

Great Explorations



Trip Dates

2010:

Apr 21-27
Jun 9-15
Sep 9-15
Sep 18-24
Oct 3-9

Don't see your date? Call or email us about adding another departure.

Custom and self-guided trips also available.

2011:

Apr 20-26
Jun 8-14
Sep 8-14
Sep 18-24
Oct 2-8

Total Days:

7 days/ 6 nights

Arrive/Depart:

Monopoli/Lecce

Activity Level:

Easy-going/ moderate
20-40+miles daily

van supported

Puglia, Biking The Land of Trulli

We were introduced to this corner of Italy by one of our Italian guides who lives in the region and has long boasted of its stunning scenery, ancient traditions and some of the best food in Italy. With the Adriatic as a back-drop, quiet roads to cycle, and fascinating sites including the enigmatic *trulli* in Alberobello we were easily convinced to create a trip. Beginning in Monopoli and finishing 7 days later in Otranto you'll see the best of this region, all the while enjoying distinctive lodging and exquisite meals. *Buon appetito!*

Only Great Explorations:

- Small groups, extraordinary guides, and authentic experiences
- A ride you will never forget: from Otranto south along the coast to Santa Cesaria Terme
- Cooking course with an Italian chef at a local *trattoria*
- Order off the menu at restaurants you won't find in guidebooks
- Distinctive, charming hotels too small for larger groups
- Wine included at first and final night receptions and at sommelier tasting in Otranto
- We design and operate our own trips so there are only good surprises

Itinerary



Getting there :

Monopoli/Egnazia: We'll meet at 2:00 at our first hotel, the Hotel Lido Torre Egnazia, located 10 km from Monopoli on the beach at Capitolo. Taxis are available from the Monopoli train station to shuttle you there. If you are flying into Bari, and prefer a shuttle direct from the airport, this would cost approximately 60 euros.

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Terrain:

3 days gently rolling, 3 days are moderately rolling

Cost

Cost (current year):
US\$2450
6B/2L/5D

Single Supplement:
US\$450

Bike Rental:
US\$140

"Puglia is natural and wild, authentic in the true sense, rustic and traditional, friendly and safe. It is totally enchanting if these are the qualities you are searching for in a place"

Written by a traveler who fell in love with Puglia, and stayed.

DAY 1:

Capitolo

We'll meet at our first hotel at 2:00, where our guides will do bike fit. Let's go cycling! The ride on this day is a loop to Egnazia, a Roman port city dating to the 5th century, where remnants of the ancient road to Rome, a beautiful Acropolis and other monuments still exist - we'll visit the museum here to learn about this fascinating history. We stay at the Lido Torre Egnazia, a 4-star, yet casual hotel located directly on the beach (an extremely rare boast in Puglia). The Lido Torre has two restaurants, a bar with sea-view terraces and several hundred meters of private beach. We'll host a welcome wine reception followed by dinner in the dining room of the hotel tonight- seafood anyone? Ride Distance: 23 km

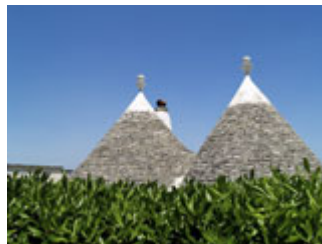
DAY 2:

Capitolo

Today we'll ride to Monopoli which boasts a charming historical center and a vibrant port where fisherman bring in the day's catch. Visit the impressive 16th century castle, and shops and restaurants in the center and return after lunch to the hotel to enjoy the beach. Prefer a longer ride with some moderate hills? Polignano a Mare and/or Conversano are both worth visiting with historical centers and cafes to tempt. We'll have dinner tonight in one of our favorite restaurants in Puglia, Le Porto, where you may be tempted to give the chef a standing ovation. Ride Distance: 40 km/ 60km/ 80 km

DAY 3:

Locorotondo



We'll cycle to the Unesco World Heritage site of Alberobello which boasts over 1500 *trulli*, distinctive round stone buildings with conical slate roofs. We'll join a local guide here to learn the secrets of this fascinating town on a walk followed by lunch together. The short option will take you directly to Locorotondo, known as the Balcony of the Itria Valley for its stunning views. Puglia produces 17% of Italy's wine and the whites produced here are very popular; you can sample from over 1000 vintners at

the Cantina Sociale in town. A longer option will take in the Bosco delle Pianelle Nature Reserve. We'll stay at the 4-star Il Palmento with charming trulli, two swimming pools and lush grounds. For dinner, we'll follow the locals to a charming trattoria, where Giovanni presides over the kitchen. Try the house *pennette*, quill shaped pasta in a hearty tomato sauce spiked with hot peppers and onions or his lamb chops with cheese, parsley and wild herbs. Ride distance: 42 km or 65 km

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DAY 4:

Ostuni

Start your day cycling to Martina Franca, an ancient city with stone walls, stunning piazzas and tiny winding streets. En-route you'll pass through olive groves, vineyards, and forested lands on quiet roads with very little traffic. Midway, we'll have time to explore Cisternino, with great cafes and restaurants. We'll finish the day in Ostuni, known as the "white city" with its Arab influenced architecture and a labyrinth of streets designed to confuse invaders (we'll show you the easy way in). Tonight, we have arranged a cooking class at a local restaurant where you will enjoy eating the Apulian specialties you prepare. Ride Distances: 36 km or 64 km

DAY 5:

Otranto

This day will start with a transfer by local train to Torre Rinalda and then a coastal ride with the aquamarine Adriatic at your side. The sea-side town of San Foca awaits you for lunch and afterwards we'll continue south to historical Otranto, the most eastern point on the Italian peninsula and one of our favorite cities in the region. Like much of Puglia, Otranto had a colourful past with Greek, Byzantine, Roman, and Aragonese influences. We'll stay at the Masseria Bandino, located just outside of town with large swimming pool and grounds. Tonight will be a free night for dinner- there are many excellent restaurants to choose between in Otranto's center. Ride distance: 70 (flat) km

DAY 6:

Otranto

We save the best ride for last! Cycle south along the dramatic coastal road to Santa Cesarea Terme with unsurpassed architectural and natural beauty in one of Italy's most serene locations. There are swimming opportunities along the way and some of the most stunning scenery in Italy. For those who want the challenge, you could continue all the way to Marina dei Leuca at the 'southern tip of the boot' and back for a century ride. For those who prefer to cycle directly back to Otranto after lunch, you can explore the Castello Aragonese, a mighty fortress castle that formed the defense of the city, or relax around the pool at the hotel. We'll finish by hosting a wine tasting with a local sommelier followed by a celebratory dinner in the dining room of the hotel. Ride distance: 34 km, 60 km or 100 km

DAY 7: Departure: We provide a shuttle to the Lecce train station by 10:00 for onward travel.

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Accommodations



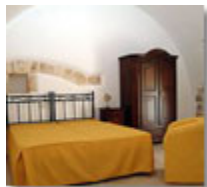
Hotel Torre Egnazia, Monopoli

The Hotel Torre Egnazia is a 4-star, yet casual hotel located directly on the beach (an extremely rare boast in Puglia). The Lido Torre has two restaurants, a bar with sea-view terraces and several hundred meters of private beach.



Sotto Le Cummerse, Locorotondo

Sotto Le Cummerse is located in Locorotondo's old town center, surrounded by traditional white houses, charming cobbled streets and ancient historic beauty.



La Terra Hotel, Ostuni

Occupying a 13th century palace, and adjacent to St. Peter's Benedictine monastery, this family run hotel sits in the center of Ostuni and enjoys extraordinary panoramic views of the surroundings. Built with class and elegance, La Terra offers a wonderful restaurant here and a charming bar built quarried out of stone.



Masseria Bandino, Otranto

This former 17th century manor house lies amid 5 hectares of unspoiled pine forest in one of Otranto's most beautiful valley landscapes and features an outdoor pool and large comfortable rooms. The surrounding area is rich in olive trees, citrus plantations, and the Salentine beaches are only a few kilometres distance.

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What's Included in the Cost of Your Trip?

- services of one or more experienced Great Explorations guides and support vehicle
- 6 nights lodging
- all breakfasts, 2 lunches, and all dinners but 1
- entrance fees for selected historical sites and museums
- wine included at reception on first and final nights
- wine tasting in Locorotondo
- detailed map and route instructions
- all baggage transportation
- all transportation from initial meeting point to final drop-off (see arrive/depart cities)
- gratuities for all meals, hotels etc. are included; tips for Great Explorations guide(s) are additional and at your discretion