

EXPLORE!

Cycle Dolomites, Lake Garda and Venice

8 days

Italy - Trip code CDV

Cycle Dolomites, Lake Garda and Venice

On this cycle journey we ride down the magnificent glacial valleys of the South Tyrol, past the jagged backdrop of the Dolomites to the beautiful setting of Lake Garda. After a catamaran ride across Lake Garda we swap natural highlights for the grand architecture and cultural heritage of Verona and Venice, where our journey ends. Along the way we ride predominantly on traffic-free cycle paths, sample the local wine and stay in charming and elegant alpine towns.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Natural beauty** - Cycle with a backdrop of rugged mountain peaks, pristine lakes and gentle alpine meadows
- ★ **Venice and Verona** - End the tour on a cultural high in these fine cities
- ★ **Gentle, quiet cycling** - Ride on dedicated cycle paths and country roads
- ★ **Lake Garda** - Ferry ride across the lake for wonderful views
- ★ **Cultural journey** - from the Germanic, Hapsburg-influenced north to the land of Romeo and Juliet
- ★ **Venosta and Adige Valleys** - Witness traditional lifestyle

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

CYCLING GRADE:

Easy

Suitable for anyone who enjoys easy and relatively short rides on flat or gently undulating terrain. Ideal if you simply want to explore a region by bike at a relaxed pace.

GROUP SIZE:

10 - 16

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join tour Venice Airport and drive to Merano

Our journey begins in Venice Marco Polo Airport from where we drive approximately three hours to our hotel for the night in the Alpine town of Merano. Located in the South Tyrol, Merano enjoys a fine setting sat in a basin at an altitude of 325 metres surrounded by mountains over 3000 metres high. It has been famed as a spa town since the 9th century and only became part of modern Italy after the First World War. Prior to this it formed part of the Hapsburg Empire which explains the prevailing Germanic culture, language and food in this region. This evening there will be a short briefing by our Tour Leader about the week ahead.

No cycling today.



Accommodation: Residence Flora (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Cycle Merano to Bolzano

After breakfast and ensuring everyone is happy with their bikes we commence our first cycle ride, much of which is flat, as we make our way to Bolzano on a bike path amidst alpine meadows. We leave Merano then make our way down the scenic Adige Valley cycle path past endless vineyards and apple orchards, against a backdrop of Alpine mountains. We ride on this cycle path all the way to the town of Bolzano, the capital of South Tyrol. After arriving in the late afternoon there is free time to explore Bolzano and perhaps visit some of the museums or take the Funivia Renon (cable car) up the mountainside to enjoy spectacular views over the valley.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 35 kilometres (Total 100 metres ascent, 200 metres descent).



Accommodation: Hotel Regina (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Cycle Bolzano to Trento via Lake Caldaro

This morning we continue our journey by bike from Bolzano to the impressive setting of Lake Caldaro on a longer ride. From the crystal clear waters of Lake Caldaro the ride follows the beautiful 'Strada del Vino' (wine road) leading through numerous wine-producing villages and along the way we plan to stop at a vineyard for an optional wine tasting. We then descend into the Adige valley and enter a bike path that takes you all the way to Trento. Along the way we may make a stop at one of the 'Bici Grills' (cyclists bar) and visit century-old villages such as Egna and Salorno. Please note that although the route is largely on the flat, it is not unusual to encounter headwinds that slow you down. For this reason there is the option to reduce today's ride by 24km by taking the train from Mezzocorona to Trento (approx 15 Euros per person depending on numbers, this must be arranged previously with the Tour Leader as the bikes need to be transported separately). We should arrive into Trento in the late afternoon. The town has an impressive setting in the Dolomites and within the town itself there are several interesting sites including Buonconsiglio castle, museums and other historical buildings.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 72 kilometres (Total 100 metres ascent, 150 metres descent). There is the option to reduce today's ride by 24 kilometres.



Accommodation: Hotel America (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Ride from Trento to Riva del Garda

We start the day with a very short bus ride from Trento to Cadine. Our cycle route leads us up and out of the Adige Valley, taking in superb views and a number of smaller lakes such as Toblino Lake which is dominated by a small castle. We continue on to the village of Arco - a famous rock-climbing mecca. The cycling today is nearly all along dedicated bike paths and towards the end of our ride we are rewarded with stunning views of Lake Garda. Upon arrival into the charming town of Riva del Garda town in the mid- to late-afternoon we check into our hotel. The rest of the day is left free to explore the narrow, medieval alleyways of the old town and its dramatic lakeside setting.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 42 kilometres (Total 300 metres ascent, 660 metres descent).



Accommodation: Astoria Park Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Lake Garda boat ride. Cycle to Verona

We start the day with a relaxing and beautiful public ferry ride (2.5 hours) south across Lake Garda to the town of Bardolino. From the port we ride through town on regular roads for about two kilometres, after which we continue on small country roads which lead us to a bike path that we follow for the last section of cycling into Verona. Although we continue mostly along urban cycle paths the traffic levels inevitably increase on the ride into the city of Verona. We spend the next two nights in the beautiful city of Verona; the setting for Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. Over the next couple of days you will have time to visit the city's Roman amphitheatre, the Duomo, see Ponte Scaligero and enjoy the vibrant atmosphere in one of the several piazzas.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 29 kilometres (Total 250 metres ascent, 245 metres descent).



Accommodation: Hotel Fiera (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Cycle to wine-producing Soave. Train return to Verona.

Today we cycle to Soave mainly along quiet country roads, with sections of dedicated bike path and an interesting section alongside old irrigation channels (fossi) built in Roman times. The ride is generally flat with one steep hill (for about 1.5 kilometres) just before we reach the village of Colognola ai Colli. From here we cycle into the beautiful wine growing region of Soave, known particularly for its fresh, fruity and light-bodied white wines which are made mostly with the local Garganega grapes. The town of Soave grew up around its imposing medieval military castle, one of the best examples of castle architecture in Veneto. For a long period of time it suffered feudal quarrels, invasions and defeats and as a result has a rich history. The final kilometre or so of the ride, from Soave to the train station in Bonifacio, encounters unavoidable busier sections of road. We return to Verona by train then cycle once again through the city to our hotel, leaving some free time in the afternoon to explore the city. There is the option of a two hour guided tour.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 35 kilometres (Total 200 metres ascent, 235 metres descent).



Accommodation: Hotel Fiera (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available

DAY 7 - Train to Venice; sightseeing. Bus to Mestre

After breakfast we catch the train to Venice where we enjoy a full day for sightseeing. The Explore Leader will provide an orientation tour and can arrange an optional two hour guided tour of the city for those interested. For those interested in experiencing Venice in a totally different way there is the option to take a guided kayaking tour of the city and lagoon, it lasts around 1.5 hours and includes the Canal Grande and other small canals. The rest of the day is free to explore at leisure. At the end of the day we make our way back to Mestre by bus where we spend the night. Mestre is located on the mainland and connected to Venice by a short bus ride.

No cycling today.



Accommodation: A&O Hostel Mestre (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Tour ends Mestre

The tour ends in Mestre this morning after breakfast.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Cycling information

DAILY DISTANCE



General cycling information

On this tour we cycle 189 km over five days (an average of 38 km per day) with optional extra 24 kilometres cycling. The terrain is virtually all on tarmac and 90% of the route is on dedicated cycle paths. We encounter traffic for short sections at the end of day 6. The route is generally a gentle descent with flat sections and occasional ascents; with a few steeper inclines on days 4, 5 and 6. The Explore Leader will cycle with the group every day and luggage is transported between hotels. Maps and route notes are also provided to cycle individually or in groups. We have graded the route as easy.

Bike included

21 gear custom made hybrid bikes

Electric bikes (e-bikes) are available for an additional cost for the duration of the holiday. You will be required to pay a refundable deposit upon collection of the e-bike in country. Please contact us for more details or to request your e-bike.

Bike information

Your included bike is a 21 gear custom made hybrid and will be the correct frame size for your height. Female and male frames are allocated accordingly when booking unless you specifically request otherwise. A rear pannier bag is included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. The tour leader leads the rides and luggage is transported between hotels. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet.

Cycling grade

Easy



Why book this trip

Unlike many other operators, we include the hire of your bike in the overall cost of the holiday: you don't need to bring your own or pay extra to hire one locally. We also provide a support vehicle, spare parts and take care of day to day bike maintenance. All you need bring is your own helmet.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7



Transport

Bus
Bicycle
Train



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader / Cycle
guide
Driver(s)



Accommodation

7 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

Italy

Climate

April/May and October/November are pleasantly warm. June/September are the hottest months. Showers are common in Autumn.

Time difference to GMT

+1

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Roman Catholic

Language

Italian

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Pannier hire - 15 Euros

Gorlenza - Castle 8 Euros

Roncolo castle 8 Euros (open Tue-Sun www.runkelstein.info/runkelstein_en/history.asp) 8 Euros

Oetzi 'ice man' museum (www.iceman.it/en) 9 Euros

Cable car to the Renon plateau and visit the natural earth 'pyramids'

Modern Art Museum

Caldaro or Termeno - wine tasting 10 Euros

Trento - Buon Consiglio castle (www.buonconsiglio.it/index.php/en/Buonconsiglio-Castle) 8 Euros

Verona - Arena 3 Euros, Casa di Giulietta museum (www.turismoverona.eu/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=35876&lang=en) 6 Euros
Venice - Guided kayak tour of Venice 72 Euros pp (duration 1.5 hrs, min. 2, maximum 10 people), Guided visit including Basilica di San Marco 20 Euros, city guide half day 120 Euros per group, vaporetto 8 Euros, water taxi approx. 14 Euros (depending on numbers)

Clothing

When cycling: quick drying cycle tops, padded cycle shorts, lightweight wind and water proof jacket and warmer breathable layers where local conditions require.

General: Pack layers of clothes essentially for mild or hot weather depending on the time of the year, but remember a warm fleece if travelling at the start or end of the season as the weather can be changeable.

Temperature and rainfall is more or less the same for all places visited, with the exception of Verona where it rains less in July and August. In spring/autumn rain tends to be lighter and more prolonged while in summer it comes down as shorter heavier downpours. In summer the Adige valley is very hot and temperatures are normally above 30°C and often goes over 35°C.
<https://en.climate-data.org/region/419/?page=2>

Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD cycle shoes are not well suited to tours that combine sightseeing with cycling. Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

We recommend you bring a daypack and one main piece of luggage (total allowance: 44lb/20kg) which will be transported between hotels while you cycle. Check the bike details section to see if a pannier or handlebar bag is provided on the bike.

Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn. Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Explore Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Explore Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Country Information

Italy

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price
£5.00 - 10.00

Dinner price
£15.00 - 20.00

Beer price
£2.00 - 4.00

Water price
£1.00 - 2.00

Foreign Exchange

Local currency
Euro.

Recommended Currency For Exchange
GBP.

Where To Exchange
We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

ATM Availability
Major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance
Larger hotels and restaurants.

Travellers Cheques
Only in major towns. Please note, the exchange rate for cash and Travellers Cheques is poor.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Bicycle, Train

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Standard - Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

If staying at the A O Hostel in Mestre please note this large accommodation has numerous twin and single rooms with private en suite facilities as well as dorm rooms, and that these style rooms are located on different floors.

Essential Information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

Visas are not required by UK, EU Nationals, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Italy

Vaccinations

Nothing required. Tetanus recommended. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.
