

Heart of Puglia

8 days — among trulli, Baroque art and the Sassi

Duration: 8 days / 7 nights

Accommodation: 4★ Hotel/Resort (Central Puglia)

Meal plan: Half board (water and house wine included with meals)

Transport: Tourist coach

Tour leader: Accompanying the group for the entire tour

Recommended period: March · April · May · June · September · October · November

Group: Minimum 25 — maximum 50 people

Price: Starting from €950

This is the tour of Puglia's deepest heart: the Itria Valley with its trulli and whitewashed villages, the rock-hewn magic of Matera, the power of Lecce's Baroque, underground caves and the sea at Polignano. Eight intense days full of emotion, for those who want to go beyond the surface and truly feel this land.

Day 1 — Arrival in Puglia

Arrival at Bari airport, welcome by the guide and coach transfer to the 4★ Hotel/Resort in Central Puglia. After check-in, free time to settle in, welcome dinner and overnight stay.

Day 2 — Ostuni and Lecce

Breakfast and departure at 9:00 am. Guided visit of Ostuni, the White City: its historic centre, entirely covered in whitewash, is a unique visual spectacle, with alleys climbing toward the Gothic cathedral overlooking the valley and the sea on the horizon. Over the centuries Ostuni has preserved its authentic, elegant and quiet identity. Free time for lunch and shopping in the small shops of the centre.

In the afternoon, transfer to Lecce to visit the queen of Apulian Baroque: Porta Napoli, Via Palmieri, the Cathedral, the Roman Amphitheatre and the Basilica of Santa Croce — the absolute masterpiece of Lecce's art, its façade carved like an embroidery in stone. Stop at a café for the ritual "pasticciotto salentino" with Lecce-style coffee. Return to the hotel, dinner and overnight stay.

Day 3 — Bari and the Castellana Caves

Morning in Bari Vecchia (the old town): a 3-hour guided visit through the heart of the ancient city, taking in the Basilica of San Nicola, the Norman-Swabian Castle and the alleys where housewives still hand-make orecchiette on their doorsteps. Stop for Bari-style focaccia and a visit to an artisan dairy for a tasting of mozzarella, burrata and Apulian taralli, paired with local wine.

In the afternoon, the Castellana Caves: one of the most important underground cave systems in Europe. A 2-hour route descends to over 60 metres below ground, into a subterranean world of fantastically shaped stalactites and stalagmites, canyons and the luminous White Cave. Return to the hotel, dinner and overnight stay.

Day 4 — Itria Valley: Martina Franca, Locorotondo and Cisternino

A full day in the heart of the Itria Valley, Puglia's most romantic territory. Morning in Martina Franca: the Baroque town with its Basilica of San Martino, the Ducal Palace and noble palaces adorned with stuccoes and wrought-iron balconies. Visit to one of the largest Apulian oil mills with a guided extra-virgin olive oil tasting.

In the afternoon, the villages of Cisternino and Locorotondo: simply strolling through the alleys transports you into a fairy-tale landscape, with flower-filled courtyards, craft workshops and the aromas of roasted meats from

the local restaurants. All around, the valley's landscape is an endless mosaic of trulli, olive groves and vineyards. Return to the hotel, dinner and overnight stay.

Day 5 — Altamura and Matera

Morning in Altamura: the city of DOP-certified bread, with its magnificent Frederician cathedral, medieval cloisters and noble palaces. Visit to a traditional artisan bakery and a tasting of Altamura bread — fragrant, golden, unmistakable.

In the afternoon, Matera — the City of the Sassi, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and European Capital of Culture 2019. Guided visit of the Sasso Barisano and Sasso Caveoso districts: a thousand-year-old urban system of dwellings, cisterns and rock-hewn churches carved into the tuff stone. One of the most evocative and unique places in the world. Free time for shopping in the craft workshops. Return to the hotel, dinner and overnight stay.

Day 6 — Alberobello and Polignano a Mare

Morning in Alberobello, the town of the trulli: the Monti and Aia Piccola districts are a UNESCO World Heritage Site and offer one of Italy's most iconic and recognisable landscapes. Guided visit to the "Siamese trullo," the Casa D'Amore and the world's only trullo-church. Free time for lunch and shopping in the trulli turned into craft shops.

In the afternoon, Polignano a Mare: Puglia's most photographed village, clinging to the limestone cliffs with terraces overlooking the sea. Guided visit of the medieval historic centre and an obligatory stop for Polignano's famous special coffee. Return to the hotel, dinner and overnight stay.

Day 7 — Castel del Monte and Trani

Morning at Castel del Monte, the octagonal castle of Frederick II — one of the most powerful symbols of medieval European culture and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The guided visit unveils the symbolic and astronomical mysteries of this extraordinary architecture, set in the light of the Murge.

In the afternoon, Trani: the Romanesque pearl of Puglia, with its Cathedral of San Nicola Pellegrino mirrored in the Adriatic Sea. The old harbour, noble palaces and the Swabian Castle complete one of the tour's most evocative stops. Return to the hotel, dinner and overnight stay.

Day 8 — Departure

Breakfast, packing and check-out. Coach transfer to Bari airport.

Price includes

- Accommodation and half board at a 4★ Hotel/Resort (house water and wine included with meals)
- Coach transfers for the entire tour, including parking and tolls
- Tour guide accompanying the group for all 8 days
- Admission to Trani Cathedral
- Shuttle + admission to Castel del Monte
- Visit and tasting at the Altamura bakery (DOP bread)
- Admission to a Cave House in Matera
- Admission to the Castellana Caves
- Bari-style focaccia and Peroni beer
- Visit and tasting at the Bari dairy (mozzarella, burrata, taralli and wine)
- Special coffee at the café in Polignano a Mare
- Admission to the churches of Lecce
- Pasticciotto and coffee at the café in Lecce

- Radio guides for the whole tour

Price does not include

- Air or land transport to reach Puglia
- All lunches
- Local tourist tax, payable on site
- Tips, personal expenses and anything not listed under "Price includes"

⚠ While all the stages and activities described will be maintained, the programme may be subject to changes depending on the location of the chosen Hotel/Resort and adverse weather conditions.

Info & Bookings:

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Provincia di Lecce Authorisation: SCIA protocol no. 20217

Travel agency / tour operator civil liability insurance: Allianz No. 732142917

Guarantee fund: Fondo Vacanze Felici No. 2018