



Land tour with optional organized daily walks

## VIA FRANCIGENA

*Retrace the ancient pilgrims' journey to Rome*

**25 Sep — 4 Oct 2009 (10 days /9 nights)**



*This is a scenic and cultural programme retracing the Italian section of an ancient pilgrimage route that stretches from Canterbury, England, to Rome.*

*It was in AD990 when Sigeric the Serious made the journey to Rome to receive the Pallium from the Pope as Archbishop of Canterbury. The description of the route he took on his return journey became the earliest existing documentation of what is now known today as the Via Francigena.*

*Unlike ancient Roman roads which were (and still are) major thoroughfares connecting centres of great importance, the Via Francigena was really more of a series of smaller paths and trails meant for traversing on foot. What in fact distinguishes this route are the location of the places providing refuge for the night, spaced at a distance equivalent to a day's walk - closer together on more difficult routes and further apart where the going was easier. It is for this reason that the Via Francigena goes through smaller towns of Italy while bypassing major cities like Milan and Florence. Although parts of the route fell into disuse after the Reformation in the early 1500's, the Via Francigena is today celebrated as an important historical pathway and was designated a European Cultural Itinerary by the European Union in 1994, uniting countries across the continent.*

*This tour introduces the highlights of the Via Francigena, starting from the Great St. Bernard Pass in the Alps on the Swiss-Italian border, through the Lombard and Tuscan countryside, and finally to the Vatican City in Rome.*

*While not meant to be a pilgrimage, the tour nevertheless closely follows the paths taken by centuries of worshippers and includes optional short walks of 1-2 hours along these trails so that you can relive this ancient journey. Coming with us is an expert local guide who will provide you with a thorough insight into the history of this ancient route.*

**For more information and bookings please call 3152-3746  
or e-mail [info@ergo-travel.com](mailto:info@ergo-travel.com)**

### 10D/9N Land Tour — S\$3370 per person

- Price based on minimum group size of 16 persons, twin-share basis;
- Flights separately booked;
- Single supplement S\$460; triple/quad-share arrangements on request;
- Sightseeing and entrance to sights included as specified in the programme;
- Private airport transfers available upon request;
- Extension of trip can be arranged upon request;
- A downpayment of S\$500 per person is required for reservation, partly refundable upon withdrawal subject to terms and conditions.

#### NOTE:

- Gratuities not included.
- Entry visas may be required for certain passport holders.
- Tour programme may be modified as a result of inclement weather or causes beyond our control.

*Customers will be informed 1 month prior to the departure date should the tour be cancelled due to insufficient number of participants, and offered a choice of alternative tours. Otherwise, all monies paid will be refunded in full should the alternative arrangements offered be not acceptable.*



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## Tour Programme

<b>Fri 25 Sep</b>	<b>Arrive in Milan</b> Tour of the city with a local guide in the morning. Afternoon and evening at leisure.	<b>Overnight MILAN</b>
<b>Sat, 26 Sep</b>	<b>Great St Bernard pass, St-Rhémy-en-Bosse</b> We head off today to follow the Via Francigena, starting from the enchanting snow of the Great St Bernard pass (2473m), already known to Julius Caesar, an ancient and welcoming resting point for travellers, passing through the more prosaic Saint-Rhémy-en Bosse, famous for its ham, to the ancient Roman town of Aosta, the last stop of the first day on the Via Francigena.	<b>AOSTA</b>
<b>Sun 27 Sep</b>	<b>Aosta, Vercelli, Pavia, and the banks of the river Po</b> First stop is Vercelli, an important crossroads of the Via Francigena with the Frankish trail. Then it's on to Pavia to visit the church of San Nicola, site of Frederick the Red-beard's coronation, to see the relics of St Augustine. The "Certosa delle Meraviglie" is an architectural jewel commissioned by Gian Galeazzo Visconti which welcomed pilgrims even in 1300. We finish the day with a "medieval dinner" at Grazzano Visconti village.	<b>PIACENZA</b>
<b>Mon 28 Sep</b>	<b>Piacenza, Chiaravalle della Colomba, Fidenza, Cisa pass</b> Piacenza is home of the Hospitaller Order (including the Templars) and of many pilgrims' hospices. The road to Chiaravalle della Colomba Abbey is famous for its flowers. On reaching Fidenza, guardian of San Donnino's tomb where pilgrims pray for protection when crossing water, there is a statue of San Simone pointing a scroll towards Rome on the face of the Cathedral.	<b>LUCCA</b>
<b>Tue 29 Sept</b>	<b>Lucca, Altopascio, S. Miniato Alto, Val d'Elsa hills, Monteriggioni</b> In Lucca, the walled city, with the Torre Guinigi standing out against the sky, there is another symbol of the pilgrimage on the face of San Martino's entrance: the labyrinth. In Altopascio, the great bell tower guided the fearful pilgrims with the tolling of its bell "for the lost".	<b>SIENA</b>
<b>Wed 30 Sept</b>	<b>Siena, Sant'Antimo, Bagno Vignoni, Bolsena</b> In Siena, in the great room of the infirmary called "the pilgrimage" of the Santa Maria della Scala's hospice, XIII century frescoes picture the daily life of those serving the less fortunate. Passing through the Tuscan countryside with its gentle landscapes and its white roads leading to the horizon, we see the sulphurous waters of the great pool of Bagno Vignoni and then we reach Bolsena, the site of the Holy Communion Miracle that is the origin of the function of Corpus Christi Day.	<b>VITERBO</b>
<b>Thu 1 Oct</b>	<b>Viterbo, Sutri, Veio ruins, La Storta, Monte Mario, Vatican City</b> Medieval Viterbo was the site of the papal conclave for a long time. In fact the word conclave comes from "cum clave" or "locked in", and the electors remained in the Papal Palace and could not come out until a valid vote for a new pope, communicated with the still used white	<b>ROME</b>

smoke signal, was taken. Veio is an ancient Etruscan city that reached the apex of its glory in the VI century. There we can find a temple and a necropolis of that refined civilization. And here is the "Mountain of Joy", "Mons Gaudi" - Monte Mario and the view of the city with St Peter's Dome, the final destination of our pilgrimage. We reach the Tomb of the Apostle Peter. A visit to the Papal tombs follow.

<b>Fri 2 Oct</b>	<b>Bus trip to Subiaco</b> The morning will be spent at Subiaco visiting the Sacro Speco (sacred grotto), a sanctuary in the rock cliffs formed by two overlapping churches, and the abbey of Santa Scolastica. Afternoon is spent at leisure in Rome, after which we take you to dinner at a typical restaurant with troubadour singers.	<b>ROME</b>
<b>Sat 3 Oct</b>	<b>Giardini di Ninfa (Nymph Gardens), Ostia Antica</b> Ninfa, a medieval city, is now famous as a natural oasis and for its magnificent romantic gardens that are full of different colours in every season. A seafood lunch is then provided at Lido di Ostia, after which we visit Ostia Antica with its ancient stones, turning back the clock to the time when this Roman port was so important for the commercial life of the city.	<b>ROME</b>
<b>Sun 4 Oct</b>	The journey ends this morning with breakfast. Complimentary transfer is provided from your hotel to Rome Fiumicino airport.	

### Note

1. All meals provided from Day 2 onwards. For days 3-7, lunches will be pre-packed picnic style, while all other meals will be either in hotels or in restaurants serving authentic cuisine typical of the location. A pizza dinner is foreseen for the final evening.
2. As the focus of this tour is the cultural heritage of the Via Francigena, it does not include any guided visits to the city of Rome itself. Nevertheless you are encouraged to extend your trip by a few days and explore the Eternal City if desired, either on your own or as part of an escorted group.
3. The daily bus trip will stop at places of spiritual, artistic or scenic interest. During the walks, which will last 1-2 hours daily from the 2nd to the 7th day, people who prefer not to walk can remain on the bus.
4. Hiking shoes would be ideal, but comfortable walking shoes will do. Weather will vary greatly so do take along some protection from the cold and rain, as well as some lighter clothing.

Pictures courtesy of  
Comune di Saint-Rhémy-en-Bosses, Associazione Europea delle Vie Francigene,  
www.walkforitaly.com and Huang Eu Chai

