

## Italy / From Venice to Mantua (IT011)

### Aboard Vita Pugna

#### Characteristics:

*Operator:* GIROLIBERO

*Tourtype:* guided

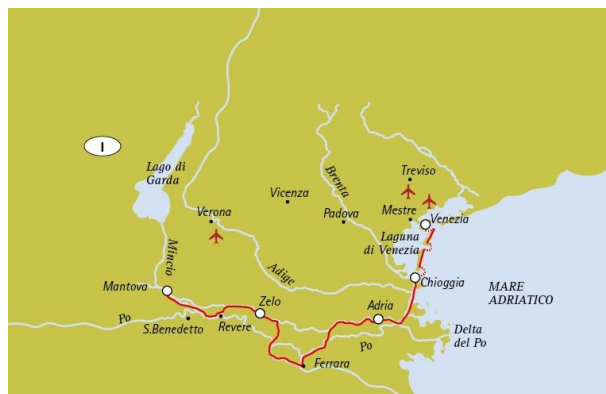
*Children:* no

*Regions:* Adige, Adriatic Sea, Lombardy, Mantua, Mediterranean Sea, Po, Veneto, Venice

*Countries:* Italy

#### Benefits:

- 7 overnights
- Full board (breakfast, dinner and a self-made packed lunch)
- Coffee and tea and other hot drinks on board
- Sheets and towels
- Courtesy kit
- Daily short cleaning + mid-week cabin cleaning service and towel change
- Travel Guide, Maps, Roadbook
- English speaking tour leader within an international group
- Guided visit in Venice and Mantua
- Visit of a cheese factory with tasting of typical Grana Padano
- Visit of Carousel and Street Entertainment Museum
- Harbour charges
- Bus transfer Ferrara-Zelo
- Boat excursion in the Nature Reserve of the Mincio Park



#### Additional costs:

- 300 EUR single cabin
- 50 EUR special diet (gluten-free and vegan diets)
- 85 EUR Girolibero bike
- 195 EUR Electro-bike
- 15 EUR helmet
- Beverages on board
- Museums, fees and extras in general
- Ticket for public transportation in Venice
- Tips
- Everything not included in the section "included in the price"



## Discount:

- 250 EUR 3rd person in cabin

## Tour description:

Blending nature, culture and fine cuisine, this leisurely bike and barge tour along the waterways of the River Po offers more than just a taster of Northern Italy. It explores celebrated cities of art, one of Europe's prime Nature Reserves and a wealth of tucked-away rural hamlets along the route, rewarding our daily rides with authentic regional dishes back on board. From the glory of Venice, the lagoon leads us to colourful Chioggia. Next up, the natural wonders of the Po Delta, famed for its birdlife. Then Adria, once a key Roman port, and onwards to Ferrara and Mantua - once major city states crowned by the Italian Renaissance.

### 1. Venice

We welcome you aboard your new home-from-home from 4.30 p.m. onwards, and then regroup for the introductory briefing - at 6.30 - with your tour leader, skipper and crew, along with a first refreshing aperitivo. After dinner we can savour Venice at night, now free of the crowds and at her most romantic: Benvenuti a Venezia

### 2. Venice

After breakfast - and perhaps following a wander off the beaten track with your tour leader - we all meet up with our Venetian guide for a tour through the historic centre. Christened La Serenissima ("The Most Serene"), the Venetian Republic held sway over much of the Mediterranean (and beyond) for centuries - both as a military power and a beacon of culture, her explorers reaching as far as China and Newfoundland. After your guided tour, you have the afternoon free to enjoy the city at your own pace.

### 3. Venice - Pellestrina/Chioggia (30 km)

Leaving Venice behind after a gentle cruise, our cycling adventure starts on the Lido, the first of two islands we traverse today. Fashionable in high society ever since 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 ferry takes us into another world: Pellestrina, where we ride past the picturesque cottages and boats of this humble fishing backwater. We rejoin our barge just in front of Chioggia - a bustling and colourful fishing hub known as "Little Venice".

### 4. Pellestrina/Chioggia - Po Delta Nature Reserve - Adria (40 km)

We open the day with a stroll through Chioggia, followed perhaps by a visit up the millennial clock tower - the oldest in the world - for some breathtaking views. Weather permitting, we can also bask in the sun at a fine-sand beach nearby: a dip in the Adriatic, a hot savoury piadina - and you are well and truly local!

Then onwards into the delta of the life-giving Po. This unique wetland is the prime reserve in Europe for herons and home to a colony of flamingos. We moor for the night in Adria, a key Roman port, once washed by the waters of the sea which bears its name. Adria is also renowned for its Etruscan and Greek heritage. An after-dinner passeggiata into town for a well-earned grappa or gelato is in order.

### 5. Adria - Ferrara - Zelo (35 km by bike + 35 km by bus)

After a short cruise we saddle our bikes and, following the Po through farmland and hamlets, we reach Ferrara. Under its ruling family, the Este, this city state attracted architects, artists and scholars for centuries, pioneering town planning principles that have been emulated worldwide ever since. To this day, Ferrara University ranks among the best, and the town is dubbed the "Cycling Capital of Italy". A private bus and trailer take us back to our floating hotel in Zelo, a sleepy village on the Canal Bianco, the waterway which runs parallel to the Po.

### 6. Zelo - Mantua (50 km)

This morning we head for the village of Bergantino, home of the distinctive Museum of Fairground Rides and its collection of street organs, all expertly restored (and thunderous!). But first things first: we are in the heartland of Grana Padano - the arch-rival of Parmesan - and after visiting the local cheese factory, we enjoy a degustazione of sharp and seasoned Grana, washed down with a glass of Valpolicella.



After our customary picnic lunch, we leave Bergantino and follow the river to Ostiglia, famed for its medieval fortress and the fierce fighting that took place here in 1945, as the Allies and partisans drove Hitler's forces back. We ride on and rejoin our barge at Governolo Lock, where Mantua's River Mincio flows into the Po. Veering north, we cruise through the lush wetlands that finally emerge into the glorious "lakes" of Mantua.

#### 7. Mantua round tour (35 km)

A day dedicated to the discovery of this little visited cultural gem, its three picturesque "lakes" formed by the Mincio, and its surrounding countryside - once a City State ruled by the Gonzaga family and now considered by many as Italy's "Sleeping Beauty".

A cruise on a local barge lets us discover a waterscape rich in birdlife, lilies and other aquatic flora. This afternoon we meet our Mantuan guide for a walking tour of the historic centre, and enjoy the rest of the day in town, at our own leisure.

#### 8. Mantua

Departure after breakfast.

The programme has been planned to feature navigation along the Fissero/ Bianco canal, which runs parallel to the Po and connects Mantua to the Adriatic Sea. Due to organisational reasons, weather conditions or provisions issued by local authorities, the itinerary may be subject to some changes before and/or during the holiday. Issues with high and low water, as well as logistic obstacles such as officially ordered - previously not announced - repair work on locks or bridges can modify some of the daily stretches or overnight stays and may even request a transfer by bus. These decisions are only taken by the boat's captain.

Total length: 190 km

Total vertical up: 20 m

Terrain: 95% tarmac, 5% unpaved

This cycling tour is largely along the flats of the Po plains, and the daily stages vary from 25 to 55 km - mostly on tarmac cycle paths along rivers and canals, or quiet country roads. 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 boat, to allow easier access onto cycling paths or simply to enjoy the cruise.

Easy cycling in mostly flat areas, with only few short climbs and descents. Little effort required, suitable for most people.

The boat Vita Pugna is equipped with:

10 Standard Twin cabins (including one accommodating up to 3 guests) of 7/8 m<sup>2</sup>.

All cabins are air-conditioned and are equipped with comfortable low twin beds and en-suite facilities. They also offer the convenience of attractive, traditional portholes, which can be opened for fresh air. Bed size is 1.90/2 m x 0.75/0.80 m.

There is a spacious air-conditioned lounge/restaurant with 5 tables, accommodating up to 23 guests.

Extra features:

1 sundeck

Free hot drinks machine (including Italian ground coffee)

Free wi-fi in the common areas

Large 42" screen in the lounge for video

Dedicated bike storage

Complimentary courtesy kit: soap, shower gel, shampoo, hair conditioner

<https://www.boat-and-bike.com/tour/italy-from-venice-to-mantua-it011.html>