

Orvieto

Umbria · Italy

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Orvieto sits on top of a flat cliff of volcanic rock that rises steeply above the valley. The town looks like a fortress from below, and its streets of grey-brown tuff stone have changed little since the Middle Ages. It lies in southwestern Umbria, close to the borders of Tuscany and Lazio.

The main reason to come is the cathedral, one of the great Gothic churches of Italy. But the town also has a second world below its streets: Etruscan wells, tunnels and caves cut into the soft rock. Orvieto is an easy day trip from Rome by train, yet it rewards a night or two, when the day visitors leave and the town grows quiet. It suits travellers who like art, history, wine and slow walks.

When to visit

Late spring and early autumn are the best times, with warm days and green or golden hills. July and August are hot, with days often above 30 °C. Winter is cool and damp, with occasional light snow, but the town is quiet and hotel prices drop.

The biggest annual event is **Corpus Domini**, in late May or June. A historic procession of more than 400 people in medieval costume walks through the streets with the town's most sacred relic. It is worth planning a trip around it, but book a room early.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Poor Poor for sightseeing	10° / 14° Feels like 6°	2° / -3°	Dry air
February	Poor Poor for sightseeing	11° / 16° Feels like 7°	3° / -3°	Dry air
March	Fair Fair for sightseeing	14° / 20° Feels like 10°	5° / -1°	Dry air
April	Good Good for sightseeing	18° / 24° Feels like 15°	7° / 3°	Dry air
May	Great Great for sightseeing	23° / 28°	12° / 8°	Dry air
June	Great Great for sightseeing	28° / 34°	16° / 11°	21 sunny days · Calm winds
July	Good Good for sightseeing	31° / 36°	18° / 15°	26 sunny days · UV 8 (Very high)
August	Good Good for sightseeing	31° / 37°	19° / 15°	24 sunny days · Calm winds
September	Great Great for sightseeing	26° / 31°	15° / 10°	
October	Great Great for sightseeing	21° / 26°	11° / 6°	Dry air
November	Fair Fair for sightseeing	15° / 20° Feels like 12°	7° / 1°	12 rainy days · Dry air
December	Poor Poor for sightseeing	11° / 15° Feels like 7°	4° / -2°	Dry air

Best months: May, June, September, October

Climate data: NASA POWER (MERRA-2) · 1996–2025

Top sights



A Orvieto Cathedral is the town's great landmark, built from 1290 onward. Its facade shines with gold mosaics and carved marble reliefs, and the inside is striped in black and white stone.

Inside the cathedral, B Cappella di San Brizio holds *Luca Signorelli*'s frescoes of the end of the world and the Last Judgment, painted around 1500. Many visitors come to Orvieto for these frescoes alone.

C Pozzo di San Patrizio is a deep well built for Pope *Clement VII* after the sack of Rome in 1527. Two separate spiral staircases wind around the shaft, so people going down never meet people coming up.

D Grotte della Rupe are visited on a guided tour of the man-made caves below the town. You see Etruscan tunnels and cisterns, old wine cellars and medieval pigeon houses cut into the rock.

E Pozzo della Cava is a smaller, privately run cave complex in the western part of town, with a deep well of Etruscan origin and a series of connected caves.

F Museo Claudio Faina, opposite the cathedral, has a rich collection of Etruscan vases, bronzes and coins. G Museo Opera del Duomo - Palazzi Papali shows the cathedral's own treasures in the medieval papal palaces next door.

H Torre del Moro stands at the main crossroads of the old town. Climb it for a wide view over the rooftops and the surrounding valley.

I Necropoli del Crocifisso del Tufo lies at the foot of the cliff. Its Etruscan stone tombs are laid out in neat streets, like a small town of the dead.

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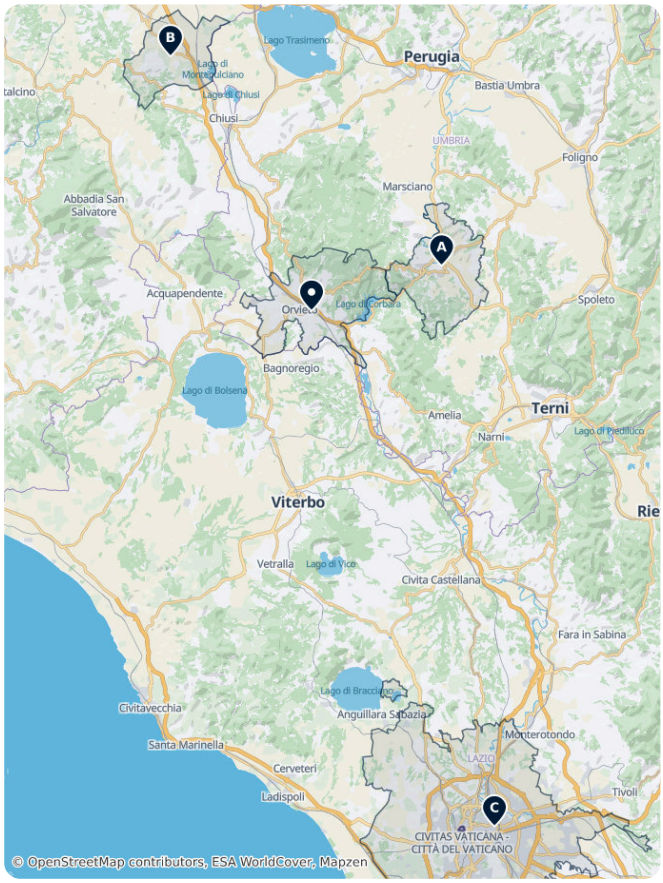
What to experience

Some of the best moments in Orvieto are tied to a time of day or a time of year.

- **Watch the cathedral facade at sunset**: late in the day the gold mosaics catch the low sun and glow. Find a seat on the steps of the square and wait for it.
- **Walk the Anello della Rupe**: a footpath that circles the base of the cliff. It passes Etruscan tombs, old gates and caves, and gives the best views of the town from below.
- **See the Palombella at Pentecost**: a small model dove slides down a wire across the cathedral square and sets off fireworks at the end. It is an old local tradition with a crowd to match.
- **Hear Umbria Jazz Winter**: every year around New Year, the town hosts a jazz festival. Concerts fill the theatre, churches and palaces, and there is often a jazz mass in the cathedral.
- **Visit the living nativity scene underground**: over the Christmas holidays, a cave at Pozzo della Cava hosts a nativity scene with mechanically animated figures.

Day trips

Orvieto sits where Umbria, Tuscany and Lazio meet, so there is a lot within easy reach. A car is the easiest way to do most of these trips.



- Lake Bolsena (about 30 min by car): a large volcanic lake with beaches and the lakeside town of Bolsena. Good for a swim or a long lunch in summer.
- Civita di Bagnoregio (about 40 min by car, or by Cotral bus from the station square, Monday to Saturday only): a tiny medieval village on a crumbling clay hill, reached on foot by a long footbridge. A ticket is charged to enter the village.
- A Todi (about 45 min by car): a quiet hill town built around a large medieval main square.
- Viterbo (about 50 min by car): a city with a well-kept medieval quarter and a former papal palace.
- B Montepulciano (about 1 hour by car): a Tuscan hill town known for its red wine and Renaissance palaces.
- C Rome (about 1 hour 15 minutes by train): a full day in the capital is easy, with direct trains through the day.

Where to explore

Orvieto combines well with other towns in Umbria on a longer trip.

- **Umbrian hill towns**: Assisi, the town of Saint Francis, and Spoleto, with its Roman remains and summer arts festival.
- **Regional capital**: Perugia, a lively university city with a medieval centre.
- **Bigger cities**: Rome to the south and Florence to the north are both on the main railway line.

Getting there

- **By air**: the main gateway is Rome Fiumicino airport. Take a train to Roma Termini or Roma Tiburtina and change there for Orvieto; allow about 2.5 hours in total. Florence airport is another option, with a change of train in Florence.
- **By train**: Orvieto station is on the main Rome–Florence line, in the lower town of Orvieto Scalo. Direct trains from Rome take about 1 hour 15 minutes to 1.5 hours, and from Florence about 2 hours. Trenitalia
- **From the station to the old town**: the funicular from the station square (Piazza Matteotti) to Piazza Cahen has been closed for works since June 2026. A frequent replacement shuttle bus runs on the same route, and city bus line 1 also links the station with Piazza Cahen. Check whether the funicular has reopened before you travel.
- **By car**: Orvieto has its own exit on the A1 motorway between Rome and Florence. Rome is about 1.5 hours away and Florence about 2 hours.

Getting around

- **On foot**: the old town on top of the cliff is compact. Piazza Cahen to the cathedral is about a 15-minute walk along Corso Cavour, and everything else is close by.
- **City buses**: line A runs from Piazza Cahen to Piazza Duomo, and line 1 links the station with Piazza Cahen. While the funicular is closed, a replacement shuttle also runs between the station and Piazza Cahen. Buy tickets in the Trenitalia app or at Busitalia sales points. Busitalia
- **Lifts and escalators**: free lifts and escalators connect the large car park at the former Campo della Fiera with the western end of the old town.
- **Cycling**: not practical on top of the cliff, which has narrow and crowded streets. The roads in the valley below suit fit road cyclists.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

High

The old town on the cliff top is compact and walkable, about 1.5 km end to end, with stone paving and some slopes.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Low

Narrow, crowded streets on the cliff top make cycling impractical; the valley roads suit fit road cyclists.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?**: not for the town itself, which is best on foot. A car is very useful for the countryside, the wineries and the nearby lakes and villages.
- **Restrictions**: most of the old town is a limited traffic zone (ZTL), and cameras fine cars without a permit. Do not drive into the centre unless your hotel has registered your car.
- **Parking**: the easiest option is the large car park at the former Campo della Fiera, below the western end of the cliff, with free lifts and escalators up to the town. You can also park in the lower town near the station and take the shuttle bus or bus line 1 up, or the funicular once it reopens.

Food & drink

Orvieto is best known for its white wine, Orvieto Classico, made from grapes grown on the volcanic soil around the town. Local food is simple Umbrian cooking: thick hand-rolled pasta called *umbrichelli*, wild boar, pigeon, roast pork and dishes with black truffles. Look in bakeries for *lumachelle*, small savoury rolls with cheese and cured pork.

For eating, the streets around the cathedral are the busiest and most expensive. You often eat better a few streets away, along Corso Cavour and around Piazza della Repubblica and Piazza del Popolo. Many wine bars and shops have cellars cut into the tuff rock, and some offer tastings inside them.

What to eat & drink

LUNCH

Pizza Margherita
Thin-crust pizza topped with tomato, mozzarella, and basil, invented in Naples and still best there.

DINNER

Spaghetti alla Carbonara
Pasta with egg, cured pork cheek (guanciale), pecorino cheese, and black pepper, a Roman classic.

Risotto alla Milanese
Creamy saffron-infused rice dish from Milan, often served alongside braised veal shank.

Lasagna · Lasagne al Forno
Layered baked pasta with ragu, bechamel, and cheese, a staple of Emilia-Romagna cooking.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Prosciutto and Cheese · Prosciutto e Formaggio
Cured ham paired with regional cheeses, a common antipasto plate found nationwide.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Gelato
Dense, slow-churned Italian ice cream, traditionally lower in fat and air than American-style ice cream.

Tiramisu · Tiramisù
Layered dessert of coffee-soaked ladyfingers and mascarpone cream, dusted with cocoa.

DRINKS

Espresso · Caffè
A short, strong shot of coffee drunk quickly, usually standing at a bar counter.

Wine · Vino
Italy is one of the world's largest wine producers, with regional styles from Piedmont's Barolo to Tuscany's Chianti.

Aperol Spritz
A bittersweet orange aperitif mixed with prosecco and soda water, a staple of the early-evening aperitivo.

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Safety & health

Orvieto is a very safe town. Serious crime against visitors is rare, and even pickpocketing is uncommon outside the busiest days. Keep the usual watch on your bag in crowds on the cathedral square.

The main risks are physical. The streets are steep and paved with stone, which is slippery when wet, so wear good shoes. Take care at the edges of the cliff and on the stairs of the deep wells, which are long and tiring. In July and August carry water, as the stone town holds the heat.

History

The Etruscans built a powerful city here, called *Velzna*, from around the 9th century BC. The cliff made it easy to defend, and the soft rock was easy to dig. Their tombs at Necropoli del Crocifisso del Tufo and the wells and tunnels under the town still survive. Rome destroyed the city in 264 BC and moved its people to the shore of Lake Bolsena.

In the Middle Ages Orvieto grew rich and became a favourite home of the popes. In 1263 a priest saw blood appear on the bread at Mass in nearby Bolsena. This miracle led Pope *Urban IV*, who lived in Orvieto, to create the feast of Corpus Domini. The cloth from the miracle is still kept in a chapel of Orvieto Cathedral, which was begun a few decades later.

In 1527 Pope *Clement VII* fled here after the sack of Rome. Fearing a siege, he ordered Pozzo di San Patrizio to make sure the town would never run out of water. After that, Orvieto slowly lost its importance, which is why its medieval centre survives so well today.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Italy at a glance:

CURRENCY
EUR €

EMERGENCY
112

ELECTRICITY

Type C / Type F / Type L
230 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES
Italian

TAP WATER
Safe to drink

Orvieto's Absolute Essentials

Orvieto sits on a volcanic tuff plateau, with a dense mix of Etruscan and medieval heritage. This selection starts with the Gothic facade of the Duomo and the Renaissance frescoes of the San Brizio Chapel, then goes underground to the Pozzo di San Patrizio and the man-made caves below the town. The Torre del Moro and the Palazzo del Capitano del Popolo mark the medieval centre, while the Faina and cathedral museums and the Crocifisso del Tufo necropolis show the city's Etruscan and artistic past.





A Orvieto Cathedral

Orvieto Cathedral is a large 14th-century Roman Catholic cathedral dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin Mary and situated in the town...

17 Piazza del Duomo, Orvieto 05018, Italy
(42.71705, 12.11369)

Su 13:00–17:30

opsm.it



B Cappella di San Brizio

Located in the Duomo's right transept, this chapel contains Luca Signorelli's Renaissance fresco cycle of the Last Judgment.

17 Piazza del Duomo, Orvieto 05018, Italy
(42.71709, 12.11383)



C Pozzo di San Patrizio

A 16th-century well built for Pope Clement VII, with two separate spiral ramps of steps winding down to the water.

(Unnamed Road), 05018, Italy (42.72254, 12.12045)

Mo–Sa 09:00–17:00



D Grotte della Rupe

Man-made tuff caves, cellars, cisterns and Etruscan tunnels beneath the Orvieto cliff, visited on guided underground tours.

30 Via dei Dolci, Orvieto 05018, Italy (42.71536, 12.11273)

orvietounderground.it



E Torre del Moro

A 13th-century civic tower standing 47 meters tall at the heart of the old town, with 360-degree views from its terrace.

58 Corso Cavour, Orvieto 05018, Italy (42.71847, 12.11058)



F Palazzo del Capitano del Popolo

Built in the late 13th century in Romanesque-Gothic style, this palace served as the seat of the Capitano del Popolo. It features an elegant loggia and Guelph merlons.

9 Via San Leonardo, Orvieto 05018, Italy (42.71937, 12.11097)



G Museo Opera del Duomo - Palazzi Papali

Housed in the medieval Papal Palaces, this museum displays the cathedral's treasury, including medieval sculptures and Renaissance paintings.

Piazza Duomo, 05018 Orvieto (42.71707, 12.11439)

Nov-Feb Mo–Su	10:00–13:00, 14:00–17:00
Mar Mo–Su	10:00–17:00
Apr-Sep Mo–Su	09:30–19:00

museomodo.it, +39 0763 342477



H Museo Claudio Faina

Etruscan and Greek vases, bronzes and coins displayed in a palace facing the cathedral facade.

29 Piazza del Duomo, Orvieto 05018, Italy (42.71685, 12.11245)

Mo–Su	09:30–18:00, 10:00–17:00

museofaina.it, 0763 619655



I Crocifisso del Tufo

An Etruscan necropolis below the cliff, with rows of stone chamber tombs laid out along streets.

(Unnamed Road), 05018, Italy (42.72098, 12.10574)

Etruscan and Underground Orvieto

The soft volcanic tuff under Orvieto has been dug into for nearly three thousand years. This list covers the hand-cut wells and caves below the town, the Etruscan necropolises of Crocifisso del Tufo and Cannicella at the foot of the cliff, the remains of the Belvedere temple, and the National Archaeological Museum, where finds from these sites are on display.





A Pozzo di San Patrizio

A 16th-century well about 54 m deep, with two separate spiral ramps so people going down never met those coming up.

(Unnamed Road), 05018, Italy (42.72254, 12.12045)

Mo–Sa 09:00–17:00



B Pozzo della Cava

An Etruscan-origin well, 36 m deep, set in a complex of nine caves with Etruscan, medieval and Renaissance finds.

30 Via Ranieri, Orvieto 05018, Italy (42.71843, 12.10538)

pozzodellacava.it



C Grotte della Rupe

Man-made tuff caves, cellars, cisterns and Etruscan tunnels beneath the Orvieto cliff, visited on guided underground tours.

30 Via dei Dolci, Orvieto 05018, Italy (42.71536, 12.11273)

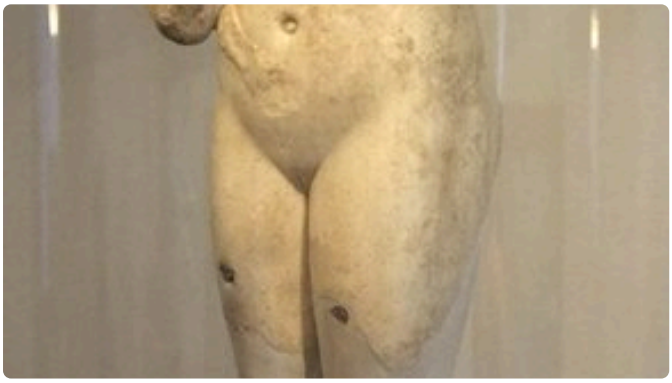
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D Crocifisso del Tufo

An Etruscan necropolis below the cliff, with rows of stone chamber tombs laid out along streets.

(Unnamed Road), 05018, Italy (42.72098, 12.10574)



E Necropoli Etrusca di Cannicella

Etruscan necropolis and sanctuary on the southern slope of the Orvieto cliff, with chamber tombs.

(Unnamed Road), 05018, Italy (42.71504, 12.11743)



F Volsinii

Foundations of an Etruscan temple from the 5th century BC, next to the Pozzo di San Patrizio.

Strada della Stazione, Orvieto 05018, Italy (42.72253, 12.11989)



National Archaeological Museum of Orvieto

Etruscan finds and tomb paintings displayed in the Gothic Papal Palace beside the cathedral.

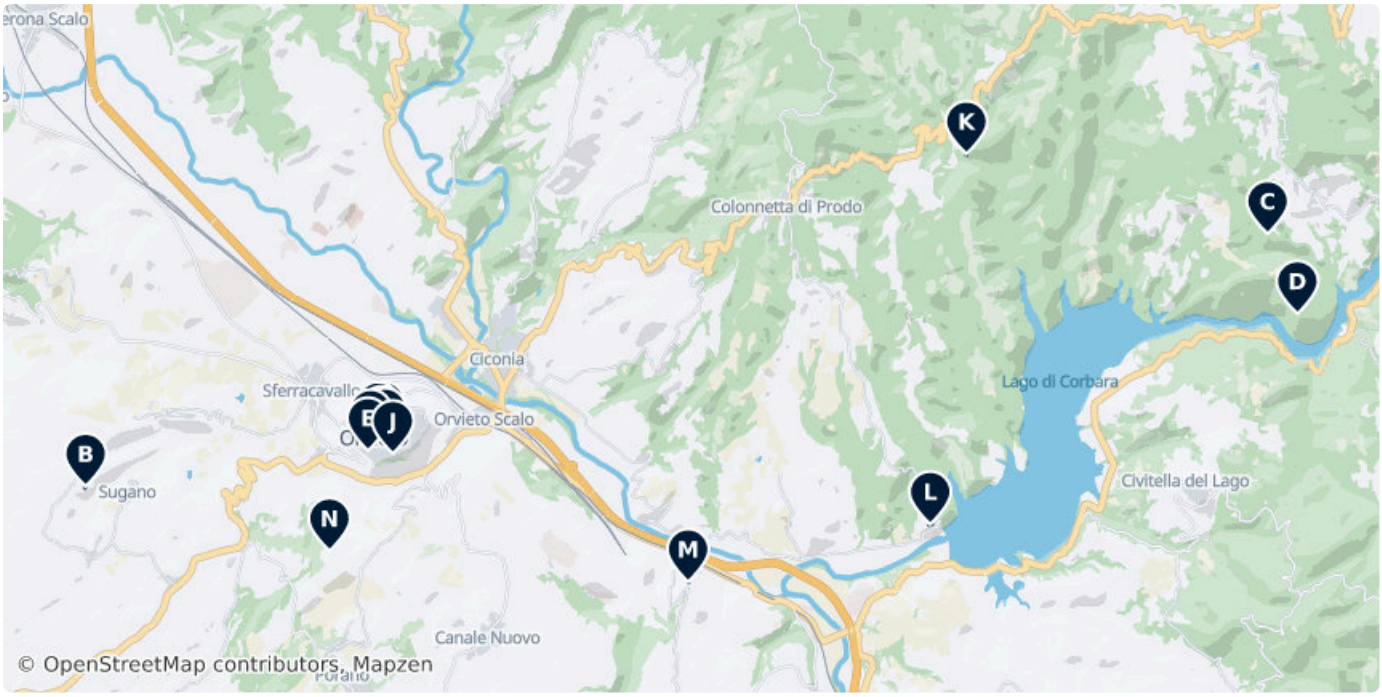
Piazza Duomo, 05018 Orvieto (42.71688, 12.11434)

Mo–Su 08:30–19:30

polomusealeumbria.beniculturali.it, +39 0763 341039

Historic Monuments and Castles

Orvieto's architecture is shaped by its tuff cliff and a dense collection of medieval and Renaissance buildings. This list highlights the city's civic power through the Palazzo del Capitano del Popolo and the Palazzo dei Sette, alongside castles such as Castello di Prodo in the hills around the town. The sites range from Etruscan painted tombs at the Tombe Golini to the Renaissance facades of Palazzo Gualterio and Palazzo Comunale.





A Palazzo del Capitano del Popolo

Built in the late 13th century in Romanesque-Gothic style, this palace served as the seat of the Capitano del Popolo. It features an elegant loggia and Guelph merlons.

9 Via San Leonardo, Orvieto 05018, Italy (42.71937, 12.11097)

B Castello di San Quirico

Medieval fortification located in the countryside surrounding Orvieto.

05018, Italy (42.71127, 12.04763)

C Montemarte

Remains of a medieval fortress belonging to the Montemarte family, on a hill overlooking the Tiber valley.

(42.75063, 12.29861)

D ruins castle

Ruins of a medieval castle in a panoramic position above the Tiber valley.

sentiero per la Roccaccia, 05018 Orvieto TR, Italy (42.73816, 12.30495)



E Palazzo Medici

13th-century palace featuring Gothic architectural elements, located near the city walls.

42 Via Garibaldi, Orvieto 05018, Italy (42.71685, 12.10762)



F Palazzo Simoncelli

Renaissance-era aristocratic residence featuring a facade attributed to the school of Ippolito Scalza.

17 Piazza del Popolo, Orvieto 05018, Italy (42.71930, 12.10970)



G Palazzo Gualterio

Palazzo Gualterio is a Renaissance architecture aristocratic palace located diagonal across Corso Cavour from the Torre del Moro in Orvieto...

13 Via del Duomo, Orvieto 05018, Italy (42.71835, 12.11125)



H Palazzo dei Sette

13th-century civic building that once housed the representatives of the city's major guilds. It is physically connected to the Torre del Moro.

(42.71863, 12.11056)



I Palazzo Comunale

Orvieto's town hall, featuring a 16th-century facade designed by Ippolito Scalza with a distinctive arched portico.

4 Via Garibaldi, Orvieto 05018, Italy (42.71812, 12.10819)



J Palazzo dell'Opera del Duomo

14th-century Gothic palace next to the cathedral. It historically managed the Duomo's construction.

2 Vicolo dei Dolci, Orvieto 05018, Italy (42.71640, 12.11287)

K Castello di Prodo

14th-century castle with corner towers, originally built as a defensive outpost.

(42.76306, 12.23467)

L Castello di Corbara

Medieval castle and estate overlooking Lake Corbara.

(42.70535, 12.22699)

M Castello di Tordimonte

Medieval fortress along the road to Todi.

(42.69639, 12.17558)

N Tombe Golini e degli Hescana

Etruscan underground burial chambers discovered in the 19th century, known for wall paintings of funerary banquets.

(42.70120, 12.09941)

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