

Bicycle Tours in Italy: Cycling Italy's Culinary Delights

OVERVIEW

Selected as one of the [Seven Best Food and Wine Adventure trips](#) by away.com.



On this popular tour, you'll bicycle through Italy's premier pasta region. Every meal will include extraordinary local dishes made according to tradition. Every day of pedaling will not only take you behind-the-scenes visits of Parmesan cheese, balsamic vinegar, and wine makers, but also to ancient castles and world heritage UNESCO sites. Here, history, art, culture, and tradition conspire to make this tour unforgettable!


If this sounds great, but you'd like a longer tour check out our [Cycling Italy's Culinary Delights Plus! the Farm](#) tour, which adds 3 days to this itinerary.

HIGHLIGHTS

Cremona - home to torrone or Italian nougat, Towns of Parma, Modena, and Bologna, Parma famous cured ham, Parmesan cheese, Castle Torrechiara, Violin workshop, Bologna

TOUR FACTS

Tour Style	 Classic: Learn more about our Classic tours at https://www.experienceplus.com/tours/bike-tour-styles/classic-tours
Includes	8 days, 7 nights' accommodation; all breakfasts, 4 dinners, 3 lunches; cooking demonstration in Bologna; guided visit of Sabbioneta and Bologna; special culinary highlights and tastings listed in itinerary
Countries	Italy
Begin/End	Cremona / Bologna
Arrive/Depart	Bologna Guglielmo Marconi Airport (BLQ)
Total Distance	345 km (213 miles)
Avg. Daily Distance	57 km (35 miles) per riding day
Tour Level	 Perfect for cyclists who prefer non-hilly terrain. Bicycle paths allows us to share the region with other non-car tourists.
Keep in Mind	<p>We work hard to maintain consistency across all of our tours, but some trips have unique differences. Here are some things to keep in mind about this tour.</p> <p>We highly recommend you spend an additional day in Cremona before the beginning of the tour. It's a true little gem to discover. For things to do, we recommend visiting the amazing Museo del Violino (note it is closed on Mondays). Read our article about Cremona here.</p> <p>OSTERIA FRANCESCANA IN MODENA: This restaurant has been voted one of the world's top 50 restaurants! If you'd like to enjoy an evening here on your free night (Day 6), you will need to make reservations online in advance: www.osteriafrancescana.it</p>

Please Note: We may have small itinerary changes to this trip after you download this PDF document. If you have booked this trip and there are major changes, including changes to towns or activities, we'll email you directly. However, you should always be sure to refer to the  [online itinerary](#) for the most up-to-date trip information including arrival and departure tips before you depart for your trip:

<https://www.experienceplus.com/guided-bike-tours/italy/culinary-delights>

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DATES & PRICES

Dates Price Single Supplement*

*We are happy to match solo travelers who would like to share a room with someone of the same gender. If no match exists, due to hotel pricing, we will charge 50% of the single supplement rate. This fee will be collected at the time of the final payment. If a roommate assignment is available this fee will be refunded at the conclusion of the tour.

DAILY RIDE SUMMARY

Day	Distance/Gain	Terrain	Day Level	Notes
1	Test ride			
2	57km / 221m (36mi / 725ft)	Gentle	▶▶▶▶▶	
3	58km / 232m (36mi / 761ft)	Gentle	▶▶▶▶▶	
4	45km / 247m (28mi / 810ft)	Gentle	▶▶▶▶▶	
5	60km / 340m (38mi / 1115ft)	Gentle	▶▶▶▶▶	
6	50km / 189m (31mi / 620ft)	Gentle	▶▶▶▶▶	
7	69km / 340m (43mi / 1115ft)	Gentle	▶▶▶▶▶	
8	Last day			

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ARRIVAL INFO

Meeting time 2 p.m. - on Day 1, meet your fellow cyclists and Tour Leaders at the Day 1 Hotel specified on your itinerary.

Note:

As you are planning, remember that the hotels listed in our itineraries are our primary hotels and are - in rare cases - subject to change. Before you make arrangements, [check with us](#) if your tour departure is guaranteed. If your tour departure is out further than 6 months, please also check with us as there might be slight changes to the itinerary.

The below information will help you plan your arrival. For more tips or other routes, you might like [Rome2Rio](#). The fare and timing information listed below is approximate.

The airports closest to the tour start are

- Bologna Guglielmo Marconi Airport (BLQ) and
- Milano Malpensa (MXP) both of which are 2 to 3 hours from Cremona.

Note: If you are flying into Milan, note that flights from the U.S. arrive at the Malpensa Airport (MXP). Most European flights arrive at the Linate (LIN) airport.

Flying into BLQ

1. Taxi from Bologna airport to the Bologna Centrale main train station (20 min/EUR 20-25) or Airport Shuttle Bus (Taxi from Bologna Centrale to Cremona (2-3 hours/fares vary))

Flying into MXP

- If you stop over in Milan: Train from Malpensa Aeroporto to Milano Centrale (www.malpensaexpress.it) (50 min/EUR 13)
- If you continue directly to the tour start: Train from Malpensa Aeroporto to Cremona (you will still need to change trains at Milano Centrale) (2-3 hours/fares vary)

From the Cremona train station to the Day 1 Hotel

Taxi (5 min/EUR 8-10)

Look up Italian train schedules at Trenitalia.com or Trainline.eu. Questions? See our information on taking trains in Europe [here](#) or [ask us](#).

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DEPARTURE INFO

Your bicycle tour ends after the cooking lesson and lunch in Bologna, around 1:30 p.m.

The below information will help you plan your departure. For more tips or other routes, you might like [Rome2Rio](#).

We recommend flying out of the Bologna Airport (BLQ).

Taxi from the ending hotel to the Bologna Airport (20 min/EUR 20-25)

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Welcome to Cremona

Highlights Cremona, home to creamy Italian nougat, handcrafted Stradivari violins, and an impressive plaza

Arrive in Cremona, home of the noble tradition of violin making. Visit the Museo del Violino to learn how Antonio Stradivarius raised violin-making to an art form and taste some torrone (the creamy nougat made from honey, nuts, and egg whites) in one of the several pasticcerie in town! We meet in the afternoon for our bike fitting at the hotel. After enjoying an aperitivo together, we celebrate the beginning of our culinary experience with a welcome dinner.

DAY 1

Level 

Meals Dinner

Lodging  Delle Arti Design Hotel

Royal Court of Sabbioneta

Highlights Guided visit to the violin lab, Po River valley, Gonzaga summer residence of Sabbioneta, guided tour of Sabbioneta

Today we cycle along quaint bike paths along the Po River to the town of Sabbioneta, a UNESCO world heritage site. Sabbioneta was named the "Little Athens of the Gonzaga" after the local ruling family for its importance as an artistic center in the Renaissance. Inside the well-preserved walls, we will have a guided tour to see the architectural jewels of the town such as the Palazzo Ducale, Palazzo del Giardino, and Teatro Olimpico as a group. If you get the chance to try a slice of sbrisolona cake, an almond crumble cake of ancient origins, try some!

DAY 2

Distance 57 km (36 mi)

Gain 221 m (725 ft)

Terrain Gentle

Level 

Meals Breakfast

Lodging  Albergo Giulia Gonzaga

Bike to Parma

Highlights Regal residence of Colorno, quiet country roads, Parma cured ham and Parmesan cheese, World Heritage Site of Parma

We head south to Parma today, one of the undisputed culinary capitals of Italy, through pleasant country roads where you can catch a glimpse of our local farm life. Our journey takes us to the ducal palace of Colorno. While it passed through the hands of many rulers, today, it houses the headquarters of ALMA, the International School of Italian Cuisine. We continue on to Parma, a city where your taste buds will not be disappointed. It is a city where the arts have flourished Parmigianino, Correggio, and Giuseppe Verdi are some of the most famous citizens. Take a stroll around the historical center before dinner together.

DAY 3

Distance 58 km (36 mi)

Gain 232 m (761 ft)

Terrain Gentle

Level 

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

Lodging  Hotel Button

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Loop ride to the castle of Torrechiara

Highlights Parma hills, castle of Torrechiara, lunch with a view

Get ready for another day of bicycling amidst ancient castles and local traditions! Today's ride will loop to the breath-taking castle of Torrechiara. Dominating the Val Parma, the castle was constructed between 1448 and 1460, devised as an instrument of defense as well as a distinguished home for the count and his lover. This area is famous for its cured prosciutto and local salame--we will have lunch in this historic setting to taste them! We return to Parma, where, if you are still hungry, our tour leaders will suggest restaurants for dinner.

DAY 4

Distance 45 km (28 mi)

Gain 247 m (810 ft)

Terrain Gentle

Level >>>>>

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

Lodging  [Hotel Button](#)

Ride to Reggio nell'Emilia countryside

Highlights Stay in an agriturismo

We'll cycle to Montecchio today before heading to Reggio Emilia where you can grab lunch and explore this lovely village. Reggio Emilia was also known as the Tricolor town because it was here that the future Italian flag was first adopted in 1797. We'll continue along back roads and bike paths to reach our agriturismo, a country house/hotel with a working farm, where we'll stay tonight.

DAY 5

Distance 60 km (38 mi)

Gain 340 m (1115 ft)

Terrain Gentle

Level >>>>>

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

Lodging  [Agriturismo La Razza](#)

Ride to Modena

Highlights Parmesan cheese making, a balsamic vinegar visit in a historical vinegar cellar, World Heritage Site of historic Modena

We have an early start this morning to observe the artistry of a working Parmesan cheese maker. The proud Consorzio will explain the intricacies of this poignant but delicate cheese on our guided tour. Another culinary mystery is unveiled today as we stop at an acetaia, a traditional balsamic vinegar factory to learn how leftover grapes are transformed into the sweet rich vinegar that can sometimes be worth hundreds of dollars. Tradition is beautifully preserved here as the historic methods of production are still in use. A picnic lunch will follow the visit to the acetaia before continuing on to Modena. Don't miss a visit to the historic center of town.

DAY 6

Distance 50 km (31 mi)

Gain 189 m (620 ft)

Terrain Gentle

Level >>>>>

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

Lodging  [Hotel Canalgrande](#)

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Bicycle to Bologna

Highlights Guided tour of Bologna

We leave Modena's Duomo and the Ghirlandaia tower along a rails to trails bike path that leads to the fortress town of Bazzano, a perfect spot for a morning snack before enjoying stunning views of the hills along our route to Bologna. Later this afternoon we'll have a guided visit of this great city.

DAY 7

Distance 69 km (43 mi)

Gain 340 m (1115 ft)

Terrain Gentle

Level 

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

Lodging  Hotel Dei Commercianti

Bologna - Tour End

Highlights Cooking school and lunch

We invite you to stick around this morning as we have a special cooking demonstration and lunch planned. After that we'll send you on your way to begin your own culinary explorations.

DAY 8

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

INCLUDED

WHAT'S INCLUDED

When you book a tour with ExperiencePlus! our goal is to ensure your only focus each day is to hop on your bike and explore scenic cycling routes in new destinations. Inclusions may differ depending on which tour style you pick but all ExperiencePlus! tours include the three most important aspects of a guided bike tour.

- Superb tour leaders who are fun and multilingual, bi-cultural experts, and cycling enthusiasts. They will support you and help you navigate confidently on and off the road.
- High quality bikes selected for the terrain you are cycling on and correct bike fitting to ensure comfortable cycling. More details on our bikes page: <https://www.experienceplus.com/what-to-expect/our-bikes/>
- Thoughtfully designed itineraries and routes that take advantage of stunning cycling destinations and the freedom of bicycle travel.

PRE-TRIP SUPPORT

- Bicycle training programs designed specifically for your tour and fitness level.
- Planning tips on what to pack, hotel recommendations and other helpful details from our Travel Planning Pages: <https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/>
- A gift of your choice (cycling jerseys, socks, or a t-shirt) as our way of saying thanks for choosing ExperiencePlus!
- *Traveler services including assistance booking extra nights at the tour starting and ending hotels. (*Not included on Explorer Tours.)

ON TOUR

- See "What's Included" on your tour Itinerary for tour-specific inclusions.

BICYCLES

For a full list of what's included with your bike see our bikes page (<https://www.experienceplus.com/what-to-expect/our-bikes/>) . If you would like to bring your own pedals and shoes we recommend doing so. On Explorer tours we include a GPS device on all bikes. We ask that you bring your own helmet to ensure the best fit. Please ask if you would like us to provide you with a gently used helmet and we will do so.

NAVIGATING, DAYSHEETS AND VAN SUPPORT:

Each day you'll receive a daily briefing with a highlighted route map. About 14 days prior to your tour, we will provide you with access to RideWithGPS Experiences, our platform

to distribute information on each tour day's activities, meals and ride, as well as GPS-routes.

Daily information also includes Tour Leader phone numbers, hotel information and interesting historical and cultural information. On Classic, Bike and Boat, Spotlight and Expedition tours we also navigate using our signature chalk dust arrows. Our arrows make navigating very easy—you may never need to look at the map. On Explorer tours the terrain and destinations are not always conducive to using chalk arrows so we'll ride as a group or you can navigate on your own with the GPS tracks. On tour you will have a support van providing water and snack resupply, mechanical assistance, a lift for tired cyclists, and luggage transfers. On some itineraries the van will not be able to follow sections of the route that stray from the road for example onto cycling paths.

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Need More Miles? On many days it is possible to add miles to the day, just talk to your tour leader about your options.

Need Fewer Miles? If you aren't sure about your abilities or how much you want to ride remember the support van is available to offer snacks, encouragement, a lift over the next hill, or to the next hotel. You are on vacation and we're here to help make it perfect for you.

TIPPING YOUR TOUR LEADER TEAM:

If you feel your tour leader team has demonstrated great expertise and service, common practice within the travel industry is to tip. Tipping is voluntary and greatly appreciated, and gratuity amounts vary widely. Should you decide to leave a tip, as a guideline, we suggest 5% of the tour cost per traveler – this is for the entire tour leader team, not each tour leader. You can give the tip to any member of the tour leader team, as they share it evenly. In order to avoid social tensions, we encourage you to tip as individuals and not as a group. If you feel your tour leaders did not quite meet your expectations, please let us know. *Tips are included in Expedition pricing.

PHOTOS:

By reserving space on tour, you agree that ExperiencePlus! may use, re-use and reproduce any images, photos or videos sent to us, or taken by our guides or travelers free of charge and without your right to inspection. If you do not want us to use any images of you on tour, you must inform your tour leader in writing at the start of the tour.

STYLES **OUR TOUR STYLES**

We realize that one size does not fit all and there are as many ways to travel by bike as there are different types of cyclists and travelers. No matter what you are looking for in a cycling vacation, we have a tour with just the right pace for you.

Classic Tours: Dream of traveling through a region by bike? then our Classic style bike tours are for you! Our unique chalk arrows lead the way as you explore small villages and world-class cities while traveling at your own pace.

- Tour Length: 7-15 days
- Hotels: 3-4 stars, most itineraries include at least one two-night stay at the same hotel.
- Road Type: Pavement, bike paths.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation: Chalk Arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4.5

Explorer Tours: Travel further off the beaten path - we let the destination dictate where we ride, not the road surface.

- Tour Length: 7-8 days
- Hotels: 2-3 stars, occasional multi-night stays at the same hotel.
- Road Type: 30-50% gravel or hard-packed dirt, the rest pavement.
- Multi-night Stays: Occasionally
- Navigation: Group riding and GPS
- Price: \$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

Spotlight Tours: Multi-nights stays, loop rides, choose from a selection of activities or enjoy hotel amenities during your free time.

- Tour Length: 6-7 days
- Hotels: 3-5 stars, typically 3-nights spent in one hotel and 2-nights in the other.
- Road Type: Pavement
- Multi-night Stays: Min 2 night stays
- Navigation: Chalk Arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

Bike and Boat Tours: Spend days cycling and your evenings relaxing on a private boat as you cruise to your next port.

- Tour Length: 7-8 days, some itineraries have land-based extensions available.
- Barge/Boat: 3-4 star, same cabin for the entire boat trip.
- Road Type: Pavement
- Navigation: Chalk Arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 1-4

Expedition Tours: Multi-week tours where you spend long days on the bike with the added satisfaction of pedaling across multiple countries.

- Tour Length: 15-40 days
- Hotels: 2-4 stars, typically there is a 2-night hotel stay every 5-7 days.
- Road Type: Pavement with occasional hard-packed dirt or gravel.
- Multi-night Stays: On rest days
- Navigation: Chalk Arrows
- Price: \$\$\$
- Tour Levels: 4-5

**LEVELS**

We know that travelers have different cycling abilities and preferences for the number of miles, elevation gain, and type of terrain they want on a bicycle tour. We have rated each day of our tours on a scale of 1-5. Our Tour Level's are an average of the day rating on tour. We recommend looking at the daily summary on the PDF and Website Itinerary to see details about each day's ride.

LEVEL 1 - 1.5

Level 1 - 1.5 days will be mostly flat and the distance will rarely exceed 50 km. Level 1 - 1.5 tours are suitable for beginner cyclists, those traveling by bicycle for the first time, or multi-generational groups with a desire for a nice and easy bike tour with plenty of opportunities to stop and enjoy the scenery.

- **Average daily mileage:** 20 - 50 km. (12-30 miles) Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 0-400 M (0-1200 ft)
- **Terrain:** Mostly flat with occasional gentle climbs at a grade of less than 3%, that are sustained for a maximum of 3km. There might be a steeper but short climb.

LEVEL 2 - 2.5

Level 2 - 2.5 days are ideal for riders newer to bicycle touring looking for a bit of a challenge.

- **Average daily mileage:** 30-60 km (18 - 38 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 400 - 600 m (1200 - 2000 ft)
- **Terrain:** Mostly rolling terrain around 3%. Presents multiple 3% to 4% climbs. May present an occasional steeper climb.

LEVEL 3 - 3.5

Level 3 - 3.5 days are great for active individuals (who run, bike, swim etc. on a regular basis).

- **Average daily mileage:** 50-70km (30-45 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 600 - 900m (2000 - 2800 ft)
- **Terrain:** Multiple Climbs with grades of 4 - 6%.

LEVEL 4 - 4.5

Level 4 - 4.5 days are the best riding days for avid cyclists or very active individuals who are excited to challenge themselves on a bike.

- **Average daily mileage:** 70-90km (45-55 miles) Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 900-1000m (2800-3600 ft)
- **Terrain:** Presents multiple steep climbs (6% to 8% grades), 1 to 3km long. Alternatively, 4 – 6% grades for 6 kilometers or more.

LEVEL 5 (EXPEDITION)

Our Expedition tours designed for strong riders looking for the challenge of riding across countries or continents. Long daily mileages mean limited van support so we recommend these tours for riders who feel confident that they can ride every mile.

- **Average daily mileage:** 120 km (75 miles). Be sure to check the day by day itinerary description for the tour you are considering for specific mileages.
- **Gain:** 500-2000 m (1600- 6500 ft)
- **Terrain:** Expect and be prepared for any and everything.

REMEMBER

A tour level is the average of the days so we recommend you look at the day level on each day of the itinerary to help you better understand what to expect from your tour.

CHECKLIST

TO DO ONCE YOU'VE BOOKED!

- Read through your Reservation Confirmation (link sent to you by e-mail), it has important information to help you plan your trip!
- Check the date on your passport. The expiration date should extend three months past your date of return to your home country.
- Complete the Customer Information Form: <https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/customer-information-form/>
- We recommend you take out travel insurance. Find details at <https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/travel-insurance/>
- Choose a bicycle training program: <https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/bicycle-tour-training/>
- Peruse our country-specific Travel Planning Pages: <https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/>

6 TO 3 MONTHS PRIOR TO TOUR START DATE

- Review the arrival and departure information under the "Travel Information" tab to see meeting place and time, if a reservation on a complimentary ExperiencePlus! Shuttle (if applicable) is required, and other important information to help you plan your arrival and departure.
- Reserve your flights after you know you have a confirmed tour departure. Please check with our office if you do not know if your trip is confirmed.
- Book your pre and post-tour hotel nights.
- Begin your chosen training program
- Final payment is due 90 days (120 days for Bike & Barge/Boat tours) prior to the tour start. Please refer to your Deposit Payment Invoice and the Final Payment Reminder e-mail you have received for detailed instructions.

6 TO 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO TOUR START DATE

- Start reading one of the books or watching one of the movies from our Reading and Movie Lists: <https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/>.
- Plan what you are going to pack and start packing! Refer to the Packing Lists on our website at <https://www.experienceplus.com/blog/travel-planning/packing/>
- We'll email you your access code to Digital Daysheets, Hotel Itinerary, Participant Roster, names and contact information of your Tour Leaders, emergency phone numbers, and other important departure information about 2 weeks prior to your tour start date. All this will be provided to you via a feature called Experiences via the RideWithGPS App (tracks available but not necessary for navigation on Classic, Expedition, Spotlight and Bike & Boat tours).

DAY OF YOUR FLIGHT

Get as much sleep on the plane as you can. Pack one day of cycling gear in your carry-on just in case. See you soon!