Daily Itinerary:

**Sunday, 08 May 2016**
**Depart from home / Fly overnight to Bari**
Depart from home and travel to Italy. The particulars of your arrival overseas are detailed with your flight itinerary.

**Monday, 09 May 2016**
**Arrive**
Upon arrival at the airport in Bari, Italy, a VBT representative meets you and helps you transfer (approximately 1 hour) to your first night’s lodging.

If you are going to be delayed meeting our transfer for more than 15 minutes due to delayed or lost luggage, please let our driver know by calling or sending a text message to +39 330 96 49 27. The driver will be generally able to wait for up to 45 minutes from the time your flight lands, after which you would be responsible for your own transfer. You may also contact our One Call travel assistance to advise of your delay and they will contact our transfer company.

Upon arrival in Ostuni, meet the friendly staff of our hotel and settle in. At 5:30 p.m., meet our local guide, and stretch your legs on an orientation walk through the narrow, white-washed limestone streets of this small city. Admire the graceful towers, staircases, arches, balconies and carved doorways, many of which are adorned with colorful pots of flowers or garlic and tomato crowns left to dry in the sun. Dinner is on your own tonight.

**Ostuni Palace Hotel**

**Tuesday, 10 May 2016**
**Warm-up ride to Egnatia**
A transfer at 10:00 a.m. will take you to our first masseria, where you will be staying for the next three days. Explore the peaceful surroundings on a self-guided walk (the hotel reception will deliver you the VBT route directions), enjoy the amenities of this luxurious country resort or maybe join in an optional cooking class organized by the masseria. Please refer to VBT City Info Package for more details. Meet your VBT Trip Leaders, who will be wearing VBT staff garments, at 2:00 p.m. in the main lobby. Please plan to eat lunch before you meet them.

The Masseria Torre Coccaro and its sister, Masseria Torre Maizza, are 5-star resorts set alongside each other on the kind of historic fortified farms for which this region is known. Masseria is the local name for these large farms, which were fortified around the 16th century to ward off attacks by pirates and brigands. Masserie feature high boundary walls, angular towers, drawbridges, and watchtowers. Inside the walls, families worked and lived alongside their own church, oil mill, and oven to bake bread. These farms would also house cisterns for water, storage rooms for tools and hay, stables, and everything else needed for day-to-day life. Over the years, these two award-winning masserie have been reviewed by prestigious magazines like the World Times Magazine, Mr. & Mrs. Smith Guide, Condé Nast Traveler, and Tatler.

After meeting your VBT Trip Leaders, join them for a safety and bike-fitting session. Then take a short warm-up ride along quiet country roads past 800-year-old olive groves to Egnatia, an ancient Messapican (and later Roman) coastal town of great economic and military importance in the 10th century. A short stop at its archaeological museum reveals precious finds such as sculptures, jewels, funeral equipment, and the particular pottery produced here, called gnathia.
Later, enjoy a welcome cocktail reception on the elegant hotel patio. Dinner is at the hotel restaurant and is prepared with local products and herbs produced on the farm.

**Meals:** B, D

**Daily Options:** 6 miles (10 km)

**Masseria Torre Maizza**

**Wednesday, 11 May 2016**

**Cycle to Savelletri and Monopoli**

After breakfast, we cycle along the coast and on quiet roads, completely surrounded by ancient olive trees. Puglia ranks first in Italy in the production of olive oil, wine, and hay, and second for almonds. Continue to Monopoli, where we stop to visit the beautiful cathedral and the old harbor. Spend free time here exploring and eating lunch on your own. Walk the maze of pedestrian streets in Monopoli's old city center, and see why they make the city so intimate and unique.

In the afternoon, ride back on a different route to your beautiful hotel and enjoy its numerous amenities. There is time to enjoy the hotel sandy beach and swim in the sea. Tonight, dinner is in the hotel restaurant.

**Meals:** B, D

**Daily Options:** 17 or 25 miles (29 or 41 km)

**Masseria Torre Maizza**

**Thursday, 12 May 2016**

**Olive oil tasting / Alberobello / The Itria Valley**

This morning, we ride along the coast and inland to Masseria Il Frantoio, another award-winning country hotel famous for the quality of the food. The estate extends over 150 acres and includes a “secret garden” planted with orange and lemon trees, as well as a well-preserved underground oil mill. Our hosts Armando and his wife Rosalba have collected many interesting odds and ends over the years, from ancient dresses and hats to precious books and a gramophone. Each piece has its own story, as we will see.

Our lunch at Il Frantoio is prepared using produce grown on the farm and an experience of the five senses. We’ll also have the opportunity to try a sampling of five different extra-virgin oils that Rosalba uses to flavor her focaccia, pickles, preserves, and delicious *laganari* pasta.

Afterward, shuttle or continue cycling to our hotel. Later tonight, we shuttle to Alberobello in the Itria Valley, where we visit with a local expert to learn about “trulli” (traditional Puglian stone huts) and why this unique style of architecture has been recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. A *trullo* consists of a whitewashed, round house topped by a large cone of local stones—all assembled without mortar. It is believed that *trulli* originated as storage sheds built for agricultural implements. Much later, they became dwellings, with adjoining buildings added as families grew. Many *trulli* are still used and inhabited today, and some of their roofs show mysterious chalk marks, either to protect them from evil or to bless the house.

Pick a restaurant for your dinner on own tonight in Alberobello.

**Meals:** B, L

**Daily Options:** 18 or 35 miles (30 or 56 km)
Masseria Torre Maizza

Friday, 13 May 2016
Acaya / Cycle along the coast of Salento
Leave Savelletri and take a morning shuttle further south to discover another area of Puglia: Salento. Begin biking from the walled city of Acaya. Ride through the ancient city archway on country roads free from traffic and marked as bike paths. We reach the ragged coast and enjoy the spectacular view of Torre dell'Orso village, rising steeply from the sea and sandy bay. The village is a good spot to buy some lunch before hitting the road again, or enjoy a shuttle to the hotel. The afternoon offers more fun cycling on quiet country roads and along the small Alimini Lakes till our next hotel.

After settling in our romantic masseria, you may want to enjoy the hotel amenities or relax with a good book. Dinner is at our hotel restaurant tonight.

Meals: B, D

Daily Options: 12.5 or 30 miles (20 or 48 km)

Masseria Montelauro

Saturday, 14 May 2016
Cycle to Otranto / Discover Otranto
Bike from our hotel on country roads and cycle through sleeping villages where a stop in a bar for an Italian coffee can be a great discovery. Our route is shaded by big olive trees and old oaks, as you head toward the sea to Otranto

Discover this picturesque town on the Italian coast. Founded by the Greeks, Otranto is surrounded by great ramparts and walls. From late spring onward, its atmosphere is extremely lively with local craft studios selling clay whistles, baskets, hand-dyed fabric, and ceramics. The city's highlight is certainly the huge, 8,611-square-foot floor mosaic representing the Tree of Life, created in 1163 by a monk in the Otranto cathedral.

After our visit, cycle flat country roads, catching sight of menhirs and dolmens—ancient monoliths and tombs—before getting back to our hotel. This evening, we shuttle to Otranto for dinner on your own at one of the many outdoor cafés or restaurants. Or, if you prefer, enjoy dinner at the hotel.

Meals: B

Daily Options: 25 or 30 miles (40 or 48 km)

Masseria Montelauro

Sunday, 15 May 2016
Discover the southern tip of Italy / Picnic on the sea
After breakfast, we set out on one of the best bike rides in all of Italy. Starting in the interior of Salento, we follow gentle rural pathways through little villages to the coastal town of Castro Marina. Relax on the way with a picnic lunch prepared by your Trip Leaders.

Continue to Santa Cesarea, a quiet town set on the edge of the Adriatic Sea. From here, we follow the cliffs to the town of Porto Badisco, famous for its azure waters and prehistoric Cervi Grottoes. In Porto Badisco, take time for a dip before continuing to Cape Otranto, the easternmost tip of Italy. We cycle back to the hotel in time to freshen up before a special farewell dinner at a cozy country restaurant and wine producer
to feast with Puglia wines and specialties.

**Meals:** B, L, D

**Daily Options:** 14, 22 or 26 miles (23, 35 or 42 km)

**Masseria Montelauro**

**Monday, 16 May 2016**

**Transfer to Lecce**
Transfer to the Hotel Patria Palace in Lecce, an elegant and centrally located 5-star hotel, arriving at about 10:30 a.m. A customized walking tour can be purchased at the time of your booking. Lecce is a beautiful Baroque city, called “the Florence of the South,” thanks to the skill with which local builders and stonemasons worked the soft, pink-tinged local stone called *pietra dorata*.

Explore Piazza Sant'Oronzo, the city's main square and the heart of local activities for centuries. The square's centerpiece is the Roman amphitheater. From here, narrow streets fan out into the city's charming quarters.

The gem of Lecce is Piazza Duomo, enclosed on three sides by the cathedral and two palaces belonging to the church. Though this is one of the largest squares in Europe, it has an intimate feel that invites people-watching from a local café or bakery. Your City Information Packet will provide useful recommendations for exploring on your own for the rest of the day. Dinner is on your own tonight.

**Meals:** B

**Patria Palace Hotel**

**Tuesday, 17 May 2016**

**Depart for home**
After breakfast, transfer to the Brindisi airport for your flight to Rome or your flight back home. VBT recommends that you check the transfer time in your “Transfer Reminder” the night before your flight. The transfer is prearranged with the reception desk and is prepaid by VBT.

**Please note:** VBT transfer times and departure points are finalized in advance and cannot be modified for individual guests. If you extend your stay beyond the scheduled program dates, return transportation to the airport will be at your own expense.

**Meals:** B