

Villas & Vineyards

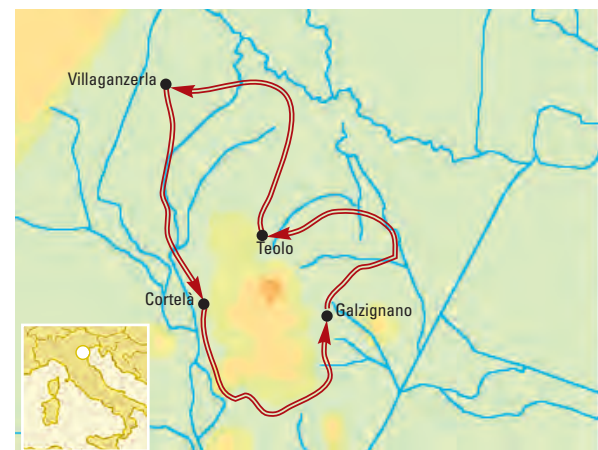
Hotel-to-hotel independent cycling

- Flat, easy, totally unspoiled cycling off the tourist trail – a great choice for first timers!
- Cherry orchards, vineyards, picturesque little villages
- Characterful, friendly hotels, great Venetian home cooking – dozens of wines to try!
- Steeped in history: medieval castles, Palladian villas, Roman roads
- Venice, Verona, Padua and Vicenza all within “rest day” reach



Our undiscovered corner of Venetia, just 60 mins (but a world away) from bustling Venice is, we think, the perfect setting for a relaxed cycling holiday. The countryside is almost entirely untouched by tourism. The cycling is gentle, and takes you through ancient vineyards, cherry orchards and along hidden canal paths. En route you eat well, and stay with some of the friendliest people we've ever met – there's a specially warm welcome at Valfrido and Angelina's farm hotel near Vicenza, and at the Ottolitri family's hotel just outside Galzignano.

This region is bursting with patrician villas, castles and great art cities spanning the 400 years when the area was ruled by the Venetian Republic. Palladio was the most famous Renaissance architect and many of his villas, including Villa Rotonda, can be visited while discovering the Venetian countryside.



VILLAS & VINEYARDS | DAY BY DAY



Day 1 Arrive in Cortelà

We pick you up in Vicenza and take you to our friendly farm hotel (50 mins) run by Gabriella and Alessandro in time for dinner.

Day 2 Cortelà to Galzignano 38km/24mi

You start along the canal path to Este. This delightful medieval town with its pastel, arcaded buildings boasts a 14C castle and an altar piece by Tiepolo in its cathedral. Next stop Monsélice. You can visit its medieval castle (converted into a sumptuous residence for a Venetian noble in the 15C). From Monsélice you follow the canal past the 19C Villa Italia, before arriving at Sig Ottolitri's friendly and family run hotel just outside Galzignano.

Day 3 At Galzignano

It's a lovely circular cycle to Arquà Petrarca, still as it was when Petrarch came here in 1370. Visit his well-preserved house before pedalling off through vineyards to the fabulous Villa Barbarigo at Valsanzibio - the C17 Italian gardens here are the best in the region.

Day 4 Galzignano to Teolo 28km/17mi or 36km/22mi

Cycling through swaying vines you reach the charming village of Battaglia. Time for a spot of wine tasting - try the local *Serprino*, a medium dry frizzante wine often compared to Prosecco - before carrying on through the spa towns of Montegrotto and Abano Terme to the Renaissance Abbey at La Praglia, still home to an order of Benedictine monks. After admiring the elegant cloisters and 15C church you cycle to Villa di Teolo where we meet you for the short transfer up to your hotel in Teolo, an elegant Liberty Villa.

Day 5 At Teolo

A former Roman settlement, Teolo's heyday was in the 15C when it became the summer home of Venice's *doges* escaping the heat on the coast. Many *palazzi* and formal gardens from the period remain. You could take a walk in the encircling Euganean hills (360° views from here) or maybe take the bus into Padua to admire the town's Giotto frescoes. Or, for a longer day out, take the bus/train to Italy's most romantic city, Venice. Enjoy a cappuccino in St Mark's Square, take a gondola under the Bridge of Sighs, admire the opulent gold decor of the Doge's Palace or visit the Peggy Guggenheim Exhibition. The list is endless!

Day 6 Teolo to Villaganzerla 27km/16mi or 38km/24mi

Today starts with an exhilarating freewheel down through the Euganean Hills to the mediaeval castle at San Martino. Then cycling by the Bacchiglione River you reach Cervarese Santa Croce in time for a relaxed lunch in the square. Onwards, it's into wine country once more to reach your charming farm hotel at Villaganzerla where you'll receive a warm welcome from Valfrido and Angelina. There's time for a dip in the pool (typically open June - early September) before dinner.

Day 7 At Villaganzerla

You could laze by the pool but it's a shame to miss out on Vicenza. A cycle path (those feeling lazy can catch the bus!) takes you there past the famous Palladian villa, *La Rotonda*. Nicknamed "Venice of the Terra Firma" for its marvellous architecture - Palladio designed dozens of the city's buildings, from the *Basilica Palladiana* in the main square to the *Teatro Olimpico* - there's plenty to explore.

Day 8 Villaganzerla to Cortelà 34km/21mi or 39km/24mi

Today's route follows the *Strada del Tocai Rosso* (the only area outside of Hungary where the red Tocai is grown). The wine road links a string of pretty villages, each with their own Venetian campanile. Then it's out across the plain to reach Vò Vecchio criss-crossed with canals. The Euganean hills are spread out in front of you as you cycle through the vineyards to Gabriella and Alessandro's farmhouse for your last dinner.

Day 9 Leave Cortelà

You return home after breakfast.

Note: Please note that, from spring 2011, cycling helmets are compulsory in Italy for children under 16. As we cannot provide these, we strongly recommend that you bring your own.



"We had a real Italian experience in an area not usually seen by tourists."

Mr Bent

Dates and Prices

Departs every two days	Tour Only
2012 departures	
May 5-25	\$2,698
May 27-31, Sep 10-Oct 16	\$2,759
Jun 2-30	\$2,815
Jul 2-Sep 8	\$2,829
Child (any dates, see notes)	\$1,667

Singles: Add \$21 per night for sole occupancy of a double room.

Child: Over 2 and under 12, sharing with 2 adults.

Room upgrade: Prices from \$13 per person, per night, based on 2 sharing.

Holiday type: Independent cycling, hotel-to-hotel, no minimum group size.

Departs: Every two days from May 5 to Oct 16.

Duration: 9 days (8 nights).

Meals: Continental breakfast and evening meals.

Other details: For "What your holiday price includes," see "Holiday Planning" section pp 84-98.

Tailor-made travel choices

Nearest Arrival Airport: Venice Marco Polo Airport

Flights can be arranged from most US/CANADA airports, with connecting transfers as required, prices and details on request.

The above prices include our standard transfers: Vicenza train station at 17:03 (transfer to hotel, 50 mins, provided). **Return:** Vicenza train station by 09:56 (transfer provided).

Rail options: Venice Mestre to Vicenza 16:32/17:03. Return: Rail Vicenza to Venice Mestre 09:56/10:28.

Second Class Italian Rail: Add \$105 per person, round trip.

First Class Italian Rail: Add \$175 per person, round trip.

Tour only: Transfers included from Vicenza train station at 17:03, and back to Vicenza train station departing hotel at 08:50.

C08VN

VILLAS & VINEYARDS | WHERE YOU STAY



Agriturismo Il Feudo
Cortelà
Days 1+8



Hotel Belvedere
★★★★
Galzignano Terme
Days 2+3



Villa Lussana
★★★★
Teolo
Days 4+5



Agriturismo L'Albara
★★★★
Villaganzerla
Days 6+7

For extra nights we recommend Teolo and Villaganzerla, and city add-ons can be arranged in Venice and Verona.