

## Puglia 2024

10-21 September 2024

COST: \$8950 Per person, twin-share, Single Supplement \$1,750

### Trip Highlights

- Food tour in Bari's historic centre
- Taste local cheeses, wines, breads and pastries
- Explore the gorgeous White Villages of the Valle d'Itria
- A cruise along the spectacular coastline from Otranto
- Take a walk among olive trees that were planted by the Romans
- Explore the fascinating Baroque city of Lecce, the Cinderella of Italy's deep south
- Spend three nights in a masseria, a traditional farmhouse
- Stay in a sassi, a cave house in the World Heritage city of Matera
- Taste Puglia's unique wines and cheeses
- See the churches where Crusaders once prayed before departing for the Holy Land

### Day 1: Arrive Bari, Tuesday 10 September

Guests will transfer from the airport or train station at Bari to our hotel via taxi, the cost of which will be reimbursed. We'll stay for three nights at the Dilman Boutique Hotel. In the evening we'll have aperitifs in the piazza followed by a welcome dinner at Al Pescatore, one of the best seafood restaurants in Bari.

[www.dilman.it](http://www.dilman.it)

Meals included: Dinner

### Day 2: Pasta with the nonnas, Bari, Wednesday 11 September

We'll start the day with a guided tour which will include Bari's famous pasta nonnas, women who make orecchiette every morning outside in an alleyway in the old town. The pasta is usually made with semolina, traditionally without eggs and salt since this has always been a poor region and eggs cost money. The port of Bari dates back 2500 years with many historical treasures built in the Romanesque-Pugliese style, including several of its many churches. Once a conduit for traders and goods from the Eastern Mediterranean Bari was a departure point for Christian pilgrims and crusaders en route to the Holy Land.

In the afternoon we'll take a guided tour of the coastal town of Trani, just to the north of Bari. Between the 11th and 13th centuries Trani's strategic position made it a flourishing commercial centre, attracting families from Italy's great Maritime Republics. In the same period, Trani was also home to southern Italy's largest Jewish community, as witnessed by the city's impressive Scolanova Synagogue. The old town is a charming medieval maze arranged

around the fishing port, flanked by numerous bars, cafés and fish restaurants. The cathedral is an outstanding example of Romanesque architecture, built from creamy limestone set against the deep blue of the Adriatic Sea. Trani's other architectural marvel is the castle of the Emperor Frederick II, built in 1233.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

### Day 3: Monopoli and Polignano a Mare, Thursday 12 September

We'll board our bus for a guided tour of Polignano a Mare, a seaside town teetering on the brink of cliffs that form a horseshoe around a sea cove where locals make daring dives from the clifftops. The old town is a compact medieval quarter, easy on the eye and made for strolling. A short drive takes us to Monopoli, a walled city where the sea-front promenade is lined with fine buildings, including the Church of Santa Maria della Zaffira, a bastion that once protected the city from the sea. Monopoli is a perfect place to sample the seafood for which Puglia is famous, and we'll enjoy lunch here before returning to Bari in mid-afternoon. We'll dine at local restaurant Al Sorso Preferito.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

### Day 4, Matera, Friday 13 September

This morning we'll drive inland to Altamura, a city of ancient palaces, churches and cloisters known throughout Italy and beyond for its bread which is baked in wood-fired ovens and prepared according to ancient tradition. We'll sample some of this local specialty and continue to Matera, one of the most astonishing towns in Italy, if not the world. Lining the sides of a river gorge in southern Italy where most of the population once lived a squalid existence in sassi, caves bored in the side of the gorge, Matera transports you back to the Old Testament. Now a World Heritage zone, it's an amazing place with great stories of astonishing hardship from a recent past, told evocatively in the town's museums. A number of movies have been shot here, from biblical epics to No Time to Die, the latest James Bond epic.

We stay two nights in Sextantio le Grotte Della Civita, a sensitive transformation of a group of the town's sassi, simple cave houses once a synonym for poverty, into a beautiful and atmospheric hotel. Rooms are powerfully evocative of their surroundings, and simply but exquisitely furnished. Breakfast is served on a communal table in a medieval church.

#### [Sextantio](#)

We'll take an evening walking tour of the town followed by dinner at a restaurant close to our hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

### Day 5: Exploring Matera, Saturday, 14 September

We'll take a bread baking class in the morning with the afternoon free for exploring some of the town's churches and museums or shopping.

Meals included: Breakfast

## Day 6: The Valle d'Itria, Sunday 15 September

Today we'll transfer to the Valle d'Itria, one of the most beautiful regions of Puglia. En route we'll call in at Alberobello. Puglia's tourism superstar, Alberobello exercises a fairytale fascination on account of its trulli, whitewashed houses which sit beneath conical roofs made from limestone slabs, held together as if by magic. A magnet for Instagrammers, the trulli cover an entire hillside, more than a thousand of them lining the laneways that unspool from the Church of Saint Anthony.

After exploring Alberobello we'll continue to Locorotondo, which sits on a hilltop overlooking the Valle d'Itria, a tapestry of wooded slopes, vineyards and ancient olive groves set on a high fertile plain in the centre of Puglia. Locorotondo is a photogenic delight, threaded with narrow alleyways lined with houses with Juliet balconies. We will enjoy lunch here and continue to our base for the next three nights at Masseria Le Carrube. A masseria is a traditional farmhouse of the region, once the centre of a substantial estate that would usually have included olive trees, orchards and pastures. Today, many masserie have been brought back to life by smart architects and interior designers, with swimming pools and chefs awake to the possibilities of regional cuisine. What guests experience at a masseria is relaxation and calm coupled with a powerful sense of country life in Puglia.

We'll have breakfasts and dinners at the masseria for the three days we are there. It's a vegetarian menu, based on seasonal local produce grown on the estate.

### [Masseria le Carrube](#)

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

## Day 7: Tasting the flavours of Puglia, Monday 16 September

This morning we'll visit Ostuni. Capping a hilltop above gnarled olive trees on the plain below, Ostuni, largest of the so-called "White Cities" of the Itria Valley, looks like a sugar-cube village transplanted from Greece's Cyclades Islands. Once inside, Ostuni is all languid charm, its knotted alleyways curling beneath wrought iron balconies and stone staircases with sleepy cats. Press on to the city's upper storey and you'll find yourself rewarded with spacious piazzas furnished with gothic and baroque churches and cafes strategically placed by fountains. We'll also visit a frantoio, where olive oil is produced, and taste some of the products.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

## Day 8: The White Villages of the Valle d'Itria, Tuesday 17 September

Today we'll visit some more of the lovely white villages of the Valle d'Itria, including Martina Franca and Grottaglie. For many centuries Martina Franca was the commercial heart of the Valle d'Itria and the town has a rich legacy of palaces and noble churches. We'll wind through the town to Piazza Maria Immacolata, bordered on one side by the Baroque façade of Basilica

di San Martino. Nearby we'll visit the cellars of an olive oil mill which dates back centuries, still with remnants of the time when olive oil was produced with huge grindstones driven by donkeys and horses. We'll also visit a dairy farm within a masseria, Itria Bonta, to taste local cheeses including burrata, the traditional cheese of Puglia. In Grottaglie we'll visit some of the ceramic workshops for which the town is famous.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

#### Day 9: Lecce, Wednesday 18 September

After breakfast this morning we'll visit Ceglie Messapica and Manduria en route to Lecce. Ceglie Messapica is a quiet town well off the tourist route and home to some fine boutiques with souvenirs you won't see elsewhere. Naturally, the town has a gastronomic specialty, biscotti cegliesi, an ancient and traditional biscuit made only here.

Manduria is known for its wines and we'll stop here to taste primitivo di Manduria and continue to Lecce where we stay for three nights at Palazzo de Noha. Located close to the duomo, Palazzo de Noha is a 15<sup>th</sup> century noble house that has been transformed into a calm, comfortable and welcoming refuge with minimalist design that retains much of the palazzo's original character.

<https://palazzodenoha.it/en/>

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

#### Day 10: Digging into Lecce's history, Thursday, 19 September

In the morning we'll take a short trip to Galatina, another Baroque city which sees far fewer visitors than Lecce. Galatina is known for its Church of St Catherine, a masterpiece of medieval architecture built by a crusading knight and featuring spectacular frescoes by Francesco d'Arezzo. Here we'll also taste pasticciotti, the distinctive pastry of the region, at a famous café which stakes a claim as the originator of the sweet treat.

In late afternoon we'll take a guided tour of Lecce's Baroque historic centre, a treat for the senses, lined with palaces and churches festooned with stone cherubs, saints and dangling grapes. Twisting laneways writhe between stone facades with arched doorways sized for riders on horseback. What gives Lecce its classical unity is pietra leccese, the soft, honey-coloured Lecce limestone quarried nearby, and tailor made for the giddy extravagance of the Baroque that earned Lecce the subtitle 'Florence of the South'. The style dates from a time when the Catholic church was battling the austere tendencies of Protestantism, harnessing art and architecture to underline the majesty and irrefutable righteousness of Catholicism, at its most persuasive in Lecce's great churches – Santa Chiara and the Basilica of Santa Croce. But Lecce is much older than the 16<sup>th</sup> century, flowering under the Romans who built an amphitheatre here in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE, only rediscovered in 1901.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

#### Day 11: The Adriatic coast, Friday, 20 September

Today we'll drive south to Otranto, one of Puglia's most charming towns. Looking out across the Adriatic Sea towards the Balkans and Greece, Otranto has been a commercial port since Roman times. The imposing castle, thick perimeter walls and robust towers which were built after the town was liberated from the Turks in the late 15th century dominate much of the town, giving way to a small port and a series of sea-front promenades with restaurants where we'll enjoy lunch. The Romanesque cathedral dates to 1088, with a floor of 12th-century mosaics.

After a walking tour of the city our group will board two motor cruisers for a trip along the coast, with snacks and, weather permitting, swimming from the boats.

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 12: Departure, Saturday 21 September

After breakfast guests will be transported to the airport or the railway station at Bari or Brindisi.

Meals included: Breakfast

Cost: \$8950 Per person, twin-share, Single Supplement \$1,750

Non-refundable deposit \$500 dollars when you book

What's included

- Transfers from Bari Airport or train station to our hotel, and another transfer to the airport or city of Bari at the end of the tour
- Safe and comfortable air-conditioned vehicle
- English speaking professional driver
- Guided tours in all cities/towns
- 11 nights' accommodation in a double/twin room with breakfast
- Admission to all historic monuments
- Breakfast daily
- Lunches on 3 days
- Dinners on 8 nights
- Gratuities (driver/guide, city guides, servers etc)
- Still water with meals, on the bus and on day tours

## What's Not Included

- International air travel
- Travel Insurance
- Alcoholic beverages
- Soft drinks
- Laundry, mini-bar charges, phone charges, spa treatments and other optional services provided by the hotel
- Lunches or dinners not included in the itinerary

Need more information?

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