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## SOUTHERN PUGLIA BIKE HOLIDAY

Cycling guided by the experts maps, but at your own pace and spirit of adventure: the best way to discover the heel of Italy in a week.

Salento is the easternmost region of Italy lying in the so-called "heel of the boot". Situated in the centre of the Mediterranean Sea, this region is filled with memories of several populations, from the Messapii, to the Greeks, followed by the Romans and then the Normans.

Crossing Salento with a bicycle is like cycling through an open-air museum: prehistoric dolmen, Byzantine shrines hidden in caves, Baroque cathedrals, secluded corners of the coast.

Salento is also internationally renowned for its traditional cuisine and folk music, called Pizzica. Salento is a region that is almost completely flat, therefore the ride is a pleasant journey for any level of riders.

You will be cycling between 30 and 50 km per day, mainly through secondary roads, with seaside or photo stops, guided visits and Italian lessons.

The philosophy behind these holidays is the "slow tour" to fully enjoy the landscape and culture with all their different aspects.

Gps Maps will guide you through the most suggestive and less busy roads just as a real tour guide.

### Tour program

Day 1: Arrival in Lecce

Day 2: From Lecce to Otranto

Day 3: Otranto surroundings

Day 4: From Otranto to Leuca along the coast Day 5: From Leuca to Gallipoli

Day 6: Gallipoli surroundings

Day 7: Back to Lecce

Day 8: Departure

Day 1: Arrival

Meeting point in Lecce for bikes and GPS navigator collection and briefing about the itinerary.

Day 2: From Lecce to Otranto (distance 58 km)

Route is flat with many interesting cultural and naturalistic sights.

First stop is Acaya, a fortified city with a huge castle, and then you move on to "Le Cesine", a WWF protected area, crossing point for many species of migratory birds.

From there you head towards the coast, along the ruins of Roca Vecchia, an ancient Bronze age city, and the Alimini Lakes.

After a few more kilometres, you will reach Otranto, where narrow streets reveal wonders at every corner, such as St Peter church with its Byzantine frescoes, a walk along the ramparts overlooking the sea and finally the cathedral with its paved mosaic, a sort of figurative Middle Age encyclopedia.

Day 3: Otranto surroundings (distance 29 km)

Riding along the little river "Idro" ("water"), which gave the name to the city, you'll get to Casamassella, where old looms are still being used in "Le Costantine Foundation".

After the guided tour, you'll move towards Giurdignano, crossing a Bronze age megalithic park containing huge stones called "dolmen" and "menhir".



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Afterwards, you'll enjoy a traditional products tasting in a local bakery.  
Return to Otranto and free time.

Day 4: From Otranto to Leuca (distance 52 km)

This ride will take you along the wildest Salento coastal stretch.

You'll see Punta Palascia lighthouse (easternmost point of Italy) and a small red lake surfaced in a disused bauxite quarry.

You'll keep cycling along the coast: nestled among the cliffs above the sea, this road is a huge balcony overlooking Otranto Strait. With a little bit of luck you will be able to see the mountains of Albania and Greece.

You can stop at the marvellous 'Zinzulusa' seacave and then continue through terraces and dry walls to the Ciolo, a small canyon carved by the waters and rich in rare flora, and finally reaching the sanctuary of Santa Maria di Leuca (Shrine of Our Lady de Finibus Terrae).

Day 5: From Leuca to Gallipoli (distance 61 km)

You'll explore Leuca Cape, the southernmost part of Apulia.

After an astonishing defense tower located in the centre of a small village, you'll visit an ancient mill and an enigmatic funerary monument made by big stones (its name "centopietre" means "hundred stones").

Finally you'll reach Leuca piccola (little Leuca), an important pilgrimage station which still maintains a vast underground area.

Through olive groves and dry stone walls you'll reach Ugento, where you may visit its archaeological museum. In the afternoon you will cycle again along the Ionian coast towards St. Andrew's island and Punta Pizzo natural park.

Once in Gallipoli, fisherman village located on a peninsula, you can enjoy an aperitif on a terrace overlooking the sea.

Day 6: Gallipoli surroundings (distance 60 km)

First stop is Sannicola where you'll discover its underground oil mill.

Then you'll move to Tuglie and the amazing "rural culture museum" to move on to Galatone and its beautiful Baroque old town with the Norman castle of Fulcignano.

In the afternoon you'll get to Galatina old town and Santa Caterina church, which is totally painted with frescoes in Giotto style.

Day 7: Back to Lecce (distance 52 km)

On your last day you'll admire several 19th century fortified farmhouse and villas. You'll visit Nardò baroque old town and discover Copertino with its impressive Norman castle and its stories about St Joseph, the saint of flights.

Some km before Lecce, you'll explore a traditional pottery workshop and finally reach Lecce where you'll return your bikes.

Day 8: Departure

Due to organisational reasons, weather conditions or provisions issued by local authorities, the itinerary may be subject to some changes before and/or during the holiday.

Along the way you may find temporary deviations (for example road works) which cannot be foreseen; in this case each biker can decide autonomously how to deal with these stretches.

**What's included**



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- 7 overnights stays in farmhouse, 3\*\*\* hotels or B&B, in double room
- 7 breakfasts
- 2 tastings with wine, cheese and local products
- Bike rental
- GPS navigator with maps
- Baggage transportation
- Road book with cultural information and tips about the route
- English Assistance h24 onsite

**What's not included**

- Flights
- Transfer IN and Transfer OUT
- Meals and drinks
- Entrance fees and tips
- Hotel tourist taxes
- Travel insurance and anything else not listed as Included

Arrival day: every Friday and Saturday from 19/3/2021 until 10/07/2021 (last departure) and from 27/08/2021 until 06/11/2021 (last departure).

**What's included**

- 7 nights B&B in 3 \* Hotels/Masseria on B&B basis
- Tour maps and information
- Public transport on day 3
- Short tasting on day 6
- Olive oil tasting on day 7
- 2 dinners in masseria
- Luggage transportation from hotel to hotel
- Phone assistance 8am-9pm

**What's not included**

- Airport transfers
- Extra meals and drinks
- Entrance fees and tips
- City taxes
- Insurance and anything not listed as "Included"

**Arrival day:** every day