



# THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED - PUGLIA

17 - 30 APRIL 2027

1 - 14 MAY 2027

11 - 24 SEPTEMBER 2027





Trulli in the Valle d'Itria

## OVERVIEW

**AUD 10,460**  
(PER PERSON, TWIN SHARE)

**AUD 12,260**  
(PER PERSON, SOLO TRAVELLER)

“The tour was absolutely fantastic, and all that it is cracked up to be on your website. We were amazed at the beauty of Puglia and were stunned by the local food. The accommodation was first-rate. The group size is perfect for the sort of tour that you offer. Our guide, Marco, ...was greatly appreciated for his care and sense of humour. He introduced us to many Pugliese dishes and especially to Café Leccese, which became a great hit with the whole group. We are now making it at home!!  
Paul and Sue, 2023

Since 2007, Italian Tours has designed small group journeys for travellers who share our enthusiasm for Italy and enjoy discovering it in good company. Our small group sizes (maximum of 12 people) and carefully planned itineraries allow us to travel at a relaxed pace and explore places often missed by larger tours.

We favour a travel style that allows time to appreciate where we are. By staying several nights in each location and including regular free time, you can wander through towns, sit in a café, visit a museum, or simply enjoy the atmosphere at your own pace.

Our Puglian journey begins on the Gargano Peninsula, one of the most striking and lesser-known areas of southern Italy. From the seaside town of Vieste, we explore the dramatic coastline by boat, visit the pilgrimage town of Monte Sant'Angelo, and travel through the shaded landscapes of the Foresta Umbra.

From here we continue south to the countryside of the Valle d'Itria, a landscape of olive groves, dry-stone walls and the distinctive trulli houses unique to this region. We explore towns such as Alberobello and Locorotondo, and gain insight into local traditions through visits to producers and artisans.

Further south lies Lecce, the elegant Baroque capital of Salento. From here, we explore the surrounding area, including the historic town of Galatina and the coastal city of Otranto. The journey concludes along the Adriatic coast with visits to Castel del Monte, the port city of Bari, and time in the seaside town of Polignano a Mare.





*Baroque architecture in Lecce*

## ITINERARY

### DAY 1 - ARRIVAL IN PUGLIA AND TRANSFER TO THE GARGANO

Our tour begins with a group pick-up in Bari before travelling north along the Adriatic coast towards the Gargano Peninsula. This striking stretch of coastline is one of the most distinctive landscapes in southern Italy, with limestone cliffs, clear waters, and small fishing towns set above the sea.

By late afternoon, we arrive in the seaside town of Vieste, our home for the next three nights. With its narrow streets, views across the Adriatic and relaxed pace of life, Vieste offers a lovely introduction to this part of Puglia.

In the evening, we gather for a welcome dinner and the chance to get to know one another.

Overnight: Vieste

### DAY 2 - THE GARGANO COAST BY BOAT

Today, we explore one of the most beautiful sections of coastline in southern Italy. We board a boat to travel along the Gargano coast, where high limestone cliffs drop into the Adriatic and sea caves open into clear turquoise water. Seeing this coastline from the water offers a different perspective on the landscape and a real sense of the peninsula's wild character.

The afternoon is free for you to enjoy Vieste at your own pace.

In the evening, we share dinner at a traditional trabucco, a centuries-old wooden fishing platform perched above the water that today serves as a simple seafood restaurant.

Overnight: Vieste



### DAY 3 - MONTE SANT'ANGELO AND THE FORESTA UMBRA

This morning, we travel inland to the historic town of Monte Sant'Angelo, one of the most important pilgrimage sites in southern Italy. Here we visit the Sanctuary of Saint Michael the Archangel, an extraordinary church built within a cave that has drawn pilgrims for centuries and is now recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Later in the day, we continue into the Foresta Umbra, a protected woodland in the heart of Gargano National Park. With its shaded roads, ancient trees and cooler mountain air, the forest offers a very different landscape from the coast.

We return to Vieste in the late afternoon.

Overnight: Vieste

### DAY 4 - TRANI AND THE VALLE D'ITRIA

Leaving the Gargano behind, we travel south along the Adriatic coast towards the elegant port town of Trani.

Dominated by its magnificent Romanesque cathedral, which rises directly beside the sea, Trani is one of Puglia's architectural highlights. We spend time exploring the harbour and historic centre before stopping for lunch.

In the afternoon, we continue inland to the rolling countryside of the Valle d'Itria, a landscape of olive groves, dry-stone walls and the distinctive conical trulli houses that are unique to this region.

Our accommodation for the next three nights is a historic masseria set in the countryside.

Overnight: Valle d'Itria

### DAY 5 - LOCOROTONDO AND ALBEROBELLO

We begin the day in Locorotondo, often listed among Italy's most beautiful villages. Its circular historic centre is filled with whitewashed houses, flower-filled balconies and narrow streets that are a pleasure to wander through. From the edge of the town, there are also wide views across the countryside of the Valle d'Itria, a landscape shaped by olive groves, vineyards and dry-stone walls.

Later, we visit Alberobello, the UNESCO-listed town famous for its remarkable trulli. These cone-roofed stone houses create one of the most recognisable landscapes in southern Italy. Walking through the small lanes between the trulli offers a glimpse into the region's traditional rural architecture and the history of life in this part of Puglia.

Overnight: Valle d'Itria

### DAY 6 - MATERA

Today we cross the regional border into Basilicata to visit one of the most remarkable towns in Italy: Matera.

The town is famous for the Sassi, its ancient cave dwellings that have been inhabited since prehistoric times. Over centuries, these caves developed into a unique settlement of houses, churches and winding lanes carved directly into the rock. A guided introduction helps explain the history of this extraordinary place, after which there will be time to explore the narrow streets, visit some of the cave churches, or simply enjoy the views across the ravine.

We return to the Valle d'Itria later in the afternoon.

Overnight: Valle d'Itria

### DAY 7 - MASSERIA DEL DUCA AND LECCE

The day begins with a visit to the historic Masseria del Duca, a traditional Puglian farmstead and award-winning cheese producer. During our time here, we learn about local dairy traditions and the different cheeses produced on the farm, with the opportunity to see how some of them are made.

Afterwards, we continue to the nearby town of Grottaglie, long known as the centre of ceramic production in this part of Puglia. The town is home to dozens of small workshops, many of them family-run, where pottery is still produced by hand. We visit one of these studios to see how the ceramics are shaped, decorated and fired.

Later in the day, we continue south to Lecce, where we settle into our hotel for the next three nights.

Overnight: Lecce

### DAY 8 - DISCOVERING LECCE

This morning we explore Lecce with a local guide. Built from the warm local limestone known as pietra leccese, the city developed a distinctive Baroque style in the seventeenth century, when churches and palaces were richly decorated with carved stone figures, flowers and elaborate balconies. Our walk through the historic centre includes several of the city's most important sites, including Piazza del Duomo, framed by the cathedral, bishop's palace and seminary, and the richly decorated Basilica di Santa Croce, one of the finest examples of Lecce's Baroque architecture. We also visit Piazza Sant'Oronzo, the lively heart of the city, where the remains of a Roman amphitheatre lie partly beneath the modern street level.

The afternoon is free for you to continue exploring Lecce.

Overnight: Lecce





*Ancient olive trees*

## DAY 9 - GALATINA AND OTRANTO

A short drive through the Salento countryside brings us to the town of Galatina. Here we visit the Church of Santa Caterina d'Alessandria, whose interior contains one of the most impressive fresco cycles in southern Italy, painted in the fourteenth century.

While in town, we also stop at the historic Pasticceria Ascalone, birthplace of the famous pasticciotto, the custard-filled pastry that has become one of Salento's best-known treats.

In the afternoon, we continue to Otranto, a fortified town overlooking the Adriatic. The highlight is the cathedral, whose vast twelfth-century mosaic floor depicts a remarkable Tree of Life surrounded by biblical scenes, animals and mythological figures. Overnight: Lecce

## DAY 10 - WINES OF PUGLIA AND POLIGNANO A MARE

Leaving Lecce behind, we travel north through the countryside of southern Puglia to visit one of the region's respec-

ted wine producers. Here we learn about the grape varieties that thrive in this warm climate, including Primitivo, Negroamaro, and other local varieties long associated with the region's winemaking tradition. A tasting at the winery is followed by lunch.

In the afternoon, we continue along the Adriatic coast to Polignano a Mare, one of the most picturesque towns in Puglia. Set on limestone cliffs above the sea, the town is known for its coastal views and compact historic centre of narrow streets and whitewashed buildings.

We settle into our hotel here, where we will spend the next four nights.

Overnight: Polignano a Mare

## DAY 11- CASTEL DEL MONTE AND A SPECIAL LUNCH

A drive inland brings us to Castel del Monte, the striking octagonal castle built in the thirteenth century by the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II. Standing alone on a hill above the surrounding countryside, the castle is un-





Castel del Monte

like any other in Italy. Its perfectly symmetrical design, based on the repeated geometry of the octagon, has fascinated historians for centuries and continues to raise questions about the intentions behind its construction.

After time to explore the castle and the surrounding landscape, we continue to Antichi Sapori, one of Puglia's most respected restaurants. Here chef Pietro Zito prepares lunch using seasonal ingredients grown in the family's gardens and sourced from nearby farms, offering a memorable introduction to traditional Puglian cooking.

Overnight: Polignano a Mare

## DAY 12- BARI

The day begins with a visit to the historic port city of Bari, capital of the Puglia region. Our walking tour takes us through the narrow streets of the old town, where daily life still unfolds much as it has for generations. Along Strada delle Orecchiette, it is common to see local women shaping the small ear-shaped pasta for which the region is famous.

One of the highlights is the Basilica di San Nicola, an important pilgrimage church housing the relics of Saint Nicholas and long a place of devotion for both Catholic and Orthodox Christians. From here, we continue through the maze of small

streets and squares that make up the heart of the old city before emerging along the lively waterfront promenade.

Overnight: Polignano a Mare

## DAY 13 - OSTUNI AND BRANCATI OLIVE GROVES

Our final full day takes us back into the countryside of the Valle d'Itria, a landscape shaped for centuries by olive groves and dry-stone walls.

We visit a local olive oil estate, where some of the trees are more than a thousand years old.

Later, we continue to Ostuni, the well-known "White City", whose whitewashed houses rise above the surrounding olive groves. There will be time to wander through the narrow streets of the historic centre and enjoy the views across the countryside.

In the evening, we gather for our farewell dinner.

Overnight: Polignano a Mare

## DAY 14 - FAREWELLS

On the last day of the tour, we provide a transfer service to Bari, with scheduled stops at Bari Airport and Bari Centrale train station.





*Alberobello*



## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### STAY

- ❖ 3 nights in the Gargano Peninsula (Vieste)
- ❖ 3 nights in the Valle d'Itria in a masseria in the countryside
- ❖ 3 nights in Lecce in a centrally located hotel
- ❖ 4 nights in Polignano a Mare in a seaside hotel

### INCLUSIONS

- ◆ Experienced and bilingual tour leader on hand for the duration of the tour
- ◆ Group transfer at the end of the tour as per the information below
- ◆ Accommodation (on a twin-share basis) in charming hotels, chosen for their location and comfort
- ◆ All breakfasts, five lunches and five dinners (wine, or something softer if you would prefer, is included with all lunches and dinners)
- ◆ All land travel in Italy is in a private, air-conditioned mini-coach
- ◆ Entry fees to all attractions listed in the itinerary
- ◆ Expert, local guides at key attractions

### EXCLUSIONS AND ADD-ONS

- ◆ Local city tax (payable directly at the hotels)
- ◆ Add a night pre-tour at a hotel in Bari (subject to availability)

### GETTING TO PUGLIA AND DEPARTING.

If you are flying to Puglia, the most convenient airport for the start of the tour is Bari Airport. Bari is also well connected by high-speed train from Rome, making it easy to reach by rail if you are travelling within Italy.

On the first afternoon of the tour, we arrange a group meeting point in Bari at approximately 3:00 pm, from where we depart together for our transfer to our first hotel on the Gargano Peninsula.

At the end of the tour, we provide a group transfer back to Bari Airport (arriving approximately 9:30 am) and Bari Centrale train station (arriving about 10:00 am).

### PHYSICAL FITNESS

We don't place any age limitations on the tour and welcome anyone with a moderate level of physical fitness. Specifically, you should be comfortable on your feet for up to 3 hours with short breaks and confident on uneven surfaces.

### TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is compulsory when travelling on one of our tours.

### BOOKING

If you would like to book a place on this or any other tour or have questions about the itinerary, please don't hesitate to contact Luca or Philippa at Italian Tours.

P 02 9358 4923

E [ciao@italiantours.com.au](mailto:ciao@italiantours.com.au)

