

Great Italian Lakes Cycle Challenge



ACTIVITY

Cycle

ACCOMMODATION

Hotel

CHALLENGE FACTORS

Terrain

DURATION:

6 days

GRADE



This exciting and beautiful route is so much more than a journey between two iconic Italian cities – on the way it takes three of the great Italian lakes: Garda, Como and Iseo, as well as the *Romeo and Juliet* city of Verona.

With a route that takes you from Venice on the Adriatic Coast, through flat plains and forested hills to the famous lakes-and-mountains scenery of Lombardy, there's enough variety to please any cyclist. Each day offers a great climb to test your legs, but with our highest point at 754m – the famous Madonna del Ghisallo with its cyclists' chapel – these aren't the high cols, and it's an achievable ride for anyone willing to train.

Add in small terracotta-roofed villages, overnight stops in picturesque lakeside towns, good roads, and plenty of opportunities for recharging on Italian coffee and gelato – this is the ultimate Italian cycle challenge!

This trip generates around **120 kg of CO₂ per person**. Because of our commitment to responsible travel, **we offset 100% of these emissions**.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Meet Venice

Venice is renowned for its beautiful waterways and buildings, such as St Mark's Square and Basilica, the Doge's Palace and Bridge of Sighs, and the Rialto Bridge. Dependent on flight times, you can enjoy some free time exploring the sights of this wonderful city. We meet up at our mainland hotel in the evening, and ensure our kit and bikes are fully prepared for the start of our challenge tomorrow. Night hotel.

(Lunch not included)

Day 2: Venice – Verona

Leaving Venice behind, we start cycling! We head south through fertile fields, crossing many small canals and rivers which drain into the Venetian Lagoon, still only a few miles to the east. Our terrain today is predominantly flat, allowing us to ease ourselves in relatively gently: it is, however, a long day in the saddle! We avoid the larger towns, but pass through several small towns and villages, all with a distinctive Italian flavour. Our halfway mark is celebrated with the only real climb of the day, as we cross a verdant region of hills dotted with thermal spas; continuing east on flat roads again, we cross the wide River Adige, Italy's second-longest river, and head to Verona. This beautiful city, setting of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, offers plenty of sights if you have the legs for an evening wander. Night hotel.

Cycle approx 146km (91 miles)

Day 3: Verona – Lovere

Our terrain becomes more rolling as we ride on back-roads towards the lakes of Lombardy. After only a few miles in the saddle, we reach spectacular Lake Garda, the largest lake in Italy. As we ride around its southern shore, we can enjoy views of the steep green slopes plunging down to the lake's edge. Today's big climb crosses the forested hills between Lake Garda and Lake Iseo – probably the toughest 10 miles of the route for many of us. It twists and turns up into the wooded hills, passing small communities with striking churches and open pastures. Surrounded by magnificent views of the verdant peaks, the scenery inspires us to keep going. After a fabulous descent, our road levels out to a relatively flat run-in to Lake Iseo. We pass through the medieval town of Iseo and ride north around the lake on a beautiful, lake-side traffic-free cycle path – a wonderful end to the day. Lovere is often touted as one of the most beautiful towns in Italy; we are close to the mountains here and the buildings have more of a Swiss influence. Night hotel.

Cycle approx 154km (96 miles)

Day 4: Lovere – Como

Our main climb comes earlier today, as we leave the beautiful shores of Lake Iseo and head up on a quiet road that twists through trees and areas of open pasture, with great views back down over the lake and surrounding green hills. The well-earned descent is longer than the climb, and brings us out of the hills through a string of river-side towns and villages as we ride along the valley towards Bergamo. From here it's more rolling terrain, with a couple of sharper climbs, as we head towards the southeast arm of the inverted 'Y' that is Lake Como. The region to the south of the lake is dotted with smaller lakes and towns and makes for varied cycling; one last short climb and descent brings us to Como, on the southwest arm of the lake. An historic town with plenty to see, an evening wander is a good way to soak up the atmosphere. Night hotel.

Cycle approx 115km (72 miles)

Day 5: Como – Milan

Our last day features one of the most spectacular stretches of road, our highest point, and for any keen cyclists,

the most famous climb! We set off from Como and ride the undulating road along the magnificent lake shore to Bellagio, the northernmost point on the triangular southern shore. Here we head away from the lake and onto the famous climb of the Madonna del Ghisallo, where the chapel on the summit (our highest point at 754m) has become a shrine to cyclists. Made famous by the Tour of Lombardy and Giro d'Italia, it's a challenging ascent, but our legs should feel great by now, and we will be spurred on by the chance to visit the chapel, packed with cycling memorabilia, and where an eternal flame burns in the memory of cyclists who have died. We then freewheel almost all the way on quiet roads right to the outskirts of Milan, our descent taking us through beautiful scenery east of Milan. Once at sea level, we join a lovely flat canal-side cycle path, leading us into the city centre and our finish! We celebrate the end of our incredible challenge in one of Italy's most iconic cities. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 104km (64 miles)

Day 6: Depart Milan

After a leisurely breakfast, you have time to relax on the canal or wander the cultured streets depending on your return flight schedule.

(Lunch not included)

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 5 nights hotel accommodation on a twin-share basis
- All meals except where specified
- Snacks and water provision on cycle days
- Discover Adventure crew (number dependant on group size)
- Full vehicle support throughout the trip
- Maps and route information
- Optional bike transfer from Venice airport at start of trip (within agreed time-frame)
- **We offset 100% of the carbon emissions from your trip**

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Flights and transport to/from start/finish point of ride
- Any meals specified 'not included' in the itinerary
- Travel insurance
- Bicycle, cycle helmet (compulsory) and water bottles
- Personal spending money, souvenirs and drinks
- Fees for any optional sites, attractions or activities
- Any applicable surcharges as per Terms and Conditions

GRADE | ORANGE

All our trips are designed to provide a challenge. Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trip lies within the **ORANGE** range.



The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors. Trip duration, accommodation and living conditions are also taken into account. Some sections will feel more challenging than others, but the grade reflects the overall trip. Unusual weather conditions can also have a significant impact.

The Accommodation icon indicates the living conditions while trekking/cycling. While there are usually several factors that present a challenge, the Challenge icon indicates the trip's most challenging element, for most people.

[Trip grading explained](#)



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Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

Please note: This document was downloaded on 12 May 2026, and the challenge is subject to change.