

Abruzzo National Parks

A 7 day 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!



Starting days: Every day from 1 May to 17 July and from 21 August to 25 September 2021

Participants: minimum two people

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 14 years.

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

Total km: 260 km / 161 mi

Program day by day

Day 1: Individual arrival in L'Aquila

From Aquila you 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 B & B in the centre of the village. In the evening, the local agent will hand over the daily maps with route notes and information on the tour. 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 & dinner 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 and dinner 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 and dinner 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 and dinner in Fontecchio.

Distance: 59 km / 36,3 mi

Ascent/Descent: +870m/-870m



Day 5 Fontecchio - Sulmona

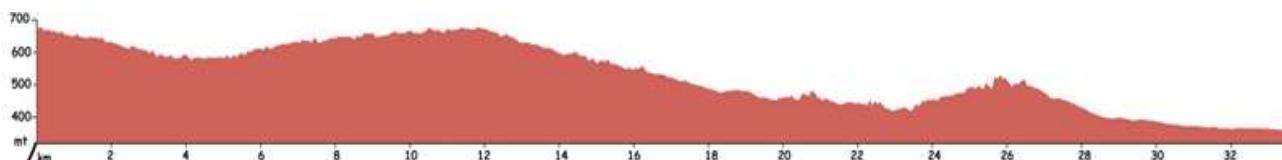
Today, an easy and relaxing ride. You will follow the river Aterno towards the south. The green of the valley is a perfect backdrop for the medieval architecture of the small villages and hamlets you pass. Along these roads, the cars are rare and often the only sound accompanying you are birdsongs and 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 and dinner 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, dear, 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!

Hotels:

*** / **** star hotel and good B&B.

Bicycles:

Hybrid bikes, road bikes and e-bikes. The bikes are delivered with lock, repair kit and pump. The road bikes and hybrid bikes don't have a luggage rack. It can be placed on the hybrid bikes for 10,00 Euro per bike. You have to bring your own pannier or small rucksack for daily use.

Prices per person:

In double room € 890,00

In single room € 1.050,00

Trekking bikes € 130,00

Road bikes € 130,00

E-bikes € 190,00

Included in the price

- 6 nights with breakfast
- 5 dinners
- Luggage transportation from hotel to hotel
- Maps with notes in English
- Telephonic helpline

- Transfer from Aquila to Santo Stefano di Sessanio on your arrival day
- gps tracks

Not included in the price

- The trip to and from Italy
- Lunches
- Beverages during dinner
- all what is not mentioned under “included in the price”

How to reach

Start /End: L'Aquila / Sulmona

From Rome airport Leonardo da Vinci (Fiumicino) and Ciampino there is a direct line to Aquila with express coach from Gaspari bus or Flix bus

Or buses from Rome station metro / train station Tiburtina to Aquila with the company Autolinee TUA or Flix bus

From Pescara airport take bus to train station / bus station at piazza della Repubblica in Pescara centre and from here the bus to Aquila

From Sulmona to Rome: with bus Autolinea Tua or Flix bus or with train (2 times a day)

[Airport of Abruzzo](#)

[Flixbus](#)

[Autolinea Tua](#)

[Gaspari Bus](#)

[Airport Fiumicino](#)

[Airport Ciampino](#)

[Italian Trains](#)

Useful information

[Italy wikipedia](#)

[Italy Travel Board](#)

[Safe travelling to Italy](#)

[Abruzzo](#)

[National park of Abruzzo](#)

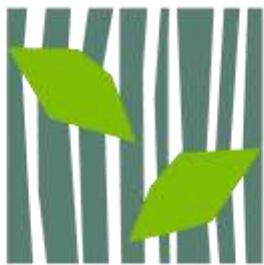
[Parco Gran Sasso e Monti della Laga](#)

[Gran Sasso](#)

[Climate Abruzzo](#)

[Visit Sulmona](#)

[Santo Stefano di Sessanio](#)



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