

## Abruzzo National Parks

A 7-day / 6 night cycling tour

**Code tour:** ITABR01C



The green region of Abruzzo is characterized by a varied landscape: a beautiful sea with sandy beaches, a hinterland with rolling hills covered with olive groves and vineyards, which turn slowly into a mountainous landscape with a wild nature and rich fauna. This tour crosses the Abruzzo National Parks and is designed for you to enjoy a true paradise with a pristine nature of green forests, mountain streams, a surreal silence, incredible views, a rich fauna and flora, small mountain villages and a good local cuisine. The tour starts in the beautiful village of Santo Stefano di Sessanio, at 1300m a.s.l. and this is certainly a big plus, because in summertime the weather is fresh! Santo Stefano di Sessanio is situated in a stunning position, in the National Park of Gran Sasso e Monti della Laga. You will ride on quiet roads winding up through a beautiful nature, passing through well-preserved medieval villages and in the evening, you enjoy the warm hospitality and the natural tastes of Abruzzo. You will discover a wonderful part of Italy!

### Program in short:

- Day 1 arrivo individual arrival in L'Aquila and transfer to S.Stefano di Sessanio
- Day 2 Loop of loop of the plateau of Gran Sasso (50 km / 31 mi)
- Day 3 S.Stefano di Sessanio-Fontecchio (40 km / 25 mi)
- Day 4 Fontecchio (loop Aquila and the valley Valle dell'Aterno (49 km / 36,3 mi)
- Day 5 Fontecchio - Sulmona (44 km / 27,3 mi)
- Day 6 Sulmona (Loop of the Abruzzo National Park) (63 km / 39 mi)
- Day 7 End of tour after breakfast

### Abruzzo National Parks



**Starting days:** On request from April 15<sup>th</sup> until October 15<sup>th</sup> 2024

**Participants:** minimum 2. More then 6 people on request.

### Level: 3

Difficult. Cycling in a hilly and mountainous landscape. For cyclist with experience and good physical condition. Cycling along quiet asphalted roads. Not suitable for children under 15 years.

Daily Kilometers: min. 40 km / 25 mi – max. 63 km / 39 mi

Total km: 266 km / 163 mi

Average daily ascent: 732m

Total ascent: 3360 m

## Program day by day

### Day 1 Individual arrival in L'Aquila

From Aquila you will have a transfer of 45 min. to Santo Stefano di Sessanio, the starting point of this cycling tour. Santo Stefano di Sessanio is positioned on an altitude of 1300m a.s.l. and has a population of 120 inhabitants. It is a charming medieval village surrounded by the beautiful nature of the National Park of Gran Sasso. Walking through its narrow alleys, you have the feeling of stepping back in time. You have an overnight stay in a cosy Hotel in the centre of the village. At the starting point of the tour where you will be welcomed by your host. Here, he/she will be personally at hand for any questions. Get ready for a memorable welcome dinner made with organic local products.

Transfer from the airports in Rome is also possible on request as an optional service (ask for quotes).

Overnight stay with breakfast in Santo Stefano di Sessanio

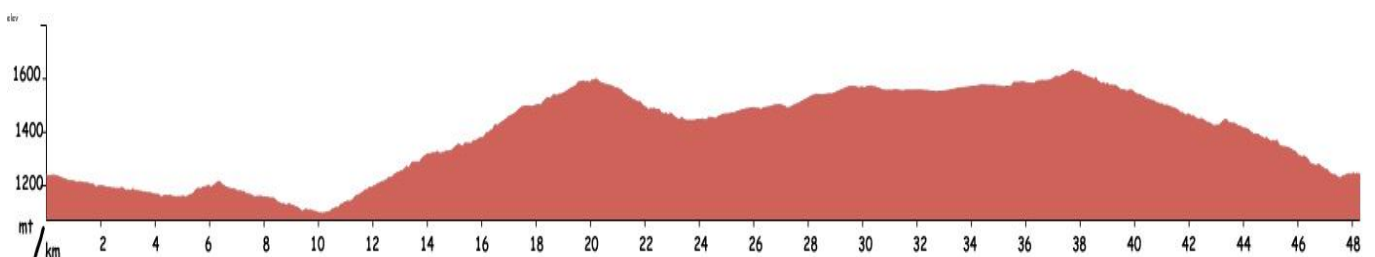
### Day 2 S.Stefano di Sessanio (loop of the plateau of Gran Sasso)

The Gran Sasso mountain range has the highest peaks of the Apennines. Today you can admire them all, always from different angles... so do not forget your camera! The first kilometres will lead you to Calascio and are flat. Here we suggest you take a break and leave your bike to walk up to castle Rocca Calascio. It was used as a set for the movie "Lady Hawke" because of its beautiful architecture and bold position on a rocky ridge at 1600m high. Back in the saddle starts the first climb of today, which takes you first to Castel del Monte and then up to the mountain pass Passo di Monte Cape Serre. The climb is challenging, but it are especially the views that will leave you breathless. Cycling downhill you have a nice view of the lunar landscape of Campo Imperatore, which the locals call rightly "Little Tibet". You cycle almost along the entire vast plateau flanked by the spectacular mountain of Gran Sasso. An easy climb will bring you back to Guado Portoni and then begins the long descent that takes you back to Santo Stefano of Sessanio. The road meanders down among flowering meadows and always giving new sceneries behind every bend and finally showing the village in all its ancient beauty.

Overnight stay with breakfast in Santo Stefano di Sessanio

Distance: 50 km / 31 mi

Ascent/Descent: + 820m/- 820m



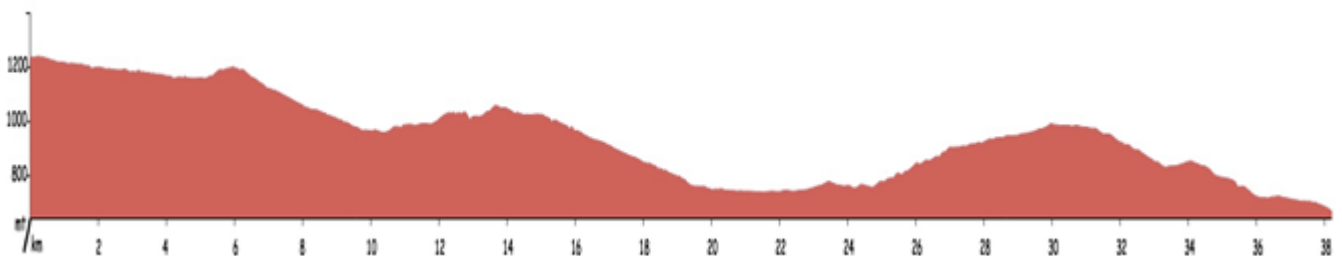
### Day 3 S.Stefano di Sessanio-Fontecchio

The long descent that inaugurates this new day, will cross several villages that are worth a visit. You arrive in the Valley Valle dell'Aterno entering the Regional Park Velino-Sirente. The road now follows the old path of transhumance. In late summer the flocks were accompanied about 300 km south to spend the winter in Apulia. This annual exodus of flocks and people has been the main driver of the local economy for two millennia. Abbeys and castles still mark its path. During the only climb of today, you can admire the villages of Caporciano and Bominaco. Do not miss a visit of the Castle and the Abbey of Santa Maria Assunta (XII century). The tour ends in another jewel of medieval architecture: Fontecchio (670m a.s.l., population of 400 people). Here you will spend the next two days in a lovely B & B in the historic centre of the village.

Overnight stay with breakfast in Fontecchio

Distance: 40 km / 25 mi

Ascent/Descent: + 600m/- 1180m



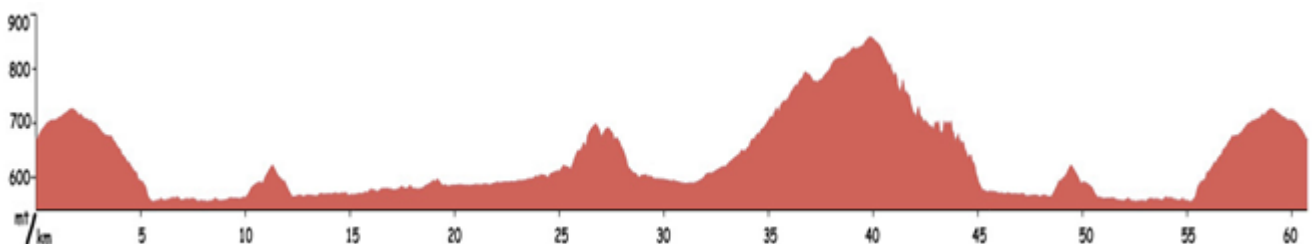
### Day 4 Fontecchio (loop Aquila and the valley Valle dell'Aterno)

After breakfast in the saddle again cycling up along the Aterno riverbanks. You cycle along quiet roads that wind their way up among cultivated fields with extensive views over the surrounding mountains. Without difficulty, you arrive at the foot of Aquila, but to reach the centre you have still to climb some. Aquila (720 m a.s.l.) has a population of 70.000 people and is the capital of Abruzzo. The terrible earthquake devastated it in 2009. A tour of the historic centre shows the slow but well-done reconstruction of the architectural treasures of this beautiful city. On the way, back a 3 km climb takes you to the Castle of Ocre. The view you enjoy from here will help to forget quickly the sufferings of the climb. After this will follow a well-deserved descent to Fossa and your return to Fontecchio following again the course the river Aterno.

Overnight stay with breakfast in Fontecchio

Distance: 59 km / 36,3 mi

Ascent/Descent: + 870m/- 870m



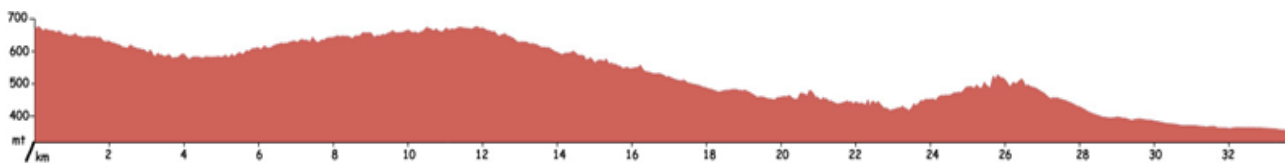
### Day 5 Fontecchio - Sulmona

Today, an easy and relaxing ride. You will follow the river Aterno towards the south. The green of the valley is a perfect backdrop for the medieval architecture of the small villages and hamlets you pass. Along these roads, the cars are rare and often the only sound accompanying you are birdsongs and the murmur of the river and mountain brooks. The only climb of today is through the S.Venanzio Gorge to arrive at Sulmona (400m a.s.l.). You will have time enough to visit this lovely town, with only 25.000 inhabitants. It is rich of monuments and museums. You will stay here for two days in the historical centre.

Overnight stay with breakfast in Sulmona

Distance: 44 km / 27,3 mi

Ascent/Descent: + 400m/- 670m



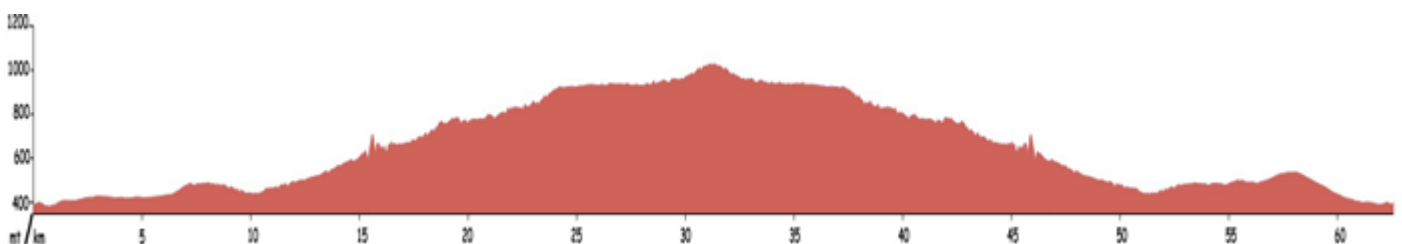
### Day 6 Sulmona (Loop of the Abruzzo National Park)

This last stage takes place in the Abruzzo National Park, the first national park established in Italy. Maybe here you can admire the Abruzzi Chamois, the brown marsican bear, the symbol of the park, the wolf, deer, foxes and the golden eagle. Also the flora is interesting and rich with thousands species of plants, mushrooms and musk's. Reach Anversa degli Abruzzi, a beautiful stone village at the entrance of the Sagittarius gorges. You continue along a road carved into the rocks and through natural tunnels with stunning views of the creek below and the village of Castrovalva, silent sentinel on top of a rocky ridge. In these places stayed the designer MC Escher, who captured the beauty of this place in some memorable pictures. Villalago marks the end of climbing and gorges. Now you pedal around Lake Scanno, in whose emerald green waters are reflecting the surrounding mountaintops. A short climb leads you up to the village of Scanno, loved by photographers and painters. Scanno is also famous for gold handicrafts and for its antique lace works. The return to Sulmona is almost all the way downhill. Dinner on this last evening isn't included in the tour price so you are free to choose among the many good restaurants in town

Overnight stay with breakfast in Sulmona

Distance: 63 km / 39 mi

Ascent/Descent: + 975m/- 975m



### **Day 7 End of the tour after breakfast**

Today is the last day of this nature tour! After a comfortable breakfast you check-out of the hotel and easily proceed to the local coach or train station for your journey to the airport or destination of your choice.

If you would like to have a transfer we can make you a price proposal

### **Hotels:**

\*\*\* and \*\*\*\* stars

### **Bicycles:**

Hybrid bikes, road bikes and e-bikes. Hybrid, e-bikes and race bikes rental include: repair kit, pump and lock. No pannier. The hybrid bikes and road bikes do not have a pannier rack. You have to bring your own pannier or small rucksack for daily use.

### **Prices per person 2024:**

In double room € 1.298,00

In single room € 1.586,00

Trekking bikes € 270

Road bikes € 270

E-bikes € 330

### **Included in the price**

- 6 nights with breakfast \*\*\* / \*\*\*\* hotels
- 3 dinners
- Welcome host
- Transfer from Aquila train or bus station to S.Stefano di Sessanio
- Luggage transportation from hotel to hotel
- Maps with route notes in English
- Telephonic helpline
- Gps tracks

### **Not included in the price**

- The trip to and from Italy
- Lunches
- Beverages during dinner
- The dinner on day 6
- Cycling guide with full Van support
- Bike rental: hybrid, road bike or E-bike
- Local tourist taxes that vary between € 1 and € 5 depending on the town you stay in.
- All what is not mentioned under "included in the price"



**ECOLOGICO**TOURS

**ECOLOGICO TOURS**

Cantonal 41C/ 19

6565 San Bernardino

Svizzera/Schweiz/Suisse

[info@ecologicotours.com](mailto:info@ecologicotours.com)

tel. (0039) 3463254167 – (0041)(0) 79 2457505

[www.ecologicotours.com](http://www.ecologicotours.com)

[www.meravigliosaumbria.com](http://www.meravigliosaumbria.com)