



14-Day Bolzano-Venice Hotel / Bike & Barge Tour June 18 – July 2, 2022

Total Cost: \$3,375 (Transportation to and from Europe not included)

Deposit: \$1500 (paid at time of registration)

Final Payment: \$1,875 due by 1/1/22

Rider Limit: 18 – **NO SINGLE SUPPLEMENTS!**

Tour Leaders: Ralph Nussbaum

Tour Rating: Easy/Intermediate

Special International Cancellation Policy:

Before 1/1/22: Refund all but \$100 (New registrants only)

Between 1/2-3/15/22: \$1,500 cancellation fee unless tour is full and your spot is filled, then \$100

After 3/16/22: Loss of total fee unless tour is full and your spot is filled, then \$100 cancellation fee

WE STRONGLY ADVISE YOU PURCHASE TRIP INSURANCE

BRIEF OVERVIEW

You will be delighted by the remarkable variety of this tour, offering you a unique opportunity to combine both a more classical bike and hotel tour with an incredible Bike and Barge trip in the Po Valley to Venice. The cycling route starts in the heart of the incredibly beautiful Dolomites. We will be dropped off at the Resia Pass at nearly 5,000'. Our first day is all downhill through picturesque mountain villages and eventually following the course of the river Adige that will take us to the palm-lined shores of Lake Garda. We will take a small ferry the length of Lago de Garda. This boat excursion will be sure to be one of the highlights of the tour. From the south end of the lake, we will make our way to the enchanting Renaissance town of Mantua, where you will embark aboard the *Vita Pugna* for the second week of our now bike and barge tour. Cycling along waterways, through hamlets and into the surprising town of Ferrara, we will 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 you will cycle through Chioggia, known as "little Venice". At the end of the trip, you will be welcomed by wonderful Venice, a town that has lured visitors for centuries. Click [here](#) for a general overview of the route; note - this is approximate routing only.

WHAT'S INCLUDED IN THE COST:

Bike & Hotel Portion

1. Hybrid aluminum 27 speed bike – includes helmet, pannier and water bottle. Also has rear rack, map holder and bike lock.
2. 7 nights hotel lodging with breakfast and dinners included. **No lunches.**
3. Travel Guides with cue sheets and maps
4. Cost of Lago di Garda ferry and bus transport on the tour.

Bike & Barge Portion

1. Hybrid aluminum 27 speed bike – includes helmet, pannier and water bottle. Also has rear rack and map holder and bike lock.
2. 7 night onboard the *Vita Pugna* which provides breakfasts, self-made lunches and gourmet dinners every day.
3. Entrance fees to museums and attractions on the tour (cheese factory, carousel museum, etc.).

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED IN THE COST:

1. Transportation to and from Italy
2. Lunches on hotel portion of tour.
3. Beverages onboard the *Vita Pugna*
4. Sightseeing costs in Bolzano and Venice
5. Tips for *Vita Pugna* crew and our European guide
6. Public transportation in Venice on our day off

THE BARGE:

The *Vita Pugna* is a comfortable passenger barge with a charming appearance. She is originally a Dutch barge 119 feet long and 18 feet wide. The cabins are small compared to a hotel room but very practical and very nicely laid out. The *Vita Pugna* is a two-story barge. The saloon, a spacious sitting area, a nice bar and a sun deck are on the upper deck. On the lower deck, the *Vita Pugna* has 10 guest cabins for two persons (no bunk beds), all with private shower and toilet as well as a hairdryer on request. The barge has air-conditioning throughout all the common areas and in the hall downstairs. (There is one cabin that has three rather than two beds to bring along an extra friend or family member.)

LIKELY ITINERARY (Always subject to changes):

Day 1 - Saturday, June 18: Bolzano

We will all meet in Bolzano, capital of South Tyrol and gateway to the Dolomites (Italian Alps). Bolzano is a bi-lingual city as it has been a major connector between the Italian and German linguistic worlds as well as the major crossroad between the Mediterranean and central Europe.

Day 2 - Sunday, June 19: Bolzano-Silandro - About 50 km

After picking up our rental bikes we will take a bus to the top of Resia (Reschen) Pass at 4800' where our tour will start. We will spend almost the entire day on dedicated bike paths starting along Lake Resia and its iconic flooded church tower (the only thing left visible after the building of this artificial lake), and then by the cloister of Montemaria to Silandro. 95% of its inhabitants are German speaking and it has the highest church tower in South Tyrol as well as a beautiful, renovated castle which serves as city hall.



Day 3 - Monday, June 20: Silandro-Merano - About 40 km

We continue on the cycle path along the River Adige passing through orchards, vineyards and impressive landmarks like the imposing castle of Dornsberg and Castelbello. Merano is known for its spas and is surrounded by mountains up to 11,000' high. It was a popular with artists and writers including Franz Kafka and Ezra Pound.

Day 4 - Tuesday, June 21: Merano-Bolzano - About 35 km

We continue along the River Adige bike trail and pass through the lovely little villages of Nalles, Andriano and others. You will begin to see some transition from the typical German/Austrian architecture to the more Mediterranean/Italian architecture in these small towns. Pinot Grigio vineyards abound in this region. With a short day of riding, you will have plenty of time to explore (or, as the case may be, re-explore) Bolzano.



Day 5 – Wednesday June 22: Bolzano-Trento - About 70 km



The dedicated cycle path continues along the Adige through more picturesque villages like Ora, Egna and Solorno. We skirt two nature parks as the mountains begin to taper off. In the 16th century, Trento was the location of the Council of Trent, the ecumenical Catholic Council prompted by the Protestant Reformation. It issued condemnations of what it defined as heresies and clarified a lot of church doctrine. Trento is also one of Italy's wealthiest and most prosperous cities. It boasts a picturesque Medieval and Renaissance historic

center, with ancient buildings such as Trento Cathedral and the Castello del Buonconsiglio. For those wishing to shorten the day's ride, it's always possible to hop on the local train which follows our path all day.

Day 6 – Thursday, June 23: Trento-Peschiera - About 50 km

Perhaps the Queen Stage of the tour. After a short and easy climb to the Passo di San Giovanni, we will have the opportunity to get a nice view of Italy's largest and possibly the most beautiful lake, Lago de Garda. We will make our way to Riva del Garda along its northern shore. From there we will take a ferry the entire length of the lake (over 50km) to the town of Peschiera. As we sail the lake, we will spot many beautiful castles and villas. Peschiera is a delightful resort town with a great deal of history. The Porta Verona from the 16th century still stands as do other 16th century structures.



Day 7 – Friday, June 24: Peschiera-Mantua - About 70/45 km



This is the last day of the bike/hotel portion of our tour. Riding along one of Italy's most famous cycle paths we make our way through Borghetto and Vleggio sul Mincio to Mantua along the River Mincio. Those who want to take it easy will just stay along the river, those who want a little more challenge will have the option to add a few more kilometers. Mantua is the capital of Lombardy and lies at 62' above sea level. We have made it down out of the mountains! It lies on the sides of three artificial lakes created from the waters of the Mincio in the **12th century** as a defense system. The ancient city center has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site and it is noted for its art and musical heritage including that of opera.

Day 8 Saturday, June 25: Mantua and embarkation on board Vita Pugna

Today is our transition to our Bike and Barge portion of our 2-week tour. You will have almost the entire day to explore Mantua before meeting the crew of the *Vita Pugna* at 4:30 PM in the harbor. After we settle into our cabins, we will enjoy the first of seven gourmet dinners prepared by our master chef. There will undoubtedly be an opportunity for an evening stroll through Mantua before turning in for our first night onboard our floating hotel.



Day 9 – Sunday, June 26: Mantua region - About 45 km

We will spend the day further exploring this jewel of a city and surrounding area. Once a City State ruled by the Gonzaga family it's now considered by many as Italy's "Sleeping Beauty". In the afternoon a local guide will show us the highlights of this delightful city.

Day 10 – Monday, June 27: Mantua–Governolo-Zelo - About 50 km



Today we start off cruising. While we enjoy our first breakfast onboard the *Vita Pugna*, we will sail along the lush banks of the Mincio River to where it flows into the Po River to the largest inland basin in Italy. At Governolo Lock, once a vital staging post for local navigation, we hop on our bikes and follow the Po through Ostiglia (famed for its medieval fortress and floating mill) and on to the village of Bergantino. Here we visit the charming Carousel and Street Entertainment Museum. Finally, we reach Zelo, a sleepy village on the Canal Bianco, the waterway which runs parallel to the Po.

Day 11 – Tuesday, June 28: Zelo-Ferrara - About 50 km

After breakfast we continue our bike and barge adventure cycling towards Ferrara, another key City State of ancient Italy. You will visit this historic town and discover its ancient center, still surrounded by the original city walls. From Ferrara, a short transfer by private coach will take us to Adria. Once close to the shores of the sea which bears its name, Adria was an ancient Greek port, famous for trading Baltic amber. Its remarkable museum also bears witness to its Etruscan, Roman and Venetian heritage.



Day 12 - Wednesday, June 29: Adria–Porto Viro–Chioggia – About 40km



An exhilarating day of discovery alternating sailing and cycling starts with a short cruise to our drop-off point at Porto Viro and the exploration of the Po's delta. This unique wetland park is the prime reserve in Europe for herons and home to several colonies of flamingos. At the mouth of the River Adige, which flows fast and cool from the Dolomites, we then follow the Po-Brondolo waterway and reach the Venetian lagoon. Our overnight stop is the bustling and colorful fishing port of Chioggia, known as "Little Venice".

Day 13 - Thursday, June 30: Chioggia – Venice - about 30 km

A morning visit to the fish market is recommended and, time allowing, we will climb up Chioggia's millennial clock tower – the oldest in the world – for some breathtaking views. We then enjoy some island hopping in the lagoon itself by bike and boat, starting with our barge dropping us off on Pellestrina (home to the Ca' Roman nature reserve); and continuing by public ferry for the short crossing to the Lido island. Celebrated by Thomas Mann (*Death in Venice*) and particularly fashionable with the artists and aristocracy of the Belle Époque (1880's to 1914), the Lido di Venezia is now home to the International Venice Film Festival and its galaxy of stars. Finally, our floating hotel takes us to our marina in Venice, for the culmination of our bike and boat holiday.



Day 14 – Friday, July 1: Venice



In the morning, a local guide will help you discover the capital of the ancient "Serenissima Republic of Venice", which held sway over much of the Mediterranean (and beyond) for centuries. After that you have a lot of time to soak up its timeless beauty or explore its islands. We will have our last group dinner onboard the *Vita Pugna* celebrating a wonderful trip with one more sumptuous dinner.

Day 15 – Saturday, July 2: Venice

After enjoying our final breakfast on board the *Vita Pugna* it will be time to head our separate ways! Perhaps you want to take the opportunity to spend a couple of extra days to explore the wonders of Venice and its environs.

PICTURES OF THE *VITA PUGNA*

