

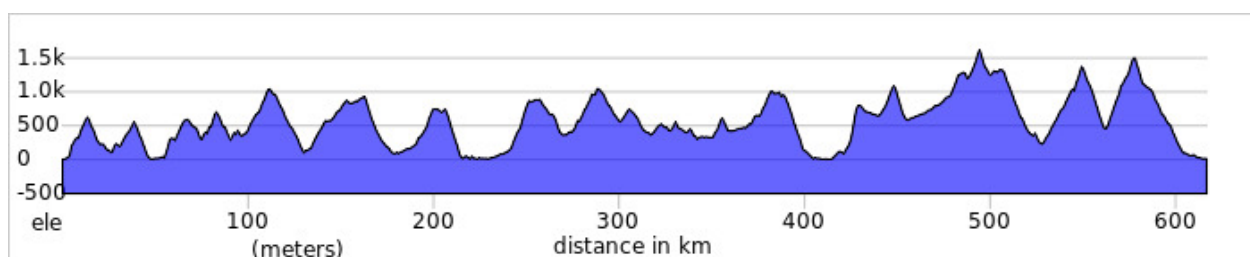
Bikexplore

Italy – The Italian Riviera, Mountains and Coast

(Tour GW243)
Price: £2150

15 September to 29 October 2024

A stunning route along the full length of the Italian Alpi Maritimi, the maritime alps in the Italian Riviera. We ride on quiet roads and visit picturesque villages absorbing the Ligurian culture. The tour is fully supported.



Tour Prospectus

We ride on extremely quiet roads through the high mountains of the Italian Riviera, the coastal region of Liguria. We visit ancient villages and absorb the Ligurian culture and cuisine. The tour runs the entire length of Liguria from La Spezia to Ventimiglia, dropping to the coast twice to spend rest days at the seaside. The tour is fully half board and stays mainly at 3* hotels.



Itinerary

Key to meals: B = Breakfast, D = Dinner

Day 1. Sunday 15 September. Arrival and overnight at Nice.

Meet at hotel, bike build.

- No cycling

Included:

- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (D)

Day 2. Monday 16 September. Nice to La Spezia.

We transfer by train to La Spezia, which is the main navy port of Italy. The train passes through and stops at several of the Cinque Terre villages, they are tricky to access by road and we will struggle to cycle through them. If you wish you can break your journey and visit one of the villages.

- No cycling

Included:

- Train tickets from Nice to La Spezia
- Bike transfer
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Day 3. Tuesday 17 September. La Spezia to Levanto.

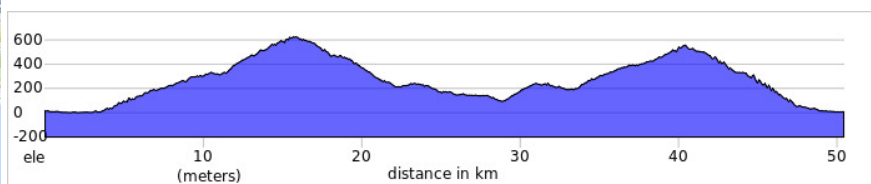
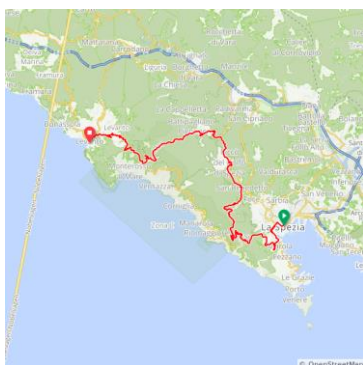
We ride along quiet roads to Levanto. The route drops to the coast at Monterosso al Mare, one of the Cinque Terre villages and then on to Levanto.

- Route distance: 58 km
- Route altitude gain: 1500 m

Included:

- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)





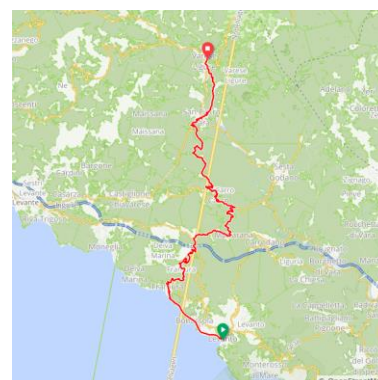
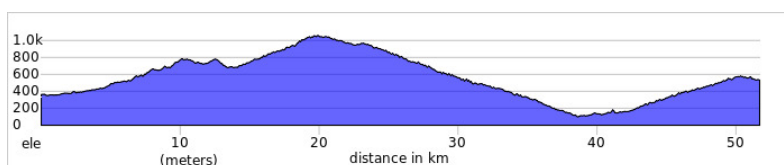
Day 4. Wednesday 18 September. Levanto to Varese Ligure.

We follow the cycle path along the coast for a few miles, then head inland using tiny lanes to Varese Ligure in the heart of the Alpi Maritimi. Varese Ligure is a lovely village in the Val de Vara with a famous circular piazza and medieval tower and bridge.

- Route distance: 50km
- Route altitude gain: 1500m

Included:

- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)



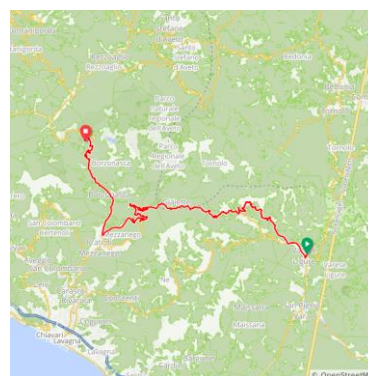
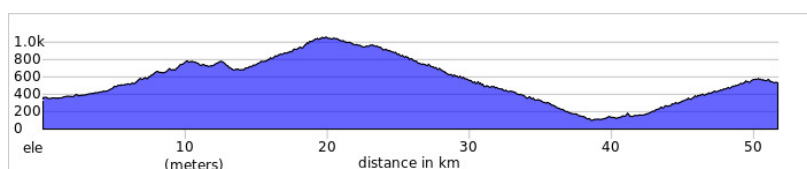
Day 5. Thursday 19 September. Varese Ligure to Centroanidra.

The route goes through the hills to an Agriturismo, Centroanidra, nestling on the side of a mountain. We may need to share rooms here as it is the only accommodation in the area, but the food and views are stupendous.

- Route distance: 53km
- Route altitude gain: 1600m

Included:

- Accommodation: Agriturismo
- Meals: (B, D)



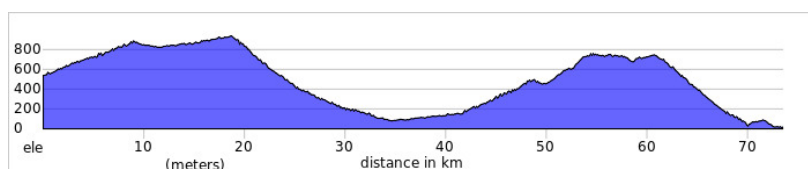
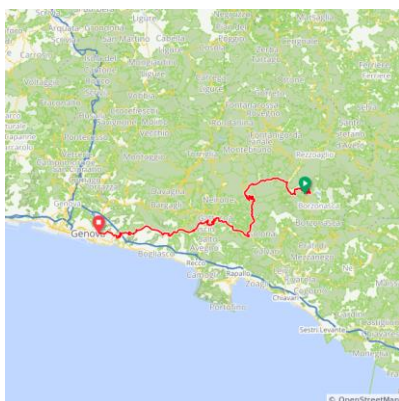
Day 6. Friday 20 September. Centroanidra to Genoa.

Leave the agriturismo, climb up over the 870m Passo della Forcella, then Passo della Scogliina, 940m. Then we ride through the hills towards the coast and then descend into Genoa.

- Route distance: 75km
- Route altitude gain: 1600m

Included:

- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)



Day 7. Saturday 21 September. Rest day at Genoa.

Genoa is the regional capital and has an illustrious history. Visit the renaissance churches and palaces, the medieval lighthouse or simply wander the streets. You can take a boat trip to Portofino, a delightful Ligurian fishing village with limited road access.

- No cycling

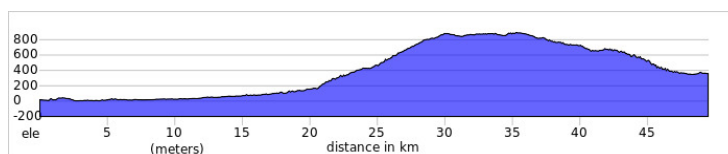
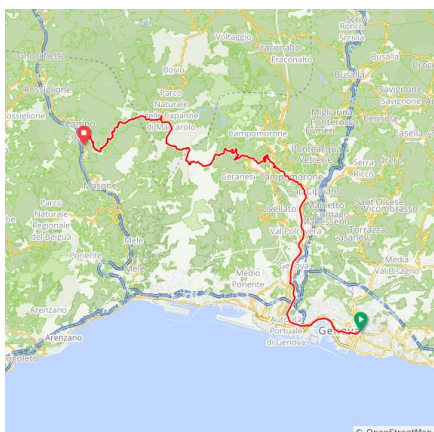
Included:

- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Day 8. Sunday 22 September. Genoa to Campo Ligure.

Genoa is a busy metropolis; we use as many cycle paths as possible to leave the city, but the roads for the first few miles will be busy. We then climb back up into the Alpi Maritimi to Campo Ligure, a delightful small Ligurian town with a medieval bridge overlooked by a small castle.

- Route distance: 50km
- Route altitude gain: 1150m
- Included:
 - Accommodation: Hotel
 - Meals: (B, D)



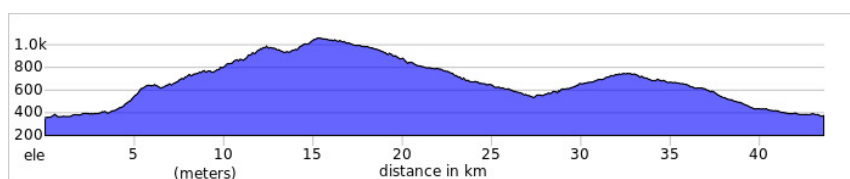
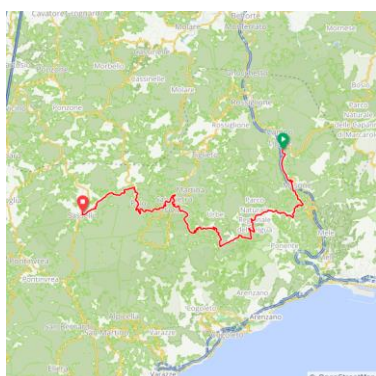
Day 9. Monday 23 September. Campo Ligure to Sassello.

We ride through the hills to Sassello. Sassello is a pretty town with a historic heart, well worth a wander around, we will have time to explore it. The town is also famous for its gastronomy.

- Route distance: 60km
- Route altitude gain: 1500m

Included:

- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)



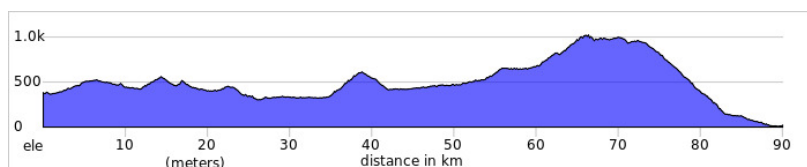
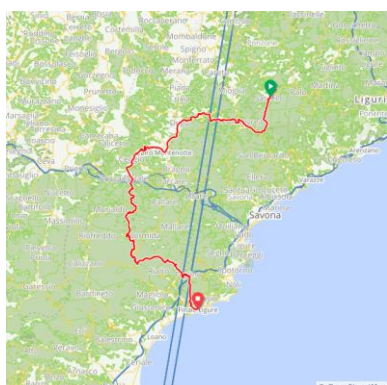
Day 10. Tuesday 24 September. Sassello to Finale Ligure.

We leave Sassello early to ride through the hills. The route takes us along Val Bormida, then we climb over the highest pass so far, the 1000m Passo Melogno. After the pass, we have a long descent to Finale Ligure on the coast.

- Route distance: 90km
- Route altitude gain: 1700m, descent 2050m

Included:

- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)



Day 11. Wednesday 25 September. Rest day at Finale Ligure.

After the long day yesterday, today a much-needed rest. Finale Ligure is an ancient Italian Borgo (town). There are two parts: the lovely 18th century port town with beaches, swimming is recommended, and the medieval walled town inland, Finalborgo. Above Finalborgo there are two castles and a pretty castle walk. Other options include: the nearby village of Varigotti which is the only village in the Riviera where the traditional houses are actually built on the beach. Cycle to Capo Noli where the main road runs along the cliff just above the Mediterranean. Cycle over the passes, ride though Le Manie a rugged plateau, or hire mountain bikes from the local shops for off road rides, Finale Ligure is a centre for off-roading in the area.

- No cycling

Included:

- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)



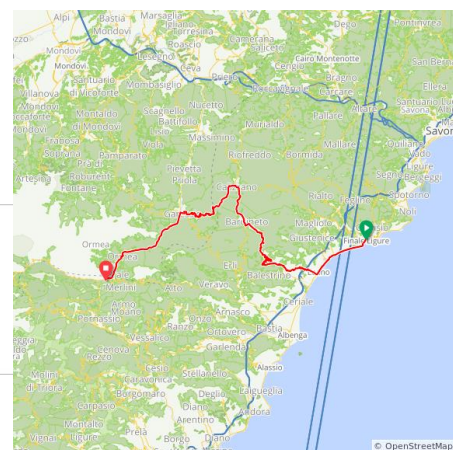
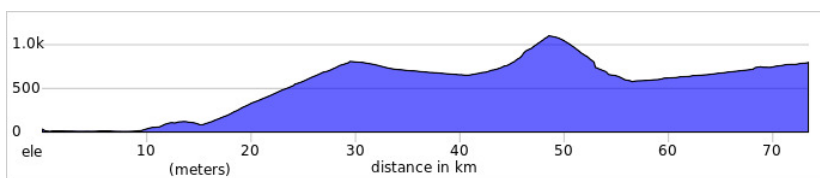
Day 12. Thursday 26 September. Finale Ligure to Ormea.

To climb back into the hills, we take one of the prettiest climbs in the area, Passo Toirano. We ride through the ancient village of Toirano on the way up. After the pass we cycle through a number of typical Ligurian villages nestling in the mountains ending at a small hotel just beyond Ormea. It is a long day, but worth it for the amazing scenery.

- Route distance: 75km
- Route altitude gain: 1500m

Included:

- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)



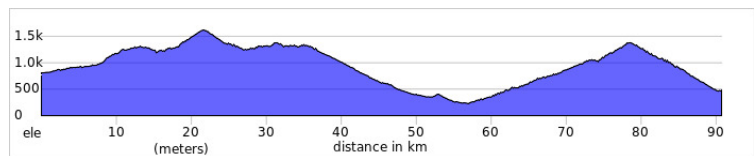
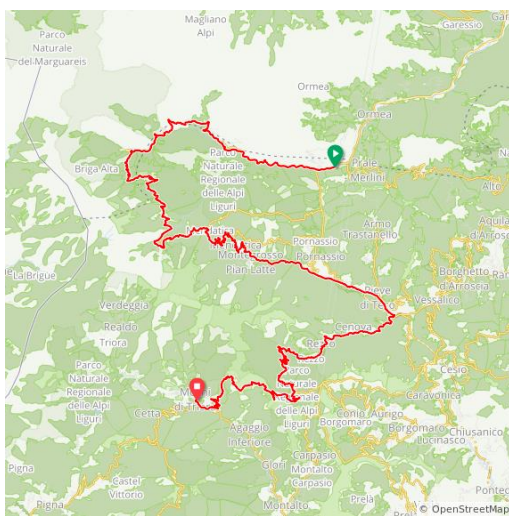
Day 13. Friday 27 September. Ormea to Molini di Triora.

The route climbs up from the hotel taking the ancient Via del Sale, or Salt route, over some tiny roads in the mountains and the highest pass of the tour, 1600m. There is a short cut that takes 40km off the total, but I recommend the longer route. We spend the night in a pretty village by a mountain stream, Molini di Triora. The hotel is quite old, but it is the only accommodation till we get to the coast. The food is excellent.

- Route distance: 90km
- Route altitude gain: 2000m

Included:

- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)



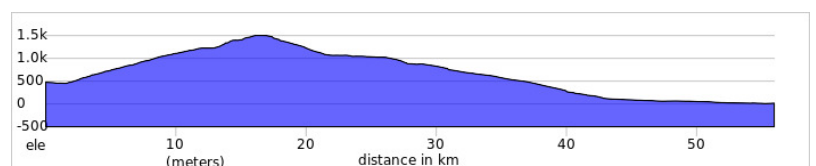
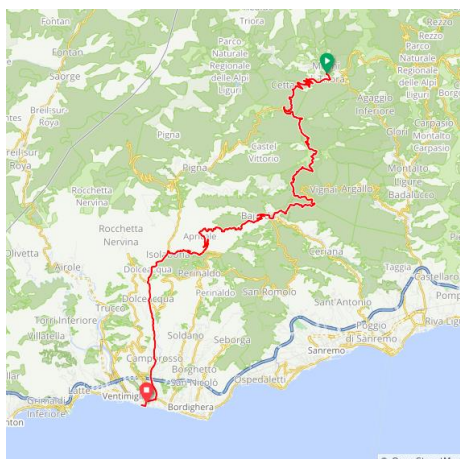
Day 14. Saturday 28 September. Molini di Triora to Ventimiglia then Nice.

We climb over a high pass straight out of Molini di Triora. The roads are delightfully deserted and we pass several stunning hilltop villages. Then it is a long lovely descent to the coast and Ventimiglia. From there we take the short train ride to Nice and then cycle back to our hotel.

- Cycling distance: 55km
- Cycling altitude gain: 1050m
- Train: 1 hour

Included:

- Train ticket
- Meals: (B, D)



Day 15. Sunday 28 September. Nice to home

The tour ends after breakfast.

Included:

- Meals: (B)

Prices and Key Dates

Price: £2150

The price is based on a minimum number of 8 participants taking part in the tour. If there are insufficient bookings by 06 July 2024, we will contact you and return all monies paid.

Price includes:

- Train trip from Nice to La Spezia.
- Train trip from Ventimiglia to Nice.
- 14 nights hotel on half board basis, sharing room.
- Vehicle support on cycling days.
- Bikexplore costs.

Price does not include:

- Travel to and from Nice from your home.
- Travel to and from the airport/ station to the Hotel at Nice.
- Drinks with evening meals.
- Lunches or refreshments during the day.
- Entry fees at any attractions visited.
- Other internal travel, including any ferry trips on the rest days.
- Any other personal expenses.
- Travel Insurance.
- Single occupancy supplement (£250, subject to availability).
- Bike transport to and from the UK, £100 extra (maximum of 8 bikes can be carried).

Payment Schedule

A deposit of £200 per person is required as soon as possible once the Tour Manager has processed your Booking Form (see below), with the final balance of £1950 per person to be paid no later than ten weeks prior to departure, by 20 July 2024.

Cancellations

Should you be forced to cancel your booking for any reason you must notify us in writing. Cancellation charges are as follows:

Written notice received:	Cancellation charge:
Up to 06 July 2024	Deposit (£200)
From 07 July 2024 to departure	100% (£2150)

To make a booking

Read the section on 'Booking a Holiday' on the Bikexplore website, then contact the Tour Manager to check that there are still places available. If there are, download and complete the booking form and email it to the Tour Manager. Once it's been processed instructions on how to pay the deposit (and balance) will be sent to you.

Holiday Information



This holiday is classed as Grade 6 - Energetic. Most days would be classified as Moderate to Moderately Energetic, but we have a couple of longer days that pushes the tour up a grade.

The information below is given by the Tour Manager to help enquirers decide if the tour is suitable for them.

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation is generally of a high standard, but two villages are quite small and there is limited choice. The two places are the Agriturismo at Centroanidra, where we may have to share rooms and the hotel at Molini di Triora, which is in need of updating. Otherwise, we will be in lovely 3-star hotels sharing rooms. Single occupancy is limited and subject to availability.

Most of the hotels have local specialities on offer. Vegetarians, vegans and special diets can be catered for, please put this down as a 'special request' on your booking form. Lunches are generally down to you; café stops or picnics.

The nature of the holiday

Most of the holiday will be 50 to 60km days, but there is a lot of climbing every day.

Rest Days

There are two rest days mid tour. The first one is at Genoa and the second one is at Finale Ligure, both on the coast.

Roads used

Mainly quiet roads, most roads have good tarmac, but some of the smaller ones will be a little rough. There will be a few busier connecting roads especially on the coast.

The area covered by the holiday

The Italian Riviera is a top tourist destination; it is as pretty as the French Riviera but has a completely different feel. Liguria is the name of the Italian region of the Riviera and has its own unique history. The culture and cuisine are typically Ligurian and also varies from the coast to the mountains.

There are a number of pretty coastal villages, some of which can be visited. The most famous are the Cinque Terre, which is a string of centuries old seaside villages clinging to the coastal cliffs. Near Genoa is Portofino, a charming fishing village with pastel-coloured houses, a beautiful harbour with crystal clear water and limited road access. Although these villages are not on our cycling route, you will be able to visit them during rest days.

Most of our tour will be in the beautiful remote mountains inland from the actual Riviera. The mountains are stunning, remote, and set with ancient villages and a strong cultural

identity. The landscape offers rich contrasts and diverse flora and fauna. Expect spectacular views and quiet routes through them. The mountains are little visited as most people stay on the coast but the climbs and views are amazing.

Route Information

Route sheets and GPX files will be provided.

Group information

The maximum group size will be 14 plus the Tour Manager and driver.

Weather and Clothing

The weather is usually good in Italy in October. However, we will be riding in the mountains so you will need to bring appropriate clothing for adverse conditions. I do not expect bad weather as Liguria has one of the best climates in Italy, however, mountains are mountains.

Cycles / Equipment

We recommend a good audax/ gravel type bike, however, since no luggage needs to be carried you can bring your lightweight road bike. Be aware that some of the roads are very small and can be rough, I recommend larger tyres than usual to avoid any problems. I reced the route on a mountain bike but will be bringing my road bike.



You should ensure your cycle is well maintained, paying particular attention to wheels, tyres and brakes. Some climbs are long so a low bottom gear (i.e., small chainring the same size or smaller than the largest cog on your rear wheel) is recommended. If you are unsure about gears, please discuss with the Tour Manager. New tyres and inner tubes are recommended. Participants will be expected to carry sufficient spares and tools each day to deal with punctures and minor repairs.

The support vehicle will not be far away in case of dramatic changes in the weather. You will not need to carry luggage, but a saddlebag, rack pack or bar bag will be useful for carrying wet weather gear, spare clothing needed for the day, camera, snacks and your map. Each participant is expected to bring and carry their personal items and spares. Helmets are your personal choice as there is no legal requirement for these to be worn in Italy.

Maps

Although you will be provided with route notes and GPX files and there will be a support vehicle as well as the Tour Manager, please bring a map with you in case you get separated



from the group. Touring Club Italy maps are a good choice; the TCI map of Liguria covers all of the route. Local more detailed maps are the Euro Cart Riviera di Ponente and Riviera di Levante, I have not found them in the UK, but they are readily available in bookshops in Italy.

Travel

Travel to the start and from the finish is not included in this holiday. Thus, it is very important that you note that neither your Tour Manager nor Bikexplore are responsible for you in any way until the appointed time at the designated meeting point. Should you fail to arrive at the appointed time for whatever reason, we will not be responsible for any additional expenses you may incur in order to meet up with the tour group. Before finalising travel arrangements, you should ensure that the tour is definitely going ahead. Should there be insufficient bookings or pandemic travel restrictions are re-imposed, we reserve the right to cancel the tour at any time. It is therefore recommended that you book fully flexible and refundable transport and

accommodation or wait until you have been told the tour will go ahead. In the event of the tour being cancelled we will not be responsible for any losses incurred outside what you pay us.

Nice is easy to access both by plane and by train. There are regular and cost-effective TGVs from Paris to Nice. www.raileurope.com

It will be possible to take some bikes from the UK to Nice in the van, but you will have to deliver your bike to the Tour Manager, and the charge is £100.

Travel insurance advice

Italy is in Europe, but Britain is no longer in the EU. Your EHIC card is valid until its expiry date, but it cannot be renewed. Instead a Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) has been introduced (see <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/apply-for-a-free-uk-global-health-insurance-card-ghic/>). However, at present Britain no longer has a reciprocal health agreement with Italy, though this might change before the start of the tour. Appropriate travel insurance is therefore essential; please check with your provider to ensure that they cover the revised conditions in Europe. Although most travel insurance

policies do not cover cancellation due to pandemic restrictions, the money you pay to us for the holiday is fully protected until we depart.

About the leader



I am a keen cyclist, trained cycle instructor, ride leader and mechanic, able to support members of the group who require it. I have led a number of tours for CTC, Cycling Holidays and Tours and Bikexplore, and I have toured extensively in Europe and further afield. As I speak Italian and have previously lived in Italy for a number of years, I know the area very well. I have stayed at length in Finale Ligure, one of the towns we visit. I reced the area in the autumn of 2022, this is the reason why the photos are all autumnal.

Greg Woodford

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