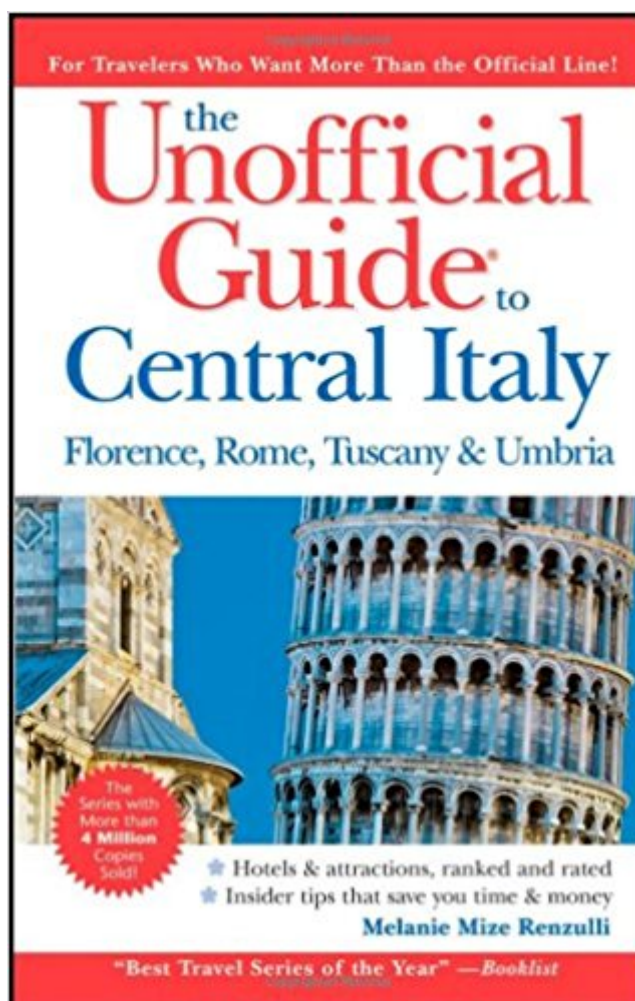


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# The Unofficial Guide To Central Italy: Florence, Rome, Tuscany, And Umbria (Unofficial Guides)



## Synopsis

From the publishers of The Unofficial Guide to Walt Disney World "A Tourist's Best Friend!"  
•Chicago Sun-Times "Indispensable" •The New York Times Five Great Features and Benefits offered ONLY by The Unofficial Guide: A complete planner to Florence, Rome, and the highlights of Tuscany, Umbria, Latium, and the Marches Honest advice that lets you feel safe and comfortable in the heart of Italy •whether you speak Italian or not Insider tips on finding the most charming hotels for the best price Hundreds of restaurants reviewed and ranked for quality and value A complete guide to the region's cultural and historic sights •with helpful hints for making the most of your time

## Book Information

Series: Unofficial Guides (Book 206)

Paperback: 490 pages

Publisher: Wiley; 4 edition (March 31, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0470229004

ISBN-13: 978-0470229002

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 1 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 9 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #2,293,032 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #64 in [Books > Travel > Europe > San Marino & Umbria](#) #64 in [Books > Travel > Europe > Italy > Umbria](#) #194 in [Books > Travel > Europe > Italy > Tuscany](#)

## Customer Reviews

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MELANIE MIZE RENZULLI IS OBSESSED with all things Italian. In addition to being the author of the Unofficial Guide to Central Italy, she was the principal writer for Michelin's Green Guide Tuscany and wrote the first edition of Frommer's Irreverent Guide to Rome. Melanie has also written travel, food, and style articles for the Washington Post, Saveur, Bell'Italia, Babble.com, and the Travel Channel. Her love for Italy is on display at [www.italofile.com](http://www.italofile.com).

On our recent visit to Tuscany and Rome, we found there were two books we couldn't do without, a phrasebook and this. This has the best, most comprehensive listings of main-stream attractions and "behind the scenes" spots of all the books I bought or read planning this trip. Some of the prices and hours for museums are a bit out of date, but you'll find places listed in this book that aren't in the others, and you'll wonder how those others could have missed it. If your vacation includes Florence, Rome, Pisa, Siena, Perugia, or any of the other wonder cities in Tuscany and Umbria, YOU NEED THIS BOOK.

I was pleasantly surprised with this book. The way the attractions are organized, with star ratings for different age groups (apparently culled from tourists at each site) as well as the author's rating (sometimes the same, sometimes better or worse) helped give a better picture of each option, since not everyone likes the same thing. The mini-history lesson for each town is also a bonus in my opinion. I really enjoy knowing a little background on where I'm going, as I feel it leads to better understanding of the things I see & people I encounter. It is a little heavy on Rome & Florence, but is also sure to include some really unique spots. I would definitely buy another one of these guides, but be sure to check the publication date to be sure it's within the last couple of years. I don't rely on guide books too heavily for lodging or restaurants (I use internet research for that) since even a most recent edition takes some time to come to press and things change. I generally see that section of guide books as a starting point or fall back if needed but not as the primary source. Also, various attractions can vary widely in hours (sometimes they just change or are closed/limited due to constant renovations - just the nature of things in Italy), so be sure to double check directly with the attraction (by phone, e-mail, or on the website) before you go to avoid unexpected disappointments. It is also well written (although the editors missed some major typos in page headings and the like, but nothing that detracts from the book) - engaging but still informative, not fluff or personal opinion.

This book details each and every inch of Rome and Tuscany. In addition to this, the book was easy

to read and follow, complete with excellent hotel, eating and shopping suggestions. I would recommend it to anyone traveling to Italy!

Good content. There are only 40 pages devoted to Umbria however. Florence, Roma, and Tuscany are the focus.

This guide was very practical and useful in comparison to the guidebook my friend had with her. Hers had a lot of pictures but less practical information. We tried several of the restaurant recommendations - one in particular in Florence was one of our best meals and one of the best prices - half of the cost of any other meal on the trip. One recommended wine shop though was no longer open. I was also disappointed that the information on the galleries was not specific about how difficult it can be to get in on certain days - for example, The Uffizzi in Florence is quite difficult to get in to without an advance reservation on a Tuesday because it is closed on Mondays. This was the day I had planned to go and the line was 5 hours long just to attempt to get in. I think it would also be helpful to include some information on the "after hours" touring options. While pricey, several of the Galleries, including the Vatican Museum have services that can provide a tour after the normal hours of the Museum when all the crowds are gone. This would likely be well worth it if you can afford the option or want to treat yourself to one special tour. Overall I thought this was a good guidebook and easy to use.

My husband and I used this guide on our first trip to Rome and Florence. It was well written and well organized. The book contained some great tips about getting around using public transportation in both cities; the included maps were helpful. Sights were rated based not only upon how interesting they were but on what age groups would be interested in them, from children through senior citizens. The restaurant reviews and recommendations were right on target. Everything from "inexpensive" to "very expensive" eateries were included. This book was obviously written using input from a variety of real travelers, not some "high-brow" travel critic! The book included information on many smaller towns, too. The only drawback was that the book was a bit on the large side. It fit into a backpack but with the other things we commonly carried, (water bottles, camera), it was a little cumbersome. However, this book contains so much useful information, it was worth taking along! Read it before you go to Italy and take it on your travels. We were glad we did!

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