

ITALY – APULIA & BASILICATA - SASSI & TRULLI CYCLING TOUR

8-day / 7-night moderate **SELF-GUIDED** inn-to-inn cycling including Matera & Alberobello

VALUE



Off the beaten track the southern regions of Italy, well south of Rome but easily accessed by train or air, hold some of its greatest surprises with a host of history, ancient cities and monuments and truly magnificent coastal and inland scenery. It is also home to some of the more authentic Italian lifestyles and cuisine.

We offer a week of cycling in a circular route around the two wonderful UNESCO listed sites of Alberobello and Matera. Leaving from Matera's "Sassi" and its rock caves and stone houses, you reach the Itria Valley, a karstic land also called the Valley of the Trulloes because of the thousands of "trulli", limestone dwellings that are remarkable examples of prehistoric dry-stone wall construction which is still in use in Apulia. There is an explosion of colour everywhere you look here, vineyards, olive trees and ancient farmhouses. Back in the mysterious land of Basilicata ride from the rolling hills of the Bradano Valley to the natural oasis of San Giuliano Lake before returning back to Matera.

Southern Italy's natural beauty, ancient culture, deep-held local traditions, beautiful weather, Mediterranean cuisine and the warmth and hospitality of the people will captivate you leaving unforgettable memories.

Departs: Daily on demand from March to October
July and August by special request only (weather mid-summer is very hot for cycling)

Cost from: **\$1520** per person (twin share) Single room supplement from \$420

Includes: 7 nights' accommodation with breakfast in 3-star hotels / *agriturismo* (farm stays), luggage transfers, guided Tour in the *Sassi di Matera*, multi-gear hybrid bike with pannier and helmet, technical and emergency assistance if required, detailed maps and road-book

Not included: Insurance, drinks, lunches or dinners, entrance fees, local city taxes, tips or personal expenses

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.

Distance: Moderate cycling – 25 to 70km over undulating terrain.

Suggested itinerary:

Day 1: Arrival in Matera

Matera is accessible by train from Bari (journey time @ 90-minutes) or Naples but services are limited. We recommend and can arrange a private transfer from Bari Airport (at extra cost). Plan to arrive in time for a look around the Sassi, the ancient town of Matera. This is a UNESCO World Heritage listed site with wonderful narrow cobbled streets and squares, caves, rock churches and cellars dating back to medieval times, or earlier – some of the cave dwellings may date back to the Stone Age, and others are layered atop older habitations. There are also plenty of local restaurants service regional specialities. Stay tonight in Matera.

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details & reservations

Day 2: Matera - Alberobello

cycling @ 70km

Collect your bicycles and depart for Alberobello, passing through the small villages of Gioia del Colle and Noci. Alberobello is the capital town of the unique stone houses known as Trulloes and another UNESCO World Heritage site. Stay for two nights in the historical centre of Alberobello in a Trullo.

Day 3: Alberobello

optional cycling @ 40km or 45km

Many choices today, you can either relax at your hotel, explore Alberobello, or you can go for a circular ride in the area. One possible ride takes you to Cisternino and Locorotondo (45km) – cycle out in the direction of the Itria Valley, a karstic depressions filled with thousands of olive trees. Cisternino and Locorotondo are charming and picturesque white-washed villages, and you can wander around the twisting laneways of the *centro storico* (old town) in both villages. Or, you can cycle to the Castellana caves (40km), subterranean caves full of calcite stalactites and stalagmites in strange and fantastical shapes, including jellyfish, bacon and stockings, and the eerie alabaster Grotta Bianca. Whichever route you choose, return to Alberobello for your second night.

Day 4: The Ravines

cycling @ 70km

Heading south into Taranto province cycle along quiet roads and through vineyards to the Land of the Ravines and the villages of Mottola and Palagianello. The Ravines are deep canyons, often over 100 metres deep, slashed into the soft rock around the villages. Many of the ravines were inhabited and the cave dwellings can still be seen. Stay the night at an *agriturismo* (holiday farmstay).

Day 5: Metapontum and Fruit Gardens

cycling @ 55km

After a visit to the archaeological site of Metaponto (a former Greek colony), cycle along the Bradano River among vineyards and orange groves, then ascend Montescaglioso Hill where a visit to the Benedictine Abbey is a must. Back into the valley and accommodation at a working *agriturismo* with a welcome swimming pool.

Day 6: Rest day with optional circular cycling routes

cycling @ 35km or 40km

Today you have time to enjoy a circular cycle in the valley or relax at the farm with a swim in the pool. The first possible ride is 35km, a loop ride along the ancient *Via Appia* (an old Roman road) to the charming village of Miglionico with wonderful views of the valley, then return to the farm. Alternatively you can cycle on a quiet backroad around San Giuliano Lake, with a stop to see the Crypt of Original Sin (which boasts the oldest frescoes in the area) before returning to your accommodation.

Day 7: Return to Matera

cycling @ 25km

Cycle back to Matera via the Park of Rock Churches. After 12km perhaps stop for a walk to the splendid Gravina Canyon. Enjoy a picnic in the caves of Cristo La Selva and see a Rupestrian village in the park before returning to Matera. Dinner in a cave restaurant is included this evening.

Day 8: Departure day

Tour ends after breakfast. From Matera you can arrange a transfer or taxi to the Ferrandina-Scalo Matera train station (@ 30-minutes) connecting to Naples or Bari or arrange a private transfer directly to Bari airport.



Outdoor Travel offer cycling holidays accross Europe including rides in Tuscany, Umbria, the Veneto (Venice) region or in Sardinia 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 France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Italy, or **Bike & Boat** cycle cruises on the Italian Amalfi Coast, in Sicily, on the Dalmatian Coast of Croatia, or the islands of Greece.

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