

## ITALY – SOUTHERN ITALY GUIDED CYCLING 2008

*A week of biking around the two wonderful UNESCO sites of Alberobello and Matera. Leaving from Matera's "Sassi" and the rock caves and stone houses, you will reach the Itria Valley, a karstic land also called the Valley of the Trulles due to the thousands of "trulli", limestone dwellings that are remarkable examples of drywall constructions offering a prehistoric building technique which is still in use in Apulia. All around you there is an explosion of colour, olive trees and ancient farmhouses. Back to the mysterious land of Basilicata, a slow ride from the rolling hills of the Bradano Valley, to the natural oasis of San Giuliano Lake and back to Matera.*

*The South of Italy's natural beauty, ancient culture, deeply-rooted local traditions, genuine Mediterranean food and above all the warmth and hospitality of its people, will capture you and leave you with memories which are unforgettable.*

**Southern Italy – Sassi & Trulli:** \$1795 per person (twin share). **\$320** Single supplement  
**Departs:** 26 Apr, 10, 31 May, 13, 27 Sep, 4, 25 Oct 08 Starts & Ends in Matera

**Includes:** Twin share 3 star hotels and farm holiday accommodation, 7 breakfasts, 6 days hybrid bike rental with bike panniers, multilingual cycling guide, tour information with route descriptions & maps, technical & emergency assistance, minibus in the area, luggage transportation.

**Not Included:** Meals not mentioned, drinks, entrance fees, personal expenses and gratuities. Transfers from Bari Airport to Matera are not included, but can be requested when booking at a cost of AU\$120 per person each way.

Helmets are not compulsory in Europe, but we recommend you bring your own on this tour.

Please note this tour is subject to a minimum of 8 participants.

### ITINERARY

**Day 1.** Arrival in **Matera** and make your way to your hotel: free lunch.

Afternoon: guided tour around the **Sassi** – a UNESCO world heritage site since 1993 - with its small streets and squares, caves, rock churches and cellars. Two districts built from the Medieval age through to the last century. We suggest you have dinner at one of the Sassi's typical restaurants. Overnight stay.

### Day 2 – From Matera to Alberobello

Length: Approx. **64** km Grade: **Easy**

Distribution of bicycles, briefing and departure for Alberobello. You will pass through the small villages of **Gioia del Colle** and **Noci** and on to Alberobello, the capital town of "trulles" and a UNESCO world heritage site. Accommodation in the historical centre in a trullo dating from 1600. Visit of the city and overnight stay.

### Day 3 - Alberobello - Locorotondo – Martina Franca

Length: Approx. **45** km Grade: **Easy**

Departure in the direction of the **Itria Valley**, a karstic depression filled with thousands of olive trees. You will pass through **Locorotondo**, a town famous for its D.O.C white wine and the historical "Wine Cellar of Locorotondo". A climb over the hill dominating the Itria Valley will bring you to **Martina Franca**, a real Baroque gem. Overnight stay in downtown area.

### Day 4 - The Land of the Ravines

Length: Approx. **66** km Grade: **Easy**

Heading south into the Taranto province, you will cycle along deserted roads and among vineyards. You will pass through the Land of the Ravines and the villages of Mottola, Castellaneta and Ginosa. The Ravines are deep precipices, often more than 100 metres deep, similar to canyons. Overnight stay at a holiday farm.

### Day 5 – The Magna Grecia

Length: Approx. **60** km Grade: **Easy**

You will visit Metaponto, an ancient Greek Colony established in the 7th century B.C set among vineyards and orange trees. Pythagoras founded one of his schools in this rich and important town. After visiting the archaeological area and enjoying a swim in the Ionian Sea, you will continue to cycle along the Bradano River. Overnight stay at a holiday farm located at the foot of **Montescaglioso** hill (a visit to the Benedictine Abbey is a must). Relax in the swimming pool.



**All Reservations Call 1800 331 582**

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**Day 6 - The Ancient Via Appia**Length: Approx. **45** km Grade: **Easy**

Riding along the ancient "Via Appia" (an old Roman road), you will pass through the charming villages of Miglionico and Grottole. Down to the Bradano Valley and overnight stay at a holiday farm set on a hill of grain

**Day 7 – San Giuliano Lake and the Matera hills**Approx. **45** km with a short final climb Grade: **Easy**

A ride along the wonderful, deserted road around San Giuliano Lake, a peaceful natural oasis, the destination of many migratory birds from **Africa**. We suggest you take some time to enjoy birdwatching, spotting grey herons, cormorants, storks and fish hawks. Back to Matera and overnight stay.

**Day 8 - Breakfast at the hotel in Matera and end of tour.****Fitness:**

This tour is rated **easy to moderate**, with 6 days of cycling on panoramic, rolling hills.

**Easy:** mainly flat, some gentle climbs

**Moderate:** some longer, steady climbs & longer days

**High:** frequent climbs & descents

**Climate:**

Weather conditions are changeable, especially at the start & end of the season. Basilicata is lapped by two seas, crossed by five rivers and marked by high mountains reach 2,300m. It is a varied landscape which can be appreciated even by traveling only a short distance. Consequently temperatures can vary by up to 10 degrees during a tour which takes in both the coast and the mountains. Therefore the maximum difference in temperature ranges from a minimum of 12 degrees C in March & November to a maximum of 32 degrees C in June and September.

The climate during the Spring & Autumn guided cycling trips is very pleasant.

**Rental Bikes:**

**Hybrid bike** with 24/27 speed (Shimano Alivio/Deore) gears with rear pack frames and side bags. Also included are a cycle computer, signal lamps & an emergency kit with universal tools for small repairs & a spare tyre tube.