

WORLD TEMPERATURES

Estimated at noon today. See Weather, page 2 for more

Algarve	Sun	21C	70F
Amsterdam	Sun	13C	55F
Barbados	Fair	29C	84F
L Angeles	Showers	15C	59F
Madeira	Fair	20C	68F
Miami	Cloudy	28C	82F
Moscow	Snow	-1C	30F
New York	Rain	13C	55F
Paris	Sun	20C	68F
Sydney	Rain	20C	68F

Holiday

email travel@people.co.uk

CAPTION:
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hereTitanic history
trail's a CorkerTRAVEL
SECRETS

NO holiday to Ireland is complete without a trip to the port of Cobh in County Cork, writes *Chris Johns*.

Originally called Cove, it was renamed Queenstown in 1849 to commemorate a visit by Queen Victoria and changed again in 1922.

But its biggest, if most tragic claim to fame, is that the Titanic stopped here on April 11, 1912, before taking 1,513 passengers and crew to their deaths on her crossing to America.

Almost 100 years on, you can follow the town's Titanic Trail, a guided tour lasting about an hour that rewinds history to bring the town to life the day before the liner sailed.

Just three years later, with war raging in Europe, Cobh witnessed another maritime disaster.

In 1915, passenger ship the RMS Lusitania, carrying 1,959 people from

New York to Liverpool, was sunk by a German U-boat off the Old Head of Kinsale. The 761 survivors were brought to Cobh and many of the 1,198 who perished are buried in its cemetery.

The sinking of the Lusitania, which outraged a neutral America, is remembered in the excellent Cobh Heritage Centre.

But the town doesn't live in the past. It's very much alive with shops, restaurant bars, festivals and attractions, not to mention museums, art galleries and an impressive 18-hole golf course.

There's also plenty of fishing, sailing and water sports to be had and a wildlife park to visit, while with Cork just 20 minutes away by rail, there are endless opportunities to enjoy the craic.

For a top stay – or just to enjoy lunch or dinner and its breathtaking views – try The WatersEdge Hotel (www.watersedgehotel.ie).

Go to www.titanic.ie, www.cobhheritage.com and www.discoverireland.ie/ for more details.

Slime & custard
pies for anyone?BRITISH
DAYS OUT

GOO your best to catch the last Slime Show today at Techniquist Glyndwr hands-on museum in Wrexham, North Wales, where demonstrators slither into action at 1pm and 3.30pm. Tickets £4.95. Call 01978 293400.

TAKE your seat at Fat Sam's Grand Slam Speakeasy as Secret Cinema brings Buggy Malone to life in London's Troxy centre until April 15. A fusion of film

and live performance, it features dancing girls, gangsters and custard pies a-plenty. Tickets from £10 at www.troxy.co.uk.

BOTTLE-FEED the lambs at Carreg Cennen Castle and Farm near Llandeilo in South Wales until the end of April. Castle entry is £4 adults, £3.50 children. See www.carregcennencastle.com.

TEMPT your tastebuds on a chocolate history tour at Spinnaker Tower on Gunwharf Quays, Portsmouth, where the cocoa and spice trade once flourished. From next Sunday until April 15, you can enter a Hotel Chocolat prize draw. Adults £8.25, children £6.55, under-threes free. Go to www.spinnakertower.co.uk.

PADDLE your own canoe around the new reed beds at the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust's Martin Mere Centre near Burscough, Lancs, from March 31. Boats cost £5. See www.wwt.org.uk.

JOIN Faberge's prize-winning hunt for 210 big ceramic eggs hidden around London. Download a map at www.thebigggghunt.co.uk. You have until April 9 to find them!

CAPTION: words go in here please

A delicious slice of Umbria

COOL BLUE:
The Prato poolSOTTO BEAUTIFUL:
Penny's heaven

by Steve Riches

PENNY Radford was sick of being a marketing consultant in London. So she upped sticks, drove to Italy and spent £175,000 on a heap of 14th Century rocks halfway up a 2,500ft mountain.

That was 1995 and she's never looked back. And for that, a lot of people can be grateful.

Those rocks in Umbria were the foundation of her holiday retreat of Prato di Sotto, one of my favourite places in the world and, handily, the very best base for exploring what Italy has to offer.

It's 15 miles from the Umbrian capital of Perugia (a two-and-a-half-hour flight from England), and a 15-minute drive from the market town of Umbertide, half of it along a topsy-turvy roller-coaster of a road so basic it could be a rally route – in fact it was in my rented Lancia.

There is no greater joy than sitting

up there at Prato, in the green heart of Italy, sipping an ice-cold Peroni and nibbling pine nuts, spreading out the map and planning your next day's adventure.

Assisi? Count me in. There are frescoes like you've never seen in the basilica of St Francis.

Spoletto, Todi or Orvieto? Why not? Each hill town little more than an hour away, each bursting with charm and historical interest.

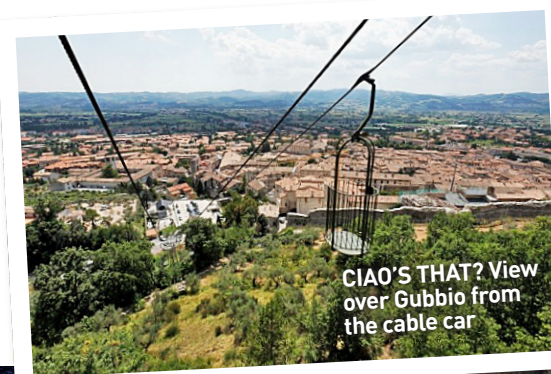
Or stick closer to this home from home and go to my favourite, Gubbio, where you can take the chairlift to the top and meander back via the Duomo through cobbled streets flanked by shops crammed with porcelain.

The other preferred option, especially if you have kids in tow, is Lake Trasimeno,

where you can swim in the shallows, potter around small lake-hugging towns like Passignano, or take the ferry to the lovely little island of Maggiore. You can amble around it in an hour and splash out on the finest of ice-cream after a must-have meal of lake-caught fish. I'd thoroughly recommend the perch.

The options are endless. Skirt Lake Maggiore by car and hop over the border to Tuscany, if you like.

No one could fail to be enchanted

CIAO'S THAT? View
over Gubbio from
the cable car



hotspots

LAPLAND has plenty for the family to do all year. Transun's Easter Northern Lights packages start from £1,199 for three nights' full board, activities, flights and transfers – visit www.transun.co.uk

GRAB a pair of trendy Raybans for your hols – from pastel shades, bold prints or the traditional black Wayfarers – all are discounted from £120 to £75. For a great deal go to www.sunglassesuk.com



BELL-ISSIMO: Church at Orvieto in Umbria

PENNY PASTA



HEADS UP: Sunflowers at Umbertide

by the hilltop town of Montepulciano and its gloriously original boutique shops (I've been done for two handbags, three pots and so many shoes you'd think I was shackled up with a centipede).

Or hop a good bit further... on a train that will whizz you through fields of sunflowers to Florence or Rome in a couple hours. Be warned, you might have trouble adapting to the fact that they are cheap, clean and on time.

Wherever you go, you're sure of three things in Italy – superb scenery, and the very best food and drink.

I mean, who wouldn't want a porchetta? Take one entire pig, stuff its insides with buckets of garlic, salt and herbs, roast for eight hours and serve fistfuls of it in crusty rolls. It's an Umbrian delicacy to rank alongside the home-made pasta that you'll find everywhere you go.

You'll also find wild boar, sausage and big chunky chickens on every menu, just begging to be washed down with the top local red wines, Montefalco and Torgiano, or a fruity white made

from grechetto grapes. But, of course, you need not move at all if you don't fancy it. Just get your supplies in from the Umbertide Co-op down the road, stay put at Prato, breathe in the freshest air in Europe and relax as you share Penny's dream.

Back in '95, she had no water, no electricity, didn't speak much Italian and was fast running out of money.

But in 17 years of sheer hard graft, and a doggedness that defies description, those rocks became first her home and then her life.

From derelict to delight, it's a Boys' Own story about a remarkable sixtysomething woman.

There are four buildings in the Prato di Sotto complex, which sleep from two to 10 people.

Each of them has rooms furnished with kilim rugs and the most stylish of antiques from all over the world, while remaining cosily comfortable with all mod cons.

Each comes with a terrace or courtyard, patches of pure tranquillity (bar the cicadas) within tastefully

tended (not clipped and manicured) gardens that extend to 2,000 sq metres. Here you can help yourself to herbs and tomatoes from the vegetable plot, pick your own fresh figs... and if you're lucky, you might even get some breakfast eggs, courtesy of Prato's resident hens.

And then there's the swimming pool. Fringed by pungent roses, jasmine and lavender, teeming with butterflies, the pool at Prato di Sotto really is a delight.

And it's not the usual large cool bath or glorified hot tub, but a generous 15 metres long, perfect for exercising as well as playing. It's your own oasis when the Umbrian heat is on. If it's not on

too much (and it can nudge 40°C/104°F in the height of summer), you can always take a spectacular stroll around Penny's mountain.

Her hugely affectionate rescue dogs – she had four at the last count – will love to come with you, sniffing the flowers, chasing the bees, lapping up the glorious scenery. You'll be as one in that respect, I promise.

FACTFILE Prices for a studio apartment, sleeping two, start from £585 a week at Prato di Sotto. See www.umbriaholidays.com.

Ryanair flies from Stansted to Perugia from £98 return. See www.ryanair.com.

Check out holidayautos.co.uk for cheap car hire from Perugia airport. Charges are from around £150 a week.

TRAVEL TIPS

- **PACK** some sturdy walking shoes as well as your usual holiday sandals and flip-flops if you really want to soak up the scenery.
- **BE** aware that prices on restaurant menus in Italy may not include local taxes and VAT, which can add up to a big difference.
- **REMEMBER** that in rural Italy, everything shuts down for a siesta between 1pm and 3pm – and that includes the petrol stations, so don't run low!



PACK AND GO

Bags packed but nowhere to go? Snap up a last-minute bargain...

£500

- CRETE** (7nts, f/b, 5*) April 12, Bristol, £449, www.thomson.co.uk
- SORRENTO** (5nts, h/b, 4*) April 20, Gatwick, £475, www.crestaholidays.co.uk
- GAMBIA** (7nts, b&b, 3*) April 10, Birmingham, £413, www.airtours.co.uk
- SWITZERLAND** (7nts, b&b, 3*) April 7, Gatwick, £436, www.inghams.co.uk

£400

- TENERIFE** (7nts, a/i, 4*) March 27, Gatwick, £366, www.directholidays.co.uk
- TUNISIA** (7nts, h/b, 4*) April 8, Luton, £387, www.onthebeach.co.uk
- ITALY** (7nts, h/b, 3*) April 1, Gatwick, £399, www.crystalski.co.uk
- RHODES** (7nts, a/i, 5*) April 11, Birmingham, £399, www.thomson.co.uk

£300

- MARRAKECH** (4nts, b&b, 4*) April 5, Heathrow, £219, www.skyscanner.net
- TURKEY** (7nts, a/i, 4*) April 14, East Midlands, £279, www.thomascookstyle.com
- FRANCE** (7nts, s/c, 3*) April 7, Stansted, £225, www.crystalski.co.uk
- GRAN CANARIA** (7nts, f/b, 3*) April 25, Stansted, £254, www.icelolly.com

£200

- KOS** (7nts, b&b, 4*) April 7, Stansted, £149, www.onthebeach.co.uk
- LESBOS** (7nts, s/c, 3*) April 21, Gatwick, £184, www.manos.co.uk
- PISA** (2nts, b&b, 3*) April 6, Heathrow, £194, www.skyscanner.net
- LANZAROTE** (10nts, s/c, 3*) April 30, Manchester, £190, www.icelolly.com

Sword fight like TV Game of Thrones stars: P41