



Free vintage train rides offered on Lazio's ancient routes

Posted on October 31, 2026 by Alina Trabattoni, Sabina Castelfranco

ROME — For centuries, visitors from the four corners of the world walked toward Rome. On [Sunday](#), November 1, a [free](#) train carries walkers the other way, from Rome Termini toward Viterbo, in Lazio's Tuscia area, the first of up to 12 departures left before the programme ends on December 10.

Seats cost nothing but must be booked through [Trenitalia](#). The trains belong to [Caput Mundi](#), a [€500 million](#) tourism programme funded by Italy's National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), the country's share of European Union recovery money.

The bet is that rail can carry a [walking](#) boom beyond the capital. Walkers collected almost 20,000 [credentials](#), the walkers' passports stamped along the Via Francigena, in 2025, a rise of 36%. Those earning the Testimonium, the certificate given at journey's end in Rome, more than doubled, and 53% came from abroad.

"The challenge is encouraging day visitors to stay overnight in the towns along the way, since that is where the real benefit to local communities lies," said [Rich Osborne](#), founder of [LuxuryTrainTickets.com](#).

"I think free trains can help more people discover Lazio's walking routes, but long-term interest will depend on whether the journey stays convenient and affordable after the funding ends," said [Andrés Serra](#), head of operations at [Optimise Travel](#).

"A concrete project, able to strengthen tourist appeal and showcase the historical, cultural, and

landscape heritage of Tuscia,” said [Mauro Rotelli](#), a Brothers of Italy member of parliament, in a joint [statement](#) with regional councillors [Daniele Sabatini](#) and [Giulio Zelli](#).





FS vintage trains, various (*Credits: FS Foundation*)

The last mile

The northern train stops at Monterotondo and Montefiascone before reaching Viterbo. From Montefiascone, coaches take passengers to lakeside Bolsena and to Civita di Bagnoregio, a hilltop village reached only by footbridge, home to [11](#) residents and a [candidate](#) for UNESCO World Heritage status.

Mandela, a village in the Aniene valley east of Rome, has no station on the route. A [coach](#) meets the train at Monterotondo instead and drives walkers toward the Cammino di San Benedetto, one of Lazio's *cammini* (historic walking routes), before returning them to Rome.

Benedict's abbey

A second train runs from Rome Tiburtina to Cassino, Lazio, on nine more dates between November 5 and December 10, 2026. The last four still depend on programme [authorisations](#), and no shuttle climbs from the station to the abbey.



FS vintage train (*Credits: FS Foundation*)

Montecassino Abbey, founded by Saint Benedict around 529, was [flattened](#) by Allied bombers on February 15, 1944, and [reconsecrated](#) in 1964. The walking route that begins near Mandela ends here, so both trains lead to the same saint.

Free, for now

Each ticket covers the return journey, a welcome box, and catering on board, and can be booked on the Trenitalia app, at ticket offices, or through travel agents.

The state pays for the ride until December. The walking is still up to the world.

Source: <https://italynow.co.uk/free-vintage-train-rides-on-lazios-iconic-ancient-routes/>