



Walking in Puglia and Basilicata

Discover Puglia and Basilicata's beautiful countryside and authentic laid-back charm on this walking holiday to the 'heel' of boot-shaped Italy. Hike along a section of Puglia's beautiful yet still little-known coastal trail from Otranto to Acquaviva and enjoy superb views, amazing swimming spots and unspoilt villages. Discover the Baroque palaces of Lecce and the beehive-shaped trulli houses of Alberobello. In Matera, stay in the ancient Sassi, a UNESCO-listed troglodyte quarter, and walk along the gorge. Sample delicious wines, cheeses and other regional specialties along the way.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Stunning coastal walking** - tiny coves and bays with inviting crystal clear water
- ★ **Matera's 'Sassi'** - Stay in the UNESCO-listed ancient troglodyte quarter
- ★ **Lecce and Otranto** - Baroque Palaces, churches and narrow streets
- ★ **Alberobello** - Explore the beehive-shaped trulli houses
- ★ **Food and Wine** - Sample delicious local produce and regional specialties

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.

WALKING GRADE:

Easy To Moderate

This grade is ideal if you want to enjoy both easy and moderate level walks on the same tour. You'll be walking mainly on good paths and at low altitude, with occasional more demanding ascents or descents.

GROUP SIZE:

10 - 16

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 Bari airport; train to Lecce, explore Baroque city

Our holiday starts at the airport in Bari from where we'll take a train to Lecce. It's around a two hour journey so there's time to relax and observe the Puglian countryside along the way. Nicknamed the 'Florence of the South' because of its rich Baroque heritage, the city's palaces, churches and statues are made from local limestone. After arrival we will set out on foot on an orientation tour with the trip leader, taking in the Basilica di Santa Croce, Piazza del Duomo and the cathedral itself. The baroque Basilica di Santa Croce was built over two centuries and has a very richly decorated facade carved with figures and topped with a large rose window. In the city you'll also find a Roman amphitheatre, statue of Saint Oronzo, which is said to have healing powers and the Triumphal Arch, which is one of the three main gates into the old centre.



Accommodation: Hotel Eos (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Dinner

DAY 2 - Walking tour in Otranto: coastal hike to Porto Badisco

This morning we travel by local train to the coastal city of Otranto where we enjoy a walking tour including a visit to the cathedral to see the amazing 'tree of life' mosaic floor. We then set out on the first walk of the week, along the stunning coastline to Porto Badisco. Leaving through the maze of the narrow alleys of the old town we reach the new port from where the flat, gravel coastal path contours around a series of coves. Passing by several WWII bunkers we plan to make a short detour to an interesting Bauxite (quarry) lake, going slightly inland. Following the coast there may, time allowing, be the opportunity to stop for a dip in the crystal clear waters. We continue along the coast towards the Punta Palascia Lighthouse from which, on clear days, you can see the Albanian mountains across the Adriatic Sea. Punta Palascia lighthouse is the easternmost point of Italy and just 71 kilometres away from Albania. The settlement of Porto Badisco is situated on a beautiful inlet.

Today's 14 kilometre walk is expected to take approximately five hours with a total ascent of 150 metres and descent of 120 metres.



Accommodation: Hotel Masseria Panareo (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 3 - Continue coastal walk to Santa Cesarea Terme

Our hike today continues south along the coast following a shepherd's path and we will see the typical round, flat-topped, dry stone buildings where the shepherds used to sleep, known as 'Pagliari'. Leaving the coast, we then start climbing up to the inland plateau. After following narrow paths through the fields we come to a great picnic spot in a small pine forest offering shade on sunny days. Finally, we will descend to our night stop in the spa town of Santa Cesarea Terme where there are some great swimming spots to cool off and relax in the warmer months. There's also the option to enjoy a spa treatment.

Today's 13 kilometre walk is expected to take approximately four hours with a total ascent of 130 metres and descent of 140 metres.



Accommodation: Grand Hotel Mediterraneo (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Walk to Acquaviva; drive to Alberobello via Ostuni

Our walk today first climbs uphill then follows narrow paths inland through the fields to the ancient Messapian town of Castro, with its imposing high walls. The Messapii were an Indo-European people who settled in the heel of Italy, thought to have travelled over from the Balkan Peninsula around 2500 BC. There's time to explore the old town and maybe stop for lunch before descending to the port. We then continue along the coast to the end point of the hike, Acquaviva cove, a beautiful hidden inlet and a fantastic swimming spot where a fresh water spring comes out at sea level.

In the afternoon we drive to Ostuni, a beautiful hilltop citadel surrounded by ancient city walls with white painted architecture and bright green and blue painted doors. The town's centrepiece is its cathedral in a late Gothic style. After time to wander through the maze of narrow streets filled with little restaurants and boutiques and soak up the atmosphere we continue on to the UNESCO World Heritage listed town of Alberobello. The town is famous for its unusual Trulli round houses with their white washed dry stone walls and pointed 'witches hat' tiled roofs. Trulli or Trullios as they're also known are either built singly or in groups of up to five which would have originally been occupied by a single family. Alberobello is a small town with a number of restaurants and shops and typically Italian bars can be found along the main street of Largo Martellotta.

Today's 10 kilometre walk is expected to take approximately three-and-a-half hours with a total ascent of 170 metres and descent of 100 metres.



Accommodation: Hotel Ramapendula (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Free day to explore the trulli, visit Bari or Monopoli

Today is free to explore more of Alberobello or make a trip further afield, perhaps to Bari, Monopoli or the Castellana Grottoes where an astonishing array of stalactites, stalagmites and fossils can be found in this underground grotto which started to form about 90 million years ago. If you like your wine, be sure to pay a visit to the Cantina Albea winery and museum where you can learn all about the production of and enjoy a tasting of some of Puglia's finest wines.



Accommodation: Hotel Ramapendula (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Drive to Matera; walk through Matera's Sassi and Gorge

Today we drive to Matera just over the regional border in Basilicata. The town 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 whose origins date back to the prehistoric era. In the 1950s the government of Italy forcibly relocated most of the population of the Sassi which it considered a slum. Today the quarter is regenerating with hotels and other businesses moving in. Our walk starts outside of the town and takes us along the gorge back to Matera.

Today's 12 kilometre walk is expected to take approximately four hours with a total ascent of 130 m and a descent of 140 m.



Accommodation: Hotel Sassi (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Circular walk by the Gorge with great views

Today we drive out of town to the other side of the gorge for a circular walk around the Belvedere di Timeo. Along the way we'll enjoy spectacular views back towards Matera. Returning to our hotel, the afternoon is free for exploring more of Matera at your own

pace.

Today's two kilometre walk is expected to take approximately 45 minutes with a total ascent and descent both of 100 m.



Accommodation: Hotel Sassi (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Drive to Bari airport where trip ends

This morning we transfer back to Bari airport (around one hour) where the holiday ends.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Walking and Trekking information

DAILY DISTANCE

Day 2	14km
Day 3	13km
Day 4	10km
Day 5	
Day 6	12km
Day 7	5km

Walking grade

Easy to moderate

Trek details

Walks on 5 days for between 2 to 5 hours. Walking is mainly along rocky mule tracks and footpaths.



Why book this trip

Popular as a holiday destination with Italians, Puglia and Basilicata have only recently become more popular with overseas visitors. This is a delightfully authentic and unspoilt region with delicious local cuisine and a favourable climate. Three of the days are spent walking on Puglia's beautiful yet still little-known coastal path. Two further day walks explore the rugged limestone scenery in and around Matera's Gorge. This trip is a great opportunity to experience a genuine slice of 'la Dolce Vita'.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7
Dinner: 2



Transport

Bus
Train



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader / Trek
Guide
Driver(s)



Accommodation

1 nights premium hotel
6 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

Italy

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

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Alberobello:

Cantina Albea winery and museum - €10-€20 depending on number of wines tasted.

Train to Locorotondo is approximately €1.10 per way.

Train to Castellana Caves is approximately €1.80 per way and the entrance and guided tour for the partial route is €12.00 and full route is €16.00. The times for the English speaking tours can be found here: <http://www.grottedicastellana.it/en/timetable/>

Taxi to Monopoli is around €25.00 per vehicle per way.

Clothing

You will need light layers of clothing for walking during the day and a fleece and waterproof jacket for early mornings and evenings, and early/late season. A sunhat is essential and bring a swimming costume if you wish to bathe in the sea.

Footwear

We recommend you bring walking boots - leather or fabric are both fine. Some of the paths are a bit rocky underfoot and so you could twist an ankle if not wearing boots. Make sure that your boots are worn-in and comfortable before the start of the trip.

Trainers are not recommended but you can take trainers/sandals for relaxing and other sightseeing. We recommend that you wear/carry your walking boots as hand luggage on the international flight: should your luggage be delayed, your well broken-in boots will be irreplaceable.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

Take one main piece of luggage and a daypack

Unfortunately it does occasionally happen that luggage does not always reach its destination on the same flight as its owner, or possibly it may be damaged in transit. If you are unlucky enough for this to occur, it is important that you file a PIR (Property Irregularity Report) with the airline before leaving the airport. This is essential when you come to make a claim either against the airline or from your travel insurance company.

Equipment

You should bring a 2 litre water bottle, sunhat, sunglasses and sunscreen. Trekking poles are also useful.

Tipping

Explore leader

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

Country Information

Italy

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, 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 Matera we stay in a number of different properties in the atmospheric heart of the 'Sassi', the old quarter where many homes have been literally carved out of the cliff wall. The group may be dispersed among different colourful dwellings all within a few minutes' walk of each other and will breakfast together each morning.

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.

Price Guarantee

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 and Passport Information

Italy: Visas are not required by U.K., CAN, US, AUS and NZ citizens. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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.

Italy

Vaccinations

Nothing required. Tetanus recommended. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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 [Explore Travel Health](#) and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.
