

## FACT-SHEET

### Packages “The Way of Saint Benedict for all”

#### 1. Guided or self-guided tour?

##### What is the difference?

Both types of tour of “The Way of St Benedict for all” are organized on request, on any date within the period of availability. **Important:** there are no programmed open tours!

Guided tours are designed for small groups (family, friends, clubs and associations) that book at the same time for all participants and choose which program and arrangements they wish.

Self-guided tour: Customers do on autonomous and independent basis the daily walking, cycling or handbike tour that is described and detailed in the documentation that is given to them before the trip, managing the time and tasks on one’s own.

Guided tour: The qualified guide that accompanies the group throughout takes care of the management of time and tasks, on the basis of the agreed travel program, as well as of any unexpected events that may occur, with particular attention for the persons with special needs.

##### Arrangements

For both types, the price of the package sold to the client includes the arrangements that are necessary to carry out the tour, first of all accommodation along the journey.

Guided tours include half-board (breakfast and dinner), baggage transfers between accommodations and transfer of the participants (if necessary) to/from accommodations.

Self-guided tours may include only some of the above-mentioned services, while the others can be obtained as extra.

##### Information and tracks

The clients who choose the self-guided style of tour, receive digital information of the stages that can be exported, viewed and tracked on their mobile devices using different applications (ViewRanger, Oruxmaps, etc ...)

##### The companion

Our accessible trips are based on the assumption that the customer with disability (physical, visual, or intellectual) always travels with a companion who can assist him/her wherever and whenever the risks and specific obstacles that exist in certain points of the stages require that.

**This applies to guided tours, too!**

#### 2. Accessibility of the Way of St. Benedict

Before addressing the issue of the current state of the current accessibility along the route of The Way of St. Benedict, it is necessary to say something about the territory.

The Way of St. Benedict goes through two of Italy’s 20 Regions: Umbria and Lazio (aka Latium).

The former is completely surrounded by mountains; therefore, it does not benefit of the influence of the sea. It is a lush land of green hills and valleys; therefore, it deserves its title of “green heart of Italy”. Just a few Km past Monteleone di Spoleto, we enter Lazio and immediately realize the complex shape of its territory. In the northern part, the range of Monti Reatini, topped by Terminillo, prevail on the hills. Moving southeastwards, we will spot the Simbruini and Ernici mountain ranges, we will come across rivers, starting with Velino in Rieti, Aniene after Vicovaro, Liri and Melfa towards the end. Lakes like Turano and the myriad volcanic ones. As we approach the Tyrrhenian coast, we realize that more mountains divide

the route from the sea. Agriculture, formerly the backbone of the economy along with cattle raising, play nowadays a modest role in the economy.

It is therefore easy to understand how the whole route goes mostly up- or downhill over the hills and how the communities have remained under metropolitan level. The only real “city” along the route is Rieti, while Cassino is historically speaking beyond the end of the route.

This is why the entire accessible route is made of asphalt road, away from the main traffic roads and as close as possible to the walking route. We have selected the mildest ways, although it was impossible to avoid some steep slopes nor to design a less undulated route.

It is not a place for beginners; however, the warmth, the atmosphere and the spirituality that you feel throughout the Way of St. Benedict have made it one of the favorite Italian cultural itineraries. Do not forget that St Francis himself has walked a good portion of the way, which gives it an unparalleled aura.

### 3. Client transportation

The route that we have designed under the Sa.Be.R. Universal project is totally on asphalt, away from the main traffic roads, as safe as possible (although the lack of sidelanes often compels to use the motor lane on mountain roads). It is as close as possible to the walking route designed by Simone Frignani in his book published in Italy by Terre di Mezzo Editore ([libri.terre.it/libri/collana/0/libro/364/Il-Cammino-di-san-Benedetto](http://libri.terre.it/libri/collana/0/libro/364/Il-Cammino-di-san-Benedetto)).

Consequently, if on one hand a person with specific sensorial needs can follow the walking route, maybe with some support, on the other hand a person with reduced mobility who is determined to undertake this route autonomously has no other choice than the accessible route. Therefore, it is very important to choose the correct moving aid. Be it a wheel-chair or a special-bike, one will have to face up-and-downs, frequently over 8%, which makes it necessary, as well as for anybody else, to choose the correct technical gear. Plan well and, if you need advice, consult [www.openuproutes.eu](http://www.openuproutes.eu).

### 4. Accommodations

Likewise, both in Umbria and Lazio, many accommodations are in private houses and apartments owned by persons who have moved to cities like Perugia, Rieti, Cassino, Frosinone and Rome. As such, they have not been adapted to welcome persons with special needs, especially so the “B&B” class.

In general, although it is luckily not strictly so, it must be clarified that the adaptations that exist are mostly for people with reduced mobility, under dialysis and celiac, while other types of need escape the common idea of disability.

Having said so, don’t panic! Nearly for each stage, there is an accessible accommodation and more are about to come: there is a reasonable expectation that by 2018/19 there will be more.

As things change, we update information about accommodations. We therefore kindly request whoever is interested in this Camino, to inquire with us for updated information concerning accessible accommodations.

### 5. Health aspects

#### Health service’s information

Information on health services will be provided in customers trip notes. This information will include list of health services and resources along the route which will include: Hospitals, outpatient clinics, physiotherapy services and pharmacies.

#### First aid kit

Although there are pharmacies along the route, they can be closed when the traveler needs to buy something or can happen that the pilgrim is half way of the stage. Therefore, it is essential to carry a basic first aid kit designed for the person with disability and his companion. However, the daily stages planned in these packages, both on foot or bike/handbike, are shorter than the standard stages pilgrims routinely perform. Some of the most common discomforts along the way are blisters, tendonitis, heat stroke, chafing, sunburn and muscle aches.

Here are the recommendations on generic articles to take:

*Aspirins, Ibuprofen, Fortasec, Needle and Thread, Voltaren, Sun Cream, Vaseline, Band-Aid, Scissors, Antiseptics, Gauze, Tweezers, Plaster*

*(\*) PMR. For wheelchair travelers, in addition to the generic items mentioned above, note that if they had any type of injury or serious injury during the trip, they may need special treatment or medication. In such a case, we do not recommend continuing the trip (for example, in case of eschars).*

### **Allergies and special diets**

In case of suffering from any kind of allergy or intolerance it is essential to inform the travel agency when booking.

## **6. Arrival / return to / from the first/last accommodation by plane and public transport**

### **General recommendations to fly with wheelchair (\*) PMR traveling on wheelchair**

All airlines offer seats for PMRs. However, each one establishes conditions, special services and number of reserved seats according to aeronautical regulations, security reasons and according to the aircraft type. Therefore, before preparing a travel with wheelchair, consult airline conditions on its website.

Once ticket has been purchased, it is advisable to collect information on boarding, security check, personnel assistance at the airport, billing and extra services costs.

### **Airport Assistance services for passengers with disabilities**

Since 2008 European airports have an assistance service for passengers with disabilities or reduced mobility. It is usually a free service, although there may be exceptions. The airport must be advised by wheelchair user 48 hours before the boarding, although this notification is usually made by the airline company. There is a special meeting point for this assistance service into the airport. The accompanying personnel will assist the passenger in all the procedures from the security control to the gate or his seat location in the airplane. If there is a family member who will accompany the passenger, it must be notify the company as well, since no one without a boarding pass can get to the plane.

The security procedures for PMR who travel by plain with wheelchair are the same as any other passenger, although sometimes wheelchair must pass through a special control.

### **When and how to do the check-in (\*) PMR traveling on wheelchair**

Wheelchair itself can be used for moving into the airport and until the time of check-in. At this point, the company will provide another one. Upon arrival at destination, it will be again airport personnel who will take the passenger to the baggage claim area to pick up its wheelchair, handbike and luggage.

Depending on different wheelchair type it can board or not into the plane. Each airline has certain conditions, weight limits or wheelchairs measures for each kind of plane, in addition some companies may request the instruction manual.

### Airports and public transport assistance services in Spain

Both airports of Rome are well connected by train and bus to the city. The airports, the main railway stations and the public transport companies offer assistance to the disabled persons.

## 7. Pre-trip recommendations

The route experience is demanding: it takes displacements, knowledge, resistance and above all resilience. Everyone has a personal concept, but everybody needs adequate preparation, taking into account clinical advice, too. Dedicate special care to the anamnesys by examining the cardiocirculatory and respiratory systems and blood analysis.

- PMR. The travelers with a physical disability must have sufficient physical tone to allow him / her to maintain an adequate pace to cover the kilometers to be carried out daily. It is advisable that the material and accessories carried are in optimal conditions and be sure to take spare parts for the wheelchair and the handbike. Also, it is essential to carry a second battery for both; handbike and mobile device.
- Persons with **psychic disability** should be accompanied by other person who knows their specific disability to assist them in the most specific way if it is necessary.
- Regarding people with **visual disability**, we advise them to walk always accompanied, due to the existence of crossings, deviations, irregularities of the terrain and other aspects that are relevant and potentially dangerous for a person with some visual disability.
- People with **hearing disability** should have extreme caution when crossing roads, which must has to be done in numerous occasions along the stretches.
- Bring enough water to cover the stages
- Take sun protection measures

## 8. Practical advice before and during the stages

Even during the route the following aspects must be taken into consideration: physical condition, travel mate, supporting person, way markings, hydration and protection from the atmospheric elements.

Common sense is the key. The person who undertakes the route has to keep in good condition by eating nourishing food, avoiding excess, so that he/she can afford the next stage. It is advisable to eat a good breakfast, so that one does not have to eat too much during the day. Dried fruits are a good source of ready energy.

Persons with cognitive problems must always have a reliable travel companion who can take care of them and be helpful when needed.

Likewise, persons with visual or hearing problems must go with a companion who can assist at crossroads and wherever the way is shared with motor-vehicles.

Finally, especially during hot months, it is very important to stay well hydrated: drink frequently in small quantities at a time, carry as much liquid as you can depending on the availability of resources along the way. And if you get too tired, do not hesitate to contact your local host: they have good knowledge of the territory and they will be happy to give assistance.

## 9. Booking and Travel

### Bookable Dates

Accessible packages are offered on the following dates:

- **Walking route:** From March 15<sup>th</sup> to November 15<sup>th</sup>
- **Accessible route (PMR and handbike):** From May 1<sup>st</sup> to October 30<sup>th</sup>

Please consider the following, too:

- In July and August it can be very hot even at the higher altitudes
- In March, April and November some stages are impracticable.

### Importance of early booking

We recommend to book well in advance since accommodations are scarce in many places and The Way of St. benedict is becoming increasingly popular. It is therefore advisable to book at least three months ahead of departure.

## 10. Travel and accident insurances

These packages do NOT include travel or accidents insurance so they must be purchased by customers.

### Reasons to choose our packages of The Way of St benedict for all:

- We select accessible accommodations
- We provide detailed information on accommodation accessibility and touristic resources
- They are designed so that the pilgrim travels with ease and without improvisations
- We have the support of a European COSME project on accessible tourism
- We are an agency with long experience designing packages in pilgrim routes
- We have a 24-hour telephone service