

Self-Guided Puglia Bike Tour

Duration: 5 Days/4 Nights

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Puglia at Your Own Pace

Puglia is in the heel of Italy's boot. This corner of the country mixes rugged countryside, unspoiled beaches, quaint fishing villages, and secluded towns. This is an area of unique architecture, from conical *trulli* stone farmhouses to extravagant Baroque palaces. Puglia's whitewashed towns are rich in piazzas, churches, and winding alleyways. The region has some of the best beaches in Italy with swathes of soft sand anchored by scenic stone cliffs. This tour starts with an overnight in Monopoli, an ancient walled city overlooking the beach in central Puglia. A warm-up ride along the coast goes past the ruins of a 13th Century Roman town. On day two you cycle to Polignano a Mare, a spectacular village perched on a rocky crag above the crystal-clear waters of the Adriatic. Day three takes you to a family-run mozzarella business where the owner takes you on a private guided tour. You ride to Aberobello, a fairy tale village chock a block full of *trulli* stone houses. You spend the night in a *trullo*, in the historic center of town (*trullo* is singular, *trulli* is plural). On day four bike through rolling farmland stopping at a scenic terrace in Cisternino to admire the sprawling Itria Valley below. Your tour ends in Ostuni, also known as the Città Bianca (The White City). Its whitewashed buildings and city walls give it a very exotic feel, more Greek or Middle Eastern than Italian. Ostuni is midway between the Bari and Brindisi airports, making for an easy departure.

Route Rating

Moderate: 17-27 miles (28-45 km) per day cycling over hilly terrain.

Start / Finish

Monopoli / Ostuni, Italy

Highlights

- Beautiful accommodations
- Mozzarella farm tour
- Overnight in *trullo* hotel
- Delightful whitewashed coastal villages
- Gorgeous coastal cycling

San Vito, the beach and abbey



Day 1 Monopoli

Monopoli Loop Ride

17 miles (27 km)

197 ft (60 mt) climb

Travel by train from Bari to Monopoli. Your hotel in the historic center is 1.1 km from the Monopoli train station. You can walk 15 minutes to the hotel, or take a taxi. Your bikes will be waiting for you when you arrive. Monopoli was built on cliffs overlooking the Adriatic. The historic center is a limestone labyrinth of houses, churches, and piazzas. The city was originally under the control of the Venetians and later fell to the Spaniards. The Spanish built a castle on the water's edge as well as imposing defensive walls with solid seaward bastions. Nestled within these fortifications is the old port, Porto Vecchio, full of old wooden fishing boats. Just outside the walls are sandy beaches and rugged cliffs. A warm-up ride follows a flat coastal road south. The sea views are spectacular and the warm up ride is flat. Along the way you pass the Roman ruins of Egnazia, the most important architectural site in Puglia. One hundred acres of this ancient Greek-Messapian town were excavated here starting in 1912. The oldest ruins date from the 13th century BC. For dinner try some local seafood. The seafood list will be long including swordfish, sea bass, urchins, and octopus to name a few.

Hotel

Palazzo Indelli

Monopoli, Spain

(2 nights)

The Palazzo Indelli is located just steps from the harbor of Monopoli and a 4-minute walk from a small sandy beach. The hotel has modern, air-conditioned rooms.

www.palazzoindelli.com

The Ride

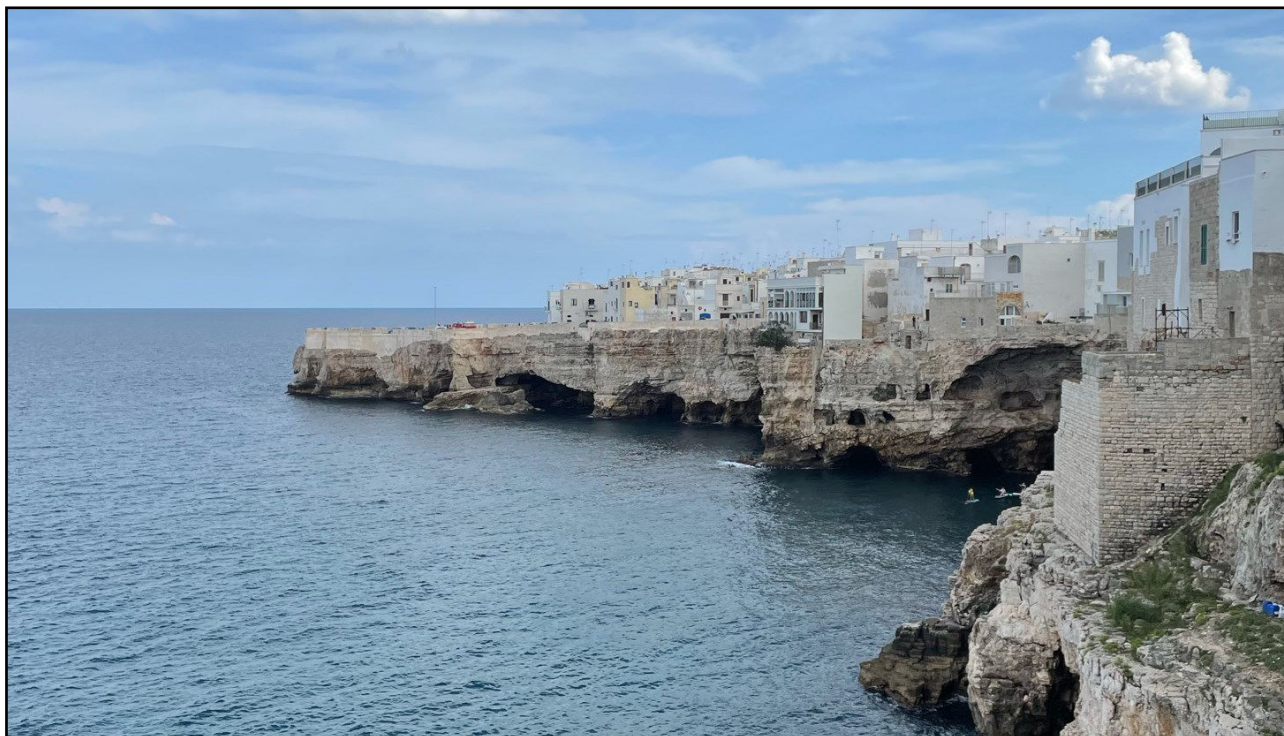
Day 1, 17 miles (27 km)

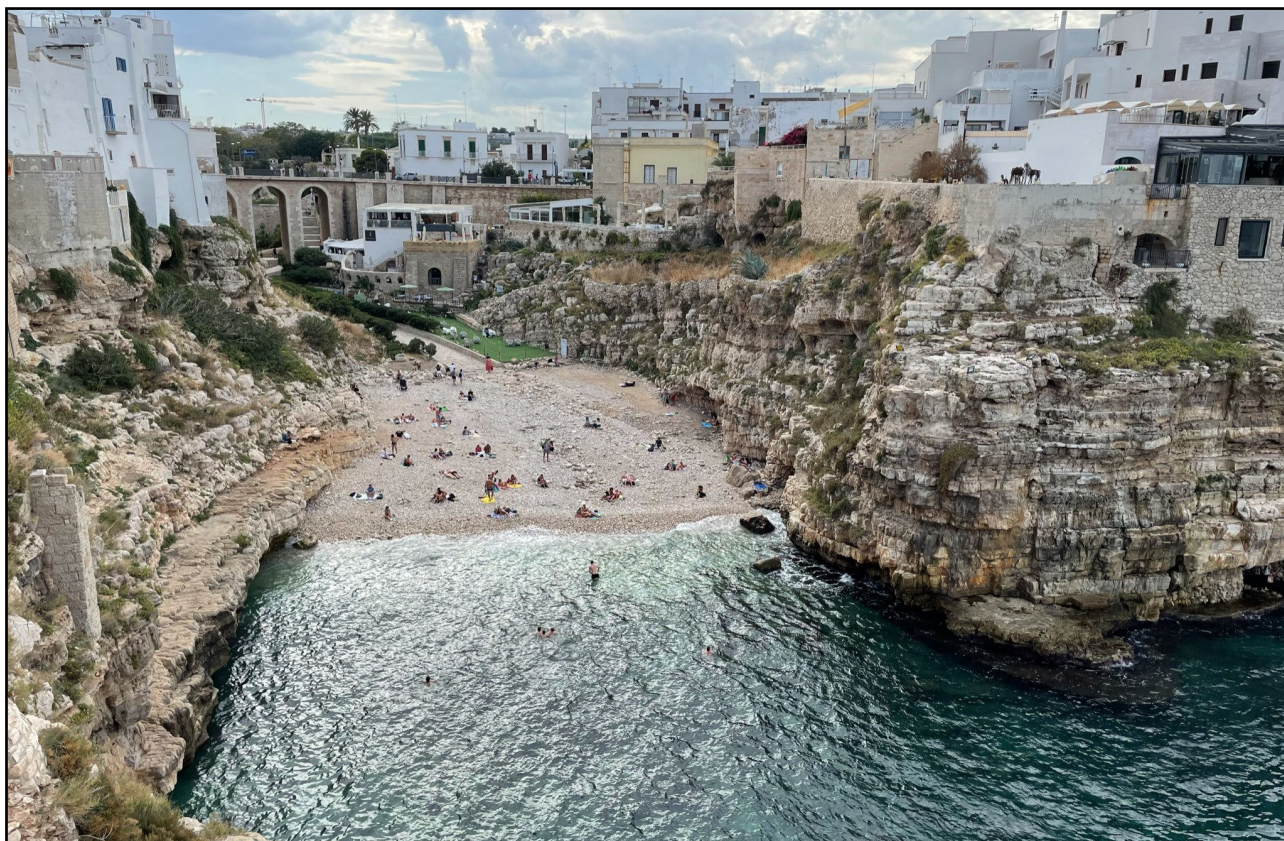
A flat warm-up ride

follows the coast south.

You have sea views the whole way on this out and back ride.

Polignano a Mare





Day 2 Polignano a Mare

Monopoli to Polignano a Mare Loop

26 miles (42 km)

919 ft (280 mt) climb

On day two a backroad leads you uphill to an ancient town called Conversano. You cycle through the pedestrian center below a dominating medieval castle. Later a quick downhill takes you to San Vito. Here you find a small cove where little blue fishing boats bob on the water, all in the shadows of a towering ancient Abbey. The place seems lost in time. Stop for a break at the scenic café on the water's edge. Pedaling a few kilometers down the coast you arrive in Polignano a Mare, also known as the "Pearl of the Adriatic". Polignano is a uniquely beautiful place. Its center is a maze of narrow white alleys ending on beautiful terraces overlooking the Adriatic Sea. Tables from inviting restaurants spill out over limestone paved piazzas. The town has a breathtaking beach surrounded by steep cliffs. On top of the cliffs are ancient apartments with the ultimate in sea views. Every summer this beach hosts an international cliff diving competition where athletes fearless leap from ancient balconies. Google "polignano diving" to see the action. A flat coastal ride leads back to Monopoli.

The Ride

Day 2, 26 miles (42 km)

An uphill ride through olive groves leads to a coastal hill town. A fast downhill takes you back to the water's edge and two beach towns.

Canolo

Try a fresh pistachio cream canolo.



Day 3 Alberobello

Monopoli to Alberobello

19 miles (30 km)

1,716 ft (523 mt) climb

Puglia is a major producer of mozzarella and burrata. If you like fresh mozzarella, you will love burrata. Burrata is a decadent version of mozzarella with a milky buttery flavor. Day three starts with an uphill ride to a family-run mozzarella farm. The owner takes you on a guided tour and tasting. The tour is in Italian, but you won't need a translator to understand the process. You will see firsthand how cow's milk is transformed into stretchy curd and rich mozzarella cheese. The tour will include a tasting where you can sample the cheese, together with cold cuts, bread and local wine. After the cheese farm it is a short ride to Alberobello, a hillside village that resembles a town built for gnomes. The *zona dei trulli*, on the western hill of town, is a dense mass of 1,500 beehive-shaped houses, white-tipped as if dusted by snow. Each *trullo* is of a different shape and size. Some are combined in a complex of communicating houses, while others are built on two levels. To fully appreciate the *trulli* you will be spending the night in one. Your *trullo* accommodation will be in an ancient structure with all the modern amenities.

Hotel

Trulli Holiday

Alberobello, Italy

(1 night)

At Trulli Suave you stay in your own stone trullo house. The houses are in the historic center of Alberobello and have all the comforts of a modern hotel room.

www.trullisoave.com

The Ride

Day 3, 19 miles (30 km)

A gradual uphill through open farmland leads to Alberobello. Visit a mozzarella farm 5 km outside of the town.

Alberobello





Day 4 Ostuni

Alberobello to Ostuni

21 miles (33 km)

755 ft (230 mt) climb

A rolling ride through the Valle d'Itria (Itria Valley) takes you to the town of Locorotondo. Locorotondo translates to “round place”, and indeed this place has a round, picture-perfect center, with small alleys, cute balconies and dainty corners quietly basking in the Southern Italian sun. Locorotondo is one of the *Borghi Più Belli d'Italia* (Italy's Most Beautiful Villages), a title given by a national tourism council. Stop for a well-earned coffee and pastry before rolling on. A gradual climb then leads to Cisternino, another whitewashed hilltop town with a perfectly preserved historic center. Further down the road you arrive in Ostuni. Ostuni is one of Puglia's most beautiful places, a tumble of ancient buildings perched strategically atop a hill with views over the sprawling green countryside and blue seas. From your hotel in the historic center, you can join the Italians for their evening *passaggiata* (stroll) down car-free streets. Head to Piazza della Liberta, past an 18th century spire and palace. Peer into the ruins of the 15th century walls. Ostuni will charm you with its baroque architecture, labyrinthine medieval streets, and pretty views.

Day 6 Bike Tour End

Departure Day

Your bike tour will end in the town of Ostuni. Both the Bari and the Brindisi Airports are easily reachable by public transport from Ostuni. Both airports have numerous international flights, although Bari is a bigger airport with more flights.

Hotel

Casa D'Autore
Ostuni, Italy
(1 night)

Casa d'Autore is a restored 18th-century building located in Ostuni's city center. The elegant rooms have views over a lush garden.

www.casadautore.it

The Ride

Day 3, 21 miles (33 km)

A rolling ride goes through one of Italy's most beautiful villages before arriving in Ostuni.

Puglia High Season

High season in Puglia is June, July and August. Consider going in the Spring or Fall for more comfortable temps and a cheaper tour price.

Other Questions?

Toll free 1 888 421 2418
info@charnestours.com