

PUGLIA

A FEAST FOR THE SENSES



Trulli houses in Alberobello

Jutting out between the sparkling emerald green and soft blues of the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, Puglia's coastline still bears the marks of its many invaders. You'll find Baroque towns, white-walled trulli, olive groves, picturesque seascapes, memorable hill-top and coastal towns and plenty of sunshine. Puglia's peasant cuisine (cucina povera) is legendary and features locally sourced olives, tomatoes, eggplants, artichokes and plentiful seafood. Its wines are among the best that Italy has to offer. This is slow travel at its best.

Highlights

- Small group – maximum 15 guests
- Cooking class in a neoclassical palace
- Walking tour of Lecce
- Visit to a papier-maché workshop
- Wine tasting and dinner in the wine growing commune of Salice Salentino
- Day tour to Otranto, a historic seaside town on the Adriatic coast and the Cappella Mortiri in its cathedral
- Visit Santa Maria di Leuca where the Ionian sea meets the Adriatic sea
- Visit the 'White Town' of Ostuni – one of the most beautiful towns in southern Italy
- Morning bike riding tour
- 2 Michelin star restaurant dinners
- Visit a local dairy to see how mozzarella cheese is produced
- Explore the cave houses and churches in Matera Matera
- Visit a bakery using the traditional ancient methods to bake the bread of the region "Pane di Altamura"
- Visit the mysterious Castel del Monte
- Spend some time wandering the byways of the historic fishing port of Trani
- Take a tour by bike or pedal cab of Bari

Days 1-3 Lecce

Arrive at Bari or Brindisi for a private transfer to your hotel in Lecce.

In the early evening we'll take a leisurely stroll to a stunning neoclassical palace built in the 1500's. The palace has the most beautiful secret gardens in the historic centre of Lecce. With the help of the chef and a glass of wine or two we will create our own dinner featuring local delicacies. A perfect way to break the ice with your fellow travellers.

Day 2: After a leisurely breakfast we'll take a walking tour of Lecce, once a Greek settlement and later an important centre of the Roman Empire. We'll visit a workshop making papier-maché where we'll see craftsmen at work at creating a unique art form developed at Lecce throughout the centuries.

From late morning you'll have free time to further explore Lecce.

This evening we'll head to one of the famous wineries in Salice Salentino, arguably the most important wine district in all of Italy, to sample the fine wines and enjoy a delicious dinner.

Day 3: Our first stop today will be the UNESCO site of Otranto, a lovely historic seaside town and port on the Adriatic coast. It is famous for its Cathedral built by the Normans in the 11th century and featuring a vast 12th century mosaic of a stupendous tree of life balanced on the back of two elephants.

A seafood lunch awaits us in the walled city of Castro before continuing our journey to the southern cape of Puglia, Santa Maria di Leuca, where the Ionian Sea meets the Adriatic Sea.

This evening you will be free to explore more of the wonderful restaurants on offer within walking distance of our hotel.

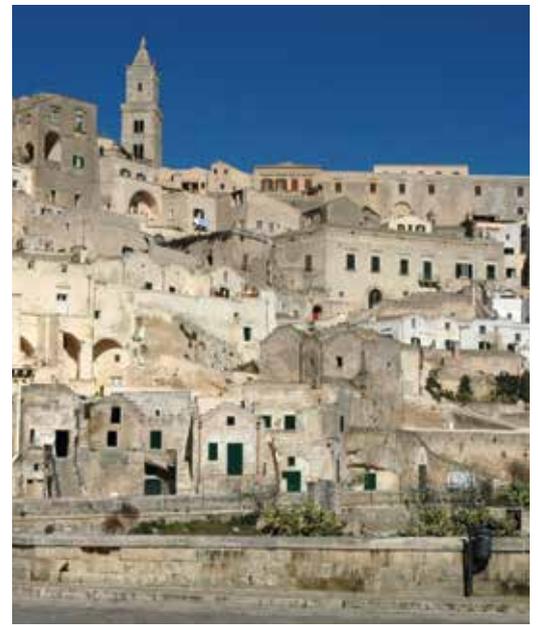
 *Risorgimento Resort, Lecce*



Ostuni



Otranto



Matera Matera

Days 4-8 Martina Franca

After breakfast we'll check out of our hotel for the drive to Ostuni. This walled city with its incredible view overlooking the coast known as the "White Town" is one of the most beautiful towns in southern Italy. After a guided walk through the town and lunch in a typical, de charme, restaurant you'll have time for further exploration before the short drive to check into our hotel outside the baroque city of Martina Franca.

The rest of the day is at leisure to wander the park surrounding the villa or relax by the pool. Why not join the locals for the obligatory passagiata and aperitifs in the historic centre of Martina Franca before finding the perfect spot for dinner.

Day 5: We'll swap walking for an optional bike riding tour this morning to explore the nearby coastal path.

Early afternoon we'll head to the heart of the Murgia upland and one of the most beautiful landscapes of the region. A splendidly cultivated valley bearing olives, fruit and vines and characterised by scattered towers, domens, chianche and dry stone walls and with fine views over the valley and its trulli.

Our final stop will be at Alberobello, UNESCO's Heritage site where after an opportunity to wander at our leisure we'll meet to dine in a fantastic 1 star Michelin restaurant before returning to our hotel with all of our senses duly sated.

Day 6: In an area famous for its mozzarella cheese we can't resist a visit to a local dairy to see how it's made and of course to taste this marvel of a cheese.

Our next stop is at the extraordinary UNESCO World Heritage site of Matera, one of the ancient world's city centres. It's impossible not to marvel at what living was like in these cave dwellings known as "Sassi" in which frescoed

churches and houses were established and where families were still living until 1952. You might also recognize it as the location chosen for the Mel Gibson movie "Passion".

We'll visit one of the restored caves for lunch to sample local specialties and varieties of cheeses accompanied by Aglianico del Vulture wine. Drunk by Horatio this is a wine of ancient origins.



Day 7: Join us on another bike tour this morning or just enjoy the facilities of the villa. After lunch we're in for a treat as we visit the famous and mysterious Citadel and Castel del Monte, a marvel of medieval military architecture and a successful blend of elements from classical antiquity, Islamic Orient and north European Cistercian Gothic.

On to Trani and a step back in time but this time just to the 1950's. Trani is an historic fishing port on the Adriatic coast. It's a lovely place to explore, wander or relax. The town is reminiscent of a 1950's film set in old-fashioned seaside Italy: historic buildings fading with casual charm, boats in the harbour and sleeping dogs lazing in the midday sun by the deserted waterfront. Our restaurant for dinner tonight is in Noci, a quiet town rarely frequented by tourists.

Day 8: This morning enjoy a city tour of Bari by bike or pedal cab. Look out in the old part of the city for the women making

the famous "orecchiette" – the typical ear shaped pasta. Time to explore on your own and for last minute shopping before we head back to the hotel to relax by the pool or enjoy a spa treatment for tonight is our farewell dinner. We'll be heading this evening for a feast at Ceglie Messapico, one of Puglia's gourmet capitals at a 1 star Michelin restaurant.

◇ *Villa San Martino, Martina Franca*

Day 9 Depart

All good things must come to an end ... until next time. Transfers will be provided to Bari or Brindisi airports.

Inclusions

- Individual transfers from Bari or Brindisi airport to the hotel
- The same English speaking guide for the entire tour
- Tips for drivers and guides
- 3 nights in Lecce
- 5 nights in Martina Franca
- 8 breakfasts, 3 lunches and 5 dinners
- Entry fees for all scheduled visits
- Air conditioned motor coach used for all excursions
- Group transfer to Bari or Brindisi airport

Dates & Prices

9 days/8 nights

Tue 24th May to Wed 1st June 2016

Mon 15th May to Tue 23rd May 2017

Tour Price: €4,500 per person

Reductions available for twinshare

Not included: Air fares to and from Italy

This tour can be customised and operate on any date for a group of minimum 4.