

Self-Guided Cycling in Puglia

Trip Code: SGBP

Version: SGBP Self-Guided Cycling in Puglia



CYCLE



SELF-GUIDED



LEISURELY



HIGHLIGHTS

- Spend the night in the UNESCO town of Alberobello in your own trullo house
- Ride to the southernmost point of Puglia where the Ionian and Adriatic Seas merge
- Discover the impressive town of Lecce with its unique Baroque architecture
- Enjoy daily opportunities to stop along the coast to enjoy the cooling waters and inviting beaches along your way

AT A GLANCE

- Self-Guided
- 6 days cycling
- Friday Departures
- BIKE HIRE INCLUDED
- Suitable for 2+ travellers
- Join at Monopoli / End in Lecce

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- 7 Breakfasts
- 7 nights Hotel

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

Step into Italy's heel and discover the charms of Puglia on this one week self-guided cycling holiday. A region where rural roads take you pedalling through centuries-old olive groves to perfect hill-top villages and pristine beaches. As you ride along the country roads you will be captivated by the unique Puglian architecture with its curious mix trulli houses in Alberobello, soon replaced with the romantic Renaissance and Baroque grandeur of Lecce. Following the coast you will have time to relax on the warm sands of the Salento beaches and pedal in awe at the dramatic cliffs and coves which line the Adriatic as you meander towards Otranto.

Staying in a fantastic selection of 3* and 4* hotels on a B&B basis you will be able to pause and savour the flavours of Puglia along your way, whether that be snacking on Taralli with a glass of locally produced fine wines, feasting on tasty Orecchiette pasta or sampling olive oils produced from the olive groves you have cycled past with a lovely wedge of Pane de Altamura. The fresh flavours of Puglia will leave sweet memories long after you have departed that's for sure. Plus, staying in a trullo house in Alberobello will allow you the opportunity soak up this UNESCO site without the crowds- a unique experience.

Is this holiday for you?

This trip really is 'la dolce vita'. If you love combining your cycling with culture and magnificent architecture, and cooling off by the sea then this is certainly the trip for you. Cycling approximately 40-50 km a day with up to 500m of ascent a day on quiet country lanes and roads your routes will take you to discover the historic stronghold ports of Monopoli and Otranto, and to the Southernmost point of Puglia where the Adriatic and Ionian sea meet. You will delve to the captivating city of Lecce, not to mention the curious town of Alberobello. Staying in family run 3* and 4* hotels and a unique stay in a trullo house on a bed and breakfast basis, and with your bike hire included, you can enjoy the freedom to explore at your own pace.

Itinerary

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DAY 1

Arrive in Monopoli, explore the old town and take a walk into the town's history at the Il Bastione del Molino Ruins.

Your trip starts in the aesthetically pleasing town of Monopoli where whitewashed buildings are set above the crashing waves of the turquoise waters- the perfect welcome to the Puglia region. Once you are checked in you can make your way through narrow streets to the picture perfect old town where every doorway, shutter dressed window and whitewash building is waiting to be captured on film. Take time to enjoy a coffee in one of the quintessential cafes; take in the views from Castello de Carlo, standing proud above the harbour; or stretch your legs with a walk up Via Luigi Cadorna to take in the Il Bastione del Molino Ruins, which once protected the town from plundering pirates and the Spanish Armada.

In the evening, dine in one of the many restaurants offering warm hospitality and fresh local fare and enjoy sipping on one of the lovely local white wines as the sun goes down.







Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 2

Enjoy your first ride of the week taking you to the spectacular caves of Castellana Grotte and the UNESCO town of Alberobello with its curious trulli houses.

Your first ride of the week will take you on a gradual climb away from the vibrant blue of the Adriatic coast to the gently undulating valley of Itria. As you make your way through fragrant olive groves and farmlands framed by low stone walls, you will have plenty of time to pause and take in the typical Murgia landscape. You will soon arrive in the town of Castellana Grotte, home to an immense underground cave system (the biggest in Europe) where it is possible to undertake a tour of the vast karst caves- a real masterpiece of nature. Castellana Grotte also make for a great lunch stop before making your way on to the star of the day; Alberobello, the trulli capital of the world. Hopping off your bike you will have plenty of time to explore this magnificent UNESCO site with over 1000 trulli houses, known for their unique white wash stone structures and conical roofs. The advantage of spending the evening in Alberobello is that you can linger a little longer and enjoy the joy of the town after the day trippers have left, and staying in a trulli house yourself this evening you can get a real taste for life in these curious buildings.

Meals: **B**

	Accommodation Hotel		Ascent 500M		Descent 100M		Distance 47KM
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DAY 3

Cycle through a carpet of vineyards and olive groves, stopping to discover Locorotondo, Cisternino and Ostuni along the way.

Waking up in your own little trullo you can enjoy breakfast before hopping back on your bike to make your way through the excellent DOC wine and olive producing region with time to stop and enjoy the quaint villages along the way- and perhaps sample some local produce. As you make your way along your ride you will soon arrive in the charming town of Locorotondo, whose name directly translates to 'the round place' on account of the perfectly round design of its old town which form a perfect cap for the hill on which the town sits. Take time to meander through the old town, enjoy a coffee in the central piazza, and perhaps snack on the regions delicacy; Taralli. If you would prefer a little more active exploring then take a ride around the old protective walls for fantastic views over the quilt of vineyards and farmlands below. Your route next takes you to the equally charming town of Cisternino, a town famed for its barbequing butchers. This is great local tradition and makes for a delicious lunch, you simply make your dinner choice with the butcher, grab a seat outside, and the butcher will bring it to you when it's ready.

Your final goal to today is Ostuni, perched on top of a hill dominating the Adriatic with its strong defensive walls and imposing Archbishop's Palace. Checking in to your hotel, you will have time to explore the town, take in the magnificent views and feast on more fantastic local dishes in one of the restaurants.

Meals: **B**

	Accommodation Hotel		Ascent 300M		Descent 500M		Distance 40KM
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DAY 4





Ride through the tranquil Salento to the vibrant coastal town of Gallipoli.

Today's ride is one to pack your swimming costume in your pannier, with several lovely inviting swimming opportunities along your ride. Your day begins by taking the train further down Italy's heel to Lecce. You will have time to enjoy a morning coffee stop and purchase supplies to fuel your ride before heading out of town into the Salento region, otherwise known as Italy's heel, to arrive at the heavenly Gulf of Taranto. With the clear turquoise waters set against the white washed houses, you would be forgiven for confusing vistas of this part of Italy as somewhere on a Greek island. Making your way through tranquil countryside punctuated with large olive trees, fragrant coastal pine forests and sand dunes, you will soon approach the medieval fishing town of Gallipoli, an explosion of life as you pedal

from the rural landscapes.

Gallipoli is a town of two halves; the modern town resides on the mainland, while its historic centro storico sits on a small island connected to the mainland by a 17th century bridge. This beautiful city has a vibrant past having been frequently under siege thanks to its strategic position. It will therefore come as no surprise that it is heavily fortified and its centre is filled with impressive Baroque churches and aristocratic palazzi paid by the town's former wealth as a key trading port. Take time to get lost in the towns narrow streets, stroll along the promenade and enjoy dinner in one of the many pavement restaurants as the sun sets on another great day of cycling.

Meals: **B**





	Accommodation Hotel		Ascent 240M		Descent 330M		Distance 52KM
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DAY 5

Ride to the southernmost point of Puglia and stand on the edge of the divide between the Ionian and Adriatic Sea.

Waking to the salt air of the Ionian Sea you can enjoy a relaxed breakfast and perhaps a further explore of Gallipoli before riding along the coast to the southernmost point of Puglia, dividing the Ionian and Adriatic Sea. Take time to stop off at Punta Pizzo for a cooling dip in the sea along your way, with its medieval Torre del Pizzo watch tower originally used for sighting and defending, it is one of 171 watch towers that once kept guard along the coast of Salento. Cycling on, you will soon arrive at Santa Maria di Leuca, once thought to be the end of the earth by the Romans. It may not be the end of the earth, but, it is the divider of the Ionian and Adriatic sea, providing beautiful undisturbed views over the blue waters. It is said that it is here that apostle Peter passed through the town on his way to Rome and Christianised the temple at the tip of promontory. Today, flocks of faithful pilgrims visit the Basilica inscribed with the words 'portal to paradise', as you watch the sun sets on another great day cycling, it is easy to believe this!

Meals: **B**

	Accommodation Hotel		Ascent 200M		Descent 170M		Distance 51KM
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DAY 6





Cycling high along the clifftops to discover Grotta Zinzulusa and Otranto.

Feeling refreshed, your ride today will take you along the high coastal route above the clifftops towards Otranto. Phenomenal views will make you feel like you are part of a National geographic cycling feature! Along the way, you will note the difference in the coastline with the dramatic grottos and cliffs along the

Adriatic coast compared to the long sandy beaches of the Ionian coast to the west yesterday. You will have opportunity to stop along the way, in the little towns and villages, to explore and enjoy a morning coffee stop before arriving in Castro, a perfect place to stop for lunch before discovering the dramatic karst cave of Grotta Zinzulusa. Translated it means rags, a name given as the vast stalactites and stalagmites resemble rags hanging from the ceiling. Alternatively, there is a lovely open-air swimming pool along from the caves where you can enjoy a cooling swim before completing your ride to Otranto.

Arriving in Otranto you will have time to be enchanted by its compact old quarter and visit the macabre artefacts that lay in glass cabinets behind the altar of the cathedral- the bones of 813 martyrs who brutally fought in the infamous battle with the Turks in 1480. Though if you prefer less morbid jaw dropping artwork we suggest taking a look at the floor which is adorned in magnificent medieval mosaics. In the evening venture to one of the local restaurants to enjoy more of the regions fantastic specialities.

Meals: **B**




	Accommodation Hotel		Ascent 520M		Descent 530M		Distance 52KM
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DAY 7

Discover the Alimini Lakes as you cycle to Lecce.

Your final ride of the week takes you north of Otranto, first to the beautiful Alimini lakes and on to Lecce, a city full of palaces and treasures for you to discover. Arriving at Alimini Lakes you will have time to explore the beauty of the two lakes (Alimini Grande and Alimini Piccolo) alive with birdlife, and perhaps enjoy a relax on the fine sand beach or a dip in the crystal blue waters before pedalling on to your final goal of the week- Lecce. With its architecture so distinctive it has been given its own name, Barocco Leccese, it is a riot of cherubs and gargoyles. This is a city to experience and be captivated by as you soak in the cities architecture and character, be sure to take time to get lost in the narrow streets unveiling hidden piazzas and extravagant churches. In the evening, delight in local cuisine and raise a glass to a great week of cycling dolce vita in Puglia.

Meals: **B**

	Accommodation Hotel		Ascent 120M		Descent 90M		Distance 53KM
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DAY 8

Departure Day

Delight in a relaxing breakfast and soak up the Lecce openhearted atmosphere and baroque charm a little longer before making your onward journey.

Meals: **B**

Holiday Information

What's Included

- All accommodation as described
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Bike hire
- Bike theft insurance
- Self-guided information pack containing your map and route notes
- Luggage transfers

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Travel to Monopoli
- Travel from Lecce
- City Taxes (approx. 2-5 euro per night)
- Public buses and taxis
- Visas (if applicable)
- Some meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Personal equipment
- Any additional activities/excursions indicated as optional

Your Self-Guided Pack & Route Notes

Each self-guided holiday comes with comprehensive route notes and a map or pocket guidebook of the area you are exploring. The route notes contain information about the places you will visit, about the local transport you might need, along with the detailed route notes for your daily walks or cycle rides. We even include some tips for the best places to stop for lunch.

You can expect to receive your Self-Guided Pack containing your route notes, a map or guidebook and all your relevant documents no later than 3 weeks before your holiday start date. We will send your documents using signed for courier so that you can track your package and know that they are safely on their way to you. For bookings of more than 4 people we will send an additional Self-Guided Pack. If you do not need this additional pack please inform our sales team. Your pack will be sent to the lead booker so please remind them to pack it before you set off.

Should your self-guided trip be part of a longer adventure requiring you to leave home more than three weeks before your holiday start date, please do inform our sales team so that we can make alternative delivery arrangements.

Self-Guided Families

Our Self-Guided Holidays are perfect for your next family holiday and are suitable for children of all ages.

Our partner hotels and accommodations are able to provide cots for young children, and some offer family rooms. We can also arrange hire of children's bikes and tag along bikes for our self-guided cycling trips and with trips such as Lake Constance and the Danube offering routes on designated cycle paths you can rest assured in keeping your family safe.

As a parent we trust that you know your own child's capabilities, please read the itinerary details to ensure the distances covered each day are suitable for your family. If this is a first time walking holiday for your family, a centre based trip is a fantastic option as it allows you to easily opt out of a days walking if a day of building sand castles, swimming in the pool or visiting museums is calling.

Please discuss this further with our sales team who will be happy to assist in picking the best trip for your family.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The trip starts in Monopoli. All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. The nearest airport for this trip is Bari Airport with many departures from regional UK airports.

If you are flying into Bari Airport, it is possible to take the metro to Bari Train Station from where you can take the train direct to Monopoli. The journey takes approximately 1 hour.

The trip finishes in Lecce. From Lecce you can take the train direct to Bari Centrale, from where you can take the metro to the airport. The journey takes approximately 2 and half hours.

Meal Plan

This trip is on a bed and breakfast basis to allow you the most flexibility during your holiday.

Food & Water

Water is drinkable from the taps on this holiday. Please fill your personal bottles for your day in the morning. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

Italy has long been a foodie's dream, but discovering Puglia is a real treat for the taste buds. With it's vast coastline providing endless supplies of delicious seafood waiting to be feasted on alongside the regions famous Pane de Altamura bread (perfect for mopping up any dish). But, the real treat is the vast amount of vegetarian dishes on offer in the region. The southern region has traditionally been a poor one built on agriculture, and this shows through in the fantastic hearty cuisine where vegetables and pasta are the star ingredients. You can look forward to snacking on Taralli, small rings made from crispy bread dough served with dipping oil; picnic on Apulian focaccia and Panzerotti, a deep-fried parcel of dough stuffed with mozzarella and tomato; and dining on Orecchiette pasta served with broccoli or Parmigiana di Melanzane (aubergine) or Parmigiana di Carciofi (artichoke). For those with a sweet tooth (like us here at KE) then you can enjoy the immensely moreish Pasticciotti, mainly found as you near Lecce, these little fried pastry puffs are served with sugar and almonds. Yum!

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your diet with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Accommodation

On this trip we have selected a fantastic range of family run 3* and 4* hotels for you, plus we have included a night in a traditional trullo house apartment so that you can really experience Puglian life. All the hotels have been chosen for their warm hospitality and facilities. All the hotels offer a great buffet breakfast for you to enjoy and some also have a pool or terrace, perfect for relaxing after a day in the saddle.

It is possible to arrange additional nights accommodation in Monopoli before your trip, or in Lecce at the end of your trip if you would prefer to explore this fantastic area a little more. Please speak to one of our sales team.

Bike Hire

Since 2011 reflective vests are mandatory in Italy as soon as cyclists leave a village/town and cycle during night time hours (half an hour before sunset until half an hour before sunrise). They are also mandatory when cycling in tunnels with traffic. Please pack a reflective vest or jacket.

Bikes are a hybrid bike and all come equipped with a pannier and handlebar bag for your daily essentials plus a milometer, a bike lock, pump and repair kit.

We strongly recommend you to bring your own helmet with you for the best comfort however, you can also hire a helmet to collect on your arrival for an additional €10.

We also recommend packing a gel seat for extra comfort or a pair of padded cycling shorts, whilst the cycling is leisurely and there are plenty of opportunities to stop and explore it is always nice to have some padding for a comfortable ride.

E-bikes are also available at an additional supplement of £240. We are also able to arrange tandem bikes, children's bikes, trailers and child seats. Please ask our sales team for details.

Baggage Allowance

Your main luggage will be transferred between each of your hotels while you are out on your ride. We ask that you please ensure your luggage is under 20kg and that your luggage is ready for collection each morning. You will also need a daypack to carry your daily essentials with you.

General Information

Passport & Visas

Europe

Your passport must meet 2 requirements. It must be:

- less than 10 years old on the day you enter (check the 'date of issue')
- valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave (check the 'expiry date')

For the latest details on visiting countries within the EU or the European Economic Area (EEA), please check the UK Government website

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

Health & Vaccinations

Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations.

GHIC / Medical cover

UK residents should carry a free Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC). This entitles you to state provided medical treatment when you're visiting an EU country or Switzerland. This is not a substitute for medical travel insurance which is vital when travelling overseas.

Severe Allergies

Please inform our KE Sales and support team of any severe allergies you may have before travel. We will always do our best to help but we are unable to guarantee an allergy free environment on our KE trips. We advise that you always carry your own treatment for the allergy with you such as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' if required. We also recommend that you discuss this with your accommodation on arrival so that they can better assist you.

Preparing for your Holiday

The advantage of a self-guided cycling holiday is that you decide the pace. Having said this it is always sensible to get some additional exercise before going on an active holiday. After all, the fitter you are the more enjoyable your cycling will be. You should be comfortable with cycling 40 to 50km and up to 500m ascent a day on quiet country lanes and roads. We advise you to dust off your bike and head out on a few rides before your holiday to help make your holiday more enjoyable. We also offer e-bike upgrades for those seeking to make the journey more leisurely.

Climate

Puglia has a Mediterranean climate with hot summers when temperatures can reach up to 30 degrees Centigrade, and mild winters. The most enjoyable time to visit this region is in the spring and autumn months when temperatures are a little cooler (between 10 and 25 degrees Centigrade).

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

Head Over Heel: Seduced by Southern Italy – Chris Harrison

Finding Myself in Puglia: A Journey of Self-Discovery Under the Warm Southern Italian Sun – Laine B Brown

Puglia and Basilicata – Lonely Planet

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

SelfGuided Cycling Equipment List

- Cycling shorts
- Cycle helmet
- Functional base layer
- T-shirts
- Scarf
- Hat
- Windproof jacket
- Fleece / extra layer
- Rain protection
- Rucksack (approx. 20 l)
- Small first aid kit for your rucksack
- Sunscreen

- Water bottle or hydration pack
- Camera (batteries/memory card)
- Mobile Phone (ensure your data package covers your destination)
- Handlebar mount that is compatible with your smartphone
- Power bank
- Waterproof phone cover
- Sun glasses
- Personal wash kit
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping to avoid the use of plastic bags
- Tupperware for picnics

Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers.
[>> Find out more](#)

Land Only Information

Please note our 'from price' listed is based on 4 persons on twin or double occupancy, however this trip is suitable for groups of two or more travellers, contact our sales team for a quote. This trip is available for departures on Fridays throughout the dates listed.

All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. You may even wish to make this holiday part of a bigger adventure or pair it with one of our other holidays. We can arrange additional nights accommodation before or after your self-guided trip, ask our sales team to find out more about this.

Our sales team will be happy to provide you a quote for scheduled flights or alternatively you may wish to book your own flights with a low cost carrier from your nearest regional airport.

Please DO NOT book your flights before you have received your booking confirmation and your deposit has been taken.

Why Choose KE

why KE?

This trip has been designed to take in our favourite parts of Puglia; Monopoli, Salentro coast, Lecce and even includes a night staying in a traditional trullo house in Alberobello so you can linger a little longer and soak up the atmosphere after the crowds depart. We have included bike hire in the cost of your holiday so you can relax and enjoy your ride. Plus we have e-bikes available too.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 20/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change