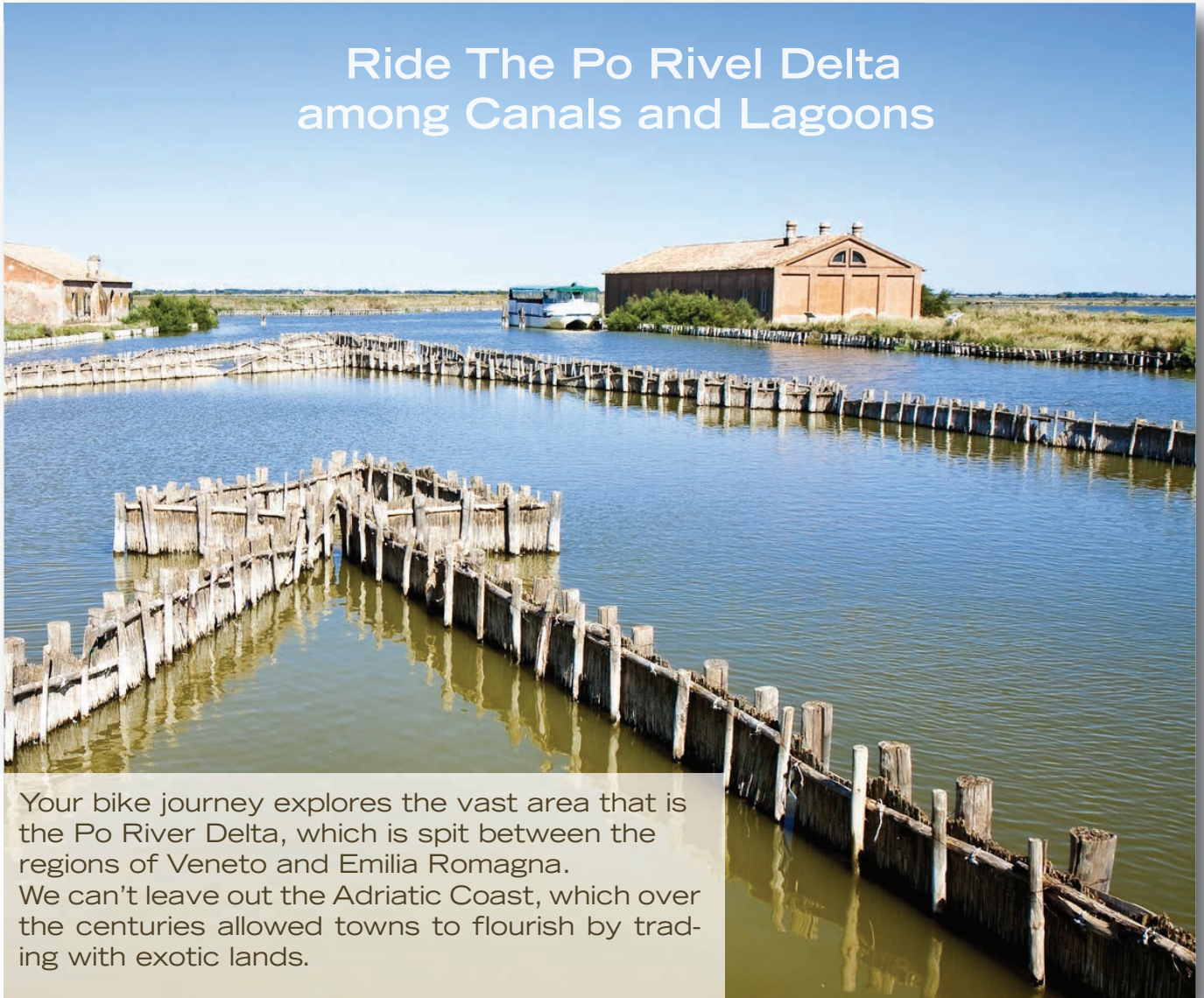


Venice Lagoon to Ravenna Bike Tour

Ride The Po River Delta
among Canals and Lagoons



Your bike journey explores the vast area that is the Po River Delta, which is split between the regions of Veneto and Emilia Romagna. We can't leave out the Adriatic Coast, which over the centuries allowed towns to flourish by trading with exotic lands.

fitness

scenery

culture

food / wine

8 days (7 nights)

Dates: Sept 10 - Sept 17, 2022

Description

The story of this bike tour actually starts some 650 km (404 miles) away from where we'll be riding in Veneto, at the spring of the Po River in Piedmont.

Running from west to east, **the Po River has created its own valley** running across northern Italy. This valley is both a physical and a metaphysical space that contains one of the largest agricultural areas in all of Europe. The Po Delta has evolved over the centuries and therefore has also changed the Adriatic coastline between Venice (in the Veneto region) and Ravenna (in the Emilia Romagna region). That stretch of coastline is approximately 96.5 km (60 miles) long. Parks and natural preserves keep the landscape intact and the fauna protected.

One of the descriptions of the Po Delta is: "the youngest landscape of Italy." It is, in fact, a landscape that has been created by reclaiming land, building canals, and managing to keep the Adriatic water from infiltrating inland and putting cultivations at risk. It's a complex system of hydraulic engineering applied to a large area that on one side grants fertile farmland (rice, corn, sugar beet, vegetables, and fruit) and, on the other hand, creates an incredible patchwork of canals and lagoons that make traveling by boat just as efficient (or even more efficient) than moving by land.

We feel that this landscape offers cycle tourism that cannot be found anywhere else in Italy. It looks plain, but in reality, it is complex. Stop on a ridge to spot the sea level several feet above the farmland. Notice the draining pumps at work or ready to spring into action.

From Chioggia to Ravenna there are some small towns, mostly villages, scattered here and there and some have an interesting past and a charming feel.

We start in the town of Adria, once a coastal town that gave its name to the Adriatic Sea (now 29 km/18 miles away). Remnants of the Roman settlements there can be viewed at the archeological museum in town.

Chioggia is the starting point for our Venice Lagoon exploration. Interestingly, Venice, a wealthy powerhouse for centuries, was the first one to decide (for economic/trading reasons) to artificially deviate the path of the Po, fearing the same fate of Adria: losing direct access to the sea.

Between Chioggia and Goro, you are in the **Po Delta Park in the Veneto Region**, which is perfect for bird watching, photo tourism, and horseback riding. Of course, it's also an incredible riding landscape between lagoons and canals. This is where you cross the characteristic floating bridges.

This area is very under-built except for some rural churches and farmhouses, some of which date back to the early 1900's and still belong to nobles from Ferrara and Venice. There is also, "industrial archeology," such as massive draining pumps. Long chimneys indicate that there once were furnaces for the production of bricks and roof tiles. It's no coincidence that in the 1500's the main branch of the Po River was called "Po delle fornaci."

Comacchio and its lagoon (a WWF natural area) have managed to remain intact and have successfully started to attract tourism (mostly domestic). If you say Comacchio, you say eel. The local gastronomic specialty is prepared in more ways than you could possibly try in one trip.

If Comacchio is one of the highlights, **Ravenna is the grand finale.** Ravenna used to have its own port but it wasn't a simple trading post. It was the capital city of the Western Roman Empire from 402 until the empire collapsed in 476. It then served as the capital of the Ostrogothic Kingdom until it was reconquered by the Byzantine Empire that left its signature in several landmarks that are now UNESCO sites.

Highlights

- 1- Ravenna, the "City of Mosaics"
- 2- Adria, the town for which the Adriatic Sea is named
- 3- Po canals and Po River Delta
- 4- Food and wine of Veneto and Emilia
- 5- Peaceful riding among lagoons in the Po Delta Park
- 6- The most secluded gold, sandy beaches of the Adriatic
- 7- Chioggia and the Venice Lagoon
- 8- Learn how reclaimed land shaped the local landscape and economy
- 9- Comacchio, "the Little Venice"
- 10- A private fishing boat ride

What's Included

- Two professional tour guides throughout the program
- Accommodations
- All breakfasts, all lunches, and six dinners
- Wine and beer with dinner
- Guides walking tours of Chioggia and Ravenna, and Pomposa
- All ferries and boat rides
- Entrance to museums
- Logistical support during the tour and luggage transfer
- Shuttle at the beginning and at the end of the tour
- All activities mentioned in the day-by-day description
- Bike rental (choice of carbon road or hybrid - straight handlebar)

What's Not Included

- Airfare
- Pre-tour hotel stays and post-tour hotel stays
- Personal expenses such as laundry and cell phone
- Guide gratuity
- E-bike upgrade



heat

min:
63 F
max:
79 F



rain

13%
Probab.



wind

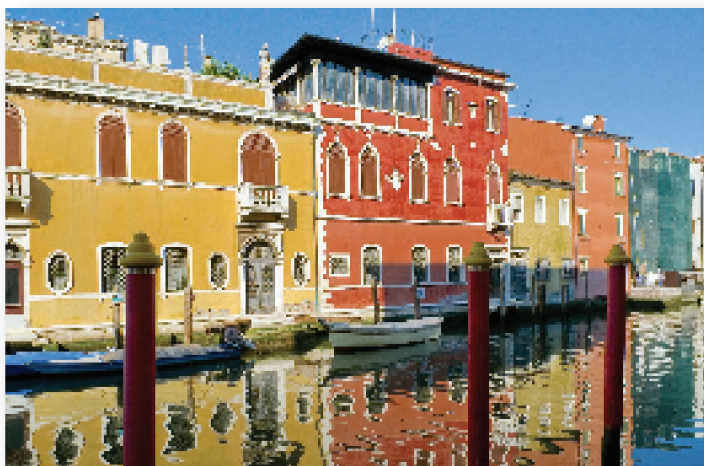
The Tourissimo Experience

Tourissimo is about meaningful, authentic experiences that are also educational, yet fun! In designing this tour, we put a strong emphasis on local productions, Slow Food, and traditional dishes. The learning experience is at the center of this program. Beppe and his guides know how to deliver unique moments that enrich a vacation and yourself.



Daily Itinerary

After an airport transfer, we arrive at our hotel in Adria, the town which gave the Adriatic Sea its name. We'll enjoy a light lunch, make introductions, and go over the details of the tour. After lunch, there will be a bike fitting and warmup ride in the countryside around Adria. We are in the Polesine region, a strip of land about 100 km (62 miles) long and 18 km (11 miles) wide, located between the lower courses of the Adige and the Po rivers, limited to the east by the Adriatic Sea and leaving the western limit undefined. Spend the rest of the afternoon by visiting the important archeological museum which houses many Roman artifacts.



After a transfer (40 min) we reach Chioggia and get ready for our ride - interspersed with some boat rides - around the lagoon in front of Venice. This overlooked "Venetian" site will charm you with colorful houses facing the lagoon, gardens in bloom, and sandy beaches frequented only by locals. Lunch is planned at a fisherman's trattoria on Pellestrina, an elongated island that forms a barrier between the southern Venetian Lagoon and the Adriatic Sea.

Chioggia, where we spend the night, is situated on a small island at the southern entrance to the Venetian Lagoon (just across from Pellestrina) and is a typical Venetian town with a few canals and the characteristic narrow streets known as calli. We are sure that you won't miss the Venice crowds as you appreciate Chioggia's still-authentic charm. Enjoy a nice, fresh seafood dinner and an evening stroll.

Day One
Adria

Daily Mileage
8 mls

Type of terrain
Flat

Meals included
LD

Hotel
Hotel Minuetto

Day Two
Chioggia - Venice Lagoon

Daily Mileage
26 mls

Type of terrain
Flat

Meals included
BLD

Hotel
Grande Italia

Daily Itinerary

An easygoing and quiet route leads you to the core of the Po River Delta, situated on the Adriatic Sea but “trapped” among man-made irrigation canals and wild enclosed bays. The area is very rural and under-built compared to the rest of the Veneto region. We are in a regional park and one must appreciate the flora and fauna of this wild area. We cross the characteristic bridges on floating barges and pedal by the fishing outposts (mostly for shellfish) that quietly take advantage of the abundance of this “last frontier,” the Po Delta. We’ll settle in at an agriturismo built in 1924. The 1,100 acre farm is specialized in rice production, as well as corn, soy and wheat.



Water is the protagonist of this day: more lagoons, and canals as far as the eye can see. The mighty banks, often higher than the houses, direct the long streams to the sea. The peaceful landscape and the pleasant sea breeze make this a unique place. It’s worth mentioning that the Po Delta Regional Park is the largest wetland in Europe and the Mediterranean. Perhaps even more interesting is that it evolves and changes year after year, due to the sediments of the Po.

And today we’ll enjoy a different perspective, thanks to a fishing boat ride that will lead us through the maze of canals and in the Sacca di Scardovari Bay, famous and appreciated for oyster farming. We’ll dock for a picnic lunch on a beach.

Once at the hotel near the village of Goro, you can spend the rest of the afternoon lounging by the pool looking forward to aperitivo time courtesy of your guides.



Day Three

Scardovari / Barricata

Daily Mileage

35 mls

Type of terrain

Flat

Meals included

BLD

Hotel

Agriturismo Ca’ Bonelli

Day Four

Goro

Daily Mileage

23 mls

Type of terrain

Flat

Meals included

BLD

Hotel

Tenuta Goro Veneto

Daily Itinerary

Today we enter the region of Emilia-Romagna and the province of Ferrara. It's a half-day ride with a transfer planned in the afternoon to take full advantage of the many interesting facets of the Comacchio area.

We leave the hotel and cross the Po di Goro, and soon after the Canal Bianco (the same one that runs through the center of Adria). We find ourselves riding with the Adriatic on one side and the Bosco della Mesola Natural Preserve on the other, as we start heading inland to a very important site: Pomposa Abbey. The earliest report of a Benedictine abbey at this site dates back to 874. The importance of this place cannot be understated for one simple reason: its intellectual and religious dominance as a Carolingian repository. Needless to say, the Romanesque church is very impressive on its own and deserves some time and a guided visit.

We dare to say that you'll fall in love with Comacchio. The so-called "Little Venice" offers many cultural angles and your guides will point you in the right direction (Ancient Delta Museum and Manifattura dei Marinai). Also, be ready for a surprise and a fun way to experience the town.



We say arrivederci to Comacchio and then pedal among farmland before rejoining with the lagoon. You should be able to spot herons and pink flamingoes while enjoying the peaceful view of the wetlands. The Comacchio Valley is the most important lagoon area in all of Italy (WWF natural preserve). Riding away from the delta of the Po, one realizes the vastness of the river plain and the number of canals built to keep every plot of land irrigated. You will notice the ordered fields and a variety of crops that occupy the large, reclaimed area. After lunch at an agriturismo, we enjoy crossing the Reno River on a small ferry; and finally, we enter Ravenna, a Byzantine jewel that was also once a capital of the Roman Empire. Upon arriving, you will have some free time to explore Ravenna on your own. We suggest gathering for a walking tour with a local guide to get a glimpse of Ravenna's glorious past. Dinner is on your own and the guides can point out their favorite trattoria or even a pizza place.

Day Five
Comacchio

Daily Mileage
16 mls

Type of terrain
Flat

Meals included
BLD

Hotel
Al Ponticello

Day Six
Comacchio - Ravenna

Daily Mileage
27 mls

Type of terrain
Flat

Meals included
BL

Hotel
Palazzo Galletti Abbiosi

Daily Itinerary

Today, we have a flexible schedule and a few suggestions. Of course, we can spend time in Ravenna, but we can also pedal to the outskirts of town to Sant'Apollinare in Classe. The beauty of the mosaics decorating the church is hard to grasp. In 1996 (along with seven other nearby monuments), Sant'Apollinare in Classe was inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List, which described it as "an outstanding example of the early Christian basilica in its purity and simplicity of its design and use of space and in the sumptuous nature of its decoration."

Other options could include a walk through the maritime pine forest or a longer trip to the Cervia salt ponds. Salt has been "farmed" and traded here for 2000 years. Salt was a highly-valued trade item to the point of being considered a form of currency. A guided visit could be organized with the visitor center (schedule TBD).

Our celebratory dinner will be the time to try to crystalize all of what you have seen and experienced in this lesser-known part of Italy, and maybe even find some symbolism or metaphor of what the Po River (a tiny stream at its spring) has accomplished while men try to keep up.



A transfer to the Bologna airport will be arranged after breakfast.

Contact us for optional extensions to this tour.

Day Seven
Ravenna

Daily Mileage
10 mls (optional)

Type of terrain
Flat

Meals included
BLD

Hotel
Palazzo Galletti Abbiosi

Day Eight
Bologna

Daily Mileage

Type of terrain

Meals included
B

Arriving and Departing

Airport - Bologna (BLQ)

Other transportation - Private group transfer by Tourissimo from and to the airport.

While as accurate as possible at the time of creation, this program should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities and tour routing, rather than an inflexible schedule.

Very occasionally events that are out of our control mean we have to make some changes, but we'll ensure you still have the best time!

We will do our best to ensure that any change is communicated as soon as possible.

Should our first choice hotels not be available due to special events, limited space, renovation, we will offer alternatives of the same standard or superior, whenever possible.

Reading List

Land Without Shadow: The Po Delta in the Fifties by Pietro Donzelli

"Terra senz'ombra" is the photographic research that Pietro Donzelli (Monte Carlo 1915 - Milan 1998), one of the masters of Italian photography of the twentieth century, dedicated to the Po Delta over eight years, from 1953 to 1961, and presented in national and international exhibition venues. The book offers a wide choice of that vast work, documenting Donzelli's profound photographic culture: his photography is not reportage, understood as gestural photography taken at speed, but it is documentary photography, it is photography of the gaze and of thought and it is precisely from this research on the Po Delta, the heart of his work, his choice of realism and the "humanistic" front of photography emerges in a mature way. Introduction by Antonio Finotti, Massimo Bergamin and Enrico Zerbinati.

Gente del Delta 1958 by Nino Migliori

More than sixty years later, a Sunday excursion in the Po Delta becomes a memorable portrait of a poor Italy that we have forgotten today, canceled by the economic boom and what followed. Nino Migliori was not yet a professional photographer, but his curiosity towards places, situations and people was already very lively. The Po Delta, a peripheral area, with a poverty considered endemic, is captured in shots that reveal the difficult cohabitation between man and nature. The relationship with the river is central, but in the photos the streets not yet asphalted, the poor interiors with few objects stand out, the children look like little adults. A boy on a Vespa is the first sign of an incipient well-being.

Ravenna: Capital of Empire, Crucible of Europe by Judith Herrin, 2020

A riveting history of the city that led the West out of the ruins of the Roman Empire

Chioggia and the Villages of the Venetian Lagoon: Studies in Urban History by Richard J. Goy

This 1985 book is the study of the history of a group of villages, and one large town, that lie in the lagoons that surround Venice. Although written by an architect, it is not concerned solely with architecture, but with the whole history of the settlements, their origins, their growth and development, the occupations of their inhabitants, and the reasons for their prosperity or decline over the centuries. The book will interest professional architects and historians, many of whom will be familiar with the history and environment of Venice itself. It will also attract a more general reader, and perhaps lovers of Venice, and engender a desire to explore beyond St Mark's Square and the Rialto markets, to discover or rediscover the lesser riches of these modest but fascinating communities, whose physical environment, like that of Venice itself, has changed very little over the last two hundred years.