



Italy / Bolzano - Mantua - Venice (IT040)

Aboard Ave Maria

Characteristics:

Operator: GIROLIBERO

Tourtype: guided

Children: no

Regions: Adige, Adriatic Sea, Alpen, Emilia-Romagna, Ferrara, Gardasee, Lombardy, Mantua, Mediterranean Sea, Po, Trentino, Trient, Veneto, Venice

Countries: Italy

Benefits:

- 3 nights hotel accommodation with breakfast buffet (in Bolzano, Trento and Peschiera/Desenzano)
- 7 overnights on board Ave Maria with full board (breakfast, dinner and a self-made packed lunch)
- Coffee and tea and other hot drinks on board
- Sheets and towels
- Complimentary courtesy kit
- Daily short cleaning of the cabin
- Welcome briefing in English
- Travel Guide, Maps, Roadbook
- English speaking tour leader within an international group
- Second tour leader with a minimum of 25 people
- Luggage transportation till Mantua
- 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
- 4-hour ferry cruise on Lake Garda
- Bus transfer Ferrara-Adria
- Boat excursion in the Nature Reserve of the Mincio Park
- Hotline service



Additional costs:

- 390 EUR single room/cabin
- 140 EUR Girolibero bike
- 315 EUR electro-bike
- 20 EUR helmet
- 140 EUR superior cabin (only aboard the Ave Maria)
- 50 EUR special diet aboard Ave Maria (gluten-free and vegan diets)
- Local hotel taxes
- Beverages on board
- Museums, fees and extras in general
- Ticket for public transportation in Venice
- Tips
- Everything, which is not mentioned in the section "included in the price"

Discount:

- 310 EUR 3rd adult in the room/cabin
- 100 EUR bunk-bed cabin (aboard the Ave Maria)

Tour description:

You will be delighted by the remarkable variety of this tour, offering you a unique opportunity to combine a more classical bike&hotel tour with a bike&boat trip in the Po Valley till Venice. The cycling route starts in the heart of the superb Dolomites and following the course of the river Adige takes you to the palm-lined shores of Lake Garda. Further on you'll reach the enchanting Renaissance town of Mantua, where you'll embark aboard the Ave Maria. Cycling along waterways, through hamlets and into the surprising Ferrara, you'll reach the Po Delta, a unique wetland park which is the prime reserve in Europe for herons and home to several colonies of flamingos. The Po river flows eventually into the Venetian lagoon, where your first stop will be Chioggia, known as "little Venice" and famous for its bustling fish market. At the end of the trip you'll be welcomed by the wonderful Venice, a town that has lured passersby for centuries (and still does).

1. Bolzano

Individual arrival. Bolzano is a famous commercial and tourist centre and also a historical and cultural connection between the Italian and the German world.

2. Bolzano - Trento (65/70 km)

You cycle along the Adige beside apple orchards, vineyards and through the villages of Ora, Egna and Salorno. You then reach Trento: take your time to have a look behind the splendid walls of its painted buildings. Possibility to shorten the stage by taking the train in several train stations along the way.

3. Trento - Desenzano/Peschiera (50 km by bike + ferry)

You reach Rovereto and Mori. From here you continue up on a gently rising slope in direction of Lake Garda. On the ferry boat you travel as far as Peschiera/ Desenzano along the southern shore of the lake.

4. Desenzano/Peschiera - Mantua (70/45 km)

Today you will cycle following one of the most famous Italian cycle paths, which runs parallel to the River Mincio. The stage ends in Mantua, where you'll embark aboard your barge. 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 stroll into town and savour the historic centre at its most evocative: Benvenuti a Mantova!

5. 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.

6. Mantua - Zelo (50 km)

After breakfast, we set sail from the "lakes" of Mantua and cruise through the lush wetlands that lead to Governolo Lock, where Mantua's River Mincio flows into the Po. Here, we saddle up and follow the broad sweeps of the levee towards Ostiglia, renowned for its medieval fortress and fierce fighting in 1945, as the Allies drove Hitler's forces back.

Next: Bergantino, home of the distinctive Museum of Fairground Rides and its collection of street organs, all expertly restored (and thunderous!). This village is also in the heartland of Grana Padano - the arch-rival of Parmesan - and a visit to the local cheese factory, sampling some well seasoned Grana, is de rigueur. We catch up with our barge in Zelo, a sleepy village on the Canal Bianco, the waterway which runs parallel to the Po.

7. Zelo - Ferrara - Adria (50 km by bike + 60 km by bus)

This morning we cross the Po and ride southwards through a patchwork of farmland, orchards and hamlets, as far as 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 then take us back to our floating hotel in Adria, an ancient Roman port once washed by 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.

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

After a short cruise, we cycle into the delta of the life-giving Po. This unique wetland is the prime reserve in Europe for herons and home to a sizeable colony of flamingos. Weather permitting, as we continue towards Chioggia, we can also enjoy a break at a fine-sand beach nearby for a dip in the Adriatic - not forgetting a hot savoury piadina! Also known as "Little Venice", the colourful fishing hub of Chioggia is a great place to "go local", and what better way than by making your own bigoli for dinner? This quintessentially Venetian type of pasta is at its best when made fresh, and a delicacy served with a creamy baccalà sauce.

9. Chioggia/Pellestrina - Venice (30 km)

Venice beckons, but first another world altogether: Pellestrina, the first of two islands we traverse today - a humble and tranquil fishing backwater, picturesque as ever with its cottages, boats and nets. A short island-hop by ferry lands us on the Lido. 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. After rejoining our barge, an unrushed cruise takes us to our final destination. After dinner we can savour Venice at night, now free of the crowds and at her most romantic: Benvenuti a Venezia!

10. 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.

11. Venice

Departure after breakfast.

Due to organisational reasons, weather conditions or provisions issued by local authorities, the itinerary of the Bolzano to Mantua part may be subject to some changes before and/or during the holiday. Along the way you may find temporary deviations (for example road works) which cannot be foreseen; in this case each rider can decide autonomously how to deal with these stretches.

In case of strike, bad weather conditions, technical breakdowns, safety problems or any other reason preventing the regular departure of the ferry boat (from Riva del Garda to Peschiera/Desenzano), the ferry boat



company can delay, cancel or deviate the navigation without notice.

In case of cancellation the ferry boat service will be replaced by alternative means of transport (usually by bus). The same applies if the ferry boat service is no longer foreseen (for example at the end of the season).

The programme of the bike&boat tour (from Mantua to Venice) has been planned to feature navigation along the Fissero/ Bianco canal, which runs parallel to the Po and connects Mantua to the Adriatic Sea. 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: 365 km

Total vertical up: 590/770 m

Terrain: 95% tarmac, 5% unpaved

Train connection among the overnight stays: day 2, 3, 4

Possibility to shorten the itinerary by taking the train: day 2 and 3

From Bolzano to Mantua you will ride on well-planned cycle lanes, part of which run along the Adige banks. Towards Lake Garda there is a bit more challenging climb to face. From Mantua to Venice you will pedal along rivers and canals on tarmac cycle paths or roads with low traffic.

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

We personally choose all the hotels mindful of your comfort as well as the proximity to cycling paths and any relevant local sites. The hotels of the part Bolzano-Mantua are 3/4* hotels. All rooms have en suite facilities. Some hotels located in mountainous places of northern Italy can be without air conditioning.

When you book the tour please specify the type of room requested:

double room is a room with one double bed

twin room is a room with two single beds

triple room is usually a room with one double bed and a single bed or a rollaway.

The boat Ave Maria is equipped with:

4 Superior Double cabins (three of these can accommodate up to 4 people adding 2 bunk beds) above deck, approx. 11 m²;

10 Standard Double cabins (three of these can accommodate up to 3 people adding 1 bunk bed) below deck, approx. 11 m²;

3 bunk bed cabins (also available as single cabins) below deck, approx. 7.5 m².

All cabins enjoy sizeable windows (the ones in the Superior cabins can also be opened), comfortable low beds, en-suite facilities, air conditioning and safety box. Bed/bunk size is 2.00 x 0.80 m. Most of the double beds can be separated into two single beds.

The air-conditioned living area measures 11 x 7.5 m and is divided into two parts: the Restaurant (up to 33 seats) and the Lounge (up to 28 seats).

Extra features:

2 sundecks

Free hot drinks machine (including Italian ground coffee)

Free wi-fi in the common areas

Large 55" screen in the lounge for videos

Dedicated bike storage (for approx. 40 hanging bikes)

Hair-dryers (limited number) available on request

<https://www.boat-and-bike.com/tour/italy-bolzano-mantua-venice-it040.html>