



EPIC ITALIAN ALPS CYCLING TOUR

Italian Alps: Via Slovenia, Dolomites, Stelvio & Lake Como



Meet your 'EPIC ITALIAN ALPS' Cycling Tour Directors

Sierra Sports & Tours and Cycling-Inform are pleased to present two packages for cyclists wanting to crush the most epic cols in Spain, France, Slovenia and Italy. During 2025 we will kick things off with an Epic Pyrenees cycling adventure before moving immediately over to Slovenia and Italy to conquer the Julian Alps, Dolomites and Stelvio National Parks. The tour groups will be capped at 15 riders to keep the experience intimate and to be able to provide excellent support to all our guests.

*This document focuses on the detailed tour itinerary for **EPIC ITALIAN ALPS**!*



David Heatley & Paul D'Andrea

The Sierra experience in Europe and the coaching support from Cycling-Inform will help you go back-to-back over the Pyrenees and Italian Alps! David from Cycling-Inform has 20+ years successfully preparing recreational and age group riders for the challenges of their lives; getting riders over WTF corner at Peaks Challenge ride, 25 Bright Boot Camps in the Victorian High Country, training cyclists for the world's biggest gran fondos including Europe's famous Haute Route events and preparing hundreds of clients for their own European cycling adventure. Now combined with the logistical support from Paul and his Sierra team, their European base, plus 15 years of rolling out first class cycling tours these Sierra / Cycling-Inform packages are a match made in cycling heaven.

Our story dates back to 2014 where we met at Peaks Challenge to assess ideas for future collaboration. By 2015 Paul from Sierra was riding a Cycling-Inform Bright Boot Camp to kick start his European cycling guide training. Jodie and David in the same European spring were conquering the cobbles and pave at Flanders and Roubaix. In 2017 Cycling-Inform were back to Europe with Sierra on some the biggest alpine passes at La Vuelta a España. To follow the professional riders Cycling-Inform also joined Sierra at the 2019 Criterium du Dauphine. During 2023 Sierra and Cycling-Inform joined forces to roll-out the successful Epic French Alps and Epic Italian Alps cycling tours.

Now in 2025 we are pleased to present you all the **EPIC PYRENESS** and **EPIC ITALIAN ALPS** trips of your lifetime!

2025 Epic Italian Alps (Via Slovenia, Dolomites & Stelvio)

Cycling from Venice to Milan

Welcome to the roads of cycling legends! This cycling tour will take you into the majestic Julian Alps in Slovenia, up and over the epic Dolomites and Stelvio National Parks before finishing on the beautiful shores of Lake Como.

During 2025 we start our cycling tour in Venice and finish in Milan. This tour is perfect for cyclists who would like to challenge themselves on some of Europe's biggest climbs. You will enjoy amazing bucket list climbs, such as, Vrsic Pass and Mangart Saddle (Slovenia), the Sella Ronda (Pordoi, Sella, Gardena & Campolongo), Passo Giau, Passo Falzarego, Passo Fedaia, Passo dello Stelvio, Passo Gavia and Passo Mortirolo! The tour has also been designed to give you the time to relax and enjoy northern Italy and a taste of Slovenia. With multiple nights in Bovec, Arabba, Bormio and Bellagio there will be many opportunities to soak up the Slovenian/Italian Alps and explore this beautiful part of the world at a leisurely pace!

The Dolomites are not the only region in Italy with famous climbs. As a special treat escapes to tackle Passo Ghisallo and the Sormano wall near Lake Como also await. From the mythical Giro d'Italia roads to the race defining climbs from Giro di Lombardia this tour has it all!

HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Ride the training roads of **Tadej Pogacar** (Bovec, Slovenia)
- ✓ Summit the highest asphalted road in Slovenia – **Mangart Saddle!**
 - ✓ Cycle along the turquoise waters of the **Soca River**
 - ✓ Follow the limestone rocky peaks around the **Sella massif!**
- ✓ Test your legs on **Passo Giau** and its toughest southern approach
- ✓ Conquer His Majesty the **Stelvio Pass** – Europe's 2nd highest paved pass!
 - ✓ Celebrate your achievements on **Lake Como!**



ITINERARY

DAY ONE – Saturday 2 August 2025 – Venice to Slovenia

This morning we will collect you from Venice (Marco Polo Airport or Annia Park Hotel Venice Airport) at approximately 9:00am. If you arrive to Venice pre-tour, please build your bikes to the best of your ability as after a 3hr transfer to Slovenia we will prepare ourselves to ride. After a bite for lunch, the challenging climb over 'Vrsic Pass' awaits. This is a classic climb which crosses through the heart of the Triglav National Park in the Julian Alps (Slovenia). The 9.2km climb includes no less than 24 switchbacks and its 8.2% average grade is an excellent first-up test! The original pass was built by Russian Prisoners of War during WW1. There is even a chapel roadside that was constructed to commemorate their fallen comrades.

The side we climb is an asphalted road, however, it includes short sections of cobbled switchbacks. Don't worry though as the descent includes a further 26 switchbacks on perfectly asphalted roads. We know which side we prefer to descend!! The breathtaking descent brings you into the Soca valley which is one of the jewels of Slovenia. Cyclists, hikers, rafters and climbers instantly fall in love with the nature which is all encompassing. At the tour accommodation we will go through a detailed briefing before enjoying a welcome dinner with the guides. Some epic cycling awaits!





Why Epic?

Vrsic Pass is the highest mountain pass in Slovenia (1611m altitude). The climb includes a variety of stunning landscapes including gorges, forests and limestone peaks. The climb and descent will see you take on 50 epic switchbacks. The cobbled bends resemble the famous Gotthard Pass in Switzerland. What a way to start the tour!

Meals

Lunch & Dinner included

Destinations

Kranjska Gora

Today's Ride

45km cycling / 1000m elevation gain

Accommodation

Bovec (Soca valley, Slovenia)

DAY TWO – Sunday 3 August 2025 – Mangart Saddle

Today you will cycle a brilliant out and back course up to Mangart Saddle. Maxing out at 2072m elevation you will now be faced with Slovenia's highest asphalted road. It is a long climb at 25km but it is best to break it up into three sections. The first 8km average 3% grade, followed by a middle 6km section which average 8.5% (you will encounter several 10+% ramps). With 11km to the summit you will now veer off the main road and be confronted with a gruelling section which averages 9.8% grade. The ride passes through beautiful alpine forest before reaching the 'saddle' at the summit and presenting its expansive views across the Slovenian/Italian border.

There is no question that the Mangart Saddle climb is as tough and beautiful as they come! For those who would like to bypass the final 11km section of the climb an alternative option can see the ride continue up to the Italian border at Predil Pass which then follows with lake views through to Sella Nevea.

Why Epic?

The statistics of the full Mangart Saddle climb place it in close company with other European cycling giants such as Mont Ventoux and Stelvio Pass. You will encounter a brutal 25km climb at 6.5% average grade. The last 17km though will leave you gasping for air. You will need to take our word for it, but even with all the suffering it just might be the most beautiful climb you have ever cycled!

Meals

Breakfast included

Destinations

Mangart Saddle

Today's Ride

75km / 1000m elevation gain or
90km / 2000m elevation gain

Accommodation

Bovec (Soca valley, Slovenia)



DAY THREE – Monday 4 August 2025 – Slovenia to Ovaro

The first 25km today are within Slovenia before crossing the border into Italy. An easy 10km to Zaga (Slovenia) will find you at the base of the Passo di Tanamea climb. This 14.1km climb with a 4.7% average grade is the longest climb of the day. Without even knowing it you will now be cycling in Friuli region (Italy). The next 45km follow the river valley near Gemona which will be a welcome reprieve after two challenging days in the Slovenian mountains. As the ride passes Lake Cavazzo you will encounter some stunning scenery on quiet curving roads. The final 25km from Tolmezzo are ‘undulating’ following quiet backroads through to the tour hotel in Ovaro. Our tour hotel was used by Chris Froome during his ‘Monte Zoncolan’ Giro d’Italia reconnaissance rides with Team Sky.

Why Epic?

With 100km and 1650m elevation gain under your belts most of you will decide to rest in Ovaro with the Dolomites approaching tomorrow. There may be a few of you curious though to find out what all the ‘Monte Zoncolan’ fuss is about. Just another 10.5km climb at 11.5% average grade. This climb rises vertically from the Ovaro township and all cyclists are greeted by the ‘Welcome to the Gates of Hell’ signboard. Hmmm!

Meals

Breakfast & Dinner included

Destinations

Lago di Cavazzo

Today’s Ride

100km / 1650m elevation gain or
120km / 2850m elevation gain

Accommodation

Ovaro (Friuli, Italy)

DAY FOUR – Tues 5 August 2025 – Tre Cime di Lavaredo

After breakfast there is a 1.5hr transfer to Lake Misurina. This is perhaps one of the nicest alpine lake settings to enjoy a coffee while the team prepare the bikes for today's ride. Now you have made it. You are about to tackle the first of three big rides in the Dolomites!

The cycling begins today with the Tre Cime di Lavaredo climb (9km / 6.9% average grade but 4km are at 12%). From the 2300m summit some of the most brilliant geological landscapes watch over you! The road to the summit is closed to general traffic so cyclists get to enjoy the climb. Stay alert though to the local buses which deliver the hikers at regular intervals up to the top. Now that you are back down at Lake Misurina the route heads in search of Cortina d'Ampezzo. The 10km descent from Passo Tre Croci down to Cortina is one of the most enjoyable free-flowing rides you will ever experience.

Cortina d'Ampezzo has been awarded the 2026 Winter Olympic Games so it is a dream summer and winter playground! The next challenge which presents itself kicks up out of Cortina and goes by the name Passo Falzarego. 'Falzarego' is one of the longer climbs in the Dolomites (15.9km / 5.8% ave. grade) but its constant grade will help everyone in their quest to ride through to Arabba in the heart of the Sella Ronda.

Why Epic?

'Tre Cime di Lavaredo' includes three emblematic peaks in the Dolomites. They were awarded UNESCO heritage in 2009.

Cima Grande measures 2999m altitude and hikers from all over the world come to explore these geological treasures.

Between 1967 and 2023 it has been used as a summit finish on 7 occasions during the Giro d'Italia. Eddy Merckx and Vincenzo Nibali have been stage winners and during 2023 it was Colombian rider Santiago Buitrago who took line honours.

Meals

Breakfast & Dinner included

Destinations

Lago di Cavazzo

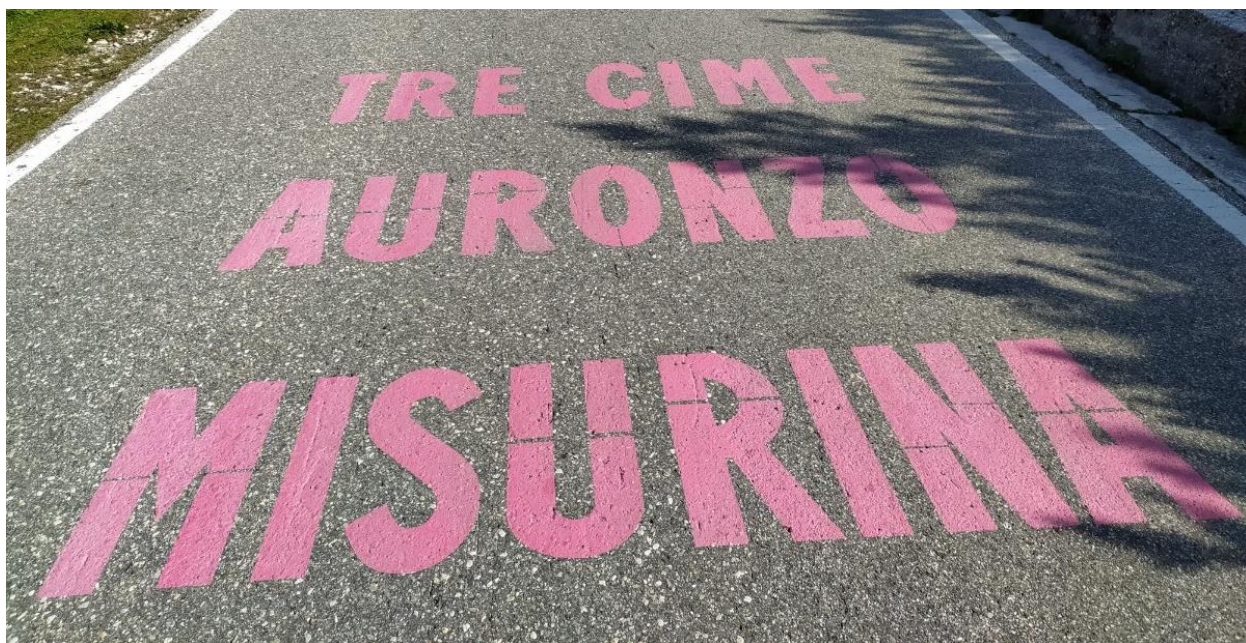
Today's Ride

65km / 1250m elevation gain or

85km / 2000m elevation gain

Accommodation

Arabba (Dolomites, Italy)



DAY FIVE – Wednesday 6 August 2025 – Sella Ronda

One of the world's most iconic cycling routes is on offer today: the Sella Ronda loop!! The Sella Ronda is a must for any cyclist who visits the towering Dolomites mountain region. There are 4 steps to become a member of the Sella Ronda club: Passo Pordoi, Passo Sella, Passo Gardena and Passo Campolongo. The views of the jagged limestone peaks, pine forests, alpine meadows and winding roads will be etched into your memory for a lifetime!

1. Pordoi: 9.2 km, Gradient: 6.9%
2. Sella: 5.5 km, Gradient: 7.9%
3. Gardena: 5.8 km, Gradient: 4.3%
4. Campolongo: 5.8 km, Gradient: 6.1%

Don't let the relatively low kilometre count for the Sella Ronda trick you today as each pass goes accumulating elevation, almost 1650m of elevation gain! This will probably be the most scenic consecutive 55km of cycling you will ever ride! For those wanting more the road dips down to Caprile before climbing a new road back to Arabba.



Why Epic?

The Sella Ronda is the core of the 'Maratona dles Dolomites' gran fondo cycling event. 9000 riders line up every year to tackle the Maratona which is described by National Geographic as "one of the biggest, most passionate, and most chaotic bike races on Earth". Riding around the Sella Massif is about as good as it gets for mountain scenery!

Meals

Breakfast included

Destinations

Corvara

Today's Ride

55km / 1650m elevation gain or
100km / 2400m elevation gain

Accommodation

Arabba (Dolomites, Italy)



DAY SIX – Thursday 7 August 2025 – Passo Giau & Fedaia

Starting out in Arabba allows the perfect chance to ride yet another classic Dolomites Giro double. For all the Giro d'Italia tragics out there you would have heard about the southern approach of Passo Giau! For most cyclists who have travelled Italy in and out 'Passo Giau South' will be in their top 10 climbs. This beauty measures 9.5km and the 9.4% average grade takes you up to 2236 metres elevation. A little like Alpe d'Huez in the French Alps, Km 1 of this pass is its toughest with ramps constantly reading 10-12%. At the summit you will be in awe of the seemingly sculptured mountain peaks surrounding you (Nuvolau, Lastoni del Formin, Cerner, Croda da Lago and Tofane). This could well be your most scenic coffee stop yet. Didn't we say that though on Day 4 also!!

From Giau the ride glides back down towards Caprile. With Stelvio Passo looming tomorrow some might decide to take the van through to Canzei for lunch. For those keen to ride some more there will be the chance to climb Passo Fedaia. 'Fedaia' is a classic climb and it was last used during the queen Stage 20 of the 2022 Giro d'Italia when Jai Hindley upset Richard Carapaz in the final brutal kilometres. To make things really interesting we hope to ride through the Sottoguda canyon at the base of the eastern Fedaia ascent but this will depend if the road is open to cyclists or not. Either way there will be a 14km climb up to the majestic Fedaia lakes which were used as the backdrop to the 'Italian Job' movie. A fast descent down to Canazei for lunch before a 2hr van transfer to near the base of the Stelvio Pass.





Why Epic?

Passo Giau has been chosen various times as the Cima Coppi (the highest peak) in the Giro d'Italia cycling race. It is the highest mountain pass in the Cortina area and when combined with Passo Fedaia makes for our Queen stage through the Dolomites! At the top of the Fedaia pass there will be time to soak up the enormity of the Marmolada glacier which at 3343m elevation is the highest peak in the Dolomites!

Meals

Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner included

Destinations

Canazei

Today's Ride

50km / 1150m elevation gain or
80km / 2150m elevation gain

Accommodation

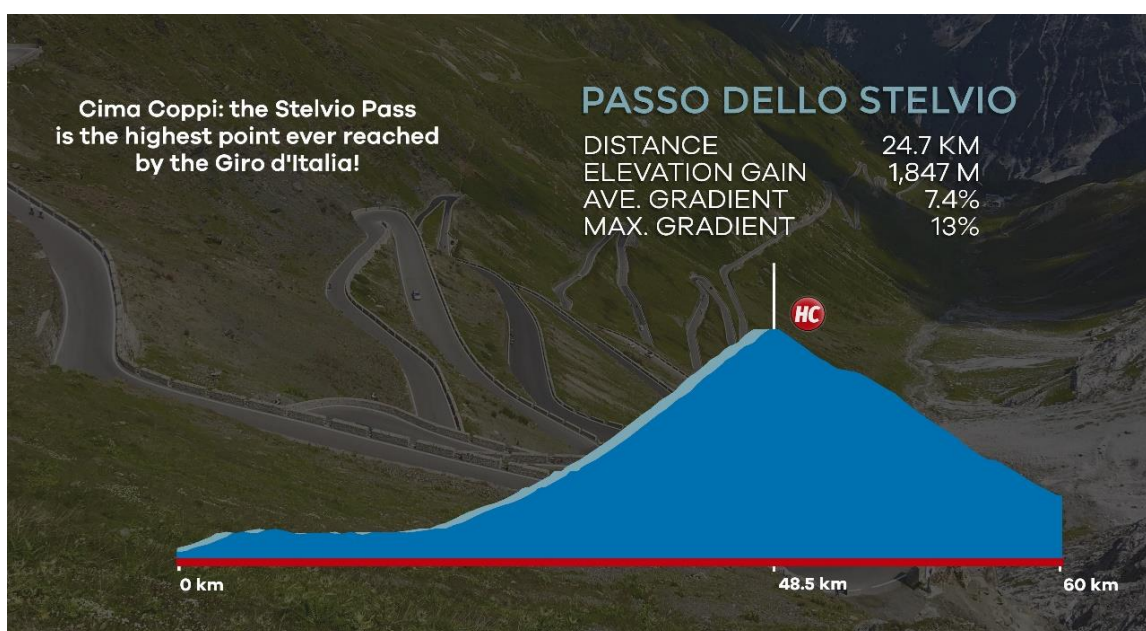
Silandro (Italy)

DAY SEVEN – Friday 8 August 2025 – Stelvio Pass

From Silandro you will ride from the hotel along the bike path to the base of the Stelvio Pass. Past guests have found this 20km through the apple orchards and woodlands as a welcome warm-up. Now you will need to be ready to climb the mythical Stelvio north side with its 48 hairpin bends that rise up and up for 25km and which gain 1840 metres of elevation. Passo Stelvio (2758m) is the highest asphalted mountain pass in the Eastern Alps, second only to Col de l'Iseran (2770m) in the French Alps in elevation and with more than twice the number of switchbacks as the famous Alpe d' Huez. The climb is epic in every sense of the definition. At the top you can take a bow to his majesty the Stelvio Pass. Your sense of achievement will be at an all time high!

When it comes to Giro d'Italia history the Stelvio Pass has been contested on 12 occasions. It first appeared in 1953 when during the penultimate stage the Italian legend Fausto Coppi attacked on the Stelvio Pass to take the lead and secure victory in Bormio. This guy Coppi was pretty good right! This would be his fifth and final Giro title and all thanks to the Stelvio.

Stelvio is a big day and we still have the descent down to the Bormio village to enjoy. A descent that includes many upper switchbacks, waterfalls and avalanche structure passings, before it finally straightens up and you can let out the brakes a little. A day for the memory bank!





Why Epic?

The north side of the Stelvio is the iconic, legendary climb from the Giro d'Italia. 7 of its 12 passings have been held during either Stage 20 or 21 highlighting its importance. With the race held every May the norm is to watch the pro peloton climbing alongside walls of snow elevating it to a level of epic which is unparalleled to the other Grand Tours!

Meals

Breakfast & Dinner included

Destinations

Prato dello Stelvio

Today's Ride

70km / 1900m elevation gain

Accommodation

Bormio (Lombardy, Italy)



DAY EIGHT – Sat 9 August 2025 – Rest Day or Mortirolo

The Stelvio Pass is a major cycling feat, so this morning some guests might prefer to sleep in and spend the day to rest and explore the Bormio village. In regards to the cycling though there are always plenty of options around Bormio but the plan is to initiate those who are keen on the Mortirolo climb!



A road that was always a secondary mountain route became asphalted in 1990 and a new page in the Giro history books was opened. In those 30 years there have been as many as 14 Giro crossings and names such as Marco Pantani, Ivan Basso, Steven Kruiswijk and Luis Leon Sanchez have all lead the peloton over this 1851m elevation summit. It will be a great chance for everyone to test themselves on an authentic Italian wall.

As we ride back into Bormio feel free to head straight for the hotel or kick-on up to the Bormio 2000 ski station (9.1km / 7.7% average grade). Grab a coffee and admire the views of the valley below before another great descent.

Why Epic?

With climb statistics that put Mortirolo in the same league as Zoncolan (Italy) or Angliru (Spain) it is one 'out and out' cycling challenge. 12km and 1190m elevation gain. We will leave you all to do the maths!

Meals

Breakfast & Lunch included

Destinations

Mortirolo

Today's Ride

Rest Day or
75km / 1850m elevation gain or
95km / 2550m elevation gain

Accommodation

Bormio (Lombardy, Italy)

DAY NINE – Sunday 10 August 2025 – Passo Gavia

After your cycling heroics on the Stelvio Pass and Mortirolo for some it is difficult to get going today. But you can rest assured after a good warm-up you will be glad you have signed up for yet another authentic challenge. Like the Stelvio Pass, Passo di Gavia (2621m) also rises out of the Bormio sport village. This is just another mythical climb that has crowned many modern-day Giro d'Italia winners! 'Gavia' with its 1400 metres elevation gain over 25km leaves one short of breath (5.5% average grade). From Bormio the climb begins as a major road accessing ski villages which then changes in a blink of an eye to a narrow remote mountain road which passes eerily through forest and later up into a barren glacier field. The 'real' Gavia road begins at Km12.5 with the first right hand switchback out of Santa Caterina ski village. We guarantee that you'll never forget its tight switchbacks and steep ramps!

1. Km 0 – 6: Gradient: 2.5%
2. Km 6 – 12.5: Gradient: 6.0%
3. **Km 12.5 – 23: Gradient: 7.4%**
4. Km 23 – 25.6: Gradient: 3.5%

The Gavia summit is a remarkable location but to get there you have to deal with its forever changing gradients. Near the summit you find the beautiful Lago Bianco with the Corno dei Tre Signori mountain (3359m) keeping guard. And right at the top the glacier means the temperature at this elevation are always quite low even in the middle of the summer. Jump into the family owned cafeteria (rifugio) for a nice hot chocolate or coffee! Since 1960 there have been 10 Giro d'Italia crossings. Interestingly enough though the Gavia has also seen several race cancellations due to terrible weather conditions (1961, 1984 and 2013). Since the mid-1990s the Giro has scheduled 8 of its 10 Gavia crossings highlighting the desire of the modern race organisers to showcase this cycling giant as a true 'Cima Coppi' for the highest point in the race!

As we ride back into Bormio the route continues for an optional 10km climb up to the 2020 Giro Stage 18 summit finish on Laghi di Cancano. The first half of the climb scales the side of the valley before the final section converts into a series of curving switchbacks. At the 8km mark you pass the two medieval towers (Torri di Friaie) and push on to the rifugio and the spectacular views over the lake.

Post-ride there will be a 2hr transfer for everyone to Lake Como and our postcard perfect base for the final two nights.

Why Epic?

For some guests the Gavia climb has actually been a more difficult proposition than Stelvio Pass due to its UNPREDICTABILITY. Stelvio is an engineered modern road, almost a mountain highway. The Gavia though is a lesser trafficked road which is often closed for longer periods of the year.

The quality of the asphalt is poorer, its rougher, the road widens and narrows, the switchback corners viciously ramp up rather than flattening and the weather is usually more extreme.

Battling between how to ride the alternating flatter and steeper grades has also seen many riders push too hard before entering the final 13km on the 'real' mountain road!

However, apart from all of its challenges we are always amazed to watch our cyclists time trial the final two kilometres around the lake to the summit on a false flat!

At this stage of the tour 3.5% ave. grade will now feel flat!!



Meals

Breakfast

Destinations

Laghi di Cancano

Today's Ride

60km / 1350m elevation gain or
90km / 2000m elevation gain

Accommodation

Bellagio (Lake Como, Italy)

DAY TEN – Monday 11 August 2025 – Lake Como

This morning the tour concludes with a classic cycling loop from Bellagio. Bellagio is considered to be the pearl of Lake Como. The grand finale concludes on the 'Ghisallo' and 'Sormano' climbs which are used during the Giro di Lombardia professional race (5th cycling monument race alongside Milan-San Remo, Tour of Flanders, Paris Roubaix and Liege-Bastogne-Liege). It is a wonderful experience arriving at Piazzale del Ghisallo with the church dedicated to cyclists and the new cycling museum. We will finish descending to our hotel for the final celebration with spectacular Lake Como views!



Why Epic?

Muro di Sormano will be an optional 2km detour for those who would like to push themselves over this short but painfully steep climb.

The climb is 1.7km long but with an average gradient of 17% and ramps pressing 24% it's one of the toughest challenges around!

The climb first featured in racing circles during three consecutive editions of the Giro di Lombardia during the early 1960's.

Many riders though were forced to walk or pushed up by cycling fans and in 1963 it quickly disappeared from the pro scene.

In 2006 'il Muro' returned to local racing and by 2012 the Giro di Lombardia was back writing 'Sormano' into cycling folklore!

Meals

Breakfast & Dinner

Destinations

Bellagio

Today's Ride

55km / 1400m elevation gain

Accommodation

Bellagio (Lake Como, Italy)

DAY ELEVEN – Tuesday 12 August 2025 – Goodbyes

Following breakfast we will transfer you to Milan Malpensa Airport by 10:30am (1.5hr drive). If you would like to spend additional days relaxing and enjoying the Lake Como area please feel free to ask us for more information. We hope you have enjoyed your 'Italian Alps' cycling experience and we look forward to seeing you again in the near future!

Meals: Breakfast

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Tour Package:

Epic Italian Alps (2 – 12 August 2025)

Tour Inclusions:

10 nights accommodation (twin share), 4 star hotels
All breakfasts included, 3 picnic lunches & 6 dinners with beer & wine
10 epic guided rides (includes support van & mechanic)
Food and drink during rides
Commemorative cycling jersey
Comprehensive tour booklet (ride maps and profiles)
On-road climbing & descending classes

Price: 4350 Euro (Payment in \$AUD available)

Minimum 6 participants / Maximum 15 participants

EXTRAS

Cycling-Inform 24 week training package (includes coaching & mentoring): \$AUD 2800

Premium tour pack: 1500 Euro

(Includes daily bike clean & tune, 4 laundry services, daily 30min massage, room upgrade & all dinners)

Single room supplement: 850 Euro

Carbon road bike hire (Mechanical 105 shifting, 11/32 cassette, rim brakes): 300 Euro

Carbon road bike hire (Di2 105 electronic shifting, 11/34 cassette, disc brakes): 500 Euro

2 nights Transition Package (Venice, 31 July to 2 August 2025): 1300 Euro

CONTACT



Sierra Sports & Tours specialises in European road cycling tours with annual trips through France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Portugal, Slovenia & Switzerland. Cycling is our life, bike travel our passion and our number one priority is to support you in your quest to cycle the very best of Europe!

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Cycling-Inform has nearly two decades of cycling coaching experience in customising training plans and master classes for recreational riders and racing cyclists. Our focus is on effective training so you achieve real breakthroughs with your cycling performance.

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