

Itineraries for Bikes

Starting and finishing point: Orvieto

Distance: 87 km.

Total ascent: 2,000 metres

Grade: difficult

Road surface: asphalt

Recommended type of bike: road or hybrid

Places to visit in the area: Orvieto, Todi, Civitella del Lago, Baschi, Lake Corbara.

This route across the hills around the reservoir know as Lake Corbara, touches on two world-famous towns of artistic importance, Todi and Orvieto, while also winding its way through some splendid, wild countryside. There are a number of climbs involved, and as such is only really for experienced, fit cyclists, given the length (90 km.) and the total ascent (2,000 metres) of the route.

The starting point is in front of the church in Ciconia, beneath the ridge on which the town of Orvieto stands. From here, you start off by riding in the direction of Todi and Monte Peglia. The first climb of the day, up to Colonetta di Prodo, comes a mere 1.5 km. from the start: this 8 km. climb, offering magnificent views, first of Orvieto and then of Lake Corbara, is not particularly steep.

After 4 kilometres of descent, the road starts to climb once again, past the village of Prodo, up to a height of 616 metres, midst a completely natural setting, a long way from any traffic or noise. This point marks the beginning of the descent down into the Tiber Valley, which eventually leads to the junction with the SS448 (km. 37.5), where you turn left towards Todi.

A mere 300 metres along this road, and you turn off to your right, still in the direction of Todi, and start to climb up towards the centre of the town. At km. 40.5, turn right towards Fiori and Izzalini, although if you wish you can continue straight on towards Todi town centre (one km. further on), one of Umbria's most famous cities of art and as such well worth a visit.

At the end of the descent (km. 43) continue towards Fiori and Izzalini, and then towards Montecchio and Civitella del Lago: past Izzalini the road starts to climb, and this climb, albeit with the occasional short downhill section, is more than 15 kilometres long, and takes you up to a height of 740 metres (at km. 61). At this point, turn right and begin the descent down to Civitella del Lago, a fascinating little town famous for its panoramic position overlooking Lake Corbara (see 'photo above). Once you have visited the centre of Civitella, you can resume the descent in the direction of the Lake and Orvieto. When you get to the lakeshore, at the junction with the SS448, turn left in the direction of Orvieto.

At km. 75, past the dam, turn off the main road to your right towards the small village of Corbara (which the lake is named after) and ride along beneath the dam itself. When you get to Corbara, bear left towards Orvieto, and a small, quiet country road will take you the 10 kilometres or so back to Ciconia. Once back at the starting point, Ciconia, you can then visit Orvieto by taking the funicular railway up to the town centre. Orvieto is famous throughout the

world for its Cathedral, St. Patrick's Well and a whole range of other artistic and architectural treasures, as well as for the delightful white wine produced in the local area.

Things not to miss

Orvieto is one of the most famous towns in the centre of Italy, renowned for its vast artistic and cultural heritage. The town's most interesting and most beautiful buildings include: the 13th century Cathedral, one of the most impressive achievements of Italian architecture; the Church of San Giovenale, the Church of San Giovanni, the Church of Sant'Andrea, the Church of San Lorenzo de'Arari, and the thirteenth-century churches of San Francesco and San Domenico.

The town's most famous public buildings include the Town Hall (Palazzo Comunale), the Palazzo del Popolo, the Palazzo dei Sette, and the Luigi Mancinelli Municipal Theatre. Another very famous and unique feature of the town is St. Patrick's Well (Pozzo di San Patrizio), a masterpiece of engineering some 62 metres deep, featuring two separate helicoidal ladders which descend to the bottom of the well, so that those persons bringing water up to the surface could do so without encountering those going down.

Beneath the town lies another reality: Subterranean Orvieto, consisting of an incredibly complex labyrinth of passages, tunnels and cellars dug out of the rock.

If you go just outside of the town walls you can visit the Etruscan necropolis entitled the Tufo Crucifix, dating from the 4th/5th century BC, with chamber tombs built out of blocks of tufo rock.

Other places of interesting along the route include the ancient villages of Prodo, Montecchio, Baschi and, above all, Civitella del Lago, famous for its delightfully panoramic position overlooking Lake Corbara. Then there is the Forello Gorge (Gole del Forello), and at Scoppieto there is even a Roman ceramic factory dating from the 1st century AD, which at the time was an important site for the production of terracotta products, which could be subsequently transported towards the Mediterranean along the waters of the River Tiber.