



# Benedictine Bits

## Sacro Speco



Sacro Speco, or Holy Cave, in Subiaco, Italy is the original hermitage site where Benedict sought refuge from the tumult of Rome in order to pray and reflect. The young hermit spent three years here contemplating how to become closer to God. This time ultimately shaped his ideas about monasticism, which he later codified in his *Rule*. Word spread of this holy man and, though reluctant, he was convinced to lead communities who wanted to learn how to live a life of Christ. These efforts ultimately led to what we now refer to as the Benedictine Order.

The current structure, San Benedetto Monastery, was built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century nestled into the mountainside and is an artistic and architectural marvel. Inside, the walls are filled with frescos depicting stories from the *Bible* and the life of Saint Benedict. These paintings on the walls and ceilings were used as an early teaching tool, telling history through art. Today, travelers from all over the world pilgrimage to this site to learn of the origins of the father of Western monasticism.