

# Cycling Europe

## ITALY: BIKE & BARGE 2020

### Venice to Mantova (or v.v.)

Guided or self-guided Cycling Tour 8 days/ 7 nights



Discover the magic of Venice. Then cycle along the Venetian lagoon between Venice and Mantova past the Po delta, the Adriatic coast, the walled town of Ferrara and through rural areas in the Italian countryside. You can choose to cycle with the guide and group, or do your own exploring, with maps provided. Please tell us if you want self-guided when booking.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- Venice city and Lagoon
- Mantova/ Mantua, a city rich in art and architecture
- The stronghold of the Mincio pirates in Governolo
- Ancient monastery of San Benedetto Po
- Harbour of Ostiglia
- Ferrara: "the city of bicycles"
- \* The little town Adria
- \* Birdlife in the marshes and lagoons of the Po Delta
- \* Porto Levante
- \* The isle of Ca Roman
- \* Pellestrina and Lido islands of Venice
- \* Brenta canal with wonderful Venetian villas

## ITINERARY VENICE TO MANTOVA

**Day 1 (Sat): Venice: Welcome aboard! Vita Pugna and Ave Maria will be moored at Giudecca Island,** in Venice Lagoon. You can get here by boat directly from Venice airport by taking the Alilaguna



Red Line (or Blue Line at night) or via the No. 2 or 4.1 vaporetto from Venice train station. **Cabins are available from 4.30 pm – the tour commences at 6.30 pm** with a meeting with the tour leader followed by dinner. If you arrive early, it is possible to leave your bags on the boat from 10.30am, and spend some extra time in the wonderful city of Venice, or visit the island of Murano, famous for beautiful handmade glassware.

### Day 2 (Sun): Venice

After waking up to a wonderful view over the lagoon, in the morning a local guide will take you to discover the magnificent centre of Venice. You will have the rest of the day free to explore Venice, discovering the wonderful historical centre of the capital of the “Repubblica Serenissima”, or its wonderful islands.

### Day 3 (Mon): Venice – Pellestrina/Chioggia

Cruising out of Venice at a gentle pace, you start your bike and boat adventure on the Lido, the first of the two islands we explore today. Fashionable with the artists and aristocracy of the Belle Époque, the Lido di Venezia is now home to the International Venice Film Festival and its galaxy of stars. A short island-hop by boat takes you to Pellestrina, where you cycle towards the Ca' Roman nature reserve, past the fishermen's cottages and boats. Here we rejoin the barge and sail to Chioggia – a bustling and colourful fishing harbour known as “Little Venice”.

**Cycling: Approximately 30km**

### Day 4 (Tues): Chioggia – Po Delta Nature Reserve - Adria

An early morning visit to the local fish market is a must and if time allows a walk to the millennial clock tower - the oldest in the world – for spectacular views. You will leave the so called “Little Venice” and head south along the Po-Brondolo waterway and through the mouth of the River Adige. Pedaling is through the wonderful nature reserve of the Po Delta with its incredible number of bird species.

**Cycling: Approximately 40 kms**

### Day 5 (Wed): Adria – Ferrara - Zelo

After a short cruise on the barge in the morning, cycling starts in the countryside towards the historical town of Ferrara with its spectacular old city walls. In the afternoon a short bus transfer will take you back to our floating hotel in Zelo, a sleepy village on the Canal Bianco which runs parallel to the River Po.

**Cycling: 35 km + 35 km by bus**

### Day 6 (Thu): Zelo - Mantova

A few kilometres on our bikes this morning and we reach the village of Bergantino where we visit the Carousel and Folk museum and taste superb Italian cheeses at a local cheese factory. Continue cycling beside the Po as far as Ostiglia, a small village famed for its medieval fortress and floating mill, and on to Governolo Lock. Once a vital staging post for local navigation, this is where the River Mincio

flows into the Po, creating the largest inland basin in Italy. We ride on and rejoin the barge at Governolo Lock, where the Mincio River flows into the Po. Heading North, we cruise through lush wetlands and finally emerge into the "lakes" of the lovely Renaissance town of Mantova.

**Cycling: Approximately 50 km**

### **Day 7 (Fri): Exploring Mantova**

Mantova is one of the most beautiful towns in Northern Italy. The entire day is dedicated to the discovery of this wonderful city and the surrounding countryside. Many famous artists have left their masterpieces in Mantova, thanks to the patronage of the famous Gonzaga family. Enjoy a guided walking tour of the historic city centre in the afternoon.

**Cycling Approximately 35 kms**

### **Day 8 (Sat): Mantova**

After breakfast the tour ends at Porto Ctena marina, a short walk from the city centre of Mantova. Additional nights can be booked in a hotel here.

There are regular trains departing from Mantova to Verona. Closest Airports Verona & Venice.



## **ITINERARY: MANTOVA TO VENICE**

**Day 1 (Sat): Mantova: Welcome aboard!** When you arrive in Mantova your boat - Vita Pugna OR Ave Maria – awaits you at Porto Catena, just a short walk from the city centre.

The closest airports are Verona and Venice – alternatively Mantova is well- serviced by trains. The train station is 2 km from the harbour and a taxi will cost around €10.00.

**Cabins are available from 4.30 pm – the tour commences at 6.30 pm** with a meeting with the tour leader followed by dinner.

### **Day 2 (Sun): Mantova**

You will be issued with your rental bikes today. Mantova is one of the most beautiful towns in Northern Italy. The morning is dedicated to the discovery of the surrounding countryside with its three picturesque "lakes" formed by the Mincio and the wonderful city, home to masterpieces by many famous artists, thanks to the patronage of the famous Gonzaga family. Meet with your Mantuan guide for a walking tour of the historic city centre in the afternoon.

**Cycling Approximately 35 km**

### **Day 3 (Mon): Mantova – Governolo - Zelo**

A short cruise along the lush banks of the Mincia takes you to Governolo, stronghold of the Mincio Pirates and site of the biggest dam in Italy. From here you follow the River Po by bike until you reach the village of Ostiglia, famed for its floating mill and medieval fortress. Back on your bike to the village of Bergantino where we visit the Carousel and Folk museum and taste superb Italian cheeses at a local cheese factory. Continue along the 'Canal Bianco' to the sleepy village of Zelo, where the barge will moor for the night.

**Cycling: Approximately 50km**

### **Day 4 (Tues): Zelo – Ferrara - Adria**

After breakfast you cycle to Ferrara, where your guide will show you around this fascinating town and its historical centre surrounded by its original old city walls. From Ferrara, a short bus transfer will take you to the ancient Greek port of Adria, famous for trading amber from the Baltic. The city's remarkable museum bears witness to its Etruscan, Roman and Venetian heritage.

**Cycling: Approximately 50 km + 60 km by bus**

### **Day 5 (Wed): Adria – Porto Viro - Chioggia / Pellestrina**

An exhilarating day of boating and biking starting with a cruise to Porto Viro. You then begin your bike into the maze of the Po Delta – a unique wetland park, home to herons and colonies of flamingos. You will be suspended between water and land as you pedal to the mouth of the River Adige and then follow the Po-Brondolo waterway to the Venetian lagoon and the colourful fishing port of Chioggia, also known as "little Venice"

**Cycling Approximately: 40 km**

### **Day 6 (Thu): Chioggia/ Pellestrina - Venice**

A visit to the fish market at dawn is an absolute must! There may be time to climb Chioggia's millennial clock tower for some breath-taking views. Then it's time for island hopping by boat 'n bike. The boat drops you at the nature reserve of Ca' Roman and you pedal along the lagoon to Pellestrina and the ferry landing. A short ferry ride takes you to Lido Island, fashionable with the artists and aristocracy of the Belle Époque. The barge meets you at Lido and takes you to our final destination - the magical city of Venice.

**Cycling: Approximately 30km**

### **Day 7 (Fri): Exploring Venice**

This morning a local guide will lead you through the sights, sounds and wonders of the ancient "Serenissima Republic of Venice". You're then free to simply soak up its timeless beauty or explore its islands.

### **Day 8 (Sat): Venice**

The tour ends after breakfast. The boat will be moored at Giudecca Island... it is easy to travel by boat (or boat & train) from here to Venice Airport, to San Marco Square or to Venice train or bus station ( Piazzale Roma). If you wish to stay on in Venice, we can book you extra nights in a hotel.





### GRADE: EASY

The tour is entirely on flat ground and the daily cycling stages vary from 25 km to 55 km. Much of the pedaling is along rivers and canals on tarmac cycle paths or roads with a low volume of car traffic. The boat is moored at night and typically sets sail after breakfast, meeting up with the bikes in the afternoon. Some parts of the itinerary are undertaken by barge to allow easier access on to cycling paths or simply for you to also enjoy the cruise. There is always the possibility to spend the whole day on board if you do not wish to cycle one or more days.

### BIKES

Different frame sizes of Unisex Citybikes all come equipped with a cycle computer, side pannier bag, water bottle and padlock. Self-guided clients will also get one map holder/front bag, and one repair kit per each couple. Due to high transportation costs of bikes in Venice and logistical issues, it is strongly advised not to bring your own bikes. **Electric bikes are also available.**

### WELCOME AND BIKE DELIVERY

The meeting with the guide and the crew will be on Saturday at 7 p.m., just before a welcome dinner. On Monday morning you will receive your rental bikes. The guide is always present during breakfast and dinner and will cycle every day with those who would like to exploit his knowledge. You have the option to cycle individually using the road book. Please let us know at the time of booking if you wish to cycle without a guide. The guide will be carrying a mobile phone in case of emergency or a technical problem with rental bikes. Every evening after dinner the guide will present the cycling program for the following day. Please note that it is not permitted to cycle within Venice city, you will explore this on foot, or by public transport boats.

### OUR BOATS



**AVE MARIA: Superior barge – Maximum 40 guests** Length: 41m / width: 7.5m

This Italian boat has been totally rebuilt in order to meet our bike and boat clients' requirements. Only the hull of the original 1970s sand digger sailing along the Po remains. The design, by a renowned Italian

architectural firm in 2011, features colours and materials carefully chosen to create a warm yet sophisticated atmosphere. The air conditioned living room measures 11 x 7.5 m and is divided into two areas: restaurant (33 seats) and lounge (28 seats). There is free wi-fi in the common areas, a hot drinks machine, large 55" screen in the lounge for video/internet, two sun decks and bike racks for 40 bikes.

**All cabins have own shower/toilet and air conditioning and sizeable windows (superior cabin windows can be partially opened).**

- **Above deck:** 4 double superior cabins with a size of approx. 11 m<sup>2</sup>. Two of these cabins can sleep 3 or 4 with a bunk bed.
- **Below deck:** 10 double standard cabins with a size of approx. 11 m<sup>2</sup>. Three of these cabins can sleep 3 passengers, with a bunk bed.
- **Below deck:** 3 Bunk bed cabins 7.5 m<sup>2</sup> with large porthole windows. These can be sold as a single cabin.

**Beds:** Each double bed can be changed into two single beds (200cm x 80cm).



### **VITA PUGNA; Standard barge – Maximum 23 guests** Length 36 m/ width: 5.4m

This charming Dutch barge has been sailing with great success between Venice and Mantova since 2008. After many years as a cargo boat, Vita Pugna was totally renewed in the early 1990s in order to start her new life as a floating hotel. Vita Pugna's spacious air-conditioned living room has 5 tables seating up to 23 guests. There is a sun deck, free wi-fi in the common areas, a hot drinks machine, a 42" screen in the lounge for video/internet and dedicated bike storage.

#### **10 twin cabins with own shower/toilet and an opening port hole:**

Each cabin has two low beds (190/200 cm x 75/80 cm). One cabin can sleep three. Cabin size is 7 or 8 m<sup>2</sup>.

### **BARGE ROUTE**

The programme has been planned to feature navigation along the Fissero/Bianco canal, which runs parallel to the Po and connects Mantova to the Adriatic Sea. A few weeks in the year, when the waters of the Po are favourable, the barge will be allowed to navigate along the Po River. This means that the some of the overnight stays will be modified. High and low water issues can modify some of the daily stretches or embarkation points. These decisions are taken by the boat captain.

### **2020 DEPARTURES: VENICE TO MANTOVA**

Saturday departures from **Venice:**

**Ave Maria:** April 4, April 18, May 2, May 16, May 30, June 13, June 27, July 11, July 25, August 8, August 22, September 5, September 19, October 3, October 17

**Vita Pugna:** April 11, April 25, May 9, May 23, June 6, June 20, July 4 July 18, August 1, August 15, August 29, September 12, September 26, October 10, October 24

## 2020 DEPARTURES: MANTOVA TO VENICE

Saturday departures from **Mantova**:

**Ave Maria**: 28 March, April 11, April 25, May 9, May 23, June 6, June 20, July 4, July 18, August 1, August 15, August 29, September 12, September 26, October 10, 24

**Vita Pugna**: April 4, April 18, May 2, May 16, May 30, June 13, June 27, July 11, July 25, August 8, August 22, September 5, September 19, October 3, 17 October

## 2020 COSTS – PER PERSON IN EURO

	Vita Pugna	Ave Maria (superior barge)
Low season (28 March, 04 April and 24 Oct)	€950	€1050
<b>Add</b> Mid season (11 April – 22 August)	€290	€ 460
<b>Add</b> High season (31 Aug -12 October)	€400	€ 670
<b>Add</b> Single Cabin Supplement	€350	€ 300 (cabin below deck)
<b>Add</b> Superior cabin Ave Maria		€ 140
Bike rental Unisex	€ 85	€ 85
Electric Bike Rental:	€195	€ 195
Special diet (gluten-free, vegan)	€ 50	€ 50

Wearing **helmets** is not mandatory in Italy. If you wish to wear a helmet, please request at the time of booking, or take your own well fitted helmet. Helmets on board suitable for head circumference 54-61cm.

### Discounts

Bunk bed cabin below deck Ave Maria	<b>Less</b>	€100
3 <sup>rd</sup> /4 <sup>th</sup> adult in cabin	<b>Less</b>	€300

## ADDITIONAL NIGHTS HOTEL (3/4\* INCLUDING BREAKFAST PER PERSON COST

Mantova	Double / Twin	3* from €50 4* from €95
Mantova	Single Room	3* from €84 4* from €139
Mestre (Venice)	Double / Twin	3/4* from €73
Mestre (Venice)	Single Room	3/4* from €90
Venice	Double/Twin	3/4*from €100
Venice	Single Room	3/4* from €167

**Local Hotel taxes - to be paid direct to hotel** €2 - €4 per person per night

### Extra nights Venice

Please ask us about our 2 night package "Taste of Venice" that includes breakfast and a walking tour.

## INCLUDED IN TOUR COST:

- 7 nights accommodation on barge
- Full board: 7 breakfasts, 7 dinners & food provided for 6 packed lunches
- Coffee & tea on board (hot drinks machine on boat)
- Sheets and towels
- Detailed route descriptions and maps
- Cycling guide and roadbook
- Tour leader on board
- Guided cycling (if you would like to cycle self-guided advise at time of booking)

- Guided visit to Venice & Mantova
- Cheese factory visit & cheese tasting, visit to Carousel and Street Entertainment museum.
- Bus transfer Ferrara–Zelo
- Daily short cabin clean

#### **NOT INCLUDED:**

- Beverages
- Entrance to museums
- Ferry ticket to Pellestrina (about €9)
- Public transport in Venice. We would recommend that you purchase a 12 or 24 hour pass in Venice for the local boats and ferries.
- Bike rental (see cost on previous page)
- Special dietary requests can be catered for if requested at least 14 days prior to travel. There will be a supplement of €50 per person for gluten-free or vegan diets, payable in advance.

#### **GETTING TO & FROM MANTOVA (MANTUA)**

**Train:** Mantova has frequent train connections to/from Verona (45mins).

**Airports:** The closest airport to Mantova is Verona. Both Venice and Mantova are well served by many airports in Northern Italy: Venice (VCE), Verona (VRN) Milan (MXP).

#### **BOOK THROUGH**

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