

Calabria Parks Ciclovía

Tour Organiser: Greg Woodford

Saturday 25th April to Friday 08th May 2026

This is a stunning ride that follows a set cycle route from south to north of Calabria. We enjoy tranquil roads and high passes riding through remote areas crossing four National Parks. Expect great views and wonderful countryside. We end our ride at Salerno where we visit the famous ancient roman city of Herculaneum.

Itinerary

Saturday 25th April 2026 Arival at Messina

Arrival at the hotel and prepare bikes and equipment

- No cycling
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (D)

Sunday 26th April 2026 Messina to Villa San Giovanni, then to Gambarie

The ride is a steady height gain over 30kms. This brings us close to the high point of the route.

- Route distance: 34.0km
- Route altitude gain: 1400m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Monday 27th April 2026 Ride through Parco d'Aspromonte to Serre San Bruno

The route starts in descent then climbs up on a gravel track type road to the high plateau of the Aspromonte. The ride goes over the forested high plateau and then descends to Serre San Bruno, there is one additional long climb to ride.

- Route distance: 111.0km
- Route altitude gain: 2200m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Monday 27th April 2026 Ride through Parco d'Aspromonte to Serre San Bruno

Alternate Route

The ride misses out the 400m gravel road climb to the plateau. We start at 1500m then ride to Serre di San Bruno. there is one further long climb on the route. The taxi ride is included.

- Route distance: 75.0km
- Route altitude gain: 1400m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Tuesday 28th April 2026 Serre di San Bruno to Pasqualazzo

Another long ride dictated by the lack of facilities. The route follows the Ciclovia, then leaves it at 77kms to ride along a quiet road to the hotel. There are two 600m climbs.

- Route distance: 84.0km
- Route altitude gain: 1900m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Wednesday 29th April 2026 Pasqualazzo to Caprara

We return to the Ciclovia and climb up to Caprara through an ancient forest. Caprara is a lovely ski resort. There is one big climb of 900m over 25kms.

- Route distance: 75.0km
- Route altitude gain: 2200m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Thursday 30th April 2026 Rest day at Caprara

Caprara is a ski resort on the side of a lake, there is a cycle path round the lake.

Alternatively, the ski lifts are in operation and high level walks and views. There will not be much snow.

- No cycling
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Friday 01st May 2026 Caprara to Loriga

We are in the heart of the Sila National Park, the highest in Calabria. We ride over the highest point of the tour, 1500m, this is a stunning high plain, with meadows of butterflies and flowers. The hotel is on the side of a lovely lake. The route goes through the forest round the lake to the hotel.

- Route distance: 53.0km

- Route altitude gain: 1050m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Saturday 02nd May 2026 Lorica to Acri

Still in the Sila Park. We climb back up to 1500m ASL, then round the Lago di Cecita to the village of Acri. Acri is a typical, slightly tired looking, town of the area.

- Route distance: 65.0km
- Route altitude gain: 850m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Sunday 03rd May 2026 Acri to Altomonte

We head into the Pollino National Park. We ride all the way through the park to Altomonte. The route is at a much lower altitude now and the scenery is totally different.

- Route distance: 55.0km
- Route altitude gain: 1000m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Monday 04th May 2026 Altomonte to Morano Calabro

We ride through the Pollino National Park to Morano Calabro. Morano Calabro has an historic centre which is well worth visiting, it is sited on a hill overlooking the main town. The day's short ride gives us plenty of time to climb up to the old village of Morano Calabro.

- Route distance: 45.0km
- Route altitude gain: 1000m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Tuesday 05th May 2026 Morano Calabro to Scalea

We leave the Ciclovía now, heading towards the coast. The Ciclovía actually ends at Laino Borgo, 37 kms north of Morano Calabro. We ride through the pretty village of Mormanno then head down the Valley of the River Lao to Scalea on the coast. Scalea has a pretty historic centre and beaches. Although there appears to be 1300m ascent, the day is largely downhill.

- Route distance: 70.0km
- Route altitude gain: 1300m
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Wednesday 06th May 2026 Scalea to Salerno

Rest day today. Wander the beaches, have lunch in the historic centre. The train takes 2 hours to cover the 200kms to Salerno.

- No cycling
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Thursday 07th May 2026 Visit Herculaneum

Herculaneum is the more compact of the two buried Roman towns. It is easier to visit and has excellent sites to view. If you have time there are other places to visit too, Vesuvius, Pompei and the ancient Greek town of Paestum.

- No cycling
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Friday 08th May 2026 Return to Messina

Salerno has a late afternoon ferry link to Messina. This gives us time to visit Salerno in the morning.

- No cycling
- Accommodation: Hotel
- Meals: (B, D)

Saturday 09th May 2026 Messina to home

From the hotel in Messina, back bikes and return home

- No cycling
- Accommodation: None
- Meals: (B)

Dates and Prices

Cost

- Land only price: £2480

Payment Schedule

A deposit of £250 per person is required as soon as possible once the Tour Organiser has processed your Booking Form (see below), with the final balance of £2230 per person to be paid no later than ten weeks prior to departure, by 14 February 2026.

Price includes:

- 14 nights hotel on half board basis, sharing room
- Vehicle support on cycling days
- Taxi for the 1st 30kms on day 3 if desired
- Ferry from Messina to the mainland
- Ferry from Salerno to Messina
- Entrance fees to Herculaneum
- Transport to and from Herculaneum
- Bikexplore costs.

Price does not include:

- Travel to and from Italy
- Travel to and from the airport to the hotel at Messina
- Drinks with evening meals
- Drinks and refreshments during the day
- Entry fees at any attractions visited, apart from Herculaneum, including if you choose an alternative to the visit to Herculaneum.

Cancellations

Written Notice Received	Cancellation Charge
14/02/26	250
25/04/26	2480

The price of £2480 (land only) is based on a minimum number of 8 people taking part in the holiday. If there are insufficient bookings by Saturday 14th February 2026, we will contact you and return all monies paid.

Holiday Information

Holiday rating

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 grade up. There is quite a bit of climbing on most days, the Ciclovía goes over the Apennines. If you take the optional taxi ride, then the tour could be classed as a grade 5.

Accommodation and meals

Accommodation is of a reasonable standard; we generally 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 down to you; usually café stops.

The nature of the holiday

Most of the holiday will be 60 to 80 km days. However Calabria and the Ciclovia del Parco is mountainous, so there will be quite a bit of climbing

Rest days

There is one rest day mid tour. This is at the ski resort of Caprara. And there are two rest days at the end, getting to Salerno and visiting Herulaneum.

Roads used

Mainly quiet roads, most roads have reasonable tarmac, but some of the smaller ones may be a little rough. On day 3, there is an extremely rough stretch of road for 9 kms, it climbs 400m. This might be better ridden on a gravel bike. Alternatively we can provide a taxi uplift.

The area covered by the holiday

Calabria is the region of Italy that starts just south of the Costa d'Amalfi and stretches along the west side of the peninsular to its toe, see maps. We ride south to north on the Ciclovia that crosses all the national parks in Calabria. Calabria is a mountainous area; the southernmost arm of the Apennines runs through the region.

We ride through the major national parks in Calabria, from south to north:

1. Aspromonte National Park;

'Nature is the undisputed star of this reserve. Thanks to the presence of many water streams, the lush vegetation is mixed beech woodlands. If you climb up to 2000m, you will find yourself surrounded by fabulous forests where European larches grow'.

2. Serre National Park;

'The Serre mountain complex is located between the Sila and Aspromonte mountains. It is a varied mountain group, where valleys and woodlands give way to rivers and many water sources'.

3. Sila National Park;

'The symbol of this park, which is located at the heart of Calabria, is the wolf. The wolf has been repopulating this enchanting place, its mountains and valleys. Wonderful plants and a wide range of animals live in this protected area, which features one of the most interesting biodiversity heritages in Italy'.

4. Pollino National Park;

'Straddling Calabria and Basilicata, the Park's territory is characterised by several mountain massifs that make up the southern Apennine chain: the Pollino Massif, the Orsomarso mountains and Mount Alpi'.

The season will be spring, and flowers and butterflies will abound as the ground warms up. We may see snow above the ski resort of Caprara. A few interesting villages we do visit are Acri, Altomonte and Morano Calabro. Salerno and Messina are also attractive coastal towns, as is Scalea. Salerno has a lovely cathedral of Romanesque origin and a castle nestling high above the town. Messina has a Romanesque cathedral with the largest and most complex astronomical clock in the world. Both towns have historical centres which are worth a wander.

Route information

Route sheets and GPX files will be provided.

Weather and clothing

The weather is typically Mediterranean and therefore should be good in southern Italy during this time. When I recced the route in May, the temperature hovered between 23 and 28°C, however, it is early spring, and in the mountains, so expect anything.

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, especially the section on day 3, this section is better suited for a gravel or touring bike. However, I will be offering a taxi ride that avoids that section. I recommend larger tyres than usual to avoid any problems. I recced the route on my road bike with narrow tyres, but I will be bringing a gravel 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 Calabria covers all of the route. Local more detailed maps are the Euro Cart maps, 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 Organiser 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.

There are two international airports in Sicily, Palermo and Catania, which is the closest. There are also airports in Bari, Salerno (a tiny airport with only one flight from the UK) and Naples. There are some trains along the coast, but it is in no way as accessible by public transport as other more developed areas of Europe. Messina has a train service to Catania airport.

It will be possible to take some bikes from the UK to Messina in the van, but you will have to deliver your bike to the Tour Organiser, and the charge is £120.

The ETIAS scheme will almost definitely be in operation, check this several months prior to departure, you may need to get a visa.

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.

The tour 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 managed a number of tours for CTC Holidays





and Tours and Bikexplore, and I have toured extensively in Europe and further afield. I speak Italian and have lived in Italy for a number of years. I reced the area in May 2025.

