



On the Road with St Francis of Assi

Linda Bird Francke



On the Road with Francis of Assisi offers a unique and lively travelogue of parallel journeys: that of Francis of Assisi on his way to sainthood in the thirteenth century, and that of author Linda Bird Francke, who followed his path through the beauty of central and coastal Italy and even on to Egypt. Francke tells the compelling story of Saint Francis through the many places he visited. She and her husband, Harvey Loomis, used as their guidebooks medieval texts, including the first official biography of the saint, completed in 1229, just three years after he died. Theirs was not a spiritual journey but one based on admiration for a man whose legend continues to inspire and fascinate millions around the world. From Assisi—a small Umbrian town that now draws two million visitors a year, making it second only to Rome as an Italian pilgrimage destination—Saint Francis crisscrossed Italy for twenty years. And so too does the author travel through the green heart of Italy to such hill towns and cities as Siena, Bologna, Venice, Gubbio, and Rome, and to the many mountaintop Franciscan sanctuaries from La Verna and Le Celle di Cortona in Tuscany to the Rieti Valley. Along the way, Francke movingly depicts the many miracles Francis performed and draws us into the splendid beauty of the landscape that inspired the saint's love for nature and regard for all living things. Unlike Francis, however, whose asceticism caused him to add ashes to his food to deaden its earthly pleasure, Francke and her husband indulge in the fabled Umbrian cuisine, from wild boar to the region's famed black truffles, and the incomparable local wines. On the Road with Francis of Assisi embraces the spirit and person of its legendary subject, and invites the reader to marvel at his spiritual intensity and follow in his footsteps through the timeless beauty of Italy.

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