

ITALY – PUGLIA & SALENTO – ALBEROBELLO *TRULLI* TO LECCE

8-day / 7-night moderate **SELF-GUIDED** inn-to-inn cycling including Alberobello and the South Coast



Italy's Puglia region, the 'heel of the boot', is home to a wealth of cultural and historic highlights, magnificent scenery, and a distinctive and delicious cuisine. In a strategic location jutting out into the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, Puglia has been settled since pre-historic times and was part of Magna Graecia before coming under control of the Roman and Byzantine empires, then the Normans, Aragonese, and the kingdoms of Sicily and Naples before joining unified Italy in 1861; this complex history is displayed in its castles and fortresses.

Puglia is the breadbasket of Italy, where much of the durum wheat for pasta and bread is grown; it is also a centre for olive oil production. Its cuisine features local seafood as well as seasonal vegetables, pasta and bread, and burrata cheese. The signature pasta is orecchiette, often served with *cime di rapa*, and there are many delicious snacks like *panzerotto* (a deep-fried bread pocket usually filled with tomato and mozzarella) and *taralli* crackers. If you have a sweet tooth be sure to try *pasticcio*, a custard-filled pastry served warm.

This self-guided cycling holiday starts in Alberobello, inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list for its *trulli*, limestone dwellings with unique conical roofs built using drystone construction techniques dating back to prehistoric times. Cycle through expanses of olive groves along a spectacular coastline lined with aromatic Mediterranean macchia scrub, stopping in white-washed villages and charming seaside towns. Your week finishes in vibrant Lecce, known for the Baroque architecture and numerous cafés in its *centro storico*.

Departs: Saturdays from 14 March - 18 July and 29 August - 31 October 2026
Sundays from 19 April - 7 June and 6 September - 11 October 2026

Cost from: **\$2295** per person (twin share) Single room supplement from \$620
High season supplement from **\$225** per person on selected departures

Includes: 7 nights' accommodation with ensuite bathroom in 3-star hotels, *agriturismo* (farm stays) and guesthouses; luggage transfers; hire of multi-geared touring bike with pannier, handlebar bag, repair kit & lock; App with tour information, digital route descriptions & maps and GPS tracks; emergency assistance hotline.

Not included: Lunches & dinners, drinks, personal expenses, optional local train transfers, entrance fees, local city hotel / tourist taxes, gratuities, insurance. Private transfers from/to Bari airport are available at additional cost, ask for details. Bike helmet hire can be added for approx. \$35 per helmet, ask when booking.

For those wanting a little more comfort, it is possible to **upgrade to Superior accommodation** and also to **hire an E-Bike** to make the cycling easier – at extra cost. Please ask for details.

Pre-tour extension in Matera from **\$710** per person twin-share, single room supplement on request. Includes 2 nights' accommodation in a 3-star hotel with breakfast and transfers from Bari or Brindisi airport to Matera and from Matera to Alberobello,

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Suggested itinerary:

Optional pre-tour extension in Matera

Matera (located in Basilicata just over the Puglian border) is a UNESCO World Heritage listed site for the Sassi, its ancient town known primarily for cave dwellings carved into the limestone cliffs above a steep ravine, some of which may date back to the Stone Age. This 3-day (2-night) pre-tour extension gives you plenty of time to explore the narrow, cobbled streets and squares, rock churches, cellars and caves of the Sassi, as well as the Murgia Materana regional park, taking in the ravine as well as some 150 rupestrine churches. After breakfast on day 3 you are transferred (included) to Alberobello where your self-guided tour of Puglia begins.

Day 1: Arrive in Alberobello

Arrive in Alberobello mid-afternoon. Alberobello is accessible by local bus or regional train from Bari, or ask about private transfers from Bari airport at additional cost. When possible we book you to stay in a hotel within one of the distinctive conical-roofed *trulli*.

Day 2: Alberobello - Ostuni

cycling @ 45km

Leaving the city of *trulli* behind, you ride into the rural landscapes of Murgia. Locorotondo, one of the most beautiful villages in Italy, is a great spot for a morning coffee in the white-washed *centro storico*. A short but steep and challenging climb leads to Cisternino with the honeycomb of narrow laneways in its old town. Refuel here with a snack of the excellent local *taralli* (a more-ish type of cracker, usually savoury) and *friselle* (twice-baked bread often served with tomato) or a plate of orecchiette. After that it's mostly downhill to Ostuni, also known as 'the white city': a beautiful village perched on a small hill overlooking the sea. You can shorten the day's ride by taking a train from Alberobello to Locorotondo.

Day 3: Ostuni to Manduria area

cycling @ 60km

You leave the hills of Murgia and, heading inland, enter the Salento region, characterised by red soils and the silvery-green of olive trees. The town of Oria makes a charming stop with its castle built by emperor Federico II, as well as its beautiful historic centre. Your cycling day ends in the Manduria region, the capital of Primitivo wine, a robust red also known as Zinfandel. In this rural area we use a number of properties so your cycling distance may vary depending on the exact location of your accommodation.

Day 4: The Salento Coast

cycling @ 70km

Your ride along the beautiful Salento coast, dotted with fine sandy beaches alternating with limestone cliffs and stone stacks rising from the turquoise waters. The fashionable resort town of Porto Cesareo is a good stop for a lunch of fresh seafood; local specialties include sea urchin risotto and pasta with mussels. The ride finishes in Gallipoli, an authentic pearl of the Ionian Sea, which is one of the most beautiful towns in Salento. Don't miss a walk through the old town and a visit to the underground oil mill.

Day 5: Gallipoli to Santa Maria di Leuca

cycling @ 50km

A whole day dedicated to the sea, with all the colours and scents that this Mediterranean coast can offer: pines, myrtles and junipers against a backdrop of the sapphire Ionian Sea, which presents itself with a myriad of coves, beaches and inlets; pack your swimsuit in your pannier for a quick refreshing dip. The route is mostly flat, with only a few short ups and downs at the end. You may like to detour to Punta della Suina for a walk along the coast to Lido Pizzo. Just before you reach the day's destination, stop at Punta Ristola, with its beautiful caves. Finally, where the land ends and the two seas (Adriatic and Ionian) meet, Santa Maria di Leuca (from the Greek *leukos* meaning white) awaits. A sunset toast in the Sanctuary Square is a must.

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Day 6: Santa Maria di Leuca to Otranto

cycling @ 50km

Ride on one of the most scenic roads in the world, undulating all the way, past small fishing villages with whitewashed houses, striking limestone cliffs peppered with stands of Mediterranean macchia scrub, and the deep blue of the Adriatic, with its many inlets and natural bays. Perhaps stop at the Romanelli and Zinzulusa caves, where fish considered living fossils have been found. Pass the spa towns of Santa Cesarea and Porto Badisco, Aeneas' legendary landing place in Italy, on your way to Otranto, the eastern-most town in Italy. After dinner perhaps walk through the old town, with its stone-paved streets, cathedral and famous Aragonese castle, first built in the 11th century and rebuilt in the 15th century to protect the city from Ottoman attacks.

Day 7: Otranto to Lecce

cycling @ 55km

Ride along the Adriatic coast, past the saltwater Alimini lakes and through small coastal towns with fine sandy beaches. Sant'Andrea, Torre dell'Orso or Roca Vecchia are all possible stops for a rest and a swim. From the nature reserve (where throngs of birds from Africa and Asia rest between migrations), head inland, first to the small town of Acaya, a 16th century fortified town with an orthogonal street grid, then to Lecce. Lively Lecce, the capital of Salento, is distinguished by the richness and exuberance of its 17th-century Baroque buildings, built with honey-coloured local stone, including the Baroque fever-dream that is the Basilica of Santa Croce. Try a *caffè Leccese*, an iced coffee made with a shot of strong espresso and sweetened almond syrup.

Day 8: Departure day

Tour ends after breakfast. Ask about extra nights in Lecce at additional cost.



Outdoor Travel offer cycling holidays across Europe including rides in Tuscany, Umbria and the Veneto in Italy. There are rides too in Spain, France, Germany, Ireland, England, Scotland, Hungary, in the Czech Republic, New Zealand, the USA and Canada. **Outdoor Travel** also offer guided **Bike & Barge** cycle cruises on the rivers and canals of Europe, or **Bike & Boat** cycle cruises in Italy, Croatia, and Greece.

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