

EXPLORE!

NEW

Highlights of Southern Italy
7 days

Italy - Trip code PNP



Highlights of Southern Italy

This full on trip combines the fascinating trullis and sassis found in the 'heel of Italy', with Amalfi's stunning coastline and the world-famous archaeological sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum. We'll travel by coach, but in true Explore spirit also by ferry and by train. We'll have the chance to eat pizza in one of Naples' famed pizzerias, sample wine and cheese, and then burn off the calories on one of the best coastal walks in the world, the Walk of the Gods. This holiday will give you the perfect introduction to the south of Italy.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Walk of the Gods** - Take one of the most spectacular coastal walks in the world with magnificent views over the Bay of Salerno
- ★ **Pompeii and Herculaneum** - Discover the ancient cities that have taught us more about Roman life than any other sites
- ★ **Amalfi Coast** - Admire the views over sandy bays, blue waters and rocky cliffs dotted with colourful towns like Positano
- ★ **Matera** - Experience the fascinating UNESCO World Heritage Listed ancient troglodyte sassi quarter
- ★ **Alberobello** - Explore the unique beehive-shaped trulli houses and enjoy dinner in a winery

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:

Full on

Full on paced trips are for travellers who like their holidays packed with activities and experiences, moving on quickly from place to place with lots of early starts and long, busy days. Some may find them tiring, but others get a buzz from packing their precious holiday-time as chock-a-block full of new experiences as possible!

GROUP SIZE:

12 - 18

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip in Naples

On this trip we will experience the highlights of three famous Southern Italian regions - we start in Campania, travel into Basilicata and end up in Puglia. We begin in Naples, a city of diverse contrasts and one that evokes enormous pride among the locals. Its rich history, staunch Catholicism and endless charm make it one of the most engaging cities in Italy. Later this afternoon our Explore Leader will take us on a brief walking tour of old Naples. We'll wander through the old city streets and narrow alleyways that give us a captivating insight into the city's heart, which has gone unchanged in essence for generations. Along the way we will see the round stone turrets of Maschio Angioino Castle, the square seafront Castle Dell'ovo, the main square of Piazza del Plebiscito, the ornate glass covered shopping arcade of Galleria Umberto and the Baroque and Neo-Classical facade of the Royal Palace. Tonight you might like to try the most famous Neapolitan cuisine, pizza. The traditional pizzas served here aren't as crispy as in most parts of Italy. They tend to be thinner in the centre so that the fresh tomato sauce collects and soaks into the base. It's normally then topped with a drizzling of olive oil, mozzarella and fresh basil. Our time in Naples is limited, so if you'd like to visit the prestigious National Museum or go underground into the Napoli Sotterranea then we'd recommend extending your stay by a night.



Accommodation: B&B Hotel Napoli (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Guided visit to ancient Herculaneum and Pompeii

This morning we will take the train to the nearby ruins of Herculaneum at the foot of Mount Vesuvius. Buried by the volcanic eruption of AD 79, the city was hermetically sealed under a thick layer of volcanic mud, which preserved a staggering amount of wooden furniture and other organic materials - even fruit. After our guided tour we'll take the train on to neighbouring Pompeii. At Pompeii we will also have a guided walking tour to introduce us to this remarkably well-preserved example of a provincial Roman city. The town once housed 15,000 people and was an important commercial centre, as well as a favourite residence of wealthy Roman patricians. Of course, on one fateful day the same eruption that hermetically sealed Herculaneum also buried Pompeii, preserving the buildings and its citizens in layers of ash and pumice. We will see the extensive colonnaded forum with its Temple of Jupiter and the magnificently-decorated villas, such as that of the Vetii. Human casts of some of the victims trapped by the eruption give an emotive snapshot of this catastrophic event. We drive to the Amalfi Coast region where we spend the next two nights. The Amalfi Coast is a picturesque 50 kilometre long stretch of coastline which runs along the southern edge of the Sorrento Peninsula. It's dotted with colourful terraced towns, sandy beaches and rocky cliffs. For the next two nights we will be staying in the Amalfi

Coast region. Due to high demand in this area, the exact location of your accommodation will vary depending on the departure date and will be confirmed to you on your final documentation.



Accommodation: Hotel Il Pino (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Admire the magnificent views along the Walk of the Gods to Positano

We will drive to Bomerano where we begin the Walk of the Gods to Positano, which is regarded as one of the best coastal walks in the world. The high cliff path contours west, with magnificent views over the Bay of Salerno and island of Capri. The trail passes under huge limestone cliffs and above picturesque stone farmhouses until it reaches the attractive village of Nocelle. From here, we descend down an ancient stairway, passing pretty flower gardens, into Positano. A poor fishing village until the 1950s, Positano has grown into a chic town that is still a favourite with Hollywood stars. Positanos colourful buildings are stacked up the green cliff side above its sandy beach. The walk today is moderately graded and will take approximately five hours and will cover a distance of eight kilometres with a 650 metre descent. The walk can be shortened and end in Montepertuso for anyone who doesn't want to do the steep final descent with a significant number of steps into Positano. From Montepertuso it's easy to take the public bus to Positano to catch up with those finishing the walk. There is some free time in Positano to relax on the beach or to have a cold beer to reward ourselves on finishing our walk. We'll take a scenic ferry ride to see the coast from a different angle, as we cruise into the town of Amalfi (the boat journey takes us around 25 minutes) and from here we transfer to our hotel.



Accommodation: Hotel Il Pino (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Discover the cave dwellings and rock carved churches of Matera

This morning we leave the Campania region and drive to Matera, which is in Basilicata and where we will spend the next two nights. Our drive today will take us around four hours and along the way we'll see some great views of the Amalfi Coast before heading into the countryside. Matera is impressively located on the side of a gorge eroded by the Gravina River and is famous for its ancient sassi, a UNESCO -Listed troglodyte quarter, which originates from prehistoric times. Stepping into the city is like stepping back in time, and it feels as though the cobbled narrow streets and meandering buildings have changed little over the past 7,000 years. It's a place that has to be seen to be believed and we have the wonderful experience of staying in a hotel within these ancient sassi cave dwellings. On arrival in Matera a local guide will take us on a walking tour of the sassi quarter which is split into two halves - Sassi Caveoso and Sassi Barisano with the cathedral sitting between them. The city is so unchanged over the centuries that it has frequently been used as a film set for biblical scenes. It's hard to believe it now, but in the 1950s Matera was an embarrassment to the Italian authorities, as many families were living in one room caves, in poor conditions and poverty was rife. The families were helped and re-housed and the city cleaned up and it's now a treasured historic city that will become the European Capital of Culture in 2019. After exploring the cobbled lanes, rock carved churches and caves we have the rest of the afternoon free to discover more.



Accommodation: Hotel Sassi (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available

DAY 5 - Free day in Matera; chance to visit Gravina Sotterranea

Today is free for you to explore Matera - it's a great city for strolling through the lanes and it's very photogenic with every street revealing yet another amazing view. Alternatively you might choose to take a train to neighbouring Gravina (the journey is around 45 minutes each way). Gravina is also an ancient town that has retained much of its character. The buildings are stacked on top of one another along the sides of river gorge with Roman bridge connecting the two sides. You could visit Gravina Sotterranea, which is an underground network of meandering passageways that run beneath the city.



Accommodation: Hotel Sassi (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Cheese and wine tasting; walk through the trullis of Alberobello

This morning we drive across the regional border into Puglia to an agriturismo in Putignano for a cheese tasting. Agriturismos are traditional country farms that have opened up their doors to visitors, so everything here is homemade. After seeing how the cheese is produced and exploring the farm and gardens we'll sample their delicious food, which usually includes freshly braided mozzarella. Following our tasting we drive on to the UNESCO World Heritage Listed small town of Alberobello, which is best known for its unique trullis or trullis as they're also known. We will spend the night in these unusual round houses with their white washed dry stone walls and pointed 'witches hat' tiled roofs. They were either built singly or in groups of up to five, which would have originally been occupied by a single family. After checking in to our trullis our Explore Leader will take us on a walk of the town to learn about the history and to help us get our bearings. The town is divided into two districts - Rione Aia Piccola and Rione Monti. On our walk we'll see Trullo Sovrano, built by a wealth priest in the 18th century it is the only two floor trulli house and it's now a museum, and the Trullo Church with its domed towers and curved windows it looks like a stretched trulli and was built far later in 1927. Our walk will end at the Cantina Albea Winery and Museum. Where we will have our final dinner this evening accompanied by their award-winning wines. Our meal will be a tasting menu of different savoury specialities. In Puglia the food revolves around local produce, so the dishes on offer will vary depending on what's in season. A lot of the cuisine is vegetable or cheese based and of course they make good use of all the olive oil produced from the 60 million olive trees in the region.



Accommodation: Hotel Trullidea (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



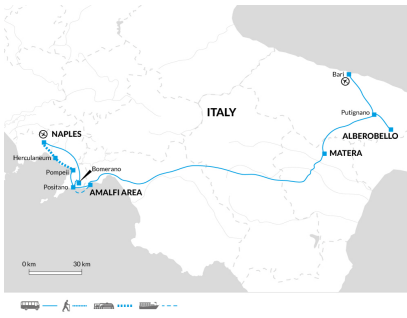
Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 7 - Trip ends in Alberobello

Our trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Alberobello.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



Why book this trip

This one week trip offers you the chance to experience the highlights of not just one but three famous Italian regions: Campania, Basilicata and Puglia. As well as getting to stay in the remarkable trulli and sassi buildings, which are unique to the 'heel of Italy' and not an experience that is offered by most other operators.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 6
Dinner: 1



Transport

Bus
Boat
Train



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



Accommodation

6 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

Italy Holidays & Tours

Climate

April/May and October/November are pleasantly warm. June/September are the hottest months. Showers are common in Autumn.

Time difference to GMT

+1

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Roman Catholic

Language

Italian

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

Matera: Gravina Sotterranea entrance with guided tour €7.00. Please note that the cobbled streets in Gravina can be slippery and due to its gorge location there are a number of steps around the town and also down into the Sotterranea.

Clothing

July and August are the hottest months and lightweight cotton clothing is best. During spring and autumn temperatures can be lower or drop during the evenings and there is also a stronger possibility of rain. You'll need your swimming costume and light rainwear may be needed at any time of year. A warm fleece is recommended for cooler evenings.

Footwear

We recommend taking comfortable walking shoes for exploring and trainers or sandals for relaxing.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a day pack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

We advise taking a water bottle for our included walks as well as sun glasses, sunscreen and a sun hat. In case of emergency we recommend that you carry a first aid kit and a torch. Bring a swimming suit and towel for taking a dip in the Adriatic Sea. We also recommend taking walking poles for the Walk of the Gods, as the path is over uneven rocky ground, some sections are steep and the descents can be a bit tough on the knees. You might also find these useful in some of the towns visited such as Matera, which are cobbled, hilly and have a number of uneven steps. We'd suggest taking a backpack with a waterproof cover for the Walk of the Gods to store your water, a picnic lunch and snacks, any clothing and sun products required, etc.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Explore Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly please allow £15.00 for tipping. In order to make things easier for you, the Explore Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the trip.

Country Information

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Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Dinner price

£10.00 - 14.00

Beer price

£2.00 - 4.00

Water price

£1.00 - 2.00

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Euro.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

GBP.

Where To Exchange

We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

ATM Availability

Major towns.

Credit Card Acceptance

Larger hotels and restaurants.

Travellers Cheques

Only in major towns. Please note, the exchange rate for cash and Travellers Cheques is poor.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Boat, Train

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

In Alberobello we will stay in traditional trulli houses. Our group will be split between several different houses, but they're only a short distance apart and are all of a similar size and standard. Each trulli has its own bathroom, but this may be shared between two bedrooms within the same trulli. In Matera we will stay in original sassi cave buildings. At this unique hotel each of the rooms are different sizes and layouts and some are located within the caves themselves and others in the ancient entry buildings attached to the caves. They are all only a short distance apart and rooms are en suite. There are excellent views from the hotels' terrace over the surrounding cave dwellings and Matera Cathedral. On days 2 and 3 we will be staying in the Amalfi Coast region. The exact location of your accommodation will vary depending on the departure date and will be confirmed to you on your final documentation.

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Italy: Visas are not required by UK, E.U. Nationals, Australian, New Zealand, US or Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the

UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Included activities

Naples is a city that is unfortunately frequented by pickpockets, so please avoid wearing valuable jewellery and keep expensive items, your passport and any spare cash or cards in the hotel safe when you go out exploring. At Pompeii and Herculaneum you aren't permitted to take in any backpacks or bags that measure more than 30cm x 30cm x 15cm. There are bag storage facilities at the sites where you can leave bigger items without charge. The walks in and around Amalfi may involve steep ascents/descents which are often stepped. Including the Walk of the Gods, which isn't suitable for anyone who suffers from vertigo. A number of the towns and cities visited on this trip have cobbled streets that can be uneven and slippery underfoot. This is especially true of Matera where the hilly streets also include a number of irregular steps.

Non refundable permits

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Vaccinations

Nothing required. Tetanus recommended. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.
