

CYCLING WEEK ACROSS SALENTO

South-east of **Italy**



www.salentobicitour.org

SELF
GUIDED
TOUR





2013|dericcardis.com

Salento

Salento is in the most south eastern region of Italy lying in the so-called "heel of the boot". Situated in the centre of the **Mediterranean** Sea, this region is filled with memories of the different civilizations that inhabited it, from the Messapii, to the Greeks, followed by the Romans and then the Normans. Crossing Salento with a bicycle is like cycling through **an open-air museum**. Prehistoric Dolmen, Byzantine shrines hidden in the caves, Baroque cathedrals, secluded corners of the coast... are all but a few of the things you can see when visiting this area. Salento is also internationally renowned for its **characteristic cuisine** which combines flavours from the sea and the earth and the **fantastic rhythm** of its folk music: most notably the Pizzica.



Itinerary

Salento is a region that is **almost completely flat**, making the ride a pleasant journey for **any level of rider**.

We will be cycling approximately 30/60 km a day (about 3 hours of **leisurely cycling**), mainly crossing **secondary roads**, with sea-breaks, guided visits and Italian lessons. "Salento bici tour" follows the philosophy of "slow-moving" to fully enjoy the surrounding landscape and culture with all its different aspects.

Gps Maps will guide you through the most suggestive and less busy roads, as if some of our expert guides you by hands.



Day 1: arrive in Lecce and overnight

Day 2: From Lecce to Otranto

Day 3: Otranto's surroundings

Day 4: Otranto-Leuca coast

Day 5: Ionic coast and Gallipoli

Day 6: Gallipoli's surroundings

Day 7: way back Lecce

Day 8: Onward Travel

Day 1: Prologue

Meeting in Lecce. Bicycle delivery, with GPS navigator. Briefing about the route

Day 2: from Lecce to Otranto

54m



Flat route today, with many interesting cultural and naturalistic sights. First we visit Acaya – a **fortified city** with a huge castle – and then we plunge down to “Le Cesine” – a **WWF protected area**, crossing point for many species of migratory birds. From there we head towards the coast, along the ruins of Roca Vecchia – an ancient **Bronze age city** – and ‘Alimini’ Lakes. Some more kilometers and we are in Otranto, where narrow streets reveal wonders at every corner: the St. Peter church Byzantine frescoes, a walk along the ramparts overlooking the sea and finally **the cathedral** with its **paved mosaic**, a sort of figurative **Middle Age encyclopedia**.



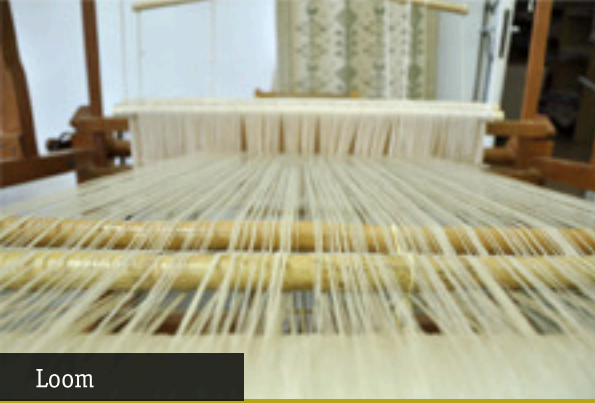
Tree of life mosaic in the Otranto cathedral



Acaya castle



In “Roca Vecchia”



Loom



Negramaro wine and fresh cheese

Day 3: Otranto's surroundings



Exploring Otranto's surroundings day. Riding along the little river "Idro" ("water"), which gave the name to the city, we arrive in Casamassela, where old **looms** are still being used in "le Costantine" foundation. After a guided tour we move toward Giurdignano, crossing a **Bronze age megalithic park** containing huge stones ("dolmen" and "menhir"), and we arrive to "La Cutura" **botanic garden**. Here "Toto" will lead us through his incredible **plants collection** (unique in Europe for its cactus species) and will offer us some lunch. In the afternoon visit to a characteristic **stone-made oven** and then we'll Enjoy a **wine and cheese tasting** in a wine cellar. Return to Otranto and free dinner in the historical centre.



Horse riding



Acquaviva bay, near Castro

Day 4: Otranto-Leuca coast



Today you cycle along the wildest Salento coastal stretch. You visit 'Palacià' lighthouse (**far east point of Italy**) and a little red lake surfaced in a disused bauxite quarry. Then you carry on riding along the coast: nestled among the cliffs above the sea, this road is a **huge balcony** that looks onto Otranto Strait. With a little bit of luck you will be able to see the mountains of **Albania and Greece**.

You could visit '**Zinzulusa' cave**, going down nearly 200 feet into the earth bowels. On the way we admire some terraces and dry walls, the ingenious devices of peasants to get arable land in barren and impervious areas. After crossing the bridge over the "ciolo" (a small and rich in rare flora **canyon** carved by the waters,) you reach Santa Maria di Leuca where you visit **the sanctuary**, following the ancient pilgrims footsteps.



Through Sant'Emiliano tower, near Otranto



Salignano's tower



Underground oil mill



"The Maldives of Salento"

Day 5: From **Leuca** to **Gallipoli**

165m



Today we discover Leuca Cape, the southern part of Apulia. After an astonishing **defense tower** - situated in the centre of a small village - it is time to visit an **ancient mill**, dug into the rock, and then an **enigmatic funerary monument** made by big stones (its name "centopietre", means "hundred stones"), coming from Vereto, an ancient **pre-romanic town** situated nearby. Finally we visit Leuca piccola ('little Leuca'), an important **pilgrimage station** which still maintains a vast underground area.

Through olive groves and dry stone walls we'll reach Ugento, maybe to visit its archaeological museum. In the afternoon we'll reach again the ionic coast until the St. Andrew's island and Punta Pizzo" natural park. In Gallipoli we could enjoy an aperitif on a terrace overlooking the sea. located on an island, this small fisherman village is striking by its light, its alleys and its fish market.

Day 6: Gallipoli's surroundings



Day dedicated to Gallipoli's surroundings. First stop is in Sannicola to discover its underground oil mill, then Tuglie with its amazing "rural culture museum". We'll go to Galatone to visit its beautiful Baroque old town and the Norman castle of Fulcignano. In the afternoon we reach Galatina where we can admire the church of Santa Caterina, totally painted with frescoes in Giottesco style, and then visit the beautiful historical center of the town. Possible return by train.



San Mauro's church

Day 7: way back to **Lecce**

65m

0km

50km

Last day of our trip. We'll pass by many 19th century fortified farmhouse and villas on our way back to Lecce. We stop in Nardò to visit its decadent **baroque style** historical center. Next stop in Copertino to discover its impressive Norman castle and listen to stories about 'the hopi of flights'. Some km before Lecce a last stop at a handcraft traditional pottery, at the Martina brothers, skillful keepers of this ancient art.

Late afternoon arrival in Lecce and bikes drop off.

Day 8: **Onward travel**



Piazza Duomo, Lecce



Potter master



Between Nardò and Copertino

8 days / 7 nights self guided tour

The tour includes:

- *7 overnights stays in: farmhouse, 3*** hoteles or B&B.
- *7 breakfast
- *2 tastings with: wine, cheese and local products
- *Baggage transportation
- *GPS guide with tracks included
- *Road book with cultural information and tips about the route.
- *Assistance h24 based on local company with english speaker.

Base price: 600€

Rental bike (trekking bike 21 gears): 70€

Rental e-bike: 160€

Single supplement: 140€

4**** hotels supplement: 140€

Extra nights in Lecce: 40€

Cooking class with lunch included: 75€ (to be made in day 6, instead of the 'around Gallipoli' tour)

Transfer from Brindisi airport to Lecce hotel (minimum 2 pax): 30€

Transfer from Bari airport to Lecce hotel (minimum 2 pax): 75€

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