

# EXPLORE!



**BEST SELLER**

**Self-Guided Puglia Cycling**

7 days

Italy - Trip code CSIP

## Self-Guided Puglia Cycling

On this self-guided cycle route around the 'heel' of Italy, in the sun-drenched region of Puglia, you discover the natural and cultural highlights of a land forged centuries ago by Greeks, Romans, Ottomans and Spanish. Enjoy beautiful rides along the Adriatic and Ionian coasts, through sparsely inhabited ancient olive groves and the medieval towns of Otranto, Ostuni, Gallipoli and Lecce.

### Trip highlights

- ★ Lecce - Stunning Baroque city of southern Italy
- ★ Jagged coastline - Beautiful sandy beaches and turquoise seas
- ★ Local delicacies - Primitivo wine, mozzarella di bufala, fresh antipasti to name but a few
- ★ Historic towns and villages - Ostuni, Gallipoli and Otranto
- ★ Santa Maria di Leuca - Beautiful harbour town

#### 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.

## Itinerary

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

### DAY 1 - Holiday starts in Alberobello

Your holiday starts in the UNESCO World Heritage town of Alberobello, famous for its Trulli (round conical-roofed houses). After checking in to your hotel, you may choose to spend the rest of your day exploring the town's picturesque whitewashed streets. Your bike will be delivered either today or tomorrow morning and you will be required to sign an agreement of care upon receipt of the bike.



**Accommodation: Hotel Cour di Puglia** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

### DAY 2 - Cycle through the Murgia region to Ostuni

Hopping onto your bike, your cycling route commences through the culturally-rich Murgia region, where you will pass olive groves, vineyards and classic 'Masserie' farmhouses. The Medieval town of Cisternino, with its brilliant DOC wine, is worth stopping off in. Your base for tonight is the picturesque town of Ostuni. Positioned close to the Adriatic Sea and fortified by ancient walls, the town's chic shops, bars and restaurants attract many Italian tourists. However, it is its fifteenth century cathedral which is its real draw card, described by many as 'enchanting.'

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 40 kilometres (total ascent 300 metres, total descent 500 metres).



**Accommodation: Hotel La Terra** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 3 - Pedal through the Salento region to Gallipoli

This morning you cycle down to Ostuni train station where you catch the train to Lecce, from where you commence your ride through the Salento region. You take the bike with you on the train but your luggage is transferred separately to the hotel. Please note it is not possible to pre-book this train ticket, so you need to purchase this locally. Once outside Lecce it is just you and nature as you pedal across flat countryside, passing the occasional olive tree, pine tree forest and sand dune. Along the coast, you will pass several good swimming spots and some ancient seaside watch towers as you approach the Medieval fishing town of Gallipoli, which, in contrast to the landscape you have passed through, is bursting with life.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 56 kilometres (total ascent 240 metres, total descent 330 metres).



**Accommodation: Hotel 33 Baroni** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 4 - Bike to Puglia's southernmost tip

From Gallipoli, you will pedal along a coastal road to the southernmost point of Puglia, where the Ionian and Adriatic Sea meet. En route, we recommend a relaxing break and refreshing dip at the paradisiacal Torre del Pizzo Beach, where you will be greeted by pristine white sand and turquoise water. Continuing south to your nightstop in Santa Maria di Leuca, this town is famous for its lighthouse, great beaches and wacky, colourful mansions.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 51 kilometres (total ascent 200 metres, total descent 170 metres).



**Accommodation: Hotel L'Approdo** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 5 - Pedal the coastal route to Otranto

Today's cycling journey takes you along the high coastal route, winding your way along gentle, undulating cliff tops, with a cooling sea breeze fanning your face. The phenomenal beauty of this coast is likely to encourage you to make frequent photograph stops. On your route, we recommend stopping off at the spectacular Zinzulusa Cave - one of the most endangered karst ecosystems in the world. Today's destination is Otranto, a Greek-Roman port town with an imposing castle.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 51 kilometres (total ascent 520 metres, total descent 530 metres).



**Accommodation: Hotel Albania** (or similar)

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Standard Hotel

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Single room available

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Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## DAY 6 - Cycle through Greek Salento to Lecce

On your final day of cycling, you will pedal alongside the Alimini Lakes, running parallel to the sea, before heading into the Cesine Coastal Nature Reserve. Managed by the WWF, here you will find dense forest and typical Mediterranean flora and fauna. Cycling through the countryside of Greek Salento, this area is inhabited by the Griko people - an ethnic minority with Greek origins. You will notice that their language is akin to modern-day Greek and their food and architecture also draw many similarities. Later, you will arrive in Lecce - a stunning city in which to spend the last night of your tour. Nicknamed the 'Florence of the South' because of its rich Baroque heritage, the city's palaces, churches and statues are made from the famous local stone and are well worth exploring.

Your total cycling distance today is approximately 52 kilometres (total ascent 120 metres, total descent 90 metres).



**Accommodation: Grand Hotel di Lecce** (or similar)

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Premium Hotel

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Single room available

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Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## DAY 7 - Holiday ends in Lecce

After breakfast, the organised part of your holiday comes to an end.

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Meals Provided: Breakfast

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# Cycling information

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## DAILY DISTANCE



### General cycling information

On this journey you cycle 250 km over five days (an average of 50 km per day). The terrain is mostly gently undulating and some days have long flat sections mixed in. Most of the route is on tarmac country lanes and secondary roads with little traffic, however sometimes you have to travel on busier roads when approaching the larger towns. We have graded the route as easy.

### Bike included

27 gear hybrid bike. E-Bike available at additional cost.

### Bike information

Your included bike is a 27 gear hybrid bike and will be the correct frame size for your height. Each bike is fitted with one lateral pannier bag and a handlebar bag with map holder. A water bottle holder is included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A lock, pump, spare inner tube and puncture repair kit with tyre levers is included. All you need to bring is your own helmet. You will be required to sign an agreement of care upon receipt of the bike.

Electric bikes (e-bikes) are available for an additional cost for the duration of the holiday. A pannier can also be hired at extra cost. 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.

### 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 pump, lock, spare inner tube and tyre levers. All you need bring is your own helmet.

# What's included?



## Included meals

Breakfast: 6



## Transport

Bicycle  
Train



## Accommodation

5 nights standard hotel  
1 nights premium 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.

Day 3 - On arrival in Gallipoli you may wish to visit the ornate Basilica of Saint Agata.

Day 5 - Stop off today during your cycling to explore Zinzulusa Cave.

Day 6 - There are lots of sites to visit in Lecce, including the Basilica di Santa Croce, the Piazza del Duomo and the Roman amphitheatre.

### Clothing

Bring cycling gear such as quick drying cycle tops, padded cycle shorts and cycle gloves. The sun can be very strong in the south of

Italy though at the start and end of the season you should bring a warmer jacket/fleece. A waterproof cycle jacket is recommended in case of rain. A light windproof jacket is always useful.

## 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: On tour

Bring one main piece of baggage as per your airline luggage allowance, maximum 20 kg per person. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage during transfers by public transport so don't overload yourself. Luggage transfers between hotels are normally arranged by the hoteliers. Mark your bags clearly and leave them at the place and time arranged with them. When travelling on public transport you should always take your luggage with you.

## Luggage transfer

Included between each hotel.

## 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. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. 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. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

Maps - Along with the destination manual and route notes you will be sent a set of maps that have been created specifically for this trip to help you navigate. The route is marked on each map together with a series of numbered waypoints which correspond with instructions in the route notes. Should you wish to purchase a more detailed commercially produced map we recommend the following:-

General maps  
Puglia 1:200.000 TCI Touring Club Italiano, ISBN: 8836548261

## Tipping

### Local fees

The train from Ostuni to Lecce on Day 3 cannot be pre-booked and so is payable locally. Tickets cost from 5.60 Euros to 13.30 Euros depending on the train you take.

Local city tax is required to be paid in cash upon check in to the accommodation. The amount varies from 1 to 3 Euros per person per night, with the higher amount relating to higher category hotels. It is only applicable to a number of towns and cities in Italy but it is being rolled out to cover more places in time so please allow accordingly in your budget.

## 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

Bicycle, Train

### Recommended airport

Bari or Brindisi.

### Flying to your destination

We recommend return flights into Bari or Brindisi Airports which are served by both budget (including Easyjet, Ryanair) and non-budget airlines (including British Airways) from multiple airports in the UK.

### 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.

Premium - Hand-picked and chosen for their character, location or local importance, these properties have excellent facilities and a higher level of comfort and service. They provide the perfect wind down after an active day.

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.

### Arrival and departure information

At the start of your trip you can fly into Bari or Brindisi Airports.

By public transport from Bari

Ferrotamviaria trains run daily from Bari airport to Bari Centrale train station (20 minutes, 5 Euros). A taxi should cost 25 Euros. The Ferrovie del Sud Est local trains run daily (except sundays and bank holidays) from Bari Centrale to Alberobello (2 hours, 5 Euros). Largo Sorrentino buses run daily to Alberobello (2 hours, 4.10 Euros).

By public transport from Brindisi

You can take a train to Cisternino then another train or bus to reach Alberobello. Take a taxi (5 mins) or local bus from Brindisi



airport to Brindisi train station (15 mins, 3 Euros). Trains run daily to Cisternino (30-60 minutes, 4 - 9 Euros). Ferrovie del Sud Est local trains run daily (except Sundays or bank holidays) to Alberobello (1 hour, 2.50 Euros).  
www.trenitalia.it

At the end of your trip you can fly back from either Bari or Brindisi Airports.

By public transport to Bari airport

Several daily trains run from Lecce to Bari train station (1-2 hours, 9-12 Euros). Ferrotramviaria trains run daily from Bari train station to Bari airport (20 mins, 5 Euros). Two bus companies run daily buses to the airport from Bari train station.

By public transport to Brindisi airport

Several daily trains run from Lecce to Brindisi train station (20-30 minutes, 3-13 Euros). STP Brindisi buses run daily to the airport (15 mins, 3 Euros).

Private airport arrival and departure transfers from Bari airport can be arranged at additional cost. These must be booked in advance.

## 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

Italy: Visas are not required by UK, E.U nationals, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

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.