



**A Taste of Puglia**  
8 days

Italy - Trip code TOP

## A Taste of Puglia

Discover the superb cuisine and wines of Puglia and enjoy easy walks with wide panoramas of gently rolling landscapes. Ramble in the Alta Murgia National Park, explore the ancient 'sassi' and gorge of Matera and visit the conical trulli houses of the Itria Valley. See first hand how local cheeses, bread, olive oil and wines are produced and learn how to make the local orecchiette 'little ear' pasta. A great introduction to an emerging destination that should be on the radar for all Italy lovers.

## Trip highlights

- ★ **Local specialties** - Visits to baker and butcher, producers of cheese, olive oil and wine
- ★ **Tastings** - Sample delicious local cheeses, wines and regional dishes
- ★ **Cooking** - Try your hand at making the local orecchiette - 'little ear' pasta
- ★ **Unique towns** - Discover the treasures of Matera's sassi and Alberobello's trulli
- ★ **Easy rambles** - Plateau and gorge walks, through villages and olive groves

### 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

Suitable for most people in good health, these easy walks are predominantly on good paths, at low altitude and on undemanding terrain. Previous walking or trekking experience is not necessary.

**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 at Bari airport; drive to Altramura, tasting dinner

After joining the trip at Bari airport, we drive to Altamura, a pretty town located on Puglia's sparsely populated limestone Murge plateau. Tonight our journey of culinary discovery commences with an included dinner of regional dishes. Our husband and wife hosts, Nina and Peppino, serve us up a feast of their home-grown vegetables and other locally sourced produce in an amazing array of traditional Puglian antipasti appetisers.



**Accommodation: B and B Il Peccati** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Dinner

## DAY 2 - Bakery visit; option to visit Gravina's underground

Altamura is famous for being the only town in Italy with a DOP (standing for 'protected designation of origin') recognised bread. The bread has a hard crust and creamy coloured dough and usually comes in very large round loaves. We start the morning with a 20 minute walk to visit a well known Altamura DOP bakery where we watch the art of making and baking the bread in huge wood-fired ovens. Naturally our visit includes the chance to taste the freshly made bread!

The afternoon is left free to spend your own time exploring more of the narrow alleyways and closed courtyards of unspoilt Altamura. Alternatively, you may like to take the local train to the nearby town of Gravina which has a fascinating underground city of rock cut caverns, churches and passages.



**Accommodation: B and B Il Peccati** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

## DAY 3 - Pasta making lesson; walk from the Pulo di Altamura

This morning we take a short drive to Nina and Peppino's vegetable garden to see how they cultivate the vegetables served at their table, learn about the local varieties and help harvest them. We then go to their restaurant, the Tre Arch, for a hands-on cooking lesson where we learn to prepare the distinct Puglian pasta known as orecchiette - meaning little ears - as well as learning the tricks of how to prepare oven-baked vegetables, one of the specialities of the house. For lunch we will eat what we have prepared during the cooking class. In the afternoon we drive out of the town to the Alta Murgia National Park where we start our walk from the Pulo di Altamura, a giant sink hole, some 500 metres wide and 80 metres deep and one of the park's most impressive geological features. The steep rock face is embedded with caves that have been inhabited since prehistoric times and are an important nesting ground for rare birds and habitat for native flowers and other plants. We walk through a landscape of cultivated fields and wild grasslands along footpaths and cart tracks, passing old abandoned farms. The walk ends at the Lamalunga archeological museum where we learn about the life and fate of 'Altamura man', a Neanderthal who fell down a sinkhole around 150000 years ago and whose bones became fused with the stalactites in the cave walls.

Today's eight kilometre walk, an ascent of 30 metres and descent of 90 metres is expected to take around two hours.



**Accommodation: B and B Il Peccati** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

## DAY 4 - Walk from Castel del Monte; lunch on organic farm

This morning's walk is in the environs of the Castel del Monte, about an hour drive from Altamura, standing on a hill on the edge of the Alta Murgia National Park. The 13th century citadel is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and was the source of inspiration for the novel 'The name of the Rose'. Around the castle, fine wines are produced of the 'uva di Troia' (Troy) grape variety. We start with a climb towards the castle through a shady forest, descend the other side and continue through fields lined with dry stone walls and dotted with small ancient trulli (the white, conical-roofed, beehive-shaped structures that are typical of this part of Puglia). In this sparsely populated region the vast open views are spectacular. Our walk ends at a local organic farm, Masseria Sei Carri where we enjoy an included lunch of local produce.

After lunch we drive back to Castel del Monte for a guided visit before continuing on to our next destination, the town of Matera, over the provincial 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.

Today's eight kilometre walk, an ascent and descent of 250 metres is expected to take around two-and-a-half to three hours.



**Accommodation: Hotel Sassi** (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



## DAY 5 - Gorge walk from Matera; explore the troglodyte quarter

Today we plan to set off direct from the town, on a walk through the deep gorge that cuts through the plain just outside the town. The walk also takes us to see some ancient rock churches. There is also plenty of time to explore the labyrinth of Matera's narrow streets. You can visit the neighbourhood of the Sassi where the stone dwellings are partially cut deep into the rock. This part of Matera has been continuously inhabited for 5000 years. Your Leader can arrange a guided tour with a licensed guide for those interested. Roaming through the maze of narrow alleys, up and down the stone stairs you will find yourself transported to a distant past. Sit down on a terrace of one of the bars for a cappuccino and soak up this magical atmosphere.

Today's eight kilometre walk, an ascent and descent of 280 metres is expected to take around three hours.

NOTE: In 2017 the path down into the gorge from Matera was closed and it's not clear if it will be open again in 2018. If it's not possible to do this walk we will drive round to the other side of the gorge for a circular walk around the Belvedere di Timeo for some spectacular views back towards Matera. This 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

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## DAY 6 - Walking tour in Cisternino; visit cheese maker, butcher and olive oil mill

This morning we leave Matera and drive to visit an organic cheese maker who has won several national and international prizes. We will see how mozzarella, trecce and nodini are made and try the freshly made cheeses. We then continue on to Cisternino, a charming town of whitewashed houses, shady streets, historic churches and elegant piazzas. It is famous for its butcher shops which serve a local barbecued delicacy known as bombette, little meat parcels filled with mince, ham and cheese, as well as other grills. We enjoy a walking tour here and buying lunch from one of the butchers is highly recommended.

After lunch we visit an olive oil mill that produces oil using both a traditional and a modern press. We tour the mill and walk in the surrounding fields to see the ancient olive trees, followed by a tasting of the oils produced here.

We then drive on to our final destination of the holiday, the town of Alberobello in the Itria Valley - famous for its iconic trulli buildings. A trullo (plural - trulli) is a traditional dry stone hut with a conical roof and often whitewashed walls, which were generally constructed in the 19th century as both dwellings and storehouses. Trullo are built singly or in groups of up to 5 trulli, and a group would be occupied by a single family. Inside an individual trullo dome is just one room, although additional separate spaces were created by curtains hung across arched alcoves.

Today's three kilometre walk is fairly flat and is expected to take around an hour.




**Accommodation: Hotel Ramapendula** (or similar)

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 Standard Hotel

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 Single room available

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## DAY 7 - Explore Alberobello; tasting at the wine museum, optional walk or visit to Monopoli

This morning you are free to explore the trulli-lined streets of Alberobello before we pay a visit to the Cantina Albea and the wine museum for a tasting of local Puglian wines, both still and sparkling. In the afternoon there's the option to walk in the surroundings of Alberobello through the gently rolling hills laced with dry stone walls, ancient olive trees and trulli houses. As an alternative, the trip leader can organise a visit to the seaside fishing town of Monopoli for an authentic taste of Puglian coastal life. Monopoli's whitewashed buildings huddle around a small harbour and it is well-known for its excellent seafood restaurants.

In the morning we will walk around two-and-a-half kilometres. The afternoon optional walk is eight kilometres, has an ascent and descent of 280 metres and will take approximately two-and-a-half to three hours.




**Accommodation: Hotel Ramapendula** (or similar)

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 Standard Hotel

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 Single room available

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast

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## DAY 8 - Drive to Bari airport where trip ends

Today we drive to Bari airport where the trip ends.

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 Meals Provided: Breakfast

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# Walking and Trekking information

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## DAILY DISTANCE

Day 3	8km
Day 4	8km
Day 5	8km
Day 6	3km
Day 7	8km

Optional Walks



### Walking grade

Easy

### Trek details

We walk on 5 days with walks between 1 and 3 hours. The Puglian countryside is gently undulating. Trails are generally good - the gorge walk at Matera is rocky underfoot and trekking poles can be helpful. We have graded the walking on this trip as Easy.

### Max walking altitude (m)

540

### Want to find out more about Puglia's amazing cuisine?

[Read the blog](#) by our PR Manager Laura Dewar.

## What's included?



### Included meals

Breakfast: 7

Lunch: 2

Dinner: 1



### Transport

Bus



### Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader

Driver(s)



### Accommodation

7 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

Italian

## 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.

Matera - Guided 2 hour city tour including entrance fee to a traditional troglodyte home - €15 per person

Monopoli - Authentic, white-washed fishing port with great seafood restaurants - approx. €20 per person dependent on numbers

### 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.

### Footwear

We recommend you bring lightweight walking boots, make sure that your boots are worn-in and comfortable before the start of the trip. Also trainers or sandals for relaxing and general wear. We suggest that on international flights you either carry your walking boots in your hand luggage or wear them - should your luggage be lost or delayed, your own boots are the one thing that will be irreplaceable.

### Luggage

20kg

### Luggage: On tour

Take one main piece of luggage and a daypack.

### Equipment

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

### Tipping

#### Explore leader

At your discretion you might consider tipping your Explore 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.

**Lunch price**

£5.00 - 10.00

**Dinner price**

£15.00 - 20.00

**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

## 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 UK, E.U Nationals, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

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](http://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.

## **Maximum altitude (m)**

540

## **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.

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