento region**. The Megalithic Garden of Italy invites you to step back in time, amidst **menhirs and dolmens** from an ancient era. Along the path, encounter mystical sites like **the "old woman's boulder,"** associated with Hercules and a sorceress from bygone days, the Stabile dolmen, and the San Paolo menhir adorned with a fresco linked to San Paolo and the "tarantism" phenomenon. This expedition concludes with your arrival in Otranto, where **the embrace of the sea** awaits.

Day 43 From Otranto to Vignicastri, 24 km

The captivating resurgence of nature reclaiming its territories unfolds visibly at the enchanting **Bauxite Lake**. Meanwhile, the Abbey of San Nicola di Casole continues to exude the magical essence of its storied history after many years. Castro and Vignacastrisi share a rich and epic past. Notably, the **Grotta Romanelli**, **Grotta Zinzulusa**, and **Grotta dei Cervi** stand as some of Europe's paramount prehistoric sites.

Day 44 From Vignicastri to Tricase, 15 km

The final two legs beckon before reaching Finibus Terrae. Thankfully, there's ample time to appreciate the charms of **Marittima, renowned as the village of towers**, with the prominent Torre d'Alfonso commanding attention over the entire town. In **Tricase**, don't miss the chance to explore the Mother Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Church of San Michele Arcangelo, exemplifying the pinnacle of local Baroque architecture.

Day 45 From Tricase to Leuca, 21 km

Greeting you on this final leg is the **Sanctuary of Santa Maria de Finibus Terrae**, now presenting itself as a fortified structure due to numerous attacks by the Saracens. However, every traveler's attention will be captivated by the grandeur of **the lighthouse, the second tallest in Europe**. You can ascend it for a breathtaking view, witnessing the waves crashing against **the cliffs of this ultimate stretch of land—the culmination point of the Via Francigena in the South.**

Day 46 Arrivederci Leuca!

Our services end today after breakfast, unless you have booked any extra services.

Practical info



On arrival, you can take a train to Rome.

On departure, take a train from Leuca

Included

What is included

- 45 Nights in double room in **/*** hotels , B&B and agriturismi with breakfast
- luggage transportation from hotel to hotel (max 1 item per person)
- transfers as detailed in the program (Velletri-Cori, Fossanova-Terracina, Pietramelara-Statigliano, Celle di San Vito-Castelluccio Valmaggiore, Santa Sabina-Torre Guaceto)
- maps and detailed description of the itinerary in digital form, app
- Pilgrim Passport
- Medical and luggage travel insurance
- 24h phone assistance

What is not included

- Transfers to the starting location and from the arriving location of the tour
- lunches and dinners, if not otherwise stated
- visits and entrance fees - tips
- personal expense
- possible sojourn taxes
- everything that is not mentioned in the "What is included" section.

Optional Services

These services can be added to the ones included in the base price of the tour:

- Single room supplement
- cancellation insurance
- Transfers to reach the starting location or to leave the arriving location of the tour, which will be quoted on request.
- official camino guidebook, shipped to the first hotel
- travel documentation in printed form (maps and detailed description of the itinerary), shipped to the first hotel