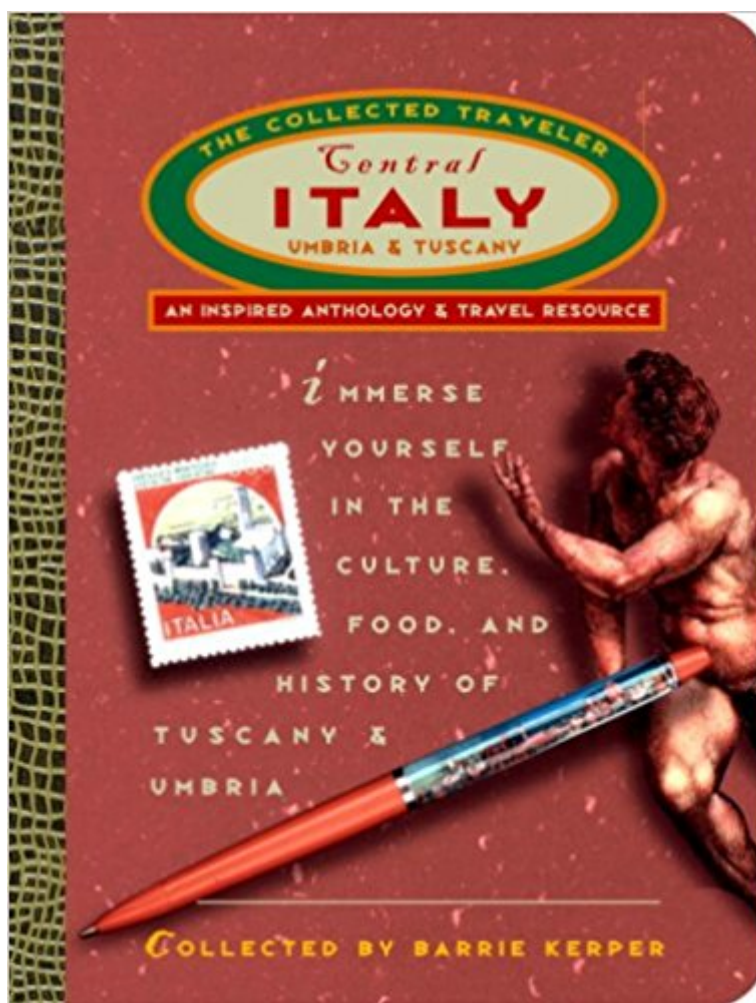


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Central Italy: The Collected Traveler: Tuscany And Umbria



Synopsis

Each edition of this unique series marries a collection of previously published essays with detailed practical information, creating a colorful and deeply absorbing pastiche of opinions and advice. Each book is a valuable resource -- a compass of sorts -- pointing vacationers, business travelers, and readers in many directions. Going abroad with a Collected Traveler edition is like being accompanied by a group of savvy and observant friends who are intimately familiar with your destination. This edition on central Italy -- tuscany & umbria features: Distinguished writers, such as Muriel Spark, Gerald Asher, Erica Jong, Jason Epstein, Pope Brock, Nancy Harmon Jenkins, and David Downie, who share seductive pieces about the side roads of Tuscany, wines of Montepulciano, renting houses in Tuscany and Umbria, cooking schools, outdoor markets, and the Festa dei Ceri in Gubbio. Annotated bibliographies for each section with recommendations for related readings. An A-Z "informazioni pratiche" (practical information) section covering everything from accommodations, hiking, and pazienza (patience) to the Italian yellow pages. Whether it's your first trip or your tenth, the Collected Traveler books are indispensable, and meant to be the first volumes you turn to when planning your journeys.

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Customer Reviews

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BARRIE KERPER is an avid traveler and reader who has lived abroad and previously worked for the travel book division of the original Banana Republic. She is also the author of Paris and the forthcoming Provence.

I didn't use this book for advance travel planning as much as I should have. As it's more of a read than typical travel advice books where you can easily skip around and get small bites of info, I thought I didn't have the time for it. But definitely make some time. You will learn very useful information for trip planning. I wound up reading much of it on our flight to Italy. I enjoyed the author's stories and learned so much, that I recently purchased the author's book about Istanbul for a future trip there. For our Tuscany and Umbria trip, I got more out of our visit there due to reading this book. And thus far while flipping through the Istanbul book's pages, it will deliver the same for that trip. So, satisfied repeat customer.

I have always enjoyed Barrie Kerper's Collected Traveler anthologies, and own three of them. They are the ultimate guidebooks for inveterate readers: rather than names and addresses and prices and museum hours, they contain a wide variety of essays and travel pieces on the place in question. While I certainly wouldn't travel without one of those more specific Fodor's or Eyewitness guidebook, these are priceless for giving the flavor and the feel of the place, as well as providing history and folklore that more practical hand books don't have space for. This particular volume on Central Italy contains, among many others, a really charming essay by William Zinsser on Siena; a wonderful and detailed account by Lis Harris on Siena's annual Palio; and a piece on market day in

Cortona by Frances Mayes of Tuscan Sun fame. You don't even have to leave your chair to have a purely enjoyable experience. My one complaint is that there's no index, and only a ve-e-ery general table of contents, so once you find an article you like, you have to thumb through 600-plus pages to find it again. Where's the piece on garlic bread? Who knows. Why do people say renaissance Florence contributed as much to music as it did to art and science? Can't find it. I don't believe in over-regimentation, but in this case, a little cataloguing would be a very good thing.

This is a lovely, evocative book that's also extremely useful and is a necessity for anyone who loves Tuscany and Umbria. A collection of little odds and ends about the area, this is a book to dip into or read from cover to cover. Leaning more heavily toward Tuscany than Umbria and omitting Le Marche (the only reason it didn't get 5 stars from me, because Tuscany has been covered so much already), it covers the major sights as well as hidden treasures, and chapters on the food, the people, and the art of Central Italy are especially fine. Many books include bibliographies, referring readers to other books on Italy, but Kerper's is especially comprehensive. The compiler's love for Italy comes shining through on every page. Nice photos, too! Because it's such a pretty book, this is also a pretty neat gift selection.

A guidebook without maps? A guidebook you can curl up and read cover-to-cover? Yes, this is it. As one who has vacationed in Tuscany for a total of 36 weeks in the past 11 years, I found this book not only evocative of fond memories but instructive by pointing me to places, eateries, and certain facts of Italian life of which I was unaware. The early sections covering tipping, car rental, trains, etc. are of particular help to the first time traveler. There's even a little Frances Mayes in there for the 1% of the people interested in Italy who have not read her books on Tuscany. But after reading this book, you'll have to get a map or two anyway...because you'll have booked a flight to bella Italia.

I found this book in the library, but it was so good I decided to buy it. I'd never bought a used book online before but the price was right! The articles, originally published in magazines, are insightful and very informative for the purpose of my upcoming trip. It is a joy to read.

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