



The Sardinian West Coast : From Alghero to the Costa del Sud

*Cycling along the Savage Coast of Italy's Most Genuine Island:
Alghero, Bosa, Sinis peninsula & Tharros, Costa Verde &
Piscinas, Arbus, Sant'Antioco & the Costa del Sud*



TRIP NOTES 2016

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****GENIUS LOCI TRAVEL - The Real Spirit Of Italy****



INTRODUCTION

Sardinia, Italy's second largest island, is well-known for its summer jet set tourism along its spectacular coast, especially along the Costa Smeralda in the north-east. It is, however, an ideal spot for active vacations throughout the year as well, and not in the least for cycling holidays. The island is a region of staggering natural beauty and many cultural treasures. Best known for its wild spectacular coastline, where towering cliffs are interrupted only by small bays dotted with beautiful sandy beaches where the crystalline Mediterranean laps at the shores, it is also home to several hidden natural, cultural and culinary marvels. Its ancient nuragic culture and the remains of several Phoenician and Roman towns, as well as charming medieval towns and villages, are only a short distance away from the busy coastal tourist centres, waiting to be explored by the traveller in the know. Some of the least known, but equally beautiful coastal scenery is on the western side of the island, the so-called Costa Corralina and Costa Verde.

This tour gives you the opportunity to discover both the more touristy and the quiet hidden, but no less spectacular, sides of Sardinia's west coast. You will start from the charming Aragonese town of Alghero, proudly showing off its Spanish heritage in both architecture and local traditions, and cycle all the way south to magical Pula near Cagliari, well known for the Phoenician remains of the ancient town of Nora. Along the way you will follow some of the most spectacular coastal roads in Sardinia, as well as heading inland to discover the real original Sardinia, untouched by modern mass tourism. You will cycle through medieval Bosa and the plains and rolling hills of the Medio Campidano province, and past the ancient ruins of Tharros and the high sand dunes of Piscinas. You will see flocks of flamingos roaming around the wetlands of the Sinis peninsula, explore the old lead and silver mines of Nebida and enjoy the peace and quiet of the island of Sant'Antioco.

During your trip you will stay in very nice hotels, located in some of Sardinia's most suggestive little towns and villages. After your day's cycling along the amazingly scenic coastal roads, or on the quiet inland lanes, you will be able to relax with an 'aperitivo' and restore yourselves with tasty dinners based on local specialities, knowingly prepared by local cooks that are handing down centuries-old culinary traditions.

On this amazing cycling adventure you will discover several hidden aspects of the island of Sardinia and see for yourselves why it has become one of southern Europe's last 'secret' cycling paradises. It will become clear that it only takes a little effort to get 'off the beaten track', finding yourselves surrounded by overwhelming nature far away from the crowds. In short, you'll explore this delightful island in a totally different way.



Please note: this is a moderate tour which is suitable for all those who are in a good general physical condition. On some of the stretches you may encounter some longer climbs. Rides are not very long, leaving plenty of time for sightseeing. Average cycling times: approx 3 - 5 hours each day.



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DAY-TO-DAY PROGRAMME

Day 0 Alghero

Arrival in Alghero in case you arrive a day earlier. Alghero has an international airport. From Milan and Rome, Alghero can easily be reached by air. From the airport frequent shuttle buses reach the centre of the town. Several hotels can be booked in Alghero, according to your wishes. If you arrive one day earlier you have the chance to explore the old town centre of charming Alghero, with its clear Spanish influences. Alternatively, you could make a trip to one of the many splendid beaches near the town and enjoy the crystal-clear sea Sardinia is rightly famous for.

Day 1 Arrival – Alghero

After arriving in Alghero (a private transfer from the airport can be arranged on request), you get settled in at the hotel where you will meet your tour guide for a short briefing and get hold of your bicycles. Tonight you eat dinner together. In case you arrive early you may want to take a stroll through the nicely preserved centre of the little town or walk down to the beach for a refreshing swim.

Hotel in Alghero – meals included: 1 dinner

Day 2 Alghero to Bosa

On the first day of your trip you will start out from Alghero and head south along the Coral Riviera. You follow a beautiful, and very scenic, winding coastal road, offering beautiful views of the Gulf of Alghero and Capo Caccia. During your day's trip you will pass by the pink, red and grey cliffs of Cape Marargiu, one of the last places in Europe where griffin vultures still roam around. In the afternoon you arrive at Bosa, a medieval town famous for its fine embroidery and gold filigree works. *Distance: 50 km – Cycling time: 3 - 4 hours*

Hotel in Bosa – meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

Day 3 Bosa to San Salvatore Sinis

Today you will travel through the typical villages of Flussio and Tinnura where the women still weave their wicker baskets. After stopping to admire their traditional handicrafts, and why not a nice hot coffee or creamy cappuccino too, you then continue on a fascinating panoramic ride down to the Sinis wetlands, where you will be able to admire large colonies of pink flamingos. Not far down the road you reach one of Sardinia's marvels, and undoubtedly one of the most beautiful spots to be seen, the white quartz beach of Is Arutas. Your trip then takes you to the Phoenician ruins of Tharros, well worth a visit, and to your hotel. After settling in at the hotel you can relax and enjoy a hearty meal together. *Distance: 58 km – Cycling time: 3,5 – 4,5 hours*

Hotel in San Salvatore Sinis – meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

Day 4 San Salvatore Sinis to Arbus

On the first stretch of the road after leaving your hotel this morning, you cycle through the plains of Arborea to reach some of the best-known – but also some very much unknown – beauty spots of the Costa Verde. Here you admire some of the most savage natural scenery on the island. You also visit the famous Piscinas beach with



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its blindingly white sand dunes that can reach heights of over 50 metres! A short stretch then takes you to the little town of Arbus in the Medio Campedano province, where you settle in at your hotel. *Distance: 46 / 54 km – Cycling time: 4 – 5 hours*

Hotel in Arbus – meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

Day 5 Arbus to Calasetta

During today's stage you will explore Sardinia's ancient mining history, which has its origins in long-gone Phoenician and Roman times. You will cycle past the fascinating abandoned mines of Ingurtosu and Masua, now abandoned, but once flourishing industrial towns housing up to 5000 inhabitants. Until the 1960s these mines produced a large part of Sardinia's lead, zinc and silver ore. They are now included in a UNESCO Geo Park. After visiting the mines you pass by the charming bay of Cala Domestica and the looming mass of the Pan di Zuccherò cliff, on your way to the old ore washery at Nebida. The now-abandoned industrial complex is located in an extremely panoramic spot, nestling halfway between the rocky cliffs and the sea, and can only be reached by climbing down 540 steps! In the afternoon you reach your hotel in Calasetta in time for a stroll through the village and a well-deserved dinner. *Distance: 54 km – Cycling time: 4,5 hours*

Hotel in Calasetta – meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

Day 6 Calasetta to S. Anna Arresi

After breakfast today you head for the island of Sant'Antioco, connected to the mainland by a large artificial dike. Here you cycle through the meadows, sparkling green in spring and golden yellow during summer and early autumn. Further on you visit the Pisan sanctuary at Tratalias, one of the most important monuments of the Sardinia Romanesque period, dating from the 13th century. On your way to the next hotel in S. Anna Arresi you cycle around Lake Monte Pranu and savour the quiet peace of the rolling plains of the Sulcis. *Distance: 40 km – Cycling time: 4 hours*

Hotel in S. Anna Arresi – meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

Day 7 S. Anna Arresi to Pula

The final stage of your trip takes you along the beautiful and panoramic south coast, with its gleaming white beaches, unspoilt landscapes and high vertical cliffs. You first stop to admire Cape Malfatano, dominated by its well-preserved 16th-century tower. At Capo Spartivento, the southernmost point of Sardinia, you enjoy the wonderful views of the coast from the lighthouse on top of the high cliffs. Finally you arrive at the major Phoenician site of the island, Nora, where you visit the extensive archaeological remains, before heading to your hotel in Pula. *Distance: 57 km – Cycling time: 4 - 5 hours*

Hotel in Pula – meals included: 1 breakfast, 1 dinner

Day 8 End of the tour

The tour ends in Pula after breakfast today. A local bus or private transfer can take you to Cagliari. A taxi transfer to other destinations can be arranged on request.



TOUR DETAILS

ACCOMMODATION & MEALS

All nights are spent in beautiful, characteristic hotels (generally 3-star) or equivalent agriturismos. All rooms have en-suite facilities.

Dinners and picnic lunches (days 2 to 7) are included in the tour price.

Night 1: The first night is spent in a beautifully located hotel at Alghero. The hotel is within walking distance of the town centre.

Night 2: Tonight you stay in the medieval town of Bosa. All important monuments of the town are within easy reach of the hotel's premises.

Night 3: The third night you stay in a nice hotel in San Salvatore Sinis.

Night 4: This night is spent in a hotel in the little town of Arbus.

Night 5: Your next night is spent in a cosy hotel in the village of Calasetta.

Night 6: This night you stay in yet another nice hotel at S. Anna Arresi.

Night 7: The final night is spent in a 3-star hotel near Pula, on the south coast of Sardinia.

UPGRADE

It is possible to book an upgrade in some of the places en route. Details and prices on request.

LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Easy to Moderate (2-3): Mostly moderate rides but with some longer climbs. All roads are well paved and mostly quiet, with limited traffic except for some periods during summer and holidays. Extensions are possible on some days.

Fitness: Some experience of bicycle touring and a good general physical condition will certainly make your travel experience more enjoyable. You should be able to cycle for several hours a day, even in hot dry weather conditions.



INCLUSIONS

On our GUIDED TOURS we include almost everything:

- Private English-speaking tour leader for 8 days
- Professional guiding service for each activity
- Accommodation: 1 night Alghero, 1 night Bosa, 1 night San Salvatore Sinis, 1 night Arbus, 1 night Calasetta, 1 night S. Anna Arresi, 1 night Pula in good ***hotels or equivalent agriturismo
- Meals: 7 breakfasts, 6 picnic lunches, 7 dinners
- 4 private transfers to avoid mountain roads and shorten the mileage
- Specialist local guides
- Entrance fees of all sites along the itinerary
- Special activities as outlined in the day-by-day itinerary
- Support van
- Luggage transport

Not Included:

- Departure taxes
- Visas
- Travel Insurance
- Drinks and meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Optional additional tours or activities
- Tips
- Items of personal nature
- Bicycle rental (80 euros, 10 euros per additional day)

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Arrival: The tour starts in ALGHERO, which can easily be reached by bus from Alghero International Airport.

Departure: The tour ends after breakfast in PULA on day 8. From Pula, Cagliari can easily be reached by public bus. An optional private transfer can be arranged.

TOUR VARIATIONS

EXTRA NIGHTS

It is possible to extend your tour with a few days in Cagliari or any other town or resort in Sardinia. Details and prices on request.

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