

7 Hidden Medieval Villages in Umbria

No Tourist guide will suggest you

Discover the "Secrets and Beauties" of these Umbrian Wonders yet Unknown to the Mass Tourism



The holidays you're waiting for arrived. **You are in Umbria**, a wonderful land, but certainly **unknown** to you.

Maybe you've already read lots of articles on blogs or web sites about **the main tourist amenities**, what to see and what to do.

But Don't be the classic tourist!

Classic tourist destinations mean:

- **Lots of people and confusion,**
- Few available parking areas,
- Very long queues for the main artistic places,
- Elbowing among **tourists** who try **to see everything** but actually see nothing and **don't let you discover the details** of the city you're visiting.

In this confusion nothing **will impress you or remain in your mind as something true and genuine**, maybe some photos in your smartphones but in a few months you won't even remember where they have been taken.

Is this the right holiday for you? I don't think so!

Of course you should visit **Perugia or Assisi**, **Giotto's frescos** in the Lower Basilica of Assisi are worth queuing in the sun.

....But there are a lot of **small medieval villages**,

- Unknown to the mass,
- Full of history and culture,
- To spend some quiet hours, surrounded by breathtaking landscapes,
- To taste delicious food and
- To meet local people telling you old stories of the village.

This is **the Umbria you can't absolutely miss**, where time goes by slowly or even seems to stand still!

With this little tourist guide I'll let you discover 7 small wonders, hidden in the Umbrian country.

Medieval villages where even international stars like **Meryl Streep and Sam Neill** could go unnoticed!

And where you can

- **have a walk through the narrow streets** and stop to admire the landscape in the green Umbrian hills and valleys,
- meet local people, always cheerful and polite,
- **have an aperitif in small picturesque squares**,
- enjoy the local daily routine,
- discover small restaurants, to **taste typical dishes**, according to local traditions and made from local farm-to-fork ingredients.

Let's start our tour in the North of Umbria, on the border with Tuscany



Monte Santa Maria Tiberina the old Umbrian marquisate

The history of the village is prevalently characterized by **the prestigious Marquis Bourbon del Monte**, one of the most important feudal family, who kept its independence until 1803.

During the reign of Marquis Bourbon, the town had numerous privileges:

- administrative and judicial independence,
- its own currency, the Fiorino Montesco,
- and it became one of the three “Campo Franco” existing throughout Europe.

“Campo Franco” was a free zone where it was possible to fight a duel to the death freely.

Today Monte Santa Maria Tiberina is a **typical medieval village enclosed by massive medieval walls**.

It is located on the top of a green Umbrian hill and it offers you a **stunning valley view**.

Walking around the **lanes of the village** you can admire ancient stone houses, the Bourbon castle, residence of the Marquis Bourbon and Santa Maria’s church.

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In the centre of the village you'll find **only one restaurant-bar** to taste the excellent umbrian cuisine, sat at tables in a **small charming square** with a **breathtaking valley view**.





Throughout the year **local festivals and events**, many with a food theme, represent **good opportunities to discover the local culture**.

The most important is: **the Autumn festival in October**.

The Autumn festival is very nice, the whole **village goes back to medieval times**.

- Have a look at parades and folklore shows in medieval costumes and medieval games.
- Listen to the music played by street bands throughout the village.
- Taste and buy the local products such as truffles, mushrooms, chestnuts, cheeses, salami, honey and so on.



Monte Santa Maria Tiberina is a treasure of the Upper Tiber Valley, don't forget to visit it during your holidays in Umbria!



Montone

Braccio's Feud

Montone, set on the top of a hill above the confluence of the rivers Tevere and Carpina, is a **small village**, perfectly preserved and magically **unchanged in the centuries**.

Enormous walls surround the village, **narrow and winding streets** alternate to **wide stairs** in the town centre, the **massive bell towers** and the remains of the **gorgeous Braccio's fortress** give us the perfect idea of its importance

The events of Montone followed the ups and downs of the **Fortebracci's** and in the 15th century the town reached its highest prestige, thanks to **Braccio da Montone**, **great condottiere, known for his strategical skills**.

In 1473, Carlo Fortebracci, walking in his father Braccio's footsteps, fought on the service of the Serenissima Repubblica di Venezia and bravely defeated the Turks, **getting as a gift a thorn from Jesus Christ's crown**.

Carlo sent the precious relic to Montone and **set its celebration on Easter Monday**. The legend tells that when the first soldiers arrived, the town bells started to ring on their own.

The Holy Thorn still attracts lots of visitors who want to live that dream-like atmosphere: its celebration takes place during the week before the last Sunday but one in August

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On the occasion of this feast, Montone celebrates **its ancient splendours in Fortebracci's county**: the Quarters compete in challenges, medieval shows, archery competitions to win the contest and choose their own "Castellana".





Two other important events you shouldn't miss

The Umbria film festival in July: the village turns into a cinema in the open.

- Enjoy the short and long films by international directors shown in the square;
- **“La festa del bosco” at the end of October:** the village turns into a great market. Taste typical products from the wood (mushrooms, truffles, chestnuts) but also from the local firms (cheeses, salami, vegetables, honey, cereals....)

Don't leave Montone not without :

- Visit St. Francesco's museum, The "Collegiata" (collegiate church), and Aries's fortress
- Enjoy the sight from the gardens in Braccio's fortress
- Sip an aperitif in the small square
- Have a look at the daily routine of the residents.



In Montone you'll find **excellent restaurants to taste** truffles, local meat, cheeses made according to the tradition, handmade pasta, in a fairy-tale set where time seems to stand still.

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Citerna

The underground village

Castrum Cisternae, the ancient name of this old **Etruscan village**, was one of the **Byzantine fortifications**, built between the 6th and the 7th centuries against the Longobards of Arezzo, and later it became their feud.

In the Middle Ages Guelphs and Ghibellines competed for it; then it passed from the Marquis del Colle to the Tarlati da Pietramala, to the Malatesta and to the Church State.

In the Reinassance, under the rule of the Vitellis, Citerna **experienced its highest urban development**.

Its old town centre is enclosed by walls, created between the 13th and the 14th centuries, with two main gates: **Porta Romana** in the south and **Porta Fiorentina** in the north

Actually, **the medieval walkways** make Citerna a unique village

A small arch leads into the path of **the charming walkway that runs along the walls**, and perfectly preserved arch openings with a **series of open galleries** offer a **truly impressive sight**.



Walking along the main street, between the two gates, at half way you'll reach **the square**. Admire the beautiful natural amphitheatre of the Upper Tiber Valley: **this is the most amazing landscape in Umbria.**





The peculiarity of Citerna is its structure.
Designed on two overlapped urban levels

The hidden part of Citerna is the most attracting.

Enjoy the wonderful valley view, the emotions and atmospheres of the past, when the citizens, unnoticed, could watch who was arriving

In October don't miss :

- **"Mostra del tartufo"** (the truffle exhibition)
- but above all the **"Festa della Luce"** (the celebration of the Light)

The village is lit only by candles, and through the alleys you'll see street artists' shows, musicians, theatrical performances, exhibitions, workshops.....

At the end of the celebration thousands of **flying lanterns** are tossed up.
It's a magic and amazing sight!



Discover the local cuisine but don't forget to taste the **Vinsanto**, a sweet raisin wine served with biscuits and desserts; Citerna has one of the best Umbrian Vinsanto makers

Our discover of medieval villages **goes on.** Let's move to the **centre of our beautiful Umbria** and visit other 3 stunning destinations.



Spello

walking through alleys and balconies full of flowers

Spello, situated at the foot of Subasio mountain, is famous for its Infiorate all over the world..

The Infiorate are wonderful carpets of flowers, representing scenes taken from the Catholic religion and realized on the occasion of Corpus Domini (1st Sunday in June).

On Saturday, the inhabitants start creating these carpets using only **petals and pieces of branches**.

On Corpus Domini Sunday, admire these **creations walking through the narrow streets** and find out the most beautiful arrangement awarded in the evening.

Don't worry if you can't visit Spello during the Infiorate, **this beautiful exhibition of flowers will last all the summer**.

Every year the Pro Loco organizes a **contest to choose the most beautiful balcony**. It aims not only at **making the village charming** with flowers and plants, but also at **inciting the residents to take care of their own village**.

Each window, balcony or hidden corner will welcome you with creative flowers arrangements and plants.

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An explosion of colours in the alleys, on the balconies, at the windows makes this ancient village even more glamorous.





But now let's discover something about its **very old history**.

Founded by the Umbrians, **later it became** a Roman settlement called Hispellum and it reached its highest prestige.

Discover the treasures left by Romans :

- some parts of the town walls,
- the gate of the Consolare called Venus's,
- remains of the amphitheatre and of the theatre, richly decorated with marble sculptures,
- ruins of a Diana's temple,
- the Temple sacred to Clitunno,
- remains of aqueducts and thermae.

Different families ruled over Spello, leaving wonderful buildings such as **Palazzo Comunale, Palazzo Baglioni and Palazzo Cruciani and the stunning Villa Fidelia**.



Definitely, you should taste **strangozzi with black truffle** or **brushetta with extravirgin olive oil**, produced in the hills surrounding the village.

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Bevagna and its medieval Gaite (quarters)

Bevagna is a small village only 30 kms far from Perugia, the perfect place to spend some relaxing hours, **wandering around its medieval alleys**, art and culture

Founded in the Roman period, it reached its present look during the centuries and under different dominations.

The Middle Ages gave the village its structure with suggestive alleys, important monuments and charming architectures.

Bevagna is enclosed by **massive walls**, the towers and **the four town gates** are perfectly preserved and **give a name to Bevagna quarters**, the so called **Gaite**.

Have a look at some Roman remains of a temple and of the **thermae**.

But don't forget the most **significant monuments dating back to the Middle Ages**:

- The Palace of the Consuls
- St. Domenico and Giacomo's church, with paintings and frescos realized between the 1200s and 1700s
- St. Michele's church with the big rose window and the bell tower capped by a spire
- St. Silvestro's church

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Definitely, you'll consider incredibly amazing the **alleys, perpendicular to the main street. Long and narrow streets, belonging to the Middle Ages**





Bevagna reaches its highest splendour on the occasion of the **Mercato delle Gaitte in June**.

Il Mercato delle Gaitte (Gaitte market) is a celebration inspired to **the medieval past of Bevagna** and to its **historical division into the four quarters called Gaitte**.

Bevagna is plunged back into the past and into **the village life between the 1200s and the 1300s**.

The celebration lasts 10 days and you can't miss:

- The opening ceremony with the historical parade,
- The shops with the medieval crafts,
- The archery contest,
- The medieval market, with lots of walk-ons wearing medieval clothes, buying things and negotiating the ancient goods.
- The closing ceremony with the declaration of the winning Gaitta.



Of course, you can't visit Bevagna during the Mercato delle Gaitte without tasting a **medieval menu in a local inn**

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Bettona

from the Etruscan period to the present

Bettona, located on Martani mountains, is one of the **most typical medieval villages in Umbria**, a small sight on an untouched past.

Its origins date back to the **Etruscans**, but it reached **its present look in the Middle Ages**.

Walk through the evocative old town centre with its **massive walls, the paved streets, the balconies and windows full of flowers, the ancient wells, monuments and churches** will amaze you.

But don't forget the most **significant monuments dating back to the Middle Ages**:

- St. Crispolto's church, patron of the city,
- The palace of the Podestà which contains two paintings by Il Perugino
- Santa Maria Maggiore's Collegiata (Collegiate church), that, according to the legend, was built on the house of the first person saved by St. Crispolto



Wander around the medieval alleys that lead to hidden corners of the town.
Have a look at **the fountain in Piazza Garibaldi, with its characteristic octagonal shape, overlapping a well of the 15th century**





Out of the walls, admire **the stunning Umbrian hills**, full of olive trees and vineyards.

A natural amphitheatre from the Lake Trasimeno to Montefalco, passing through Assisi and Perugia

Taste the local cuisine, **above all the goose dishes:**

- Tagliatelle or gnocchi with goose sauce,
- Goose livers,
- Roasted goose,

Served with local wines such as **Trebbiano, Sangiovese and Grechetto**

From the heart of Umbria, between olive groves and vineyards, let's move to the **Lake Trasimeno**, a peaceful and quiet oasis, you will admire from the square in **Castel Rigone**.





Castel Rigone

the Barbarian's village

Castel Rigone is a medieval village almost unknown.

Situated on the hills surrounding the Lake Trasimeno, it has a **breathtaking view** you shouldn't miss at all.

According to the tradition, **Castel Rigone was founded in 543**, when the **Ostrogothic lieutenant Arrigo** decided to set a camp here for the soldiers that were besieging Perugia.

The Castel was built later, around the 1200, even if Arrigo himself started the fortification of the camp

It's a tiny village and it's really a pleasure to wander around its **narrow and winding streets**.

But don't forget to see:

- St. Bartolomeo's church,
- St. Agostino's church
- the little theatre

Keep on wandering, you'll arrive at the **small square** with a **stunning lake view**.

If you're looking for visiting an **unusual town**, Castel Rigone **is the right one!**



Visit the **Church of Madonna dei Miracoli (Madonna of miracles)**, built on an ancient well. According to the legend, in 1490 the Virgin Mary appeared to a girl at the well, and asked her to build the chapel right where the well was.





Its barbarian origins inspire the **Festa dei Barbari** (Barbarian celebration), the **main event** in Castel Rigone.

Castel Rigone turns into a barbarian village, so have a look at:

- Craftsmen and merchants at work, for example a craftsman making arms very similar to the ancient ones,
- Stunning swords duels through the alleys,
- Real fightings in the main square,
- Daily routine scenes,
- Historical parades

And spend pleasant nights along the village streets following **musicians and fire swallowers**



Taste the local cuisine in the inns serving a Barbarian menu. Don't forget to taste the **Cinghiale alla barbara** (wild boar at Barbarian's Style)

Thank you for reading my Guide.

Wouldn't be lovely to discover traditions, art, history, real local food and excellent wines in your next Travel?

This is why I want to invite you to visit Umbria

...However the best locations in Umbria are unknown
to the 90% of tourists!

I'm Daniela Bucchi and I am a travel agent specialized in Luxury Experiences in Umbria.

I have welcomed and planned holidays for famous international stars like **Meryl Streep and Sam Neill**.

If you come to Umbria and book a holiday planned by me, I will let you discover **typical and truly Italian locations where even an international star could go unnoticed!**

You can wander around small medieval villages where you will meet only the locals, and count tourists on the fingers of your hand!

**The holiday I'm offering you is not an usual holiday, it's a real
"Oscar Experience"**

It is An Immersive Stay to Experience Local Culture and Unconventional Destinations and to Feel Like a Local not Only a Tourist

If you are curious to discover all the suggestions I gave Meryl and Sam, just click here below, and contact me right now!

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