

DAY 1 – THURSDAY 17 MAY | STAGE 12

Arrival day: Milan, Malpensa Airport Italy

Airport pick up time: 9:00am

Ride: Start 12pm. **Ride Options:** 45km, 60km – 800m climbing

Welcome Dinner: 7.30pm

Accommodation: Lake Como (1 night)

More About Our Day:

Welcome to the 2018 Giro d'Italia with Ride International Tours.

Your trip will start at our “Pre Trip Hotel” near Milan/ Malpensa Airport, Italy at 9am. If time permits in your schedule, we suggest arriving at least a day prior to your trip start, it's the best way to acclimatise and build some wiggle room into your pre trip travel schedule.

If you choose to arrive on Day 1 of your trip at Milan Malpensa Airport, we'll collect you at 9:00am. Look out for us in our Pink Ride International Tours Tshirts at the designated airport pickup location.

From Milan Malpensa Airport, it's a short drive to our “pre trip hotel”, where we will assist you to assemble your bike or do a final set-up and check of your rental bike. Once ready we'll depart from the hotel by bike.

We'll make our way by bike via the shores of Lake Varese, onto magnificent Lake Como, our home for the night and home to the rich and famous.

The Race: Stage 12

Today is a completely flat stage from Osima to Imola. The finish line is on the Tre Monti circuit, to be raced once, where Zakarin won in 2015 and Vittorio Adorni was awarded World champion in 1968.

Our Rides: Milan Malpensa, Lake Varese, Lake Como

Time: 12pm. **Ride Options:** 45km, 60km – 800m climbing.

We'll get acquainted, or re- acquainted with riding in Italy, first timers riding in Europe are always pleasantly surprised how polite and encouraging other road users are to cyclist, you'll really enjoy the riding. Remember right is right - for those of you who are used to cycling on the left hand side of the road, we'll keep you on track, you'll find you adapt to riding on the right hand side of the road very quickly

Today we depart our pre trip hotel near the Milan/ Malpensa airport on a scenic ride north to Lago Varese, then onto the beautiful surrounds of Lake Como. We'll orientate you with Como to get your bearings and see if we can spot George Clooney on the way in.

Today's ride is mostly about making sure everything on your bike is working properly after your travel, to spin your legs and shake off any travel lethargy.

We'll time our ride to be at Como in time to see the finish of today's stage live on TV, we'll watch it from a local, nearby bar on the main Piazza Cavour to get you into the local vibe quickly, it's going to be an exciting finish on the car race track at Imola today.

Non Cycling - Things to see off the bike:

You'll join the group on a scenic drive from Milan/Malpensa to Lake Varese, stopping for photo opportunities enroute, then onto our base at Lake Como.

Our hotel in Como is near the main Piazza Cavour, where you can wander around the Marina, visit the famous Cathedral (Como Duomo), you can walk into the centro storico/ old town or take a ride on the scenic funicular railway up the mountain.

It is a typical Italian network of pavement cafes, little squares and picturesque lanes, some bustling with shops, others calm and peaceful. Como is much livelier and more 'real' than the tourist-dominated villages around Lake Como. It has been a successful town since Roman times. Como still produces exquisite silks and has a sense of purpose independent of tourism.

Après Bike:

Welcome Dinner. Meet: Hotel Lobby, 7.30pm for a short walk to our local restaurant. Meet the team, other guests, sample famous Italian in season local dishes and drinks.

Accommodation:

Lake Como (1 night)

DAY 2 – FRIDAY 18 MAY | STAGE 13

Breakfast: From 7am

Ride Start: 7.45am

Our Rides: 30km, 45km, 70km – 1900m climbing

Dinner: 7.30pm. Hotel.

Accommodation: Bormio, Lombardy. (1 of 3 nights)

More About Our Day:

First thing after breakfast we will ride to the famous lakeside village of Bellagio for morning tea, a Gelato and a for those who'd like some time off the bike a chance to explore Bellagio some more.

The riders will then start the climb up to the Madonna Ghisallo Cycling Chapel and onto the Wall of Surmano loop. We'll then meet our vehicle to transfer to Bormio. It's 2-3 hours drive to Bormio so we'll catch today's stage finish on TV in a bar. We'll arrive in time for a look around this pretty little mountain village which has a very nice and historic village centre.

Bormio (1225m) is located in the province of Sondrio, Lombardy (Italy). It is a small town with population of less than 5,000 people. It's a popular destination, which has been attracting tourists for centuries. Wealthy Roman citizens flocked to the town to enjoy its thermal baths, many of which are still functional today.

In recent years, people from across the globe come to Bormio to ski during the winter and also to experience some of the world's most spectacular cycling climbs during the summer.

The Race: Stage 13

Ferrara – Nervesa della Battaglia, 180km.

It's an uneventful transfer day in the Giro with an almost flat stage that crosses the Po Valley from south to north up to Montello with an approx. 30-km circuit with a few climbs that won't prevent a field sprint. The final section features some iconic WWI landmarks, including the Piave river, and other modern and contemporary wine-related places. Upon approaching the finish, the route runs across the eastern Polesine areas that haven't been included in a Giro stage for over 30 years.

Our Rides: Como, Bellagio, Madonna Ghisallo and The Wall of Sormano.

Ride Time: 7.45am **Ride Options:** 30km, 45km, 70km – 1900m climbing

A tough ride to start your trip with but the reward at the top will make it all worthwhile. Firstly though from Como we will get a nice warm up as we head along the scenic road that takes us to Bellagio, 30km.

From Bellagio we head uphill to Madonna Ghisallo through the mountain range that cuts into Lake Como and offers us stunning views in both directions on a clear day. Visiting the Madonna del Ghisallo Cycling Chapel and the Cycling Museum at the top of Ghisallo is an amazing, almost spiritual experience for a cyclist, 45km.

After visiting the chapel and museum it's onto the Muro di Sormano. A legendary climb that is part of the Giro di Lombardia. Prepare yourself for the Muro ... possibly the most difficult, yet short, climb you will ever experience, with an average gradient of 18% ... the small ring will be your best friend for these two tough kilometers! 70km – 1900m climbing.

Non Cycling - Things to see off the bike:

Our non cycling guests will travel in the vehicle this morning and visit beautiful Bellagio pausing for morning tea, gelato and a spot of shopping.

Next up it's a visit to the cycling chapel and museum at Madonna Ghisallo. This afternoon we all travel together along the shores of Lake Como/ Lecco and into the beautiful big mountain valleys via Tirano and onto the idyllic mountain town of Bormio, our new base for the next few nights.

Après Bike:

Dinner: Tonight we take dinner at our hotels restaurant. Our hosts philosophy is about excellent primary produce that are a result of choosing the best hay, of how to take care of their cows and finally, of creating the perfect conditions for our produce. This process of production guarantees the chef's delicious preparations of the highest quality. Traditional Valtellinese dishes skillfully prepared with a touch of nouvelle cuisine are their specialities.

Accommodation:

Bormio, Lombardy. (1 of 3 nights)

DAY 3 – SATURDAY 19 MAY | STAGE 14

Breakfast: From 7am

Ride Start: 7.45am

Our Rides: 50km, 75km, 100km – 3000m climbing.

Dinner: Free program.

Accommodation: Bormio, Lombardy. (2 of 3 nights)

More About Our Day:

An amazing day awaits you today. It's time to climb the Stelvio and head up into the beautiful mountains. We will head off after breakfast to tackle the beast returning to Bormio for a late lunch.

After lunch the choice is yours to rest up, enjoy exploring Bormio or head out again on the bike for the afternoon program to ride Torre de Fraele, Lago Cancano Loop.

The Race: Stage 14

San Vito al Tagliamento – Monte Zoncolan, 181.0 km

First queen stage across the Alps. 181km long with 5 categorised climbs and 4400 m of elevation gain. It starts with Monte di Ragogna and in the final 45 km, Passo Duron, Sella Valcalda and Monte Zoncolan. It's the 6th finish on the Zoncolan, and the 5th one on the "intimidating" side of Ovaro. On Monte di Ragogna several Tours of Friuli have finished, amongst all when Bugno won the Italian championship in 1991. Monte Zoncolan has gradients topping out 22% in its first part. In Chialina (1.5 km before the foot of the climb) there will be the usual pit-stop where the following vehicles will be replaced by motorbikes.

Our Rides: Stelvio Pass, Torre de Fraele, Lake Cancano.

Time: 7.45am **Ride Options:** 50km, 75km, 100km – 3000m climbing

Morning: “The Stelvio Pass” 50km – 1600m Climbing

Afternoon:

- Torre de Fraele/ The Mini Stelvio 25km – 1300m climbing
- From the top of Torre de Fraele Pass
- Additional optional: Lake Cancano, Strada Nero dirt loop 25km – 100m climbing.

The Stelvio Pass: The stats: Length 21km, Average Gradient: 7%, Height at start: 1200m, Height at finish 2758m, Total Elevation Gained: 1558m

Today it’s an iconic climb, which is no doubt on your bucket list, the Stelvio Pass.

We head straight out of the hotel, through town and we are onto the climb. Overall, the climb is quite steady with a maximum gradient of 12%, so just pace yourself accordingly. If it feels easy in the first few kilometres then you are doing it right.

You’ve probably never ridden through snowfields and up to these altitudes, but you will today! As you approach the top the snow walls on the side of the road will be up to 2 metres in height. When you arrive at the top there will be time for some reflection on riding this amazing climb, the traditional photos in front of the Stelvio sign and then put some warm gear on and head on down and back to Bormio for great coffee and lunch.

After lunch you have the option to relax at the hotel and keep some reserves in the tank for tomorrow’s big loop, or ride (or travel in the vehicle) up to the Torre de Fraele fort and viewpoint. The views of the mountains, the valley toward Bormio and looking down over the switchbacks of the “Mini Stelvio” are fantastic.

Once at the top of Fraele, you can choose the option to ride the Strada Nero “dirt loop” of Lago Canacano or head back down the Torre Fraele and onto Bormio for a refreshing cool drink.

Non Cycling - Things to see off the bike:

This morning you have options to explore Bormio, it’s old center, the thermal spa’s or travel in the vehicle up to the Stelvio pass following the group. We’ll be stopping along the way to take photos, assist the cyclists and enjoy the stunning scenery, maybe even see an elusive marmot or two sunning themselves!

In the afternoon the choice is yours, you can travel in the vehicle up to the viewpoint at Torre de Fraele and its fort, or explore Bormio in the afternoon with a Gelato in hand.

Après Bike:

Tonight we've kept the program open for you to explore the many dining opportunities Bormio has to offer. It's a short walk into the village and it's eateries and restaurants. Ask us for ideas, we'll give you some suggestions based on your preferred food types and dining style!

Accommodation:

Bormio, Lombardy. (2 of 3 nights)

DAY 4 – SUNDAY 20 MAY | STAGE 15

Breakfast: From 7am

Ride Start: 7.45am

Our Rides: Bormio – Mortirolo Pass – Gavia Pass – Bormio Loop. 110km – 3100m climbing

Dinner: 7.30pm

Accommodation: Bormio, Lombardy (3 of 3 nights)

The Race: Stage 15

Tolmezzo – Sappada, 176.0 km

A stage in the Dolomites with 4 categorised climbs, none of which very hard or too easy. In particular Auronzo di Cadore. The stage takes in two new climbs of Comelico (Passo Sant'Antonio and Costalissoio) with gradients almost always above 10%. The finish is located a few hundred metres from the finish in 1987, when Stephen Roche claimed the first maglia Rosa of his "Giro-Tour-World Championships" Grand Slam that year, a feat that only Eddy Merckx managed to make in 1974.

Our Rides: Bormio, Mortirolo Pass, Gavia Pass – Bormio

Time: 7.45am **Ride Options:** 50km, 70km, 110km – 3050m climbing

Anti-clockwise loop from Bormio to Mortirolo and back via the Gavia Pass. Both climbs are absolute beauties!

So here we go! We head down the valley towards Tirano on a nice valley ride through quaint Italian villages. Then it's a left turn across the river and onto the feared Mortirolo at 1852 m.

The climb starts at Mazzo di Valtellina and is 12.4 kilometres long at an average of 10.5% (elevation gain 1300 m), with the maximum gradient being a whopping 18%! Since the death of Marco Pantani in 2004, stages of the Giro that go over the Mortirolo feature a special prize to the first man at the top of the pass, called Cima Pantani. A monument to Pantani can be found on the road side from Mazzo di Valtellina.

Once over the top we'll descend to the valley below and then turn left where we begin a gentle climb to Ponte di Legno where we will pause for refreshments and lunch.

After lunch we cross the wooden bridge (Translated in Italian - Ponte di Legno) and turn left towards the Passo di Gavia, a mountain of 2621 metres. It's a gradual climb for about 4 kms. The road is paved, but after a couple of km, it turns to a narrow one lane road, where it suddenly reaches 16% for a while. The average grade is 7.9 % and the length is 17.3 kms and the actual metres climbed is 1363 m.

The Passo di Gavia is often on the route of the Giro d'Italia and is sometimes designated the Cima Coppi or the highest point of the race. Probably the most historic day here was on 5 June 1988 when the race passed over the Gavia in a snowstorm, making for an epic stage won by Erik Breukink. American Andrew Hampsten, the second-place finisher, became the overall race leader and went on to win the Giro.

Now for the good news! From the top mountain chalets at the top, it's pretty much all downhill into Bormio. What a ride, what an epic day on the bike...

Non Cycling - Things to see off the bike:

Take a trip on the world famous Bernina Express scenic train to St Moritz in Switzerland, we'll transfer you down the valley to the starting point for your train journey. The views of the Swiss Engadin Alps from the panoramic coaches with enlarged windows is stunning.

The trip on the Bernina Express is a magnificent railway journey through the World Heritage site across 196 bridges and across the Bernina Pass at 2,253 metres. You can choose from a multi-lingual (English, Italian and German) audio guide on board.

Or, you can choose to travel in our vehicle on the Bormio – Mortirolo Pass – Gavia Pass loop and see this stunning remote area and its high mountain passes. At this time of year there is plenty of snow on the surrounding mountaintops, making the scenery and photo's all the more spectacular!

Après Bike:

Dinner: 7.30pm. Tip, try an Aperol Spritz for a pre dinner aperitif, they are back in vogue on our Italian, Giro trips. Bellissimo.

Tonight we take dinner at our hotel restaurant. We'll experience more traditional Valtellinese dishes and dolce (desert) skillfully prepared by our resident chefs.

Accommodation:

Bormio, Lombardy. (3 of 3 nights)

DAY 5 – MONDAY 21 MAY | REST DAY

Breakfast: From 7am

Depart Hotel – Vehicle: 8am

Our Rides: Trento – Lake Garda, 30km flat, 50km – 300m climbing

Dinner: Free program

Accommodation: Lake Garda (1 of 3 nights)

More About Our Day:

This morning it's a transfer for us from Bormio to Trento in the vehicle. From Bormio we will drive through the mountains via Passo Tonale and onto the town of Cles, where Maurizio Fondriest, of Fondriest bikes hails from.

Fondriest controversially won the World Cycling Championships in 1988 when a group of three arrived at the finish, Canadian Steve Bauer knocked off local favourite Claude Criquelion in the sprint and Fondriest did a Stephen Bradbury and rode through to win the race!

However, Fondriest was a great cyclist in his own right, winning stages in the Tour de Suisse, Milan–San Remo, La Flèche Wallonne, the Züri-Metzgete, the Giro dell'Emilia, the general classification and two stages of Tirreno–Adriatico, three

stages and the general classification of the Grand Prix du Midi Libre, a stage in the Giro d'Italia and the overall World Cup.

After Cles we enter the valley of the Trentino area and we will stop in Trento for lunch. Trento is the stage start town for tomorrow's stage of the Giro d'Italia, so there will be plenty of excitement around the town.

With our hydration and nutrition needs satisfied we'll channel our energy from the other great cyclists Trento has bred such as Francesco Moser and Gilberto Simoni, we'll climb onto our bikes for an easy/active recovery ride onto our hotel on Lago di Garda.

The Race: It's a Rest Day!

Our Rides:

After the challenges of the past few days we will have an easy active recovery day today.

We will stop in Trento for lunch, then head off on our ride through the beautiful vineyards and orchards that are found here.

The first part of our ride will follow a very similar course to tomorrow's 34.5km Individual Time Trial Course from Trento to Rovereto. You can opt for a relatively flat 35km ride through the valley and onto Rovereto or ride onto the hotel for a total of 50km. It's mostly bike path, small roads so no worries with traffic, giving you time to enjoy the beautiful scenery and the final descent down to Lago di Garda.

Non Cycling - Things to see off the bike:

There is beautiful scenery along the way today from Bormio to Lago di Garda. It's also a good day for riders to take a complete "recovery day" off the bike, sit back and enjoy the sights before we arrive at the magnificent Lago di Garda.

Welcome to Lake Garda, the largest Lake in Italy. Enjoy the genuine environment of the famous lake, walk through the antique streets of the villages, taste Italian food and ice cream – Gelato and look forward to a couple of days in Lake Garda.

Après Bike:

Tonight we've kept the program open for you to explore the many dining opportunities Lake Garda has to offer. From our hotels central location, everything is within walking distance in the village, it's bars, eateries and restaurants. Ask us for ideas, we'll give you some suggestions based on your preferred food types and dining style.

Accommodation:

Lake Garda. (1 of 3 nights)

DAY 6 – TUESDAY 22 MAY | STAGE 16

Breakfast: From 7am

Ride Start: 7.45am

Our Rides: Lake Garda, Monte Baldo, Rovereto. Lake Garda. 30km, 40km, 70km, 95km – 1850m climbing

Dinner: Free Program

Accommodation: Lake Garda (2 of 3 nights)

More About Our Day:

We'll wake up to the sights, sounds and surrounding mountains of beautiful Lake Garda, it's a very special place.

Today we are back at the Giro d'Italia and the "race of truth" – it's the day we have all been waiting for, the Individual Time Trial.

The TT's have a habit of turning Grand Tour standings on their heads and today after two weeks of racing we expect big changes to the overall General Classification riders standings.

We'll take a ride out along the lake, then up over the mountains and down to Rovereto to see the Pro's come into the finish of the Time Trial.

The Race: Trento – Rovereto, 34.5 km ITT (flat)

Individual time trial fit for against-the-clock racers. The course is almost completely flat with long straight stretches connected by wide bends where the speed doesn't

drop. The final section in the city is slightly more complex, but still a very fast-running course.

Expected average speed will be around 50 km/h.

Our Rides: Lake Garda, Monte Baldo, Rovereto. Lake Garda.

Ride Start: 7.45am **Ride Options:** 30km, 40km, 70km, 95km -1850m Climbing

Another day today means another great ride and another super climb, although it's not like the monsters we did a few days ago.

We've broken the ride into bite sized parts so you can choose to depart the hotel by bike for a 30km ride including the big climb for the day.

You can choose to skip the climb and take the vehicle to the top of the Monte Baldo Climb and ride an undulating – mostly downhill 40km to Rovereto to watch the Race.

Combine both rides for 70km – 1700m climbing. We will leave Lake Garda and head out along the flat for a while before heading up the climb. The first part was used by the Giro in 2013 where a Mountain TT was won by Vincenzo Nibali where he sealed his pink jersey and put Cadel Evans four minutes in arrears.

Starting from Mori, the Monte Baldo ascent is 19.15 km long. Over this distance, you climb 1026 metres with an average percentage of 5.3 %.

It's a loop ride so we will drop back down into the valley and head to the race finish in Rovereto where we will arrive in time to see the race riders finish their Individual Time Trials here.

If you're feeling fresh and are inspired by the feats of the Pro's on today's Individual Time Trial, it's 25km back to our hotel via our ride route from yesterday. Total 95km – 1850m Climbing.

For those that like their Strava numbers rounded off - a few circles around the block will clock your Strava 100km, the rest of us will supply plenty of encouragement from the Hotel bar with a cool drink in hand.

Non Cycling - Things to see off the bike:

This morning explore our beautiful lakeside town and the lake before we head off on the route up to Monte Baldo enjoying the beautiful scenery on offer. We will then make our way to the Time Trial finish in Rovereto to enjoy an exciting afternoon of

racing. You'll be able to get up close and personal with the riders as they finish, maybe sneak in an autograph or selfie with the riders back at the team buses.

Après Bike:

Tonight it's a free program so you can explore the many dining opportunities our lakeside village has to offer. The village has great bars, eateries and restaurants. Ask us for ideas, we'll give you some suggestions based on your preferred drinks, food types and dining style!

Accommodation:

Lake Garda. (2 of 3 nights)

DAY 7 – WEDNESDAY 23 MAY | STAGE 17

Breakfast: From 7am

Ride Start: 7.45am

Our Rides: Morning: Lake ride – Malcesine. 36km – 400m climbing. Afternoon: Optional – Villages, Valleys and climbs loop 60km -1100m climbing

Dinner: Free program

Accommodation: Lake Garda (3 of 3 nights)

More About Our Day:

We have a full morning. First will be an early ride, followed by a visit to the race start. The afternoon is yours to either enjoy the lake or head out for a ride on our harder: Villages, Valleys and climbs loop.

Starts are amazing and a must see for any cyclist. We are staying in the race start village so our town will be a buzz to the sights, sounds and fashionista that only the Giro d'Italia can produce.

We'll walk out the front doors of our hotel and be among the festivities, here you will see the riders before they get serious. You'll be able to get a peek around the team buses and get quite up close and personal with a few riders, especially if any of our personal friends are racing or working with the Teams.

Any race start is a fanfare but this is Italy, so of course they will really turn it on, it'll be fun and something you'll not forget for years to come. Wear your sunglasses, it will be a sea of pink!

The Race: Riva del Garda – Iseo. 155.0 km

Stage with a (slightly) uphill start and a few long tunnels up to Lago Iseo. Short climbs, including the classified Lodrino climb, lead up to the first pass on the finish line. An approx. 20-km final circuit runs across the entire Franciacorta area. This is the last stage fit for sprinters before the final showcase stage in Rome.

Our Rides: Lake Garda – Malcesine – Garda – Sarche - Garda

Ride Start: 7.45am Ride Options: **Morning:** 36km – 400m. **Afternoon:** 60km – 1100m climbing

An easy ride this morning, we follow the lake road down along lake Garda, it's beautiful at every turn with the mountains towering above the lake. We'll pause for a coffee stop on the lake to enjoy the scenery at the small village of Malcesine.

Once back to our hotel we'll freshen up before we head off to see the race start. After race start, we'll suit up again and head out on our afternoon loop ride into the nearby Villages, Valleys and Climbs ride out to Sarche. It's a scenic ride in the valleys, gorges, with the mountains towering above, there's plenty of climbing too as we make our way back around to our base in Garda in time to watch today's stage finish on TV at a local bar.

Non Cycling - Things to see off the bike:

We will be off to the race start this morning. Race starts in Italy – at the Giro d'Italia are a real hoot and a fashionista's dream. Here you will see the riders before they get serious. You'll be able to get a peek around the team buses and get quite up close and personal with a few riders.

Après Bike:

Tonight we've kept the program open again for you to checkout the many dining opportunities Lago di Garda has to offer. Wander around the village, you'll discover great eateries and restaurants or Ask us for ideas, we'll give you some suggestions for great bars, or places based on your preferred food types and dining style!

Accommodation:

Lake Garda. (3 of 3 nights)

DAY 8 – THURSDAY 24 MAY | STAGE 18

Breakfast: From 7am

Ride Start: 7.45am

Our Rides: Casale Monferrato – Verolengo – Turin/Torino. 45km, 80km – 300m

Climbing

Dinner: 7.30pm

Accommodation: Turin/Torino (1 of 2 nights)

More About Our Day:

We have a fair transfer toward the Alps this morning, approximately 4 hours, so we can be in place to see the Queen Stage on the Col de Finestre on Friday.

Exact details for the race route and timetable are limited at this stage. However, we'll time our transfer to see the race pass near Casale Monferrato on the Po River. Time permitting, we'll explore the town, take some lunch, soak up the atmosphere, watch the race on TV and enjoy the excitement in the village as the race approaches. These days in the smaller villages can be great fun, we'll join in with the locals and immerse ourselves in the festivities, it'll be a great experience.

After the race has passed it's onto Turin/Torino by bike or by vehicle the choice is yours, it could be a good day to rest off the bike if your legs are feeling in need of a recovery day.

The Race: Abbiategrosso – Prato Nevoso, 196.0 km

Almost 200-km flat stage with a final steep climb. A very long approach across the Po Valley and the Langhe leads up to Mondovì, where the route starts to climb. Thus, the fight for victory will start here. A long climb with fairly uncomplicated and very constant gradient leads to the finish. It is the climb where Tonkov (1996) and Garzelli (2000) claimed their win at the Giro and Gerrans (2008) at the Tour.

Our Rides: Casale Monferrato – Verolengo – Turin/Torino

Time: After the race pass. **Ride Options:** 45km, 80km – 300m Climbing

After watching the race pass in Casale Monferrato, we'll ride a scenic/flattish route through the rural lands of the Po Valley, hopefully we have the wind at our tail as we follow sections of the Po river toward Turin.

Today's flattish ride is designed to freshen up your legs – an active recovery day in preparation for tomorrow's ride to the Col delle Finestre. Once in Turin we ride a scenic route through to our lovely Hotel in the bustling heart of this vibrant city.

Non Cycling - Things to see off the bike:

We have a transfer towards the Alps this morning. We'll intersect the race enroute as we transfer to our new base in Turin. We'll take some lunch and explore the village of Casale Monferrato on the Po River while we wait for the race to arrive.

After the race has passed we'll make our way to Turin via a scenic route following the Po River. You'll arrive in plenty of time to explore our fantastic hotel, it's lovely surrounds, the old city and it's historic walls. Turin is a beautiful city with lots to explore and plenty of charm.

Après Bike:

Dinner: 7.30pm. Meet in the hotel lobby, It's a short walk to dinner.

Tip, try Italian Prosecco while you are at the Giro – It's the Italian equivalent of Champagne, the Italians say it's better than Champagne – It's Italian! It's a great pre dinner aperitif.

Accommodation:

Turin/Torino. (1 of 2 nights)

DAY 9 – FRIDAY 25 MAY | STAGE 19

Breakfast: From 7am

Ride Start: 7.45am

Our Rides: Turin–Susa-Finestre-Susa. 40km, 55km, 95km – 2300m climbing

Dinner: Free Program

Accommodation: Turin (2 of 2 nights)

More About Our Day:

We will ride from central Torino this morning and it won't be long before we are on quiet roads and heading up the valley to Susa, then onto the iconic climb of Colle delle Finestre. It's surfaced at first and make sure you keep some energy in reserve as it won't be long and you'll be onto the 9km dirt sector.

It's an amazing day on this mountain. Normally a quiet little road high in the Italian Alps is invaded by thousands and thousands of crazy spectators. As you approach the top the crowds will be all over the road and if you're lucky you'll get a push or two.

After photos, we will see how conditions are at near the top, if it's a nice day we'll watch from near top or we might descend down a little to where it's a bit less hectic and we can see the action in relative calm.

The Race: Venaria Reale – Bardonnechia, 181.0 km

First queen stage across the Western Alps featuring 4 categorised climbs, all of them being long and testing ascents. Past the Colle del Lys, the stage features the Colle delle Finestre (Cima Coppi) with a 9-km dirt road. This time the finish is not located in Sestriere, which is crossed by the course, but in Bardonecchia (Jafferau), after a 7-km climb at a 9% gradient. It is the same place where Eddy Merckx joined and passed José Manuel Fuente, who had attacked, in 1972.

During the “backup” stage in 2013 that climb was raced without any previous ascent and the finish line was crossed by Santambrogio and Nibali, who won the Giro.

Our Rides: Turin – Susa – Finestre - Susa

Time: 7.45am. **Ride Options:** Turin - Finestre – Susa. 40km, 55km, 95km - 2300m climbing

This morning we ride out from our Hotel in Turin, It's a nice 55km ride through small villages in the valley enroute to Susa.

Another good option is to take the vehicle from our Hotel to save your legs for the climb, from Susa it's a short warm up then onto the climb to the top and back down it's 40km.

More about the legendary Colle delle Finestre climb: its situated in the Piemonte region and belongs to the Italian Alps. Starting from Susa, the Finestre ascent is 18.62 km long, over this distance, you'll climb 1694 meters. The average percentage is 9.1 %.

The Finestre although 18.62 km in total, approx. the last 9kms is dirt before arriving at the top. In previous editions the dirt section has been in immaculate condition and everyone who has attempted to ride to the top has thoroughly enjoyed this part of the ride, we think the dirt sector is slightly easier going up and down than tarmac bottom half of the climb.

After the race has passed on the Finestre we head back to Susa to regroup and watch the finish of the stage on TV, it's guaranteed to be an absolute beauty of a Giro stage.

Non Cycling - Things to see off the bike:

Our vehicle will head to Susa this morning it's a great place to explore, it's a small - very old Italian village, but it will come to life for the Giro today.

A short walk out of Susa will have you on the race route where you will be able to see the race and the race caravan. You may also like to walk a little way up the early part of the climb to see the riders attack as the gradient kicks up.

Après Bike:

Tonight's a free program for you to explore the many dining opportunities Turin has to offer. Wander around this great city, you'll discover superb eateries and restaurants or Ask us for ideas, we'll give you some suggestions for great bars, or places based on your preferred food types and dining style!

Accommodation:

Turin/Torino. (2 of 2 nights)

DAY 10 – SATURDAY 26 MAY | STAGE 20

Breakfast: From 7am

Train Time: TBA

Our Rides: No rides – Transfer Day to Rome

Dinner: Free program

Accommodation: Rome City Center (1 of 2 nights)

More About Our Day:

It's a Non Cycling day as we transfer to Rome:

This morning provides another chance to explore Turin in the morning before we head off to Rome, there's plenty to see in Turin, or maybe you fancy a sleep in, the choice is yours.

We transfer from Turin Station to Rome by train, put your feet up, watch the countryside roll by and relax til we arrive in Rome, these days, you can make the whole journey by high-speed Frecciarossa trains.

Driving from Turin to Rome would take more than seven hours, which makes it easy to see why taking the train to cover such a long distance is clearly the best idea. Italia's high-speed Alta Velocità trains cover the roughly 450-mile -724-km distance from Turin's Porta Nuova station to Rome's Termini station in 4 to 4.5 hours.

Our hotel is strategically located near the Rome train station and within walking distance to Sunday's race route. Once we arrive and check into our Hotel, we'll catch the finish of today's huge final mountain stage live on TV.

Our Rides:

No rides today, we transfer to Rome so we are in place for our Sunday morning Rome sightseeing ride and to see the big finish of the Giro d'Italia tomorrow.

The Race: Susa – Cervinia. 214km - 4500m Climbing

The Second stage of the Western Alps with 4500 m of climbing in only 3 climbs. After a first flatter part, even though it's always climbing, the stage enters into Valle d'Aosta the new Col Tscore is tackled with 3 of the km's over 12% in the last part and after a fast descent you face the St. Pantaléon climb and then finally up to the top of Cervinia without the chance to catch a breath.

Après Transfer:

We've left the evening as a free program so you can explore this beautiful city by night, it's famous sights, it's bars and restaurants at your leisure. We absolutely adore Rome, we are sure you'll fall in love with it too.

Accommodation: Rome City Center. (1 of 2 nights)

DAY 11 – SUNDAY 27 MAY | STAGE 21

Ride Start: 6am

Breakfast: From 7am (if not riding the scenic tour). 8.30am: Breakfast when we return from scenic city ride

Our Rides: Rome Sightseeing Ride 15-20km

Dinner: 7.30pm. Meet in the hotel lobby for farewell dinner.

Accommodation: Rome City Center (2 of 2 nights)

More about our day:

Today is going to be a very special day, one that you will remember for years to come, we'll rise early and be on our bikes prior to sunrise. Rome at sunrise is absolutely fantastic - by bike in the early morning it's even more special.

After our early morning Rome city sights tour, we'll assist you to pack up your bike - If you're departing for the airport tomorrow morning.

Then it's off to see the race, the racecourse is only a short walk from our hotel, we'll visit multiple locations to watch the race pass, then we'll make our way to the finish area to watch the Sprinters do battle one final time.

We'll head over to watch the podium presentations for the winners of each category, then watch the winner of the Giro d'Italia hold the beautiful Giro trophy aloft, who's it going to be this year?

The Race: Stage 21

10 circuits of the 11.8km course, 118km

Final catwalk in 11.8 km circuit to be repeated 10 times in the center of Rome. Most of the roads of the 2009 time trial are to be found, such as the Fori Imperiali, via Nazionale, via Sistina, Piazza del Popolo, via del Corso, via del Circo Massimo with

the passage from the Baths of Caracalla and the Colosseum before arrival, probably to the Imperial Forums.

Our Rides: Rome Sightseeing Ride 15-20km

Ride Start: 6am

Hopefully your head and legs aren't too sore this morning. We'll head out for one last, easy ride. An early start to the last day, we'll endeavour to take in a lap of the final day's race route around Rome prior to the course being closed off.

Bring your camera, we'll also take in a Rome city sights tour, it's worth the early start to visit Rome's iconic spots without the crowds - including the Colosseum, Throw a coin in the Trevi Fountain, visit the Spanish Steps, roll past the Pantheon, Vatican City, we'll be back at our hotel in time for breakfast.

Non Cycling - Things to see off the bike:

Wow, where do we start it's Rome, it's one of the world's greatest cities with so much to see, do and experience. We'll have some great city maps for you so you can circle your must see locations, it's compulsory to check out this incredibly historic city with Gelato in hand.

Sightseeing over, we'll wander down to see the final, stage 21 of the Giro, we'll be there to see the sprint finish, the presentations and the festivities as only the Giro d'Italia can put on.

Après Bike and Race:

Arrivederci - Farewell Dinner: Meet in the hotel lobby.

Time: TBA. We are waiting for the detailed timeline information from the organisers for the final stage in Rome. We've heard rumours of a twilight finish as it's a very long transfer to Rome for the Teams after yesterday's mountain stage.

It's a short walk to our restaurant where we will indulge in some fantastic Roman food, hospitality and drinks, it's the last supper of our 2018 Giro d'Italia trip.

Accommodation:

Rome City Center. (2 of 2 nights)

DAY 12 – MONDAY 28 MAY

Breakfast: From 7am

Depart Hotel – Airport Transfer: 8.30am

More About Our Day

Time to go to the airport, we offer a transfer to the airport at 8.30am for those that would like. If time permits in your schedule we'd suggest making the most of being in Rome, stay on a few days, explore this wonderful city at your leisure and or take advantage of visiting some of Italy's beautiful towns, villages, cities, coastal areas or islands.

If you are flying out later in the day airport transfers can be arranged at the hotel, It's likely to be a busy day at Rome Airport, so allow plenty of time to get to the airport, checked in and on time for your flights.

Many thanks for coming to see the 2018 Giro d'Italia. We hope you've had a great time watching one of the best UCI Grand Tours of the season. We trust you are headed home with tired legs, a smile on your face and plenty of great stories to share with your friends.

We look forward to welcoming you and your friends and family on another one of our trips in the near future.

Where will it be next, Italy, France, Spain, Belgium or Australia?

Until then, safe onward travelling.
All the best.

Ciao from Pat, Grace and the Ride International Tours Team.

