



# THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED - PUGLIA

20 APRIL - 3 MAY 2025

9 - 22 MAY 2025

14 - 27 SEPTEMBER 2025

28 SEPTEMBER - 11 OCTOBER 2025





Trulli in the Valle d'Itria

## OVERVIEW

**AUD 9,970**  
(PER PERSON, TWIN SHARE)

**AUD 11,970**  
(PER PERSON, SOLO TRAVELLER)

Since 2007, Italian Tours has crafted unforgettable journeys for those who share our passion for Italy and believe that the best holidays are enjoyed in great company. Our intimate group sizes (maximum of 12 people) and thoughtfully selected itineraries ensure an authentic and delightful Italian holiday.

We embrace a leisurely pace, allowing you ample time to savour Italy's charms without the rush. Each itinerary includes plenty of free time for personal exploration and indulgence in local interests.

Our adventure starts in the charming town of Lecce, known for its expansive pedestrian zones and exquisite baroque architecture. We explore the enchanting Salento area and some of Puglia's most picturesque towns.

The Valle d'Itria will captivate you with its iconic trulli homes, and the stunning coastal views along Polignano a Mare and the Gargano Peninsula are a photographer's dream. We'll engage with local artisans, visit traditional producers, and learn about regional specialities and wines.

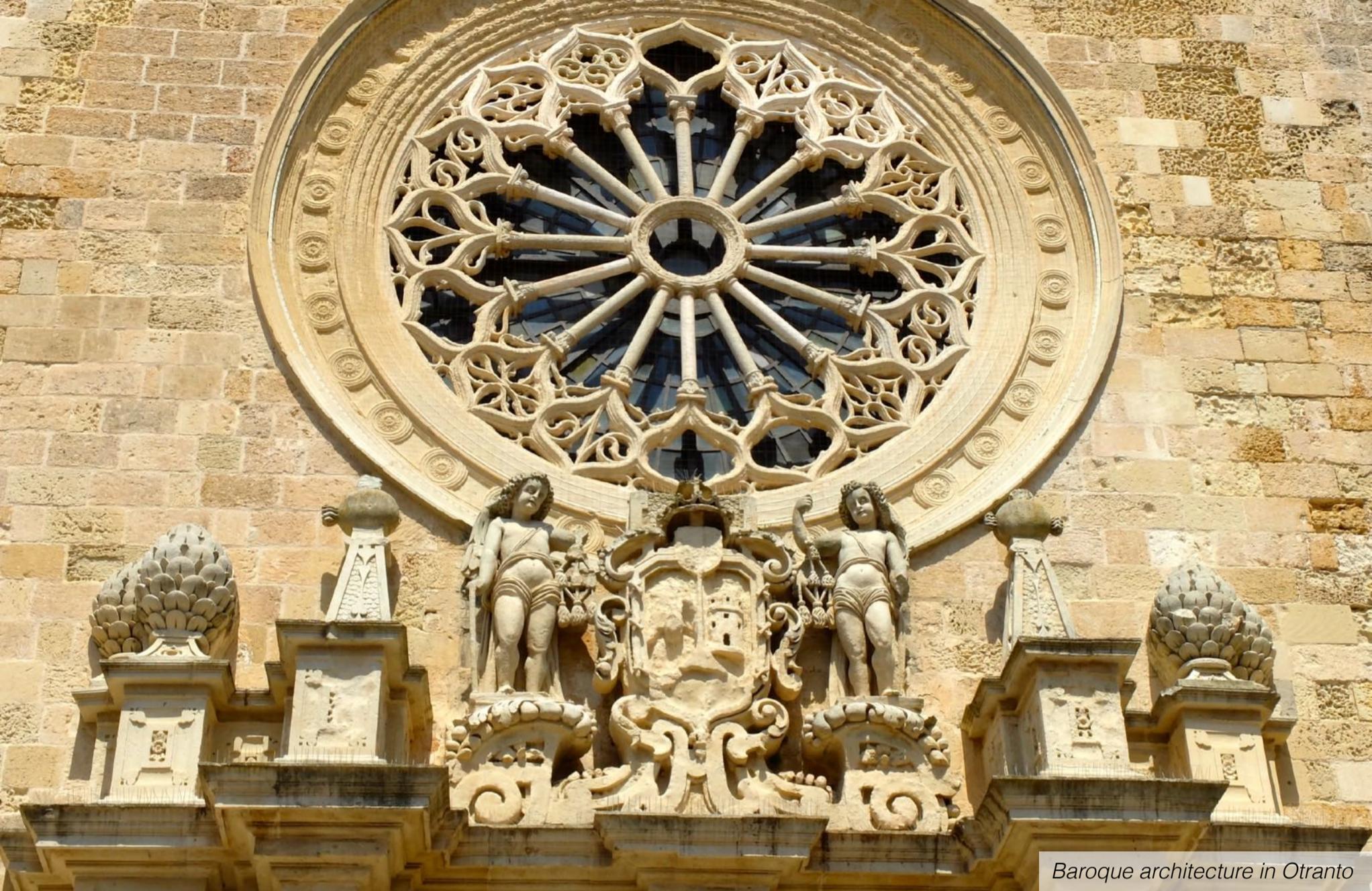
To maximise comfort and minimise travel hassle, we stay in just four well-chosen hotels over 14 days: Lecce (3 nights), Valle d'Itria (3 nights), Gargano Peninsula (3 nights), and Polignano a Mare (4 nights). The tour includes five lunches and five dinners in select restaurants renowned for their exemplary cuisine and wines, which are characteristic of the regions we visit. Beyond scheduled meals, we relish sharing restaurant recommendations and additional dining experiences.

"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





*Baroque architecture in Otranto*

## ITINERARY

### DAY 1 - ARRIVE IN PUGLIA

Welcome to Lecce, your home for the next three nights! This wonderful city features ornate iron balconies, streets lined with golden stones, fascinating Roman ruins, and the distinctive local Baroque architecture. Arriving in Puglia is convenient via Brindisi airport, the nearest airport, or by fast train from Rome or Milan. Our journey begins with an evening aperitivo and a welcoming dinner.

Overnight: Lecce

### DAY 2 - EXPLORING LECCE

Spend your morning soaking in the charm of Lecce, a city with a history even more ancient than Florence. With our expert local guide, you'll explore atmospheric streets, visit awe-inspiring churches to discover artistic gems and enjoy a leisurely coffee in the vibrant central piazza.

The afternoon offers free time for you to explore Lecce at your own pace.

Overnight: Lecce

### DAY 3 - PASTICCIOTTO IN GALATINA AND OTRANTO ON THE SEA

Today, we venture to Galatina, renowned for its rich history and delicious pasticciotto. Start with a visit to the Church of Santa Caterina d'Alessandria to admire an exquisite fresco cycle by Francesco d'Arezzo, depicting scenes from the New and Old Testaments. Afterwards, indulge in a sweet treat at Pasticceria Ascalone, where the famed Pasticciotto Galatina was created, and perhaps sample other local pastries.



In the afternoon, we head to Otranto, a picturesque fortified town with medieval walls and crystal-clear waters. Don't miss the Cathedral of Santa Maria Annunziata, home to the ancient Tree of Life mosaic and an intriguing zodiac mosaic, both crafted in the twelfth century by the monk Pantaleone.

Overnight: Lecce

#### DAY 4 - AN INTRODUCTION TO PUGLIESE WINE

Today we bid farewell to Lecce and set our sights on the vineyards of Salento. Our first stop is Masseria Li Veli, a top wine producer, where we enjoy an exclusive guided tour. Discover the secrets behind their prestigious wines and enjoy a tasting session paired with a delightful lunch featuring regional specialities. After a memorable experience, we journey towards the picturesque Valle d'Itria. Here, we'll stay in a beautifully restored masseria, offering a glimpse into the life of the region's past barons and farmers, all while providing modern comforts. We'll be staying here for the next three nights.

Overnight: Valle d'Itria

#### DAY 5 - A CHEESE PRODUCER AND GROTTAGLIE

Awaken to the rustic charm of Valle d'Itria and prepare for a day immersed in local traditions. We visit a nearby farm that produces excellent local cheeses and olive oil. Witness the art of mozzarella making and sample freshly made cheeses that epitomise the flavours of Puglia.

Later, we explore Grottaglie, a town synonymous with ceramic craftsmanship. Meet local artisans and perhaps collect a piece of handcrafted pottery as a keepsake. Afterwards, unwind back at our accommodation.

Overnight: Valle d'Itria

#### DAY 6 - LOCOROTONDO AND ALBEROBELLO

This morning, we explore the enchanting town of Alberobello, a UNESCO World Heritage site famous for its trulli. These distinctive stone dwellings with conical roofs offer a glimpse into the area's traditional architectural styles. Enjoy time capturing photos and learning about the history of these fascinating structures.

Later, we visit Locorotondo, known for its circular layout and well-preserved historic centre, offering a peaceful ambience for leisurely exploration. We head to Martina Franca in the evening, enjoying its baroque architecture, vibrant local life and a delicious group dinner.

Overnight: Valle d'Itria

#### DAY 7 - AN EMPEROR'S CASTLE AND THE GARGANO PENINSULA

Our adventure continues as we journey towards the enigmatic Castel del Monte. This UNESCO World Heritage site has captured the imagination of historians and travellers alike. Constructed in the 13th century under the orders of Emperor Frederick II, this architectural marvel is renowned for its unique octagonal design and precise geometric harmony. Its imposing stone walls and strategic hilltop offer breathtaking views of the surrounding Apulian countryside. Explore its mysterious chambers and corridors, and delve into theories about its original purpose, ranging from a hunting lodge to an astronomical observatory.

After immersing ourselves in the medieval allure of Castel del Monte, we make our way to the Gargano Peninsula, a picturesque corner of Puglia. It's charm lies in its dramatic coastal cliffs, beaches, and the quaint whitewashed houses that dot the old town's of the area. This region is less frequented by international tourists, offering a serene and authentic taste of Italian summer life.

Overnight: Gargano Peninsula (either Mattinata or Vieste, depending on the departure date)

#### DAY 8 - THE FORESTA UMBRA, A TRABUCCO AND THE GARGANO COAST

Delve into the heart of the Gargano Peninsula with a morning drive through the lush Foresta Umbra, stopping at the charming hamlet of Vico del Gargano. Continue to a traditional trabucco for a unique lunch experience over the water, enjoying fresh local seafood.

The afternoon is spent driving along the breathtaking Gargano coast, with opportunities to stop for photos or a relaxing walk along the beach.

Overnight: Gargano Peninsula (either Mattinata or Vieste, depending on the departure date)

#### DAY 9 - THE GARGANO COAST AND A PILGRIM'S CHURCH

Set sail along the rugged coast of Gargano, where dramatic cliffs meet the crystal clear waters of the Adriatic. Enjoy opportunities for swimming and discovering secluded coves. In the afternoon, our journey takes us to the spiritual heart of the region, Monte Sant'Angelo. Here, we visit the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Sanctuary of St. Michael Archangel. Built in the 13th century by Charles I of Anjou, this sacred site has been a major pilgrimage destination for centuries. Delve into its rich history and enjoy the serene atmosphere that has drawn pilgrims here for generations.





Bari

Overnight: Gargano Peninsula (either Mattinata or Vieste, depending on the departure date)

### DAY 10 - TRANI

This morning, we depart for Trani, a jewel of the Adriatic coast celebrated for its picturesque seaport and the magnificent Cathedral of San Nicola Pellegrino. The cathedral, built in the 12th century, is a testament to the Puglian Romanesque style, with its impressive rose window, bronze doors, and a bell tower that offers panoramic views of the Adriatic Sea. Stroll along the bustling port where local fishermen offer their fresh catch of the day, providing a glimpse into the town's vibrant maritime culture. Explore Trani's historic centre with its charming streets and lively piazzas. Enjoy some free time to indulge in a leisurely lunch at one of the local trattorias, where the seafood is as fresh as it gets.

After absorbing the serene atmosphere of Trani, we continue our journey to Polignano a Mare, renowned for its dramatic cliffs and breathtaking sea views.

Overnight: Polignano a Mare

### DAY 11 - POLIGNANO A MARE AND BARI

The morning is yours to explore Polignano a Mare - its charming maze of winding streets, each turn offering a new vista or a cosy café. Venture down to the beach where the town's natural swimming coves invite you to dip your toes into the clear blue waters, or simply relax on a piazza and savour a coffee.

In the afternoon, our journey continues to Bari, the vibrant capital of the Puglia region. Our guided walking tour starts at the Basilica of San Nicola, an important pilgrimage site that houses the relics of Saint Nicholas. This majestic church is a masterpiece of Romanesque architecture, renowned for its beautiful crypt and stunning gold ceiling. As we wander through Bari's old quarters, you'll encounter local women crafting traditional orecchiette pasta right on the street. These historic streets, lined with stone houses, are buzzing with life and offer a perfect blend of history and local culture. Enjoy learning about the town's intriguing past and its dynamic present as you walk its ancient pathways.

Overnight: Polignano a Mare





*Castel del Monte*

## DAY 12 - OLIVE OIL AND OSTUNI

Today's exploration begins at a traditional olive farm nestled in the picturesque countryside. Here, you will learn about the age-old process of olive cultivation firsthand. Wander among ancient olive trees, some of which have stood for thousands of years, providing a living connection to the region's agricultural heritage. Explore the remains of historic olive presses that have produced oil for generations and learn about the modern techniques that continue this rich tradition. The visit culminates in a tasting session where you can try the rich, aromatic flavours of freshly pressed olive oil.

Following our visit to the olive farm, we continue to the stunning city of Ostuni. Known affectionately as the 'White City,' Ostuni is a visual marvel. Spend time strolling through the vibrant streets lined with artisan shops and quaint cafes. The city's architecture, with its layers of history visible in every stone, makes Ostuni a photographer's paradise.

Overnight: Polignano a Mare

## DAY 13 - MATERA

Today, we explore the UNESCO World Heritage site of Matera, a city celebrated for its remarkable cave dwellings known as the Sassi. Matera's fascinating history stretches

back to prehistoric times when these cave formations were first inhabited. The city's unique landscape caught the eye of filmmakers, including Mel Gibson for his film 'The Passion', adding a touch of Hollywood allure to its ancient streets. Over centuries, these caves have housed communities until the 1950s, when residents were relocated. Matera has been revitalised, hosting vibrant businesses, boutique hotels, and quaint bars.

We'll spend a full day here, starting with a guided tour in the morning to delve deep into its history and architecture, followed by free time in the afternoon for you to explore this captivating city at your own pace.

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 Centrale train station by 10:00 am and Bari Airport by 10:30 am. Reflect on the wonderful memories and spectacular sights of Italy as you prepare to depart, taking a piece of Puglia back home with you.





Alberobello



Luca and Philippa



Ostuni

# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

## STAY

- ❖ 3 nights in Lecce in a central 5-star hotel
- ❖ 3 nights in the Valle d'Itria in a masseria in the countryside
- ❖ 3 nights in the Gargano Peninsula
  - ❖ Vieste - 20 April departure
  - ❖ Mattinata - 9 May and 14 & 28 September departures
- ❖ 4 nights in Polignano a Mare in a sea-side 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 4 and 5-star hotels
- ◆ 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 in 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 our hotel in Lecce (subject to availability)
- ◆ A private transfer from Brindisi or Bari Airport to Lecce can be arranged

## GETTING TO PUGLIA AND DEPARTING

If you are flying to Puglia, the closest airport is Brindisi. You can also fly into Bari, but it is further from Lecce. You can also arrive in Lecce on the high-speed train from Rome or Milan.

At the end of the tour, we provide a transfer to Bari train station (arriving by 10am) and to Bari airport (arriving by 10.30am).

## 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 if you have some questions about the itinerary, please don't hesitate to contact Luca or Philippa at Italian Tours.

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