

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](#)

CHALLENGE INFORMATION

DETAILED INFORMATION

Leaders & Trip Support

Your trip will be led by experienced Discover Adventure crew - selected for their knowledge and experience, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises; they are also trained in first aid. The crew will have mobile phones and/or radios where appropriate, medical kit and other safety apparatus where necessary.

The number of crew and support vehicles looking after you will depend on the final size of your group, but the team will be looking after every aspect of your trip whether that's transporting your luggage, ensuring your route is clear, making you lunch and sorting out any mechanical problems. Support vehicles are with the group all of the time, and carry all luggage and spares.

Trip Safety

Your safety, and that of the rest of the group, is our highest priority. Our trips are designed and planned with safety in mind. Your crew will be equipped with appropriate communication devices (eg phones, radios), medical kit and other safety apparatus appropriate to the destination. Our leaders always have access to our 24-hour emergency UK back-up. They are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary, should local conditions dictate. Pre-trip administration - such as medical questionnaires and travel insurance as appropriate - is all done with your safety in mind.

Accommodation

We usually stay in hotels or lodges of a 2-3* standard or equivalent. Standards may vary between the hotels but they are generally comfortable and convenient for our route. Hotels are often on the outskirts of towns to minimise unnecessary extra mileage and avoid traffic.

Roomshare Arrangements

Our trips are sold on a shared accommodation basis, usually twin-share, in hotels convenient to our route.

You can tell us if you are travelling with someone else on the trip when you book or within your passenger portal, and we will do all we can to accommodate this request. It is important that both people complete the room share request on their bookings. For customers booking and travelling together, including same-sex couples, a double bed can be requested if available.

If you're not familiar with anyone in the group, rest assured, we always pair you with someone of the same gender (as per the information you provided when booking, or passport markers), and a similar age where possible. We're actively working to improve our system's gender restrictions to be more inclusive, and we've recently made significant strides in this area. If you identify differently from the gender marker on your passport and would like to discuss this before booking, please feel free to reach out to us.

Single Supplements

In most standard hotels, we can usually offer a limited number of single rooms. This is upon request, on a first-come, first-served basis, and additional charges apply. In more communal accommodation, single rooms are rarely an option. We do not charge a single supplement if you are a solo traveller in a shared room.

Food & Dietary Requirements

We like to support local businesses and will source food locally wherever we can. Lunches will be a mix of restaurants along the route or supplies will be purchased from local shops; dinners are usually eaten at the hotel. For larger sized groups we may opt to cater the lunches ourselves with a buffet style provision. Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. Having said that, despite working very hard with the hotels, it doesn't always translate into what we'd like for you. If this is the case on your trip, please chat to the crew at the time and they will do their best to find a solution. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat you may wish to bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply.

PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

Challenge Grading

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[Trip grading explained](#)

Fitness Levels

This is designed to be a challenge, and it is vital that you train sufficiently for it. We will supply you with a thorough training guide once you have registered. We expect all participants to train hard in advance, but we respect everyone's limits and do not expect everyone to maintain the same pace. Inadequate training is likely to have an impact not just on your chances of completing the challenge, but enjoying it too - and we want you to have the time of your life!

Our challenges attract people of all levels of experience, fitness and ability as well as all ages and backgrounds. We design our challenges so that everyone can go at their own pace: this is not a race. If you have concerns about your fitness or if you have reduced mobility please do contact us for a confidential chat about whether this challenge is appropriate for you.

For logistical and safety reasons we sometimes need to re-group, so the front-runners may find themselves waiting for the slower ones. Please relax, and remember that this is a team effort that enables people to achieve their personal goals and earn sponsorship.

Terrain

The cycling is predominantly flat for the first day, and features one significant climb on each of the other days, with plenty of smaller climbs and rolling terrain thrown in. There are some flatter sections once in lake-country, but not many! Distances on the first two days are particularly challenging. We ride mainly on small, quiet roads, but recommend you are confident cycling in some traffic. There's also a lovely stretch of traffic-free lakeside cycle path.

Electric Bikes

In the last few years e-bikes have become increasingly popular. At Discover Adventure we see them as a great tool for inclusivity, and a great enabler for people to get out cycling – at home and on our trips – especially when continuing riding (or starting again) in older age or through health problems.

With charity challenges being at the heart of our business, we know that e-bikes are being used by beneficiaries of various charities to aid recovery, and that they enable participation in events raising funds for those charities.

E-bikes must, however, be used with caution on a multi-day, high-mileage trip and are in no way a substitute for training. Please talk to us well in advance if you have one you wish to ride on this challenge, so that we can ensure that it is

suitable for the challenge, and that you are aware of the pros and cons.

Clothing & Kit

We plan our trips around the optimal weather conditions, but could still be exposed to bad weather at any time. It is vital you are prepared for all conditions. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, with plenty of information, and we are always available if you need advice.

Passport & Visa / Vaccinations

Entry requirements vary depending on your destination and nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure your passport is valid, and any visas are obtained in good time. Check the [FCO's advice](#) on entry requirements for your destination to be sure. Please ensure you allow plenty of time to apply for your visa; we will provide you with all necessary information 6 weeks prior to departure to assist with your application.

Your routine UK schedule of vaccinations should be up-to-date (especially tetanus). We recommend you check the [NaTHNaC Travel Health Pro](#) website for further details. You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

Foreign Travel Advice

For the latest travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, check www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance is compulsory on all of our challenges outside of the UK; we strongly suggest that you arrange insurance cover as soon as your booking with us is confirmed, or as soon as you're able to purchase some, and at least 8 months prior to travel. Should you need to cancel prior to departure, you will need insurance to cover the costs involved (registration fee and any trip costs depending on cancellation date).

We all hope never to need it, and thankfully most of the time we don't, but on those rare occasions when you do, you want it to cover you as best it can. Whilst it's a fairly boring admin task relating to your trip of a lifetime, it is really important you ensure that you have adequate cover for the type of challenge you are taking part in as well as medical emergencies, evacuation and repatriation, so make sure you're happy with the level of cover. There are lots of suppliers out there, with a wide range in levels of cover; generally speaking, you get what you pay for! Get and pay for the right level of cover and then you can go on your adventure not having to worry about the what-if's. For more details click [here](#).

Once your travel insurance is arranged, just remember to let us know the policy number and 24-hr medical emergency phone number provided by your insurers.

Cancelling your booking

In the unfortunate circumstance that you need to cancel your booking, we would ask that you notify us in writing either by email or post. Your cancellation will be considered effective from the date the notice is received. Registration, administration and amendment fees are non refundable and, depending on your payment option and how close it is to your challenge departure date, you may be liable for a cancellation charge.

Full details of all cancellation charges may be found in the Terms and Conditions of booking.

Group Size

Your booking is part of a group challenge and the tour costs and fundraising targets listed on our website are based on a minimum number of participants which is shown on the challenge. Our typical London to Paris groups run with approximately 30-40 participants whilst all other Euro cycles run with approximately 15-20, however you may find your group is smaller or larger than this.

We will confirm at least 12 weeks prior to departure that your challenge is guaranteed to run however occasionally it may be possible to still run the challenge with less than the minimum numbers, subject to a small group supplement. If we think a small group supplement may be necessary, we will discuss this with you as soon as possible, usually 5 months before your departure date.

Minimum numbers and groups sizes may vary on Bespoke Charity challenges. If you are booked onto a bespoke challenge please contact your charity for full details.

Passenger Portal

We have a Passenger Portal which will give you more details of the challenge itself. It also enables you to see any outstanding information we need, the countdown to your challenge departure, see your outstanding balance, make payments and update your contact details. You can access this via the following link - [Passenger Portal Log in](#).

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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 29 May 2026, and the challenge is subject to change.