



Clockwise from above: Local produce on sale in Castiglione del Lago; cooking up a storm at the Festa del Tuoro; Florentine steak on the barbecue



buried. Most of the settlements that remain on the lake shores, including castles and fortresses, date back to medieval times.

A TASTE OF UMBRIA

Gastronomy here is very unlike the UK, where the precise geographic location doesn't have a major influence on what local people eat. Here, generic Italian food as such doesn't really exist and merely traveling a few kilometres in one

direction or another will totally change what the natives eat on a day to day basis. The Trasimeno area is a perfect example of this culinary diversity because of its unique position, being partly in Tuscany and partly in Umbria, partly in the countryside and partly by the lake.

The food here could never be described as glitzy, fancy, complicated or over presented. Hearty, homemade food using the freshest, seasonal ingredients best describes the local cuisine. The nearby fertile plains of the Valdichiana

THE PERFECT ITINERARY: SIX DAYS IN Trasimeno

Day 1: Explore Castiglione del Lago. Along Via V Emanuele, stock up on local specialties. The town hall has wonderful 16th-century frescos by Pandolfi and Savini. Once inside, follow the secret passageway to the Rocca del Leone castle for a breathtaking view of the lake.

Day 2: Take the ferry to Isola Maggiore for lunch. The village on Isola Maggiore has a number of small, rustic, restaurants. After lunch, visit the island's lake museum or take a leisurely stroll

along the lake's shore.

Day 3: Drive around the lake to Tuoro and visit its Battle of Trasimeno museum. This museum brings to life the events of 217 BC when Hannibal's army wiped out over 16,000 Roman soldiers. Now drive down to the lakeshore at Punta Navaccia. Follow signs for Campo del Sole, a quirky series of modern stone sculptures on the lakeside.

Day 4: Relax on the Lido di Tuoro beach and admire the

wonderful view out to the islands. If you are really lucky, the smell of grilled steak should be wafting over the beach from the nearby Festa del Tuoro – a simple *fiesta* where they spit roast a whole cow!

Day 5: Head for the Torre Pendente, Trasimeno's version of the leaning tower of Pisa, then stroll along the lakeside and explore the winding alleyways up the 5th-century Longobard castle for a great view of the lake. Continue along the lake to Santa

Feliciano. From here you can take ferry to the lake's three islands.

Day 6: Follow the road round the southern end of the lake. There are a number of beaches by the lakeside, with bars and sports equipment for hire. Continue towards Sant Arcangelo. A number of bar/restaurants by the shore serve simple local food. Sant Arcangelo has a small fishing fleet and you can watch the fishermen repairing their nets and landing their catch.