

FIRST SUGGESTION



a) You could come earlier to Italy and stay in ROME for few days before the retreat ... Not only you would be sightseeing one of the most beautiful cities in the world but also you would be rested for the retreat ... No jet lag .. Then, on September 2nd, you just take the train to Assisi.

b) AFTER THE RETREAT, I suggest that you take a train or a bus to PERUGIA (20 miles from Assisi), the capital of Umbria. This is another medieval city with a balanced amount of modernity as seen in its university programs, culinary and art galleries. The city is gorgeous.

And if you are in the mood, Perugia is the place where the 'Italian kiss' (Baccio Perugina) chocolates are made ... you don't want to miss it. Then, from Perugia you can take the train (or a car) and EXPLORE THE SMALL CITIES AND VILLAGES around in Umbria and/or go to Tuscany ... you can do this in a day or more days, depending on your availability and interests.

One more tip ... in Umbria, there is the largest lake in Italy: LAKE TRASIMENO where you can take a boat to visit small islands around. It is where nature meets ancient history. Very easy to visit for a day.

Second Suggestion



a) You arrive in Italy on September 2nd and go directly to Assisi as planned.

b) AFTER THE RETREAT, you can take the train in Assisi (only 2 hours) to FLORENCE in Tuscany ... the birth of art in the world, David from Michelangelo, Dante Alighieri's house among so many other attractions.

And once in Tuscany, you can either get a tour or rent a car and visit many other places in the heart of Italy, such as: PISA, SIENA, LUCA, AREZZO and so many other wonderful small cities and villages in TUSCANY, full of beauty, history, great food and lovely people.

Third Suggestion



If you are interested in the religious (spiritual) sites around Umbria and Tuscany, and beyond, there are several beautiful cities and valleys where St Francis and his companions also lived and worked in addition to other spiritual places.

AFTER THE RETREAT:

Before leaving Assisi, you can visit Santa Maria Degli Angeli again, a city very close to Assisi, where St Francis died and also where St Clara was hosted when left her parent's home. Beautiful.

Then, you can take a car or train and go to places such as: SPELLO, POGGIO BUSTONE (Province of Rieti), LA FLORESTA and The Sacred Valley, GUBBIO, GRECCIO (where the first nativity scene for Christmas was created by St Francis), LA VERNA among other places.

There are also cities worthy visiting: Siena (St Catherine), Province of Foggia to visit Padre Pio's work and sites (It is around 200 miles from Assisi but you can add a visit to the nearby cities in the Adriatic coast);

And you can finish your trip, by including the Vatican when visiting Rome before heading back home.

There are so many sites in Italy where Christianity was embraced by the first mystic Christians, who lived authentic lives. They are great places to visit and enjoy the energy you may feel just for being there, in addition to their history, great people and the usual awesome regional food and wine you can find wherever you go in Italy.

In summary, regardless of your religion or beliefs, you will have a beautiful and uplifting experience by visiting these places.

Forth Suggestion



a) You arrive in Italy on September 2nd and go directly to Assisi as planned.

b) AFTER THE RETREAT, you can take a train (4-5 hours) to MILAN ... and you will be in one of the most beautiful cities in the world ... one of the main points of fashion. There you can visit also LAKE COMO (maybe George Clooney and Amal, who are local residents, are at home) and who knows ... you can even take a car, a short one hour drive to the SWISS BORDER and spend a day in the beautiful city of LUGANO.

b) In Milan, you can take a one day tour for CINQUE TERRE, one of the most beautiful places in Italy .. 5 villages considered the Italian Riviera ... I even think you won't be able to resist and will spend a night or two in Cinque Terre before going back to Milan.

Going to Milan, you can also explore further the north of Italy and go to places such as VENICE and so on.

c) If not Milan ... You can go south from Assisi and take a transportation and go to POSITANO .. one of the most famous summer spots in Italy.

And if you have extra time, as you are already in the south of the country, you can go from Positano to SICILY (around 400 miles) which is a whole different kind of trip ... unforgettable for sure. You choose.