



## ITALY

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### CYCLING PUGLIA BY BIKE 9-DAYS

The Cycling Puglia trip offers a unique opportunity to explore the “heel of the Italian boot,” a lesser-traveled region in Southern Italy. We’ll begin our exploration of the region by starting out from the maze-like port city of Bari. From there, we’ll cycle through the back roads of the region, from the countryside to the coast, including local stops such as at an olive orchard for an olive oil tasting. There will also be a chance to dip into the crystal clear Ionian Sea, and soak in the scenery of rugged limestone cliffs and beaches. The Puglia region offers a history-lovers delight as well. In various towns along the way, we’ll visit medieval castles and citadels, gorgeous cathedrals, pilgrimage sites, and even sleep in traditional dry stone huts called Trullies. You’ll feel immersed in the real Italy over these 9 days, encountering countless opportunities to get a true taste of Italy.

## Day 1

### BARI - RUVO

#### ARRIVAL

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Upon arriving in Bari, you will be met by a BikeHike Adventures representative, at either the train station or airport. Plan your arrival by 1:30pm to connect with our scheduled group transfer to your countryside farmhouse hotel near Ruvo di Puglia. After a short stop to get checked in, we'll get fitted on our bikes and go on a short afternoon warm up ride to Castel del Monte. Built by the Emperor Federico II and now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, this castle is unique in Europe for its simple octagonal shape and the eight octagonal towers that surround it. This ride starts the trip with a nice introduction to the rolling hills of the region. Tonight, we'll savour the tastes of Puglia and its local specialties with a true home-cooked meal at the farmhouse before overnighting at this charming, typical Italian countryside accommodation (near Ruvo).

**Distance:** 36 km / 22 mi

**Ascent:** +373 m (1,225 ft)

**Descent:** -373 m (1,225 ft)

**Meals:** Dinner

**Accommodation:** Countryside Hotel



## Day 2

### BARI - MATERA

#### BIKING

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After breakfast, we'll have an early start to ride through the area's wide, open farmland and cross the Murgia National Park – the high plateau that extends from Castel del Monte to Matera, through picturesque karst scenery. We will stop for an early lunch break in Gravina, a town known for the beautiful gorge cutting right through its center. We will then continue riding on to Matera. After we have arrived in Matera, we'll have a short stop at our hotel directly in the town before enjoying a guided tour of the city to learn about its history and highlights. Named a 2019 "European Capital of Culture" city, Matera is unique in all of Italy for the cave dwellings that ring the city's center. At one time during the 8th and 9th centuries, these caves carved into the town's sandstone cliffs housed as many as 25,000 people, primarily refugee clerics and monks from Greece and the Balkans. Today, the churches and caves are preserved as a World Heritage Site. Afterwards, the evening is at your leisure to explore town, with dinner on your own. There will be plenty of chances to explore local specialties including local wines to satisfy your culinary interests.

**Distance:** 71 km / 44 mi

**Ascent:** +753 m (2,470 ft)

**Descent:** -679 m (2,228 ft)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Accommodation:** Hotel

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### Day 3

#### MATERA – ALBEROBELLO

##### BIKING

After a hearty breakfast, we'll start the trip's longest ride, through a variety of beautiful landscapes to the town of Alberobello, another UNESCO World Heritage Site. We'll ride from the expansive scenery around Matera to the rolling hills around Alberobello. As we enter Trullie region, you'll notice the red dirt landscapes and olive groves beautifully contrasting the white stone and Trullie along the small roads. Trullie are traditional Apulian dry stone huts with conical roofs, an architecture style dating back to the 16th century, something else unique to Puglia. Once reaching Alberobello, we'll have time for a short rest and recharge. Our night's accommodation will be in some of these huts so we'll have the opportunity to truly experience them and their history. Late afternoon, we'll enjoy a guided walk through the narrow, medieval streets of Alberobello, all lined with traditional Trullie. Afterwards, the evening is at your leisure to explore town, with dinner on your own.

**Distance:** 74 km / 46 mi

**Ascent:** +503 m (1,650 ft)

**Descent:** -485 m (1,590 ft)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Accommodation:** Hotel

### Day 4

#### ALBEROBELLO – OSTUNI

##### BIKING

After breakfast, we'll continue riding the area's rolling hills, passing through whitewashed villages and along quiet roads lined before reaching the beachside, and the beautiful seaside town of Ostuni. Somewhat resembling Greek island villages, Ostuni is known as the "white city," for it gleaming jumble of white houses, churches, and charming piazzas spread over a hilltop facing the sea. After being destroyed by Hannibal during the Punic Wars in the 1st and 2nd Centuries BC, Ostuni was then rebuilt by the Greeks. Ostuni takes its name from the Greek expression "Astu neon," meaning "new town." Ostuni later flourished during the Italian Renaissance under Duchess Isabella of Bari. After lunch, the final part of the afternoon will be spent visiting an area olive mill set amid ancient olive orchards. There, we'll have the opportunity to do an olive oil tasting. Tonight, we'll settle into a cozy countryside hotel not too far out of Ostuni where we'll also enjoy dinner together. The remains of the evening are at your leisure to explore town or relax at the hotel.

**Distance:** 45 km / 28 mi

**Ascent:** +329 m (1,080 ft)

**Descent:** -708 m (2,323 ft)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Countryside Hotel



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## Day 5

### OSTUNI - GALLIPOLI

#### TRAIN TRANSFER & SIGHTSEEING

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After breakfast, we will have the day off riding and will set out on a train journey to Gallipoli. The train heads south from Ostuni, leaving behind the murgia plateau and the olive groves. On the way we'll transfer in the bustling town of Lecce before catching our local train to Gallipoli, a beautiful town surrounded by defensive walls built in the 14th century. The town's labyrinthine, narrow streets lead to a gorgeous seaside promenade, and the old town center actually sits on a tiny island connected to the mainland by a 17th century bridge. After arriving in town this afternoon, you'll be able to explore the "old" village of Gallipoli right outside your hotel. The evening is at your leisure to explore town, with dinner on your own.

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** Hotel



## Day 6

### GALLIPOLI - LEUCA

#### BIKING

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After feasting on a hearty Italian breakfast, we're back on our bikes today cycling along the Gulf of Taranto, the largest gulf in the Ionian Sea. On our way to Leuca, we'll first pedal to the southeastern tip of Italy and look out on the Ionian Sea and, if it is a clear day, we'll be able to see Albania and Greece from there. This area is home to a wide variety of beautiful beaches including the "Salento Maldives," an area resembling the tropical islands after which the area was nicknamed. As you cycle, you might just fall in love with this rugged yet inviting coastline, its beautiful blue water contrasting the white limestone cliffs and sandy beaches. After arriving into Leuca early evening and settling in at the hotel, you'll be able to explore the town at your leisure, with dinner is on your own tonight.

**Distance:** 55 km / 34 mi

**Ascent:** +316 m (1,037 ft)

**Descent:** -319 m (1,047 ft)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Accommodation:** Hotel

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## Day 7

### LEUCA - OTRANTO

#### BIKING

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After breakfast this morning, we'll pedal north alongside the Adriatic Sea to Otranto, one of Puglia's historic fortified fishing villages, located at the very tip of Italy's boot heel. If time and weather permits, we recommend a dip in the sea. Our route continues on the coast with chances to stop and enjoy the views of the rocky (sometimes sandy) beaches. We'll also pass a number of defensive "towers" built in the 16th century to defend the coast from seafaring marauders. A town once bloodied and bruised by an infamous Turkish massacre in 1480, Otranto is now best known for its magnificent cathedral. For those interested in history, inside you'll discover the bones of 813 martyrs on display in a glass case behind the altar. After arriving into Otranto early evening and settling in at the hotel, we'll have dinner together in town. Afterwards, you'll be able to explore the town at your leisure.

**Distance:** 52 km / 32 mi

**Ascent:** +619 m (2,030 ft)

**Descent:** -618 m (2,028 ft)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Hotel

## Day 8

### OTRANTO - LECCE

#### BIKING

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Our final ride is a calm and scenic pedal into the charming city of Lecce, often nicknamed "Florence of the South" for its beautiful and historical baroque buildings. A section of today's ride is through a car-free nature preserve. We'll arrive into Lecce early afternoon and have some time to freely wander through the village. Later, we'll enjoy a farewell dinner together in town with the remains of your evening at leisure to take in one last night of the region's culture and atmosphere.

**Distance:** 55 km / 34 mi

**Ascent:** +312 m (1,024 ft)

**Descent:** -264 m (866 ft)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Hotel



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## Day 9

### LECCE – BARI (OR BRINDISI)

#### DEPARTURE

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The trip ends this morning in Lecce. Transfers can be arranged to the Bari or Brindisi airports or the train station, at an additional cost. If you prefer to fly out of Rome or Naples, which are bigger airports with more international departures, you can easily plan to take the train to either of these cities from Lecce. You might even want to continue to explore Italy from there. Either way, we know you'll carry fond memories with you of your days riding through the south with us!

**Meals:** Breakfast



## TRIP INCLUSIONS

### Trip Includes

Meals as indicated in itinerary (8 Breakfasts, 5 Lunches, 4 Dinners), all entrance fees, all internal transportation, all accommodation (twin shared), one group airport transfer at arrival and English-speaking guide.

### Not Included

International airfare, airport taxes, airport transfers other than those noted in itinerary, gratuities, meals not indicated in itinerary and items of a personal nature.

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