

HeartCycle Bicycle Touring Club Puglia, Italy

- Dates:** Meet-up Tuesday, September 15, 2026. Tour begins Wednesday, September 16 and ends on Monday, September 28 (lodging on the 28th is not included).
- Coordinator:** Janet Slate
- Miles:** Approximately 353 miles (569 km) and 12,700 feet (3,870 m) of elevation gain
- Rating:** Intermediate
<https://www.heartcycle.org/tour-ratings>
- Riders:** 20
- Price:** \$5,700 (double occupancy). \$1400 due at registration. Balance due by June 17, 2026. Single supplement +\$1400. Non-motorized bicycle included; e-bike +\$510.
- Cancellation:** [Standard cancellation policy](#)

Travel insurance is strongly recommended.

OVERVIEW

A sunny region forming the heel of Italy's boot, Puglia is home to whitewashed coastal towns, a rich gastronomic scene, and a picturesque landscape dominated by rolling hills and olive groves. Situated between the Ionian and Adriatic Seas, Puglia is one of the least explored regions of Italy and shares strong cultural and historical ties with Greece.

On this 2-week tour, we will experience Old World architecture and stay in centuries-old estates and a converted monastery, several 4-star hotels, and limestone dwellings (cave features and "trulli"). Culinary activities will



include a visit to a family-run winery on a hill overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, making fresh mozzarella at a small cheese farm, and a tour of an olive farm where the same family has been making extra virgin olive oil for seven generations. Gorgeous cycling will connect our accommodations and culinary fun as we ride quiet coastal roads with endless sea views, through sprawling olive groves, and zigzag cobbled streets in ancient villages. All breakfasts are included, plus four group dinners and three lunches.



ITINERARY

Day 1: Tuesday, September 15, 2026

Arrival Bari

Welcome to Puglia with a delicious dinner together in Bari (included). Stay at a 4-star beachfront hotel.

Day 2: Wednesday, September 16

Bari to Matera (via minibus, approximately 1 hour)

Depart Bari at 10 am; arrive Matera at 11 am. Lunch (included) followed by a guided walking tour of Matera. Our hotel is an exclusive maze of refined rooms distributed in the heart of the ancient district, excavated or partially built, in the shadow of the cliff that joins the rock churches of Madonna de Idris and San Giovanni in Monterrone.



Day 3: Thursday, September 17

Matera to Altamura to Cassano delle Murge

Cycling distance: 65 km (40 mi), Elevation gain: 550 m (1,800 ft)

As we ride inland, we'll pass through wide valleys with rolling hills and farmer's fields. Stop for a break in the charming medieval town of Altamura. Dinner at the hotel, a country estate with a spa (included).



Day 4: Friday, September 18

Cassano delle Murge to Alberobello

Cycling distance: 51 km (32 mi), Elevation gain: 360 m (1,200 ft)

We cycle through iconic Puglian scenery, past dry-stone walls, ancient farms, and *trulli*, the typical rural houses with conical roofs. Our accommodations are in *trulli*, round, 14th century limestone dwellings, in the center of Alberobello.

Day 5: Saturday, September 19

Alberobello to Monopoli

Cycling distance: 55 km (34 mi), Elevation gain: 440 m (1,400 ft)

Today, we'll ride through Locorotondo, recognized as one of the most beautiful towns in Italy. Locorotondo has a delightful historic center crisscrossed by a labyrinth of winding streets. We'll visit a mozzarella cheese farm and enjoy tasting cheese, cold cuts, bread, and olive oil. Tonight's 4-star hotel is in a 16th century seaside fortress.

Day 6: Sunday, September 20

Monopoli to Conversano to Polignano a Mare Loop

Cycling distance: 58 km (36 mi), Elevation gain: 340 m (1,100 ft)





We ride to the fortified medieval village of Conversano, tour a winery and sample their wine, then descend to Polignano a Mare, a cliffside village with a spectacular center and pebble beach. Tonight's hotel is another 4-star seaside one.

Day 7: Monday, September 21
Monopoli to Ostuni

Cycling distance: 60 km (37 mi),

Elevation gain: 660 m
(2,200 ft)

A coastal road takes us past the 10th century ruins of the town of Egnazia. We'll bike through coastal villages before arriving at an ancient farm where we'll see olive trees that are thousands of years old and tour their farm. Our 5-star boutique hotel is in the historic center of Ostuni.



Day 8: Tuesday, September 22

Ostuni to Brindisi to Lecce

Cycling distance: 86 km (53 mi), Elevation gain: 220 m (700 ft)

We'll ride past giant olive trees on our way to the small village of Carovigno, known for its elegant 11th century Dentice-Frasso castle. We continue south on quiet farm roads before arriving in Brindisi, an ancient port city. After Brindisi, a coastal road brings us to beautiful baroque Lecce where we will stay in a converted and restored 17th century monastery.

Day 9: Wednesday, September 23

Lecce

Rest day

On the Salentine Peninsula at the heel of Italy's boot, Lecce is nicknamed "The Florence of the South" and is more than 2,000 years old.

Day 10: Thursday, September 24

Lecce to Otranto

Cycling distance: 65 km (40 mi), Elevation gain: 190 m (600 ft)

We'll cycle through Acaya, a fortified village with an ancient castle. We then ride along the coast, stopping to admire the sprawling views at the Grotta della Poesia, a spectacular natural grotto. Our ride ends at a seaside hotel just outside the old walls of Otranto, on the promenade at the edge of the historic center.

Day 11: Friday, September 25

Otranto

Rest day

With a day off the bike, consider exploring the shops in the old city of Otranto or enjoying some relaxing beach time. Optional group hike to a nearby lake. Group wine tasting with snacks before dinner (wine tasting included but dinner is on your own).



Day 12: Saturday, September 26

Otranto to Santa Maria di Leuca

Cycling distance: 63 km (39 mi), Elevation gain: 750 m (2,500 ft)

We'll ride south following a gorgeous road on a coastal cliff. We pass through two seaside towns stopping for lunch al fresco. This is a rare road in Italy, a seaside road with spectacular views and little traffic. Our hotel is set in an olive grove on a hill above town.

Day 13: Sunday, September 27

Santa Maria di Leuca to Gallipoli

Cycling distance: 66 km (41 mi), Elevation gain: 3600 m (1,200 ft)

Today's ride is entirely along the coast. We'll ride through sleepy summer vacation towns stopping for a coffee break at a seaside cafe. We'll ride past sprawling agricultural fields before arriving in Gallipoli, a fortified town with an ancient center on an island. Our group dinner in Gallipoli is included. Our hotel is 100 m from the beach in the historic center.

Day 14: Monday, September 28

Tour ends in Gallipoli

After breakfast, we'll shuttle to Brindisi (1 hr), then to Bari (an additional 1.5 hr). (Lodging is not included on the 28th.)

For more information contact:

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