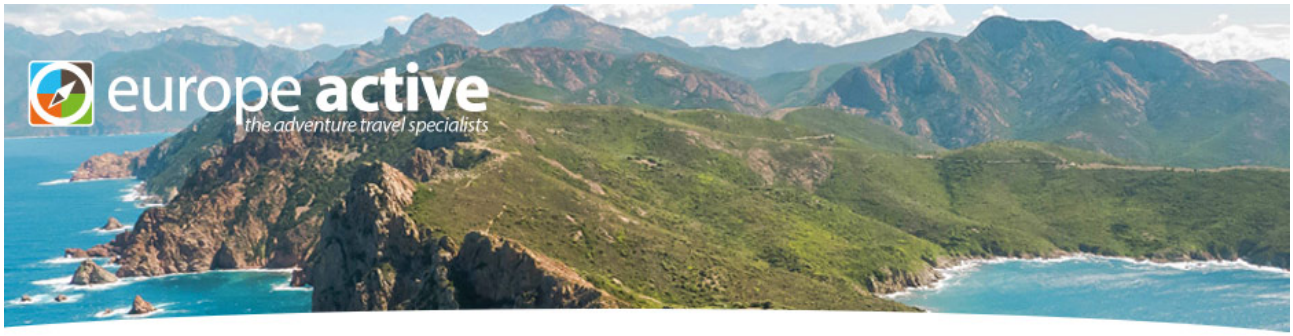

Apulia's nicest roads by bike

8 days/ 7 nights

Salento is in the most southeastern 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 the different civilizations that inhabited it, 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 the caves, Baroque cathedrals, secluded corners of the coast etc. are all but a few of the things you can see when visiting this area.
Salento is also internationally renowned for its characteristic cuisine which combines flavours from the sea and the earth and the fantastic rhythm of its folk music: most notably the Pizzica.

Prepare your trip

YOUR PROGRAMME

Day 1 - Arriving in Lecce

Arrival in Lecce. Meeting to give you all the documents and your bikes (if rented). Briefing about the route.

Day 2 - From Lecce to Otranto - 58km

Flat route today, with many interesting cultural and naturalistic sights. First we visit Acaya – a fortified city with a huge castle - and then we plunge down to “Le Cesine” – a WWF protected area, crossing point for many species of migratory birds. From there, we head towards the coast, along the ruins of Roca Vecchia – an ancient Bronze age city – and ‘Alimini’ Lakes. Some more kilometers and we are in Otranto, where narrow streets reveal wonders at every corner: the St. Peter church 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. 58Km



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Day 3 - Otranto's surroundings - 29km

Exploring Otranto's surroundings day. Riding along the little river “Idro” (“water”), which gave the name to the city, we arrive in Casamassela, where old looms are still being used in “le Costantine” foundation. After a guided tour we move toward Giurdignano, crossing a Bronze age megalithic park containing huge stones (“dolmen” and “menhir”), and we arrive to “La Cutura” botanic garden. Here ‘Toto’ will lead us through his incredible plants collection (unique in Europe for its cactus species) and will offer us some lunch. In the afternoon, visit to a characteristic stone-made oven and then we’ll enjoy a wine and cheese tasting in a wine cellar. Return to Otranto and free dinner in the historical centre.

29Km.



Day 4 - From Otranto to Leuca - 54km

Today we cycle along the wildest Salento coastal stretch. We visit ‘Palacìa’ lighthouse (eastern most point of Italy) and a little red lake surfaced in a disused bauxite quarry. After a little stop in a fresh cheese farm, for a sampling, we carry on riding along the coast: nestled among the cliffs above the sea, this road is a huge balcony that looks onto Otranto Strait. With a little bit of luck we will able to see the mountains of Albania and Greece. You could visit ‘Zinzulusa’ cave, going down nearly 200 feet into the earth bowels. On the way we admire some terraces and dry walls, the ingenious devices of peasants to get arable land in barren and impervious areas.
Around 52Km.

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Day 5 - From Leuca to Gallipoli - 61km

Today we discover Leuca Cape, the southern part of Apulia. After an astonishing defense tower - situated in the centre of a small village - it is time to visit an ancient mill, dug into the rock, and then an enigmatic funerary monument made by big stones (its name “centopietre”, means “hundred stones”), coming from Vereto, an ancient pre-romanic town situated nearby. Finally we visit Leuca piccola ('little Leuca'), an important pilgrimage station which still maintains a vast undergound area. We'll go through the hill that houses the remains of Vereto, an ancient Messapian city, and we'll reach the so called "Maldives of Salento", one of the most beautiful beaches in the region. In the afternoon we'll cross the countryside, where karst rivers create a stunning scenery. Around 61Km



Day 6 - Gallipoli's surroundings - 30/60km

Day dedicated to Gallipoli's surroundings. First stop in Sannicola to discover its undergound oil mill, then Tuglie with its amazing “rural culture museum”. We ride through Neviano, to visit the remains of Macugno abbey, and then Cutrofiano, where we step inside the “fossil park. Option to have lunch at “Piccapane” bio farm house, where you can pick up yourselves vegetables Giuseppe will cook for you. In the afternoon we reach Galatina where we can contemplate the church of Santa Caterina, totally painted with frescoes in Giottesco style, and then visit the beautiful historical center of the town.
Return possible by train.
60Km.

Italian cooking class possible instead of riding today, proposed with an extra cost of 75 € p.p. - lunch included - to be paid on the spot.

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Day 7 - Way back to Lecce - 52km

Last day of our trip. We'll pass by many 19th century fortified farmhouse and villas we meet on our way back to Lecce. We stop in Nardò to visit its decadent baroque style historical center. Next stop in Copertino to discover its impressive Norman castle and listen to stories about Sant Joseph of Cupertino, 'the Saint of fligths'. Some km before Lecce a last stop at a handcraft traditional pottery, at the Martina brothers, skilfull keepers of this ancient art. Late afternoon arrival in Lecce, guided city tour and bikes drop off. Around 52Km.





Day 8 - End of trip

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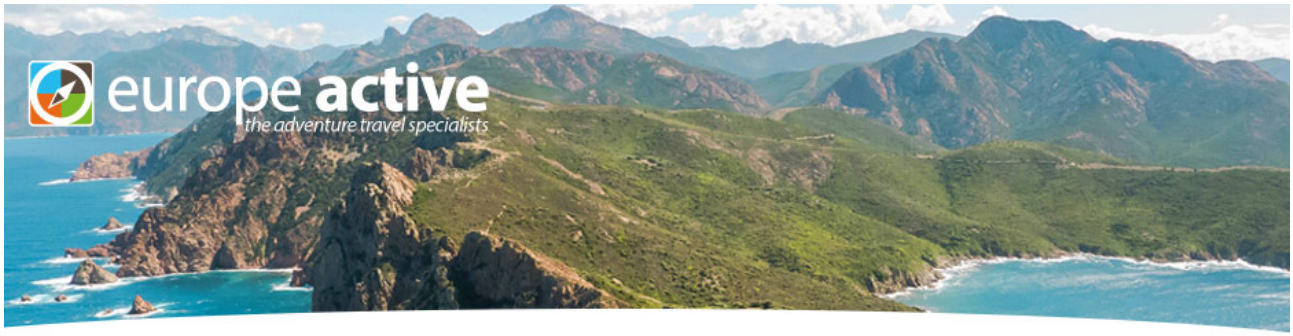

End of trip after breakfast.

Additional information

TARIFFS
Price from 830 euros per person.

OPTIONS
Other days departure on request : 85 euros per person.
High season supplement (from 19/06 to 12/09) : 140 euros per person.
Electric bike rental : 210 euros per person.
Leisure bike rental : 80 euros per person.
Extra night in Lecce : 55 euros per person.
Single room : 160 euros per person.
Extra nights in Lecce, single room : 80 euros per person.
Trip in 4* hotels : 170 euros per person.
Extra nights in Lecce 4**** single room : 105 euros per person.
Extra nights in Lecce 4**** : 80 euros per person.
Cooking class (on day 6 morning, with lunch, instead of Gallipoli bike tour). : 75 euros per person.
Transfer from Brindisi airport to Lecce (to be paid locally). Min. 2 people. : 35 euros per person.
Transfer from Bari airport to Lecce (to be paid locally). Min. 2 people. : 85 euros per person.

INCLUDED
Luggage transfers
7 nights and breakfasts
2 wine, cheese and local products tasting sessions
GPS guide with tracks included
Road book with cultural information and tips about the route
Assistance h24 based on local company with English speaker.

NOT INCLUDED
Transport options to the meeting point and from the point of dispersal, transfers which are not included in the tour, insurance, beverages, meals (except breakfasts), bike rental, visits of tourist sites, optional activities which are not included in the tour, personal expenses.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY
Suitable for everyone. The Salento is a flat region.
Distance: between 29 and 61km a day, mainly crossing secondary roads, with sea-breaks, guided visits and Italian lessons.

LUGGAGE
Luggage transfers by vehicle. You only need to take with you what you wish to have available during the ride (picnic lunch, camera etc.).

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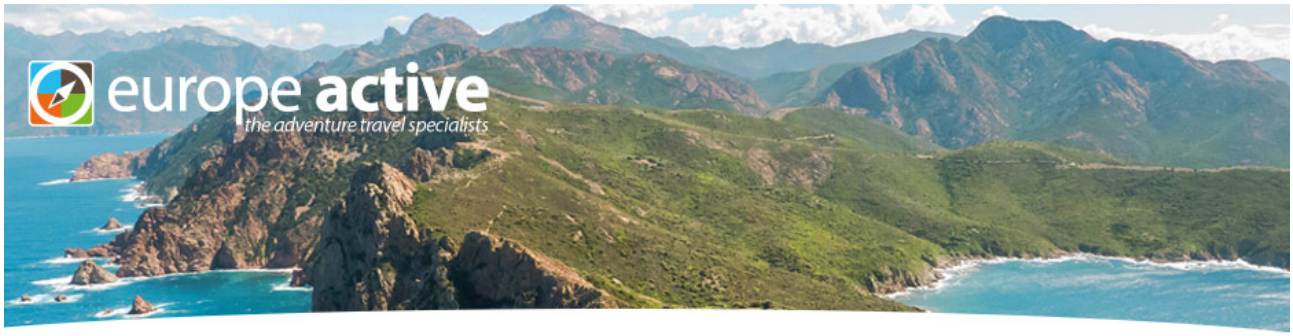

ACCOMMODATION
Nights in 3-star hotels, charming B&Bs and agriturismos - double bedroom basis.

SIZE OF GROUP
From 2 people

DEPARTURES
Every fridays and saturdays from March, the 18th to Jully, the 09th and from August, the 26th to November, the 04th, 2022. (On other days on request, paying a supplement)

DEPARTURE
Meeting in Lecce. Bycicle delivery, with GPS navigatore. Briefing about the route.

DISPERSION
In Lecce, end of your tour after breakfast on day 8.

HOW TO GET THERE
Lecce is easily accessible by the airports in Brindisi (30 minutes by train) and Bari (2hours by train). There are discount flights available from London, Rome, Milan…

EQUIPMENT TO TAKE
ADVISED MATERIAL TO TAKE WITH YOU (non-exhaustive cheklist) :

As a good preparation is key to a successful stay, here are a few tips to ensure that your trip takes place in optimal conditions.

BIKES
In order that your stay does not turn into a mechanical training course, it's advisable to carry out a meticulous revision of your bike before going on a tour :
- the tyres are well inflated and in good condition
- cables and chain are in good condition
- the transmission elements are clean and oiled
- there are no leaks in the suspensions
- the wheels are well tightened
- the brakes are in good condition (wear + possible leaks)
- the headset has been checked

And don't forget that anomalies are easier to spot on a cleaned bike…

REPAIR MATERIAL
To avoid mechanical problems, it's better to be far-sighted and always carry the basic equipment of a biker:
- 2 inner tubes (puncture sealant is strongly recomended, or puncture sealant strips)
- a pump
- tire irons
- an inner tube repair kit consisting of patches and glue
- a multi-tool

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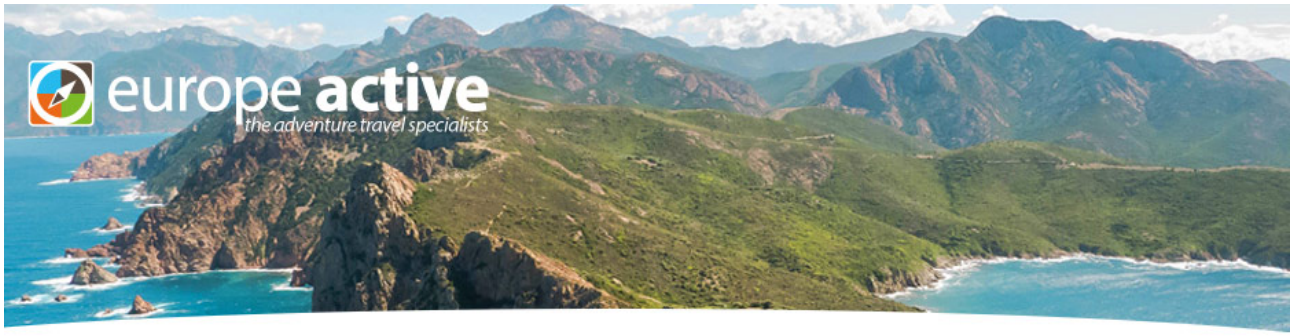

- a small wrench
- a piece of tire

Also, you can prepare your own toolbox which we transfer with your luggage. You will put in it the following items :
- a brake cable (front and rear)
- a derailleur cable
- a tyre
- one derailleur hanger
- chain oil
- a rag

EQUIPMENT
As you can't judge a book by its cover, cycling slinky shorts won't help you to turn into a cycling champion. However, a minimum of specific bike equipment will be necessary in order to be comfortable :
- a helmet
- glasses
- suitable shoes (no smooth soles)
- a cycling short or short
- a breathable tee-shirt (try to avoid cotton)

DAY BACKPACK
Because it's unpleasant to ride with a too loaded backpack, it's better to think carefully about the necessary things to bring in the backpack for the day:
- a water bag and/or a flask and/or water cans on the bike (2L/day/person minimum)
- provisions (energy bars, dried fruits...)
- the basic repair material for your bike (see above)
- a windbreaker (waterproof)
- picnic
- a headlamp
- a knife
- sun cream (+ lip protection)
- toilet paper
- a first-aid kit (see below)
- your mobile phone + an external battery
- a rubbish bag

PICNIC
In order to avoid unnecessary waste at picnic time, remember to take with you :
- an airtight box (0.5L) with initials marked on the lid and on the box + wide elastics
- reusable cutlery (fork and pocketknife)

TRAVEL BAG

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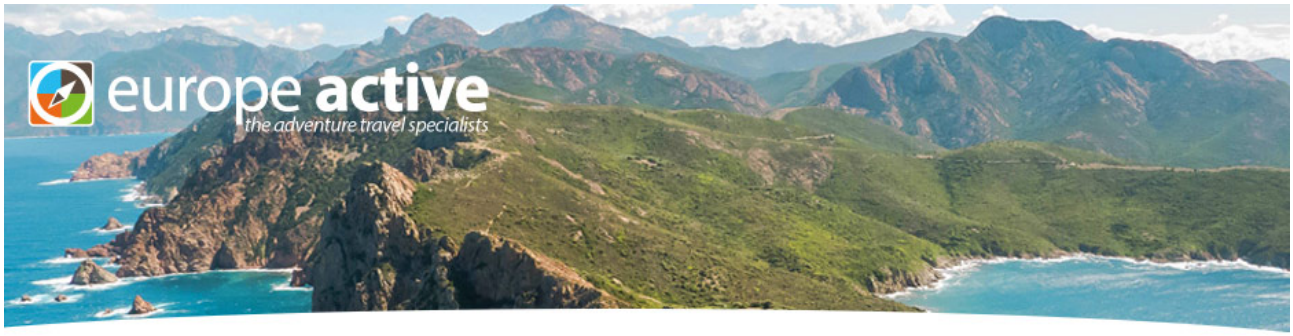

Your luggage is transferred during the day and you will find it every evening at your hotel. It is preferable that your travel bag contains the following items :
- a sleeping bag liner (stays in gîtes)
- a change of clothes
- a pair of light shoes for the evening
- a large jumper or fleece jacket
- a small toilet bag with a towel

FIRST-AID KIT
Concerning all our guided stays, the instructor has a first aid kit.
However, it is essential to bring your own first aid kit.
Here is a list of the minimum items to take with you:
- disinfectant
- gauze strips
- plaster
- protective cream for the buttocks
- your personal medicines
- micropur pastilles (water disinfectant)
- a survival blanket

A more complete first-aid kit should be formulated with your doctor.

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