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Magical Moments in Puglia & Matera

This is a sample itinerary.

All itineraries are customized to your Travel Dreams & wishes



Polignano a Mare



Trulli of Alberobello

Our tour is designed to satisfy the most discerning travelers who want to explore the highlights of Southern Italy with its fascinating cultural heritage, excellent food and wine and stunning, picturesque landscapes. Distinctive and delightful, with crystalline seas, pretty countryside and endless sunshine, Puglia is a captivating region and the right place to spend your vacation.

DAY 1: ARRIVAL IN PUGLIA

Welcome to Apulia! We'll meet you from Bari or Brindisi airport or train station and then take you for a delicious home-style lunch based on our regional specialties. After lunch we'll head to your accommodation in Ostuni, the picturesque, hilltop, medieval 'white city' overlooking the Adriatic Sea. You'll spend the first three nights at either the 5* boutique hotel, La Sommita Relais, with its Michelin star restaurant, set in a 16th century former monastery in the heart of Ostuni. If you prefer to relax in the countryside, you can enjoy the peaceful atmosphere of a former agricultural estate, the Masseria Torre Coccaro, now transformed into a luxury golf and spa resort.

DAY 2: DISCOVERING CISTERNINO, ALBEROBELLO & POLIGNANO A MARE

This morning our first stop is Cisternino, where we'll stroll through the narrow streets of this medieval village, Then we'll drive to Alberobello, the famous Unesco World Heritage Site, famed for its conical-shaped dwellings, built from limestone with rooves stacked of stone tiles without mortar. Lunch at a family-run restaurant "La cantina" where the chef Francesco will cook a delicious meal in front of you in his open kitchen. In the afternoon we set off for Polignano a Mare, renowned for its breathtaking balconies with views to the crashing waves of the Adriatic below. Also the birthplace of the Italian singer, Domenico Modugno famous for 'Volare'.

DAY 3: COOKING OR BOATING

After a delicious breakfast you'll visit Masseria Brancati with its underground oil mill where you will taste five different oils produced there. You then have the option to partake in our cookery class set in a rustic setting. After your lesson, you'll relax in front of a generous meal where you'll enjoy the food you have made and more provided by the chef or take a two hour boat trip, including a light lunch, along the Adriatic coast and enjoy a swim. In the afternoon take time on your own to have a relaxing walk, visit the shops or just sit with a glass of wine in the old main square and people watch.

DAY 4: GALLIPOLI, THE BEACH, SEAFOOD AND WINETASTING

From Ostuni we'll drive south, past Lecce, crossing the heel of Italy to Gallipoli, a charming fishing village on the Ionic Gulf. After a stroll through the fish market we will visit an underground oil mill before enjoying a nice lunch at "Puritate" one of the best fish restaurants on the Salento peninsula. In the afternoon we'll head to a fantastic local winery "Schola Sarmanti", in Nardò, where you'll visit its cantina and taste their award winning, organic wines. Then we'll return to Lecce for a brief siesta before dining at the celebrities favourite restaurant Le Zie. As we walk to and from the restaurant we will experience Lecce beautifully lit at night, the Palazzos and the stunning facade of the highly decorated Santa Croce. You will enjoy three nights in the 5* luxury resort Hotel Risorgimento, situated in the heart of this beautiful Baroque city; this elegant resort has been an inn since the 15th century. The gourmet restaurant's executive chef, Cosimo Simmini, uses excellent local produce and the traditional flavours and aromas of the Salento cuisine. The Wellness Spa, Salus per Aquam, offers an array of relaxing and beauty treatments or you can enjoy a Hammam roman bath.

DAY 5: HISTORICAL LECCE AND THE MARVELS OF OTRANTO

After breakfast we will explore the city of Lecce, much of the architecture is in the highly decorative Baroque style, which flourished in the 17th century and earned the city the name "Florence of South". We will visit Piazza S.Oronzo and the magnificent Roman Amphitheatre. Or, if you prefer, there is an option to take a boat trip and enjoy a swim in the crystal Adriatic waters in the morning. We will have our lunch at Il Cantico dei Cantici in the stunning seaside town of Otranto, one of Puglia's most vibrant towns, overlooking a pretty harbour and recognized by Unesco and named as one of the "Borghi piu'belli d'Italia" (one of the most beautiful small towns in Italy) where we'll explore its charming historical centre. It is here that St Peter is fabled to have celebrated the first western mass. I

DAY 6

in the morning we will drive to Galatina and visit the Basilica Santa Caterina d'Alessandria with its amazing frescoes and paintings similar to those at the Basilica San Francesco in Assisi. It is thought that some of the artists that worked with Giotto were also employed to work here. We will then drive down to Leuca where we will have lunch at Osteria Del Pardo famous for its fish and seafood dishes. In the afternoon we will visit the centuries old winery Castel di Salve that brings together wines produced from four of their vineyards which, are geographically very close but fall into four very distinct microclimates and soil environments. You'll have a chance to taste them all! We will then visit the old town of Tricase and enjoy an aperitif at Farmacia Bilboa. You are then free to enjoy the evening in Tricase before we drive back to Lecce.

DAY 7: THE SASSI OF MATERA

Today we leave Lecce, we'll start the tour with a visit to Grottaglie, famed for its ceramics, where we will visit the workshop. We then continue our journey to Matera, a Unesco World Heritage Site. Where we will have a delicious lunch at Falco Grillaio then begin to explore the fascinating Sassi. The people of Matera once lived in these Sassi, dwellings scooped out of the rock. Many chapels were also gouged out of the rock and we will be visiting some of these chapels and dwellings on route. You will spend your two nights in the spectacular hotel, Sextantio Grotte della Civita a cultural project of preservation and renovation located in the oldest part of the sassi and overlooking the Gravina stream and the dramatic scenery of the Murgia Park. We will dine at Abbondanza, a chic restaurant in a cave.

DAY 8:

After breakfast, we will visit the Crypt of the Original Sin commonly known as the Sistine Chapel of Rupestrian art it was discovered as late as 1963. Experts have dated the cycle of paintings back to the second half of the eighth century, painted by Basilian monks. After a wonderful lunch at Baccanti you may choose between a bike tour to a natural preservation area just outside Matera or an easy walk in the old town to look at workshops of local artisans or perhaps relax at a local cafe and pastry shop.

DAY 9:

Today we travel to "Castel del Monte" built in the 13th century by the Norman emperor Fredrick the second to be used as a hunting lodge. This is one of the most sophisticated secular buildings of the middle ages and its octagonal geometry has inspired many novels. Lunch at "Antichi Sapori" in Andria or "Corte in Fiore" in Trani, both excellent awarded restaurants. In the afternoon we will visit Trani and its amazing cathedral built by the sea. During the middle ages the town was an active port and bustled with mercantile activity with merchants and Knight Templars that travelled throughout the Mediterranean and the Holy Land. We will also visit one of the few working synagoges in Puglia built in 1246-7, in the time of the greatest Jewish community in Trani, which in 1160 had a population of 200 families. We will spend the night either at "Corte in Fiore" in Trani or "Albergo delle Nazioni" in Bari.

DAY 10: GOODBYE

We'll escort you to Brindisi or Bari airport for your return journey. We hope you will return to visit us and keep exploring more of our colourful land. "Goodbye!"



Basilic Santa Croce of Lecce