

Hidden Puglia

A SMALL GROUP CULTURAL JOURNEY

OCTOBER 20 - 26, 2014

Puglia, the heel of Italy's boot, is a visual and culinary feast, a place to sooth your soul while discovering a new and delightful area of Italy. At every turn there's a sight to behold. The Adriatic Sea with colors from lapis to turquoise ribbons along its eastern coast, groves of ancient gray-green olive trees stretch to the horizon, hillsides dotted with white sundrenched villages and the rise and fall of row upon tailored row of grape vines over gently rolling hills. Fresh fish, mussels, oysters and octopus; delicately flavored pasta dishes; olives; figs; almonds; fine wine; fresh fruits and vegetables; signature desserts and of course; gelato, all contribute to a rich and varied food experience. You'll discover the secrets of la cucina puglese while shopping and cooking with Chef Rocco and in the traditional lunches and dinners planned especially for you. You'll experience first hand with our knowledgeable and enthusiastic guides the treasures that await your discovery.

Thanks for introducing me to Italy back in 2006. It was a dream trip visiting the hilltop towns of Umbria and Tuscany with their ancient charms. The wonder continued in 2010 with the towns of Emilia Romagna and Lombardia, their World Heritage sites and first class food and cheeses. I met new friends and really enjoyed the camaraderie of people enjoying the thoughtful itinerary. I am looking forward to new trips in the near future.



Daily Itinerary

Day 1 - Monday October 20

This morning we will travel to the unique city of Matera, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, located in the Basilicata region bordering Puglia. Matera is also known as “la Città Sotterranea” or the Subterranean City. The name derives from the ancient dwellings carved into the rock here. This quarter is known as the *Sassi*. We will be introduced to Matera with a personal walking tour of the *Sassi*. Here, we can explore the fascinating rabbit warren of homes, shops and restaurants cut into the rock. Next, we will enjoy a spectacular buffet-style lunch at one of Matera’s signature cheese and salami producers. This is a true Southern Italian cuisine experience, complete with fresh bread and local wine. After lunch, we will walk back to our graciously restored 5* palazzo. This exquisite palatial hotel is known for its superb collection of artwork adorning the bedroom walls.

We’ll then be allowed some time to explore Matera on our own. Be sure to stop by the Laboratorio Ceramica Piero Colapietro or Pasquale Dilena, where you can watch local craftsmen make traditional decorative ceramics. These are also places to pick up authentic gifts. Don’t forget to visit a bar for your first *espresso*, Southern Italy’s signature afternoon beverage. Our group will rejoin in the hotel lobby at 6:30 pm for a welcome *aperitivo*, before heading to the spectacular restaurant for more delicious southern Italian cuisine. Dishes at the restaurant include lobster linguine, quail with orange, and iced nougat with hot chocolate sauce. Overnight Matera.

Meals: (L,D)

HIGHLIGHTS DAY 1

- *Arrive Matera*
- *Matera Walking Tour*
- *Walking Tour of Sassi*
- *Welcome dinner*



Matera



Puglia

Day 2 - Tuesday October 21

Early risers have the option of starting the day with a dawn walk (Matera looks exquisite bathed in morning light) to a local bakery. Here, we will watch a demonstration of traditional bread making by artisan bakers. Alternatively, we can sleep in and make the most of our sumptuous accommodations. Later in the morning, the group will gather in the hotel lobby before driving out of town for a lovely walk through the gorgeous Montescaglioso countryside. Along the way, we will stop at a restored farmhouse for an authentic southern Italian lunch. The journey will end at the Abbey di San Michele, the striking religious building that stands atop Mount Pirchiriano. From here, we will return to the hotel by shuttle. Dinner tonight is an open option. If you are in the mood for traditional Italian fare, try the *antipasti caldi* at Trattoria Lucana. Oi Mari' and Da Mario, meanwhile, are purveyors of delicious stone-baked pizzas made with the freshest ingredients. Be sure to get plenty of rest tonight before another activity-packed day tomorrow. Overnight Matera.

Meals: (B,L,D)

Day 3 - Wednesday October

After breakfast, we will travel into Puglia. Along the way, we see beautiful hilltop towns whose Greek influence is apparent in their whitewashed exteriors. Our first stop is the small town of Alberobello. This UNESCO World Heritage site is characterized by its *trulli* - quaint dry stone structures topped with conical stone roofs. We'll have a walk through the picturesque trulli area before going to a tiny cheese farm where artisan Raffaele will demonstrate the art of making fresh burrata and ricotta cheeses. Raffaele will also show us the special room in which he ages mozzarella over several days to make tasty *scamorza*.

Then, we will take a short ride to the pretty town of Martina Franca. Here, we will enjoy an antipasto feast at a local Osteria. Our friend, Chef Stefano, is extremely creative so prepare to be dazzled. Following lunch, we'll travel a short distance through the picturesque Puglian countryside to our beautiful accommodations: an authentic, lovingly restored masseria surrounded by olive trees and gardens. Overnight and dinner at this beautiful countryside masseria.

Meals: (B,L,D)

HIGHLIGHTS DAY 2

- *Optional Dawn Walk to Traditional Bakery*
- *Visit local bakery*
- *Walk Montescaglioso Countryside*
- *Lunch at Farmhouse*



HIGHLIGHTS DAY 3

- *Shuttle to Puglia*
- *Cheese Demo & Tasting*
- *Walking Tour Alberobello*



Trulli of Alberobello

Day 4 - Thursday October 23

This morning we will shuttle to a nearby farmhouse, which specializes in making ricotta cheese. This is the departure point for a walk through the picturesque countryside around Ostuni, known for its thriving grape and olive industry. The walk will take us through fascinating gorges dotted with caves, once home to local people, churches and thieves. After a few hours of exploration we will visit the nearby town of Ostuni, known as the White City.

A personal guide will lead us through the cobbled streets, and tell us the stories behind landmarks such as Saint Oronzo's column. Here we will be free for lunch on our own to sample any one of the town's excellent eateries. Then it's back to our Masseria for some downtime. For dinner tonight we will take a short ride to another lovely masseria for a delicious eight-course tasting menu featuring typical Pugliese cuisine with fresh, homemade olive oil! Overnight at a beautiful countryside masseria.

Meals: (B,D)

Day - 5 Friday October 24

After checking out of our lovely Masseria, we will head south towards Lecce, stopping at one of our favorite family-run wineries. Producing some of the best wines in the region, this winery uses long forgotten local varietals (some dating back to Greek settlers) and modern methods to coax interesting new wines. Wine-maker Giovanni will personally take us on a short walk through the vines, giving insight into his precious grapes, their harvest and production techniques. Next, we'll have lunch in a private dining room overlooking the oak barrels from which Giovanni will pair individual vintages with our dishes.

Then it's onto Lecce, known as the Florence of the South for its splendid baroque architecture, to check into our exclusive hotel, once a beautiful palazzo. This evening we are free for dinner; so one option is to take a stroll around the gorgeous baroque streets of Lecce and just soak up the ambience and chic vibe. There will be an option before dinner to take a walk around the city with an expert guide.

Meals: (B,L)

HIGHLIGHTS DAY 4

- *Walking Local Gorges*
- *Walking Tour Ostuni*



Ostuni
The White City

HIGHLIGHTS DAY 5

- *Wine Tasting & Lunch*
- *Arrive Lecce*



Santa Croce
One of the baroque
churches in Lecce

Day - 6 Saturday October 25

After breakfast, we will transfer to Torre Badisco for an invigorating walk to the Cape of Otranto. The hike will highlight the diversity of this area, which is one-part beach resort, one-part Middle Eastern, and many parts Italian. After a relaxing picnic lunch with a stunning sea view, we'll return to Lecce, where we can rest, or browse the artisan boutiques for gifts to take home. The final dinner this evening is a cooking class at a nearby local-family venue. This provides a wonderful opportunity for us to learn a few secrets of Pugliese cuisine. We'll round off the evening after dinner at the farmhouse with some fabulous live music courtesy of one of the region's leading folk bands playing rousing and traditional rhythms. Professional dancers will show everyone how the famous Puglian dance, the pizzica. It promises to be an unforgettable send-off. Overnight Lecce. Watch the pizzica [here!](#)

Meals: (B,L,D)

HIGHLIGHTS DAY 6

- *Seaside Walk to Cape of Otranto*
- *Picnic by the Sea*
- *Cooking Class*
- *Live Music - Folk Band*



Day - 7 Sunday October 26

After breakfast, we will be shuttled to Brindisi Airport, where our guide will bid us a fond farewell. If you plan to extend your stay in the area, we will give insider tips on where to go and what to do. We hope your time in Puglia changes your life, just as it has all of ours!

Meals: (B)

HIGHLIGHTS DAY 7

- *Transfer to Brindisi Airport*

Our Goals

To make sure your journey with us is filled with **one of a kind moments**, moments guaranteed to produce memories of a lifetime.

We believe that travel should be fun, enlightening, educational and memorable. We also believe travel should be filled **unforgettable experiences** and memories that last a lifetime. We at UBJ craft our journeys to accomplish all of these goals but we also do more.

We strongly believe in supporting the **sustainability** of the diversity of the destinations we choose, both culturally and environmentally. It is after all the reason we travel, to see and experience things that are different from our own norm.

To accomplish the goal of sustainability we travel in small groups, never more than 16 and many times less than that. We make sure we hire all of our ground support, guides, drivers and organizers, from locally based, well vetted, companies. We search out **unique accommodations** that are architecturally beautiful, older and perhaps re-purposed structures. We especially like old **restored palaces** and rural estates, all of which are owned and operated by local people. This is also includes the restaurants we go to, the craftsmen we visit, the wineries we call on. By doing this we hope to support the local economy, which, in turn, helps the culture stay vibrant and alive.

During this trip to Puglia we will stay in 3 different places. In Matera and Lecce, we stay in lovingly restored, beautifully furnished former palaces. Both are in the center of the towns, providing a true glimpse of life, history and culture.

Our other lodging is a **working masseria**; a fortified farm...much needed during Puglia's tumultuous past. A

masseria usually has a main house and several outbuildings for livestock and workers. Most of them date from the 16th to the 19th century

The masseria where we will be staying grows olive trees, vegetables and fruit. The owners have lovingly restored every detail of the structures to maintain the character of the original architecture and as well as harmony with nature. The estate produces extra virgin olive oil and all guests are invited to walk through the grounds and enjoy all the fruits, flowers and vegetables grown and celebrated at the Masseria. Naturally breakfast each morning is brimming with homegrown produce, homemade preserves and freshly baked cakes.

This trip is all about interacting with the local people.

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October 20-26, 2014

Price:

- \$3,395. per person, double occupancy
- \$699. Single Supplement - Single supplements are due with deposit

What's Included:

- Unique & Boutique hotel accommodations for 6 nights
- All transportation described in the daily activities
- 2 full time English speaking guides
- Professionally driven passenger van
- 6 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 4 dinners 2 glasses table wine included
- 2 expert guided tours Matera & Lecce
- Visit to a winery including private lunch with wine-maker
- Visit to cheese farm for burrata making
- 3 countryside walks
- Transfers to and from Bari and Brindisi
- Trip Literature

What's Not Included:

- Tips for guide(s) and driver
- Meals not included in the itinerary
- Drinks not included in the itinerary
- Transportation other than what is indicated in the itinerary
- Optional Expenses

Please Note

Walking will be from 5-8 kilometers per day. Most of it will be on easy terrain except for a few rocky places. Therefore, we recommend sturdy footwear. Hiking boots are not necessary.

There are plenty of flights into Bari from major cities in Italy and other cities around Europe. Please let us know if you would like a list of them.

Bari is a lovely place to spend a couple of days. If you would like the names of hotels in Bari, please contact us.

TRIP PROTECTION

Trip Insurance is Strongly Advised.

Here is a link where you can compare packages after entering the details of your trip.

Deposits and Final Payment

Deposit (\$600.) plus single supplement
Due May 20, 2014

Final Payment
Due August 4, 2014

Payment Methods

PayPal

Personal Check

Cancellations & Refunds

- Nonrefundable cancellation charge...\$250 per person
- 91-120 days before departure...50% of total cost
- 31-90 days before departure...25% of total cost
- 30 days or less before departure...no refund
- On or after departure...no refund.

**PLEASE SEE TERMS AND
CONDITIONS ON WEBSITE.**