

Italy – Treasures of Puglia and Basilicata

Tour Code IT

29 October – 5 November 2019

The south east corner of Italy, known as the 'heel', was part of Magna Graecia before the arrival of the Romans and later the Normans, and so has a rich and varied cultural heritage. This comprehensive and perfectly paced tour allows for a complete exploration of the two regions of Puglia and Basilicata. In addition to historic ports, Norman castles and Baroque splendour, the region is famous for its whitewashed conical 'Trulli' dwellings that dominate the landscape and UNESCO listed 'Sassi' cave houses. The highlight for many is Lecce, known as the 'Florence of the South', where we spend three nights at a fabulous resort located in the historic centre of the city.

UNESCO town of Matera, Basilicata
region of SE Italy



ITINERARY

Day 1 Fly to Bari

Departure from London Gatwick direct to Bari with Easy Jet. On arrival at Bari airport we transfer for two nights to the Excelsior Hotel, close to the old town and many restaurants. Dinner in a local trattoria (B,D)

Day 2 Visit Trani and Castel del Monte

We explore Trani this morning, rich in tradition and history, visiting the cathedral on a promontory close to the port. Later we visit Castel del Monte, famous for its 13th century castle built by Emperor Frederick (B)

Day 3 Visit Matera

Leaving the province of Bari we reach the charming UNESCO listed town of Matera. Here we visit the famous 'Sassi', cave settlements used as houses until the 1950's and more recently as the location for the film *The Passion*. In Sassi Barisano, the larger district of cave dwellings in Matera, many have been restored and converted into cosy houses, shops and restaurants. We visit a cellar and enjoy wine tasting and a delicious lunch at a countryside *Azienda*. Overnight at the Casino Ridola Hotel (B,L)

Day 4 Visit Taranto. Drive to Lecce

We have a bread and Focaccia cooking lesson this morning before continuing to Taranto to visit the National museum with its excellent collection illustrating the history of Magna Graecia. We continue to Lecce and stay three nights at the Dimora Storica Torre Del Parco 1419 hotel close to the historic centre (B)

Day 5 Visit Lecce, the 'Florence of the South'

We have a full day visit to Lecce, known as Florence of the South as its famous for its 17th century baroque churches and buildings carved from the beautiful honey coloured local stone.

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We also have a visit to the Palazzo Tamborino, one of the most beautiful mansions of the city, with an exquisite museum. Dinner in a local trattoria. (B,D)

Day 6 Visit Otranto and Gallipoli

Otranto is a picturesque town located on the east coast of the Salento peninsula where on a clear day one can see the Albanian coast only 80 km away. We visit the cathedral which houses beautiful 12th century mosaics that relate many stories about Otranto including King Arthur seeking the Holy Grail! We also pause at Gallipoli to visit its 17th century bridge connecting the historic centre with the modern town (B)

Day 7 Visit Ostuni

We start the day with a visit to the 'white city of Ostuni', due to the perfect setting of whitewashed houses with lime which fit into the landscaped hills of the town. Ostuni has a special charm and we will be able to enjoy a lunch at a *Masseria*; a fortified country house, to protect against attacks by Turks or pirates, and dates from the 16th century. In the afternoon we will have a walking tour through the town and visit the charming cathedral. We pause at Cisternino to visit an Oil Mill and taste some of the locally produced olive oil before arriving at Martrina Franca. Overnight at the Villa Rosa hotel. (B,L)

Day 8 Visit Martina Franca and Alberobello. Fly to London Gatwick

The site of Martina Franca has been settled since ancient times as testified by archaeological finds dating since the 7th century BC. It is now an elegant Baroque town with a pretty historic centre dominated by many grand civic buildings. Alberobello is known for its whitewashed conical 'Trulli' houses and has UNESCO heritage listing and is a pleasure to wander and explore on one's own. Later we transfer to Bari airport for our evening return flight direct to London Gatwick with Easy jet (B)

Cost £1895.00 per person in a twin room (single supplement additional £99.00)



Picturesque Otranto on the Salento Peninsula

Price includes –

- ▶ Tour accompanied from London by Patrick Syder
- ▶ Specialist Italian guide for the duration of the tour
- ▶ Private minibus with driver
- ▶ Airport transfers
- ▶ Quality 4* hotels with private facilities
- ▶ Two included dinners at local trattorias
- ▶ Olive oil and wine tasting
- ▶ Two included traditional lunches in an *Azienda* and a *Masseria* with wine
- ▶ All entrance fees plus visit to a private Palazzo
- ▶ City taxes

PLEASE NOTE – personal travel insurance, drinks, gratuities, some meals and international flights are not included in the land tour cost

(Included meals denoted by B Breakfast, L Lunch, D Dinner)