

PUGLIA

TRAVEL GUIDE



ENG

PUGLIA

The best way to relax is with a trip into antiquity, no rush, immersing yourself in the light and nature of Puglia. Take a slow trip, on foot, by bicycle or by boat from **Gargano** to **Salento**. Fill your eyes with the wonders of the province of Foggia: its two lakes, Lesina and Varano, the Isole Tremiti, and the magic of the bays, caves and trabucchi from Rodi Garganico to Mattinata. Immerse yourself in the Umbra Forest, contemplating the sanctuaries and hermitages from Siponto to San Giovanni Rotondo, traveling from Monte Sant'Angelo to the timeless villages of Daunia, with luxuriant forests and traditional recipes. **Barletta, Andria and Trani** are cities of art from Imperial Puglia's glorious past, where everything is a reminder of emperor Frederick II, like the enigmatic Castel del Monte.

Canosa di Puglia and Canne della Battaglia have important archaeological areas; Europe's largest salt mine is at Margherita di Savoia and the Alta Murgia National Park's lunar landscape is home to the *cardoncello*, or king trumpet, mushroom. There are the stones and strong flavors of the **Murge**, in the province of Bari, and **Gravine**, in the province of **Taranto**, where deep crevasses and natural caves surround the gulf of Taranto. You'll find splendid Grottaglie ceramics and gold artefacts – the Ori di Taranto – in MarTa (National Archaeological Museum of Taranto), one of Italy's most important museums. There are fishing boats and magnificent views on the **Bari** coast, beginning at the capital with the old city center with its scents of focaccia and orecchiette. Be amazed by the beauty of the area between Molfetta and Giovinazzo and further south from Polignano to Mare a Monopoli. The green hills of the Barese countryside are covered with almond trees, cherry trees and vines.

Valle d'Itria is known for its dry-stone walls and thousands of *trullo* houses, whilst Noci, Alberobello, Locorotondo, Cisternino and **Martina Franca** are a labyrinth of alleyways, courtyards and '*fornello pronto*' stores where you can get fresh meat grilled to order. Other sights include olives to whet the appetite and charming farms on the plains of Fasano, the archaeological site at Egnazia, the white city of Ostuni, the marine protected areas of Torre Canne and Torre Guaceto, and the bastions of taste at Ceglie Messapica and Carovigno. Take a dive into **Brindisi's** thousand-year history, a city with one of the largest natural harbors in the Mediterranean; see the little art villages and the land of Primitivo and Negroamaro wines. The **Salento** is home to the breathtaking world of the Baroque at **Lecce**, including churches, *palazzos* and papier-mâché boutiques, which can be found in the province. The towns of Grecia Salentina are enchanting, a hidden world of crypts, caves and underground oil presses, and enigmatic dolmens and menhirs. Towers punctuate kilometers of coastline, where the cliffs on the Adriatic, from Otranto to Santa Maria di Leuca, give way to beaches and dreamy sunsets over the Ionian from Gallipoli to the dunes at Campomarino di Maruggio.

Leave your watch behind and let yourself go on a slow journey, among memorial sites and breathtaking countryside. Seek out delicious treats and artistic masterpieces. Surrounded by sun-kissed hills, lush woodland, gardens of lost flavors, sheer cliffs and golden beaches.



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GARGANO AND DAUNIA

24 hours in FOGGIA

Itinerary ①

Amidst ancient forests and places of faith

Rignano Garganico - San Marco in Lamis - S. Giovanni Rotondo
Monte Sant'Angelo - Foresta Umbra - Siponto

Itinerary ②

Coast to coast among sea stacks and trabucchi

Manfredonia - Mattinata - Pugnochiuso - Vieste
Peschici - San Menaio - Vico del Gargano
Ischitella - Carpino - Rodi Garganico
Laghi di Varano e Lesina - Cagnano Varano
San Nicandro Garganico

Itinerary ③

Multicolored seabeds

Le Tremiti: San Nicola - San Domino - Capraia

Itinerary ④

Delicious Daunia

San Severo - Lucera - Pietramontecorvino
Alberona - Biccari - Roseto Valfortore
Faeto - Troia - Orsara di Puglia - Bovino
Sant'Agata di Puglia
Rocchetta Sant'Antonio
Ascoli Satriano



24 hours in Foggia

A WALK ABOVE AND BELOW

A hidden city can be found along the **Via Arpi** with historic *palazzos* and ancient churches, like the Church of the Addolorata, which comes to life with the **Good Friday** procession, when the statue of the Virgin meets the urn of Christ in Piazza XX Settembre. The urn departs from the 12th century **Cathedral**, where you can see the Byzantine high altar of the Madonna of the Seven Veils or Iconavetere, the giant canvas *La moltiplicazione dei pani* by Francesco De Mura and a wooden crucifix. In the bars around **Piazzetta Cattedrale** you can taste **craft beers** produced in the city, while the **Church of St. Mary of Mercy** can be found between Piazza Purgatorio and Via San Domenico. The church has a wooden ceiling with gold leaf decoration, altars with inlay work and precious stones and an enormous hypogeum, which hosts the Nativity at Christmas. Opposite, go down to the three large **Urban Hypogea** linked by underground corridors and featuring fragments of masonry of the majestic *Palatium* of Frederick II of 1223, of which only a doorway and an inscription remain. Beyond the **Three Arches**, in Piazza **Piano delle Croci**, the imposing **Basilica of St. John the Baptist** is a triumph of Baroque architecture.

VILLA COMUNALE

Lovers of green spaces will appreciate the spectacular **Villa Comunale** in Piazza Cavour, with its kilometer-long tree-lined avenue, enclosed by a **neo-classical-propylaea** designed by Luigi Oberty. Its small woodland of native plants, flowerbeds, fountains, busts and statues of local personalities, fragrances, greenhouses and archaeological excavations are more than just a place to relax, the area hosts summer workshops and events, like the **Libando** street food festival.



Cathedral - Foggia



Umberto Giordano theater - Foggia

UMBERTO GIORDANO THEATER

This is the oldest working theater in Puglia, together with the Teatro Mercandante at Cerignola and the Teatro Curci in Barletta.

You'll find it in **Piazza Battisti**, where it was opened in **1828**, based on Luigi Oberty's neo-classical designs. It's well-proportioned with a Greek-temple façade and notched frontage, and inside there are three tiers of decorated boxes, a gallery, and elegant red velvet in the foyer and the auditorium.

MUSEUM VISITS

At 155 Via Arpi the **Museo del Territorio** doesn't just contain finds from the Capitanata excavations, like funeral finds from the 4th century B.C., it also hosts fun "Archeotraining" classes and workshops on graffiti, pottery and ancient scripture for children and families ([tel.+39 0881 706464](tel:+39 0881 706464)). The finds at the **Civic Museum** at 1 Piazza Nigri include those from **Passo di Corvo**, the largest Neolithic village in Europe, which can be seen a few kilometers from Foggia, and the lapidary with the **Tomb of the Medusa** from the Arpi site from the second millennium BC, and a **Gallery of Modern Art** ([tel. +39 0881 814042](tel:+39 0881 814042)). There are many curiosities at the **Civic Museum of Natural History**, like the cast of an elephant shark and the dinosaur rooms ([via Giuseppe Di Vittorio 31, tel. +39 0881 706460](tel:+39 0881 706460)).

AMIDST FAITH AND NATURE

In Piazza S. Eligio you'll find the enchanting **Church of Montecalvario**, known as the **Church of Crosses** dating from 1615, which is a national monument, with a triumphal arch which leads to a street with five chapels, similar to temples with crosses inside, and ends at a church that houses a fragment of the True Cross. For a weekend out of town, the **BMV Mother of God Crowned Sanctuary** is 12km from Foggia. This ancient religious site dates back to the year 1000 and at the end of April every year it celebrates the festival of the **Black Madonna** with a reenactment. It's a chance to visit one of Italy's most important museums of votive offerings and take a walk in the **Bosco Incoronata Regional National Park**, among elm, poplar and ash trees, and the enchanting Cervaro stream (santuarioincoronata.it).

Itinerary 1

Amidst ancient forests and places of faith

RIGNANO GARGANICO

This is an unmissable stop for fans of hang-gliding, pilgrims and food lovers. Known as Puglia's balcony, at 590m high, this authentic village offers a breathtaking view from the Monti della Maiella at the Gulf of Manfredonia. It's known for its **caciocavallo podolico** cheese, grown under Slow Food rules, and it's an important archaeological site with caves dating back to Paleolithic times, like the Spagnoli and the **Paglicci**, inhabited by homo sapiens 32,000 years ago. The world's oldest grains of oatmeal were discovered here. Along the Via Sacra Langobardorum you'll find the old **Church of the Madonna di Cristo**, with its gabled façade, large cross outside and valuable votive offerings inside.

SAN MARCO IN LAMIS

To continue the Via Sacra, make your way along a green valley until you reach the town center, where the "Le Fracchie" procession takes place each **Good Friday**. Enormous torches are transported on small wagons, which precede the statue of Our Lady of Sorrow. There are two religious sites: the **Sanctuary of St. Matthew**, founded by Benedictine monks in the 4th century as a sanctuary to care for pilgrims heading for Monte Sant'Angelo, and is now a Franciscan convent, filled with works of art and an extensive library, and the Sanctuary of St. Mary of Stignano, in Medieval-Romanesque style with two cloisters, one of which contains frescoes on the life of St. Francis. In the middle of June, the **Grani Futuri** event is a tasty opportunity to find out everything about bread.



Rignano Garganico



Basilica of St. Michael - Monte Sant'Angelo

SAN GIOVANNI ROTONDO

On the slopes of Monte Calvo (1065m), deep in the Gargano National Park, this medieval country house has become a destination for the world's pilgrims, thanks to **St. Pio of Pietrelcina**, the Capuchin monk who worked here for 52 years, whose remains are held here in the shell-shaped church designed by **Renzo Piano**, which has a large altar and cross designed by Arnaldo Pomodoro, and an open-air grandstand that can hold 30,000 faithful. Another religious site is the **Sanctuary of St. Mary of the Graces** (1540) and the adjoining convent, where he lived until 1968. You can visit his cell and the choir of the old church, where he received the stigmata. Protected by walls from the era of Emperor Frederick II, the center of this pretty village is a labyrinth of alleyways, *palazzos* and towers, like the 12th century Cylindrical Tower which houses the **Museum of Popular Arts and Traditions**. Two old churches worth a visit include the Church of **St. Ursula**, known for its valuable paintings and the Church of **St. Nicholas**, with its extraordinary statue of Our Lady of Sorrows, which is carried in procession on Good Friday (conventosantuariopadrepio.it).

MONTE SANT'ANGELO

20 minutes from San Giovanni Rotondo is the **Basilica of St. Michael**, one of the world's oldest sanctuaries dedicated to the Archangel, who appeared around A.D. 490 in the cave in which it was built. Since then, it has been a destination for pilgrims and crusaders from all over Europe and has been a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** since 2011. From the 13th century staircase dug into the rock, you reach a porticoed courtyard and from here, through the bronze doorway from 1076, to the basilica, which houses the statue of St. Michael, the episcopal throne, the silver cross of Frederick II and the baptismal font (santuariosanmichele.it). A short walk takes you to the Lombard-Norman **castle** where you'll find the Torre Quadrata and the pentagonal Tower of the Giants, with symbols like Solomon's knot, a mark of the Knights Templar. This, along with the two Swabian castles, is one the area's three privileged castles. Take a walk along the beautiful panoramic walkways, whilst the interior rooms, like Emperor **Frederick II's Treasury**, host temporary exhibitions.

Info Point Monte Sant'Angelo +39 0884 562062

BREAD AND WAFERS

Just a few steps through a labyrinth of alleys and stairways, you'll reach the **Tomb of Rothari**, an ancient baptistry which takes its name from the famous Lombard king, known as the Church of St. John and the **complex of St. Francis**, which houses the **Museum of Popular Arts and Traditions**. You'll have to stop by the bakery to buy one of the famous large loaves, cooked in a wooden oven, crusty on the outside and soft in the middle, it's delicious with a drop of Dauno DOP extra virgin olive oil. You should also try the typical sweet, the **Ostie Chjène**, a wafer cookie filled with a mixture of almonds, honey, cinnamon and cloves, which, apparently, were invented accidentally by the Order of Poor Clares.

ABBEY OF SANTA MARIA DI PULSANO

The journey of faith continues 8km from Monte Sant'Angelo, at the Abbey at **Pulsano** and the monasteries dug into the rock, connected by paths and stairways. The original nucleus was built on the wishes of **Pope Gregory I** at the end of the 6th century and in 1130 St. John of Matera founded the Congregation of the Pulsanese Hermits. The last of these hermits died in 1959. A bi-ritual (Latin and Byzantine) monastic community has been here since 1997. This community lives according to **Benedictine and Basilian Rules**, with a guesthouse and a school of iconography, to learn of the symbols and meanings of these sacred arts and how to paint icons using ancient techniques. [Info +39 0884 561047, abbaziadipulsano.org](mailto:info@abbaziadipulsano.org)



Abbey of Santa Maria di Pulsano



Umbra forest

SIPONTO

This is the last stop on the **Via Sacra**, 3km from **Manfredonia**. Here, the pilgrims who came down from Monte Sant'Angelo and the crusaders embarked to journey to Jerusalem. In Siponto Archaeological Park you can see the treasured remains of the abbey of **St. Leonard in Lama Volara**, founded around the year 1000, with an amazing side doorway in Pugliese Romanesque style, with lions, gryphons and volutes inlaid with evangelical scenes and a gable sculpted with the image of Christ. Today it's a spiritual center entrusted to the Reconstructors in Prayer (sanleonardomanfredonia.it).

The nearby **Basilica of St Mary Major** is made up of two churches, one atop the other: the upper church is square, with a central cupola and an early Christian sarcophagus, placed on Roman foundations; the lower 11th century church is divided by 4 columns and 16 pillars with Romanesque volutes. In 2016 the artist Edoardo Tresoldi created a 14m-high ghostly reconstruction of the early Christian Basilica in metal wire mesh, located alongside the original ([Info +39 0884 541470](mailto:info@basilicadimariamaggiore.it)). A short distance away are the enchanting Capparelli Hypogea, the biggest early Christian necropolises in Daunia

UMBRA FOREST

A thousand-year-old wilderness of around 11,000 hectares lies at the ancient heart of the **Gargano National Park**, the largest in the Region, instituted in 1995 covering more than 121,000 hectares in total, an incredible variety of landscapes spread over 18 municipalities that includes over 2,500 botanical species and 80% of the varieties of wild orchids found in Europe (parcogargano.it). On foot or by horse, you can cross the centuries-old forests of beech, oak, and yew trees, which are more than 1,000 years old: its primeval beech woods are listed in the Unesco World Heritage. There are 15 adapted paths and a Natural History Museum in the **Umbra Village**, which houses giant pictures of Gargano's flora and fauna, sections of more than 120 varieties of tree trunk, flintwork finds from the Paleolithic to Neolithic ages, stuffed animals and, outside, a reconstructed mining and logging village. There are many dirt roads for mountain bikers, like the one that takes you from Caritate to the Sfinale Tower. And runners shouldn't miss Gargano Running & Trekking Week (garganorunningweek.com). [Info Point Monte Sant'Angelo +39 0884 562062.](mailto:info@montesantangelo.it)

Itinerary 2

Coast to coast among sea stacks and trabucchi

MANFREDONIA

To discover Gargano, start here. The city was founded by the son of Emperor Frederick II, **King Manfred**, whose equestrian statue sits in Piazza Silvio Ferri, and is the second biggest fishing port on the Adriatic. At the entry to the **Molo di Levante** a nativity scene recalls old Manfredonia, while the historic Via Maddalena, with its old fish warehouses, has become a gourmet stop with many cafes. The most beautiful view can be enjoyed from walking on the walls of the **Swabian-Angevin Castle**, which houses a branch of the **National Archaeological Museum** with Italy's most important exhibition of Daunian steles ([Info +39 0884 587838](#)). Along Corso Manfredi there are artisan boutiques selling ceramics and works by papier-mâché masters, who create the huge floats for the **Dauno Carnival**. You must also taste the traditional *farrata* made with wheat and ricotta. In Piazza del Popolo the **Chapel of Mary Magdalene** contains the original **Museo dei Santi sotto campana** (**Museum of Saints beneath bell jars**) and the nearby **Cathedral**, the icon of St. Mary of Siponto dating from 1327. For more than 130 years **Faro** has had a small museum with model sailing ships, and you can catch a boat from the tourist port for a trip to the caves.

MATTINATA

A land of strawberry trees, tamarisks, Aleppo pines, breathtaking scenery and bays. In the ancient commercial oil and wine port of **Mattinata**, where exquisite vegetables and cheeses are produced, lovers of trekking can find unique pathways, like the one that takes you from the coastal path to Vieste arriving at the bay at **Vignanotica** or from Monte Barone descending again to **Pugnochiuso**. The path to **Monte Sacro** takes you to the Benedictine **Abbey of the Most Holy Trinity** to see the impressive remains of its doorways, columns and volutes; while on **Monte Saraceno**, a rocky spur on the sea, you'll find a necropolis with hundreds of tombs dug into the rock, a testimony to the Daunian people.



Swabian-Angevin Castle - Manfredonia



Vignanotica beach - Vieste

THE COAST OF MARVELS

The coast between **Mattinata** and **Vieste** is spectacular, enclosed by green Aleppo pines, the blue sea and the white coves and high cliffs. A succession of surprising scenery and caves that can be reached by boat or canoe, like those in the **Baia delle Zagare** with the famous **Faraglioni** and the Campana, Serpent and Red caves, the Red Cave has a small beach inside. **Vignanotica** has the Tavolozza Cave and the Marble Cave, Cave of the Sirens and the Two Rooms cave are in the inaccessible, yet spectacular **Pugnochiuso Bay**. The thrills continue along the coastal path with other caves near **Campi Bay**, including the **Grotta Viola** until you reach the **Cala San Felice**, a deep inlet that's perfect for snorkeling, with the famous **Architiello** stretching out into the water. Soon, you reach the **Pizzomunno**, the white chalky monolith that rises up at the end of a long beach at **Vieste**.

VIESTE

The village's houses are perched on a promontory of alleyways, stairways and small squares, and the 11th century **Cathedral** and **Frederick II's Castle** can be found there. Take a few minutes in Via Pola to see the **Malacological Museum**, with Italy's largest collection of shells and fossils, while on **Isoletta del Faro**, which can be reached by boat, as well as the lighthouse built in 1867, there is a cave with more than 200 votive inscriptions in Greek and Latin, like those in honor of the Venere Sosandra dating from the 3rd century B.C. to late Roman times. [Info Point Vieste +39 0884 708806](#)

TRABUCCHI

On the Vieste-Peschici coast road, you can see an interesting demonstration of ancient fishing techniques at the historical **Trabucchi** machinery found at **San Lorenzo, Punta Lunga** and **Molinella**. These machines are anchored on the cliffs and feature long platforms on wooden poles with ropes and pulleys. There used to be lots of these machines here and they landed more than 200 pounds of fish per day. Some machines found at **Peschici** have been brought back to life: you can eat the catch on the cliffs with the breathtaking sunset in the background. Just a few yards away are the well-known **Zaiana, San Nicola** and **Sfinale** beaches. [Info Point Peschici](#) +39 0884 964966

VICO DEL GARGANO

This picturesque village, one of Italy's most beautiful and perched on a 500-meter-high hill, will surprise you. Take a walk in the medieval areas of **Casale, Terra** and **Civitas**, up and down the stairways and small squares, among tower houses, churches, ancient oil mills like the **Maratea**, that houses the Permanent Museum of Rural Life and the imposing **Castle** from the time of Frederick II. Adorned with citrus trees, the perfume of orange blossom pervades the festivities for **St. Valentine**, the village's patron saint since 1618.

RODI GARGANICO

The town center is well worth a visit, on foot along the Via Crocefisso until you reach the *u vuccl*, a "balcony" over the Levante shoreline and over the marina, from where you set off for the **Isole Tremiti**. The 18th century village is gorgeous, and has monumental chimneys, decorated doorways and the long Corso Giannone road, known as *sotto il Castello* (beneath the Castle), the mammoth walls of the old castle, until you reach the central Piazza Rovelli. [Info Point Rodi Garganico](#) +39 0884 919432



Trabucco - Peschici



GARGANO CITRUS OASIS

This was already a flourishing producer in the year 1000 and until the 1930s, oranges, lemons and bitter oranges were shipped to England and the United States. Even today, one thousand hectares of terraced gardens stretching between **Vico del Gargano, Ischitella** and **Rodi Garganico** are cultivated for citrus trees under Slow Food rules, including the small **Gargano Blonde Sweet Orange** and Italy's oldest type of lemon, the **Gargano Femminello**. They are excellent when eaten fresh or as fruit juice, ice cream, granitas or preserves. Contact the Producers' Consortium to ask about touring some of the gardens by jeep and having an aperitif with citrus producers.

LAKE LESINA AND LAKE VARANO

These two coastal lakes are natural paradises, with a spit of sand separating them from the sea. The mouth of the Capota river, on **Lake Varano**, is a stopover area for cormorants, whilst the marsh rushes on **Lake Lesina** hide red herons, bitterns and the rare osprey. **Cagnano Varano** is renowned for being a fishing center and St. Michael's Cave is a destination for the devout. At **Lesina**, the remains of a Roman villa are hidden under the water at the island of **San Clemente** and the **Ethnography Museum** houses exhibits that teach about local fishing and holds fishing activities in the laguna, which you can cross on a *sandalo*, a boat typical of the area (centrovisitelesina.it). Tilapia, common bleak, mullet and eels (produced under Slow Food rules) can be eaten barbecued, in soup or marinated and fried. Relax on the deserted beaches of **Bosco Isola**.

SAN NICANDRO GARGANICO

This is a picturesque village with a Norman-Aragonese **Castle** and a Lombard **Cathedral** in the center; whilst the surrounding countryside hides the spectacular **Pozzatina** karst area, the **Cave of the Angel** and the **Pian della Macina** cave, filled with stalagmites and stalactites. The Romanesque church of **St. Mary of Monte Devio**, with its 12th–14th century frescoes, can also be found here.

Itinerary 3

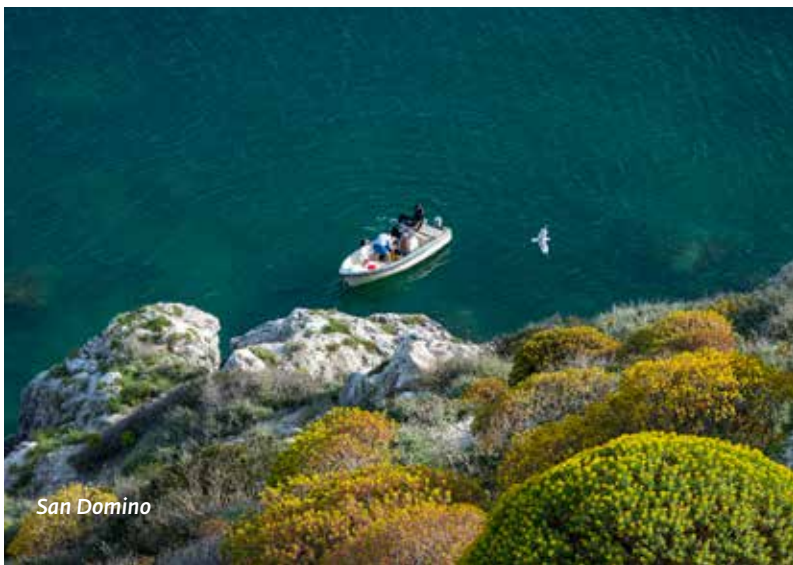
Multicolored seabeds

ISOLE TREMITI

Crystalline sea and wild nature. These are five small islands, totaling 3 km², sitting 12 miles off the Gargano coast and 20 minutes by helicopter from Foggia airport. Boasting the most beautiful seabeds in the Adriatic, since 1989 they have been designated as a **Marine Reserve** and since 1996, they have been part of the **Gargano National Park**. With more than thirty diving sites, they are a top destination for snorkelers. **San Domino** is the biggest and best for tourists, **San Nicola** has a long history, **Capraia** is uninhabited, **Cretaccio** has a barren "reef" and **Pianosa** is a Natural Marine Reserve and is accessible.

SAN DOMINO

Lush nature covers the steep rocks on the sea. Walking along the perimeter trail, among the Aleppo pines, you get a great view over the coves at **Cala del Sale**, **Cala delle Roselle** and the **Cala delle Viole**, until you reach the San Domino Lighthouse and the **Chapel of the Hermit**. The only sandy beach is at **Cala delle Arene**. You can take incredible photos at **Cala del Diamante**, where you can see the **Pagliai**, a group of ten white pyramid-shaped monoliths. You can only really appreciate the beauty of the coast by boat, among the rocky coves, cliffs and natural caves, where the albatrosses nest. Here, you'll find the **Grotta delle Viole** and the **Grotta del Bue Marino**, while the **Grotta delle Rondinelle** is a favorite with nocturnal divers. Going past the **Cala dei Benedettini**, you'll reach the **Cala degli Inglesi**, where Garibaldi's steamer "Il Lombardo" was sunk in 1864.



SAN NICOLA

San Nicola is a little treasure chest of stories and legends, which you can discover, once you disembark, crossing the old drawbridge to reach the **Angevin Tower** and enjoying a spectacular view. The Greek hero Diomedes was buried here, and Venus transformed his companions into birds, the Diomedee (albatrosses); Julia the Younger, the niece of Emperor Augustus, was exiled here; in the 13th century, Cistercian monks constructed a defensive system here, which was then modified by the Laterans in the 16th century and was an internment camp for opponents of the Fascist regime. Further on, you'll reach the **Abbey of Santa Maria a Mare**, consecrated in 1045. Inside, there's an incredible mosaic floor and a large 12th century cross on which a Crucified Christ and a Black Madonna are painted; alongside, there are the medieval and Renaissance cloisters. Along a panoramic path, you'll find Greek tombs. The only cave, the **Grotta del Teschio** or **Death's Head cave**, is at the South of the island.

CAPRAIA

Inhabited only by wild rabbits and covered with Mediterranean maquis and caper plants, this is perfect for swimming in deserted coves, like **Pietre di Fucile**, and for diving, especially at **Punta Secca** and **Cala dei Turchi**. In 1998, a 4-meter-high underwater statue of Padre Pio, created by Mimmo Norcia, was installed on the sandy seabed and surrounded by myriad fish. **Cala Sorrentino**, and its **Love Cave**, is a romantic location, with an enchanted atmosphere and fascinating light.

Itinerary 4

Delicious Daunia

SAN SEVERO

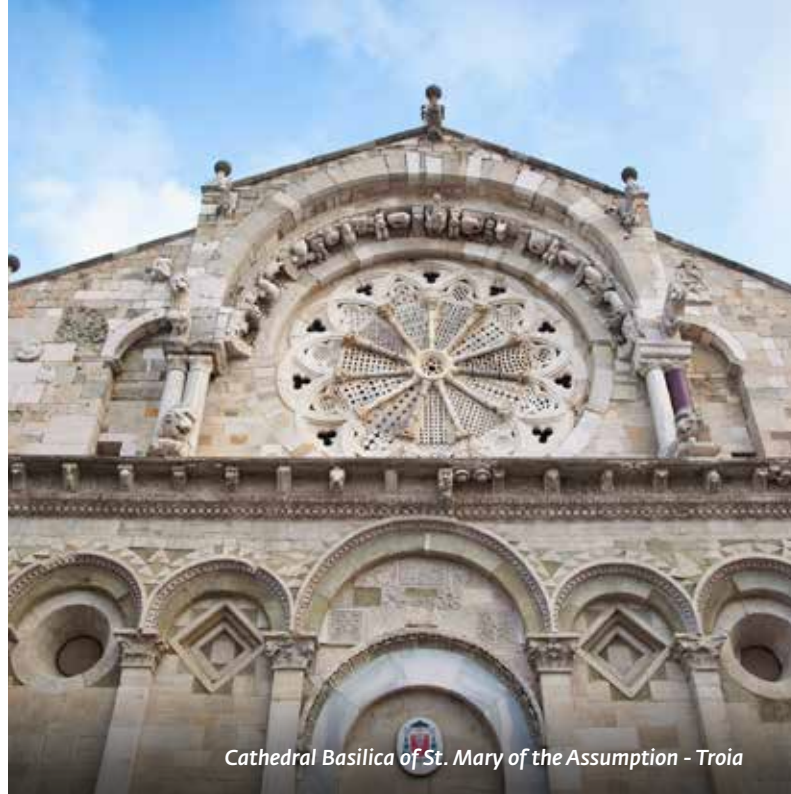
A city of art and a tasty stopover, this was an important Medieval agricultural center and, in 1968, was the birthplace of **San Severo DOC wine**, the oldest in Puglia. In the center you can see palazzos, and hidden underground wine cellars, the **Giuseppe Verdi Municipal Theater**, Romanesque and Baroque churches with authentic gems. The **Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption** has a 18th century organ; the **Sanctuary of Santissima Maria del Soccorso** has a high altarpiece in colored marble; the **Church of St. Nicholas** has Neapolitan-school paintings, and the **Church of San Severino** has a 13th century bell tower. The city's 13th century Franciscan convent holds a surprise: it's the location for **MAT**, Museo dell'Alto Tavoliere, which has permanent collections *Trame di storia*, *Un racconto al museo*, *Pinacoteca Luigi Schingo*, *SPLASH-Archivio Andrea Pazienza*, and the *Antiche iconografie svelate* exhibition showing alongside grave goods, Pugliese ceramics and aerial photos of the Tavoliere, and a "Comicbooks Area". [Info +39 0882 339611](tel:+390882339611)

LUCERA

It was a bishop's seat, a Lombard *castaldato*, and the capital of the Province of Capitanata and the County of Molise until 1806. Emperor Augustus built baths, temples and a grand **Amphitheater** here. **Emperor Frederick II** gave the city a **castle** capable of accommodating more than 20,000 Saracens, stables for 500 horses and part of the Imperial treasury. Today, there are 900 meters of city walls and 22 reinforcement towers ordered by **Charles of Anjou**, including the **Torre della Leonessa** and the **Torre del Leone**. The city can be enjoyed on foot beginning from the 14th century **Church of St. Dominic**, which was transformed in Baroque style, then to Piazza Tribunale to admire the stunning doorway and grand rose-window of the Sanctuary of **San Francesco Antonio Fasani** and continuing to Lucera Cathedral with its 14th century statue of the Madonna and Child and a 15th century crucifix. Continuing further you'll find elegant palazzos with votive chapels and Roman and Medieval archaeological finds, like those in Palazzo Cavalli – de' Nicastri, home to the **G. Fiorelli Civic Museum** [Info +39 0881 522762](tel:+390881522762)



Roman amphitheater - Lucera



Cathedral Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption - Troia

BICCARI

Mountains, woodland, truffles and an adventure park with rope courses, suspended bridges, climbing walls and zipwires. Just a few kilometers from this pretty village, the **Lago Pescara - Monte Cornacchia** (1151 m) - Bosco Cerasa is a natural area with paths, picnic areas and observation points.

TROIA

This town rises up on a high hill with a 360° view over the Tavoliere. It has a very old history and one of Puglia's most beautiful Romanesque churches, the **Cathedral Basilica of St. Mary of the Assumption**, with an 11 pillar rose-window, a unique masterpiece of arches, carvings and intricate stonework. It's known for its bronze doors by Oderisio da Benevento, the late-Gothic fresco *Dormitio Virginis*, St. Basil's lectern and the adjoining **Treasury Museum**, with more than 500 parchments, illuminated manuscripts and three *Exultet* Easter chants. Don't miss the **Holy Week** processions, including the spectacular **Procession of the Mysteries** on Good Friday evening and the **Procession of the Kiss** on Easter Sunday with statues of the Madonna and the Savior, which finish in front of the Cathedral.

[Info Point Troia +39 0881 970020](tel:+390881970020)

DISCOVERING DAUNIA

You'll be pleasantly surprised by the route beginning from **Pietramontecorvino**, dominated by the large Norman tower and the imposing Palazzo Ducale adjoining the Mother Church of Santa Maria Assunta, where on 16th May, the evening before St. Albert's day, you can witness the enchanting 7km procession dedicated to the patron saint. **Alberona**, the "water town" with its Muta Fountain and breathtaking views from the Muraglione Observation Point, fascinates with stories of the Templars, beginning from the Mother Church of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary with its ex-military belltower, connected by an underground passage to the Torre del Gran Priore, headquarters of the Knights Hospitaller. Just a few kilometers away is **Roseto Valfortore**, the town of stonecutters, honey and truffles, with its captivating, ornamented palazzos, doorways and low-relief sculptures and straw oven, and thanks to the dioramas of the **Osservatorio di Ecologia Appenninica** you can discover the Daunian woods and the Italian wolf ([Info +39 0881 594019](#)). **Faeto** is ideal for nature lovers, with hiking and horse-riding trails in the Bosco Difesa, and also for food lovers in search of treats, like *prosciutto* from the black pig. **Bovino** is known for having 800 stone doorways, a water mill, a Romanesque Co-cathedral, a Ducal Castle with Diocesan Museum and the Palazzo Ducale with 19th century roof gardens. Don't miss the Cavalcata Storica on August 29th, in honor of St. Mary Valleverde in period costume ([Info Point +39 0881 966475](#)). **Sant'Agata di Puglia**, known as "The Loggia of Puglia", fascinates with its stone residential area that follows the contours of the hill and the imposing imperial castle, whilst **Rocchetta San Antonio** unfolds with Castello D'Aquino amidst the palazzos and fountains and amazes with impressive bonfires during the Festival of St. Anthony the Great in January.



ORSARA DI PUGLIA

A riot of art and an important gastronomic stopover, with a wooden oven from 1526 that is still in working order. This **Bandiera Arancione** [Orange Flag] tourism award-winning village is built around **The Abbey of the Angel** with two churches and **St. Michael's Cave**, an ancient religious site on the Via Francigena. The **Diocesan Museum's** Lapidarium tells the village's story from pre-history to the Middle Ages, while on November 1 each year, the tradition of *Fucacoste e Cocce Priatorje* (Bonfires and Heads of Purgatorio) is revived. The center is illuminated by thousands of pumpkin lanterns and bonfires and since the 1700s, the custom is to hold a procession to the **Church of the Dead** and eat a grain-based dessert made with nuts and mulled wine.

ASCOLI SATRIANO

This pretty village is a crisscross of alleyways, the *trasonn*, with houses and noble palazzos, like the **Palazzo Ducale** with its elegant loggia and the Historical Complex of **Santa Maria del Popolo**, which houses the **Museums of Ascoli Satriano** with the **Diocesan Museum's** collection of sacred art and the **Civic Archaeological Museum** with grave goods from Daunian tombs, a room containing statues and opus sectile panels from Villa Faragola, marbles and splendid multicolored griffins (polomusealeascolisatriano.blogspot.com). The **Daunian Archaeological Park** is an open-air museum with a sanctuary dating back to the 6th-5th century B.C., a pre-Roman necropolis on the Collina del Serpente and the Faragola area has the remains of a Roman villa.
[Info +39 0885 662186](tel:+390885662186) [Info Point Ascoli Satriano +39 0885.651756](tel:+390885651756)





IMPERIAL PUGLIA

24 hours in **BARLETTA**

24 hours in **ANDRIA**

24 hours in **TRANI**

Itinerary ①

Salt mines and archaeology

Margherita di Savoia - Trinitapoli - San Ferdinando di Puglia
Canne della Battaglia - Canosa di Puglia

Itinerary ②

Ancient ports, castles and cardoncello mushrooms

Bisceglie - Ruvo di Puglia - Corato - Castel del Monte
Minervino - Murge - Spinazzola



24 hours in Barletta

SWABIAN CASTLE

The exciting route to discovering the city begins here. Emperor **Frederick II**, a skilled warrior and cultured leader, established this residence and in 1228 convened the famous Diet; then Emperor **Charles V** transformed it into an impregnable fortress, square in layout, with a large internal courtyard, formidable angular bastions, magnificent basements and moat. Today, it's a treasure chest of artworks, finds and impressive spaces, in which you'll find the municipal library, the **Archaeological Museum**, the **Civic Museum**, with the only bust of Frederick II in the world, and the **Galleria Cafiero**, rich in silver, fabrics, ceramics and furnishings from the 19th and 20th centuries. Then there are the bastions, which give you a breathtaking view over the sea, the port with its **Napoleonic lighthouse** and the long **Eastern and Western coast roads**. *Info +39 0883 578621 - barlettamusei.it*

THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. MARY MAJOR

This is just a short distance from the castle. Founded on an **early-Christian basilica**, this is a mix of styles including a Romanesque façade, a Renaissance doorway and Gothic rose-window, which holds unexpected surprises. Just 5 meters further down, you'll see the **catacombs** of the previous churches of the 6th and 9th-10th centuries and the **mosaic flooring**. A walk through the alleyways of **Borgo Santa Maria**, in the company of a guide, is a leap into the city's history, into its architectural fabric and into the local dialect in its variants connected with the farming and seafaring communities, which is also reflected in the cooking: "from garden to port" as they say in these parts.

Info Point Barletta +39 0883 331331.



Cathedral - Barletta



Colossus - Barletta

CANTINA DELLA DISFIDA [CHALLENGE CELLAR]

It takes just a moment to get from Via del Duomo to Via Cialdini and here in the grain storehouse of the 14th century **Palazzo Damato**, you'll find the **Cantina** and, in the front, the **Tempietto**, which recalls the famous Challenge of 1503, which saw 13 Italian knights, led by **Ettore Fieramosca**, triumph over the French. For one week each year, in September, the Knights return and bring to life the historic locations of the challenge. Don't miss the small **Museum** dedicated to the Knights, with arms and armor from the "Cafiero collection".

PINACOTECA G. DE NITTIS

Further along the Via Cialdini, the **Palazzo Marra** hits you with the elegance of its balconies and internal loggia. It's known as "**Casa De Nittis**", and it houses the gallery with works by Giuseppe De Nittis (1846-1884), Italy's greatest impressionist, who was born in Barletta. There are seventeen rooms that evoke the locations, atmospheres and colors favored by the maestro. The new exhibition "*Rileggere De Nittis*", curated by the art expert Renato Miracco, highlights the painter's artistic experiences in **Paris** and **London** at the end of the 1800s, compares some of his paintings with those of his contemporaries Manet, Degas, Caillebotte and Tissot, and includes reproductions of some of his masterpieces that are exhibited at the Metropolitan Museum in New York and the Musée d'Orsay in Paris. *barlettamusei.it*

Not to be missed

On **Corso Vittorio Emanuele** you can find the elegant **Curci Theater**, built in 1872 and featuring a neo-classical facade; you then reach the **Basilica of the Holy Sepulcher**, with its third century baptismal font, which welcomed pilgrims heading for the Holy Land. Next to the church is a bronze statue known as the **Colossus**; standing over 5 meters tall, the statue recalls the Byzantine emperor Heraclius. There are many restaurants in the center and along the seafront in which you can stop to taste genuine local dishes, and pools in which you can go kitesurfing and canoeing. Three kilometers away, on the road to Trani, you'll find the **Sanctuary of St. Mary of the Sterpeto**, which was built in the Middle Ages on an ancient little church. This is popular with devotees of the Madonna, the patron saint of Barletta since 1732 *santuariodellosterpeto.it*

24 hours in Andria

THE CATHEDRAL OF SANTA MARIA ASSUNTA

You can discover Andria on foot, starting from Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II, better known as **Piazza Catuma** where you'll find the impressive **Palazzo Ducale**, with its principal entrance on Piazza La Corte, 15 minutes from the Station and just a short walk from the **Cathedral**, which dates back to Norman times, but was rebuilt and expanded in late-Gothic style (15th-16th century), then reworked until the 1900s. The building is a good contrast between the early-Christian church of the 7th-8th century, with two naves and cross vaults, where the remains of **Frederick II's** two wives, Isabella II of Jerusalem and Isabella of England, are buried, and the overlaid building, with three naves and a large Baroque chapel dedicated to **St. Richard**, patron saint of the city and the peripheral chapels.

FROM FAITH TO ART

This attractive village is a labyrinth of cobbled streets, alleyways and little squares that contain noble *palazzos*, tower houses and numerous churches. On Piazza Manfredi you'll encounter the Renaissance doorway and Baroque bell tower of the **Church of St. Dominic**. Go along Via Federico II and you'll arrive at **St. Andrew's Gate**, the only remaining example of the old gates, where the external front bears the inscription "Andria fidelis", as it was renamed by **Frederick II** in 1229, on his return to Puglia from the 6th Crusade, when he found many cities in revolt, except for **Andria**, which remained loyal to him.

Passing through the gate and continuing to Via Porta Nuova, Via Mantonè and Via Porta la Barra, you reach the **Church of St. Augustine**, a national monument, built in the 13th century by the Templars and then passing to the Augustine order. It has an arched doorway framed by a triangular gable and is richly decorated. From here, along Via Flavio Giugno, you arrive at the Church of St. Mary of Porta Santa, a single nave with a Renaissance doorway.

SANCTUARY OF OUR LADY OF MIRACLES

This religious complex nestles among vines and gardens and was built in the 1500s on the **Basilian lavra of St. Margaret**. The complex is made up of three churches: the "cave" where the Byzantine **Madonna "of Miracles"** was discovered, the intermediate **Church of the Crucifixion**, filled with frescoes, and the 17th century Basilica, designed by the architect **Cosimo Fanzago**. The high altar and the wooden coffered false ceiling are of particular interest. *Info Point Andria +39 0883 290231 - 290229*



APRIL FAIR

It was April 23, 1438 when **Francis II of Baux**, the Duke of Andria, discovered the bones of **St. Richard**, and Pope Eugene IV declared it a holiday. The Duke established an annual fair that has been held every year since. The **April Fair** is an important showcase for artisan goods and local food and drink.

GOURMET DESTINATION

Any journey into local flavors begins with the explosion of fresh quality that is **Burrata di Andria PGI**, a stretched curd cheese filled with strips of mozzarella and cream (*stracciatella*). This cheese, together with the DOP extra virgin olive oil, the **Castel del Monte DOC** and **DOCG** wines, the *broccoletto*, the *cardoncello* mushrooms and the Podolica beef, characterize the delicious cuisine of **Imperial Puglia**. Food lovers should stop at the delicious **Museo del Confetto Mucci Giovanni**, right in the historical factory founded in 1894, where you'll hear the history and facts about candy making here, then you'll go to the confectionery room with its copper kettles once used to coat almonds with sugar, the chocolate area with the old kneading machine, and the caramel room *museodelconfetto.it*

DIOCESAN MUSEUM

Inaugurated in 2019, in the **Palazzo Margiotta** in Via De Anellis, this museum contains an exceptional marble bust of Emperor **Frederick II**, which can be seen along with paintings, furnishing and religious vestments, including two valuable panels of the Redeemer and of the Virgin, that once enclosed two reliquaries that are also exhibited, an icon of the **Madonna** and child from the 12th century and a manger scene from the 15th century. *musediocesanoandria.it*

24 hours in Trani

A GREEN BALCONY OVER THE SEA

There's an enchanting urban trekking path that starts from the Villa Comunale, one of the few in Italy overlooking the sea. Opened in 1824 and built on a wall dating back to the 13th century, this is a mixture of Italian and English gardens, including holm oaks, maritime pines, palms and flowerbeds; fountains, sculptures, ancient Trajan columns, busts of illustrious Tranese people and the tabulae of the **Ordinamenta Maris**, a one of the Mediterranean's oldest maritime financial regulation codes, issued in 1063. It's a short distance from here to **Fortino**, and the view will leave you speechless! In the **Sanctuary of the B. M. V. of Carmine**, the protector of sailors, you can see the **votive offerings** from the 19th century and the story of an icon arriving on the back of a dolphin; whilst on the port road, you can see the *palazzos* of the powerful merchants of the 1700s, like the **Palumbos**.

JEWISH QUARTER

Passing by **All Saints' Church**, which conceals the history of the **Knights Templar**, you go through the **Old Gate** into the old center to visit Trani's Jewish district, cradle of European Judaism from the 9th to the 16th century. It was a crucial trading post, with 4 synagogues, where great biblical and talmudic scholars operated. The only surviving building, now reopened for original use, is **Scolanova Synagogue**, whilst the former **St. Anne's Synagogue** houses the **Museum of Jewish Culture**, which contains the Jewish Section of the Diocesan Museum, with finds depicting the city's history and documents on relations with other Medieval synagogues. A gourmet stopover here is just the opportunity to taste the excellent seafood cooking and Trani DOC Muscat, a very aromatic, natural sweet wine.



Scolanova Synagogue - Trani



Cathedral - Trani

THE CATHEDRAL BASILICA OF ST. NICHOLAS THE PILGRIM

This building seems to be suspended over the sea and is a real Romanesque jewel with a limestone façade and elegant **Bell Tower**, which you can climb to enjoy a breathtaking view. Inside, there are multiple churches laid on top of one another: the upper church is divided into three naves by twin columns with a large 32-panelled bronze door from 1775 designed by **Barisano da Trani**. A few steps further down and you arrive at the transverse crypt of **St. Nicholas the Pilgrim** with 42 small cross vaults and 28 marble columns, which support the transept of the upper church. From here you can get to the longitudinal crypt of St. Mary with three naves and the hypogeum of **San Leucio** (5th–7th century), two meters below sea level (cattedraletrani.it). In the old **Palazzo Lodispoto** on Piazza Duomo, the **Trani Museum Complex** houses the Cathedral treasures and Europe's largest **Typewriter Museum**, which has more than 400 pieces from all over the world. fondazione seca.it

Curiosities

The ancient **Church of St. Martin** was entrusted to the Orthodox community. On Piazza Sedile di San Marco, **Palazzo Caccette** is a valuable example of Renaissance architecture; whilst the **Palazzo delle Arti Beltrani** is a lively cultural hub with the **Pinacoteca Ivo Scaringi** featuring works by the Tranese painter of the same name and other artists of the late-19th and early-20th centuries. In September it becomes one of the locations for the exciting **Trani Dialogs** festival. idialoghiditrani.com

SWABIAN CASTLE

Piazza Manfredi is the home of the impressive **Swabian Castle**, originally a quadrangular castle with four corner towers, then in the 16th century it was expanded with two ramparts, one square rampart and one spearhead. In the 1800s, it changed from being a defensive edifice into a prison. The castle has two memorial halls, finds retrieved from excavations, and an inscription of **1233** of **Frederick II** on the doorway in the western courtyard and the walkways.

FESTIVAL OF THE HOLY CROSS

Held in the small **Church of St. Mary of Colonna**, annexed to the convent in the year 1000, the **Festival of the Holy Cross** takes place on May 3, when a fishing boat brings the cross to the port and from there it's carried in procession to the parish, which will keep it for a few days, before it's returned. It's said that in 1480 the Saracens stole it and damaged it, but when it began to bleed, they threw it in the sea and returned to the Tranese coast. Amidst history and legend, you can admire the city from the peninsula known as **Capo Colonna**.

Info Point Trani +39 375 5575405



Swabian castle - Trani



Saltworks - Margherita di Savoia

Itinerary 1

Saltworks and archaeology

MARGHERITA DI SAVOIA

This town owes everything to salt. It's famous for its saltworks, among the largest in Europe, which cover more than 4,000 hectares. They date back to ancient Rome, but the canals, salt tanks and the system of partitions, that the **salt miners** raise and lower, have existed only since the middle of the 18th century. Find out more with a guided tour, films and salt workshops, and children can dress up as chemists and learn the history of salt, measure the saline density of water, discover the molecular structure of salt under a microscope, and extract salt from water (salinamargheritadisavoia.it). The saltworks are located within a wetland area, which became a **Nature Reserve** in 1977, an important hibernation hub in central-southern Italy, with an impressive colony of **pink flamingoes**. There's a real show at sunset, when thousands of birds take off together. Along the coast towards **Zapponeta**, there are perfectly formed vegetable gardens (potatoes, carrots, PGI white onions) that exports its goods all over the world. There is also a renowned thermal spa. *Info Point Margherita di Savoia +39 0883 654012*



TRINITAPOLI

Opened in 2020, the new **Archaeological Park of the Hypogea** is well worth a visit. This is one of the world's most important **Bronze Age** sanctuaries: be catapulted into a subterranean world of rites and mysteries connected with the lives of the peoples of the 2nd millennium B.C., following the focus on the **via sacra** and the **monumental hypogea** with a cultural area in which workshops are held (*Info +39 349 1641909*). The many finds unearthed in the excavations can be seen in the **Archaeological Museum**. This pretty village also produces **excellent beers**, refermented in wooden casks, while nature lovers and birdwatchers can walk or bicycle around the edge of the Reserve, starting from **Casa di Ramsar**, and visit the Environmental Education Center and see a large number of species of birds.

CANNE DELLA BATTAGLIA

A charming path through history, art and nature. On the famous battlefield between **Canosa** and **Barletta**, wherein 216 B.C. the **Romans** suffered a terrible defeat at the hands of Hannibal's Carthaginians and 50,000 men lost their lives, you can find one of the largest **Bronze Age** sites. There are two itineraries when visiting the **Archaeological Park**. The first, on the main hill, takes you to the Citadel of Canne, the Medieval settlement with a castle and a basilica; the second takes you to the early-Christian basilica, the Daunian village with its burial chambers and then to the furnace and the Medieval cemetery. There are the beautiful remains of a Tiberian domus with a well-conserved mosaic flooring and frescoed walls, and the excavations at the San Mercurio springs. The **Antiquarium**, at the foot of the fortified citadel, houses finds from all eras, from Neolithic times to the Punic wars, to the Middle Ages. There's also a video reconstruction of the battle that can be seen in the multimedia room. *Info +39 0883 510993*



Canne della Battaglia



Mausoleum - Canosa di Puglia

SAN FERDINANDO DI PUGLIA

Famous for its **purple artichoke**, the sweet-tasting, intensely perfumed star of the **National Fair of the Mediterranean Artichoke and Garden Produce**, this village is a real archaeological treasure chest with 35 **Neolithic** settlements found in its countryside and original collections housed in the **Civic Museum** in Piazza Giovanni Paolo II. Its **ethnographic** section contains rural objects from the 1800s and 1900s and a room dedicated to viticulture, while the **archaeological** section has finds from **Neolithic** times to the **High Middle Ages**, which includes some curious pieces, like ancient toys, a Neolithic spindle, and loom weights found in the graves. *Info +39 333 1409125*

CANOSA DI PUGLIA

This is an unmissable destination for lovers of archaeology, with objects covering 3,000 years of history. Go one and a half kilometers from the city center and take a walk in the magnificent **San Leucio Park**. Here you'll be amidst olive trees and you can see southern Italy's largest **Etruscan Temple** and the enormous **early-Christian Basilica**.

The Byzantine mosaics and the Corinthian volute, a city landmark, are beautiful. In the city center you can visit the underground tombs of the Daunian princes, like the **Lagраста Hypogaeum**, with 9 rooms, and the grave goods of the **Varrese Tomb** in the towns branch of the National Archaeological Museum in the **Palazzo Sinesi**. Then go to the Roman Domus of Montescupolo, where wall paintings and mosaics are conserved. In the Cathedral of St. Sabinus there are two extraordinary Romanesque sculptures: the Accepted pulpit and the Romualdus throne. Outside, there's the mausoleum of **Boemondo d'Altavilla** and you can end your tour at the 6th century St. John's Baptistry.

Info Point Canosa di Puglia +39 0883 612423 - canusium.it

Itinerary 2

Ancient ports, castles and cardoncello mushrooms

BISCEGLIE

Each morning there's a great fuss at the port, when the fishermen unload their catch at the **Fish Market** behind the **Norman Tower**, where an auction takes place at 7 a.m. The discovery continues in the **Civic Museum of the Sea** in the former Monastery of the Holy Cross in Via Frisari, which includes model ships, nautical charts, navigational tools, anchors and archaeological finds. A few steps on and you can see the diamond pointed *bugnato* façade of the **Palazzo Tupputi**, which is today an urban studio which organizes exhibitions, events and concerts. Then there's the **Cathedral of St. Peter the Apostle** and the excellent **Diocesan Museum**. But **Bisceglie** is also famous for its *sospiri*, literally "sighs", which are sweet cream sponge cakes covered with frosting, made under Slow Food rules; it's also famed for its **dessert grapes** (Cardinale and Regina) and its **cherries**. In the nearby countryside there's the **Dolmen of Chianca**, a Bronze Age megalith.

Info Point Bisceglie +39 080 3968554

RUVO DI PUGLIA

The highlight of the city is the **Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption**, with its iconic gabled façade, amazing rose window, and central doorway decorated with columns on which stand two lions, and inside there is the apse ciborium, which recalls the one in the **Basilica of St. Nicholas in Bari**, and the remains of the early-Christian basilica and Roman tombs underground. Enjoy a panoramic view from the nearby **Clock Tower** and go underground to the **Cave of San Cleto** beneath the **Church of the Purgatory** in Via Cattedrale with its *bugnato* façade and papier-mâché statue of St. Mary of Mercy. There's a splendid collection of terracotta vases in the **National Archaeological Museum** in the 19th century **Palazzo Jatta**, like the large krater vase featuring human faces from the 4th century B.C. and the Talos vase, a red-figured Attic vase. *Info Point Ruvo di Puglia +39 080 3628428*



Cathedral - Ruvo di Puglia



Minervino Murge

CASTEL DEL MONTE

Built by **Frederick II**, the Norman emperor known for his boundless personality and culture, this castle can be seen from a distance on a 540-meter-high hill with its eight slender towers on the corners of the octagonal structure. The enigmatic castle, a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** since 1996, wasn't designed to be a fortress, since it has no defensive elements. Perhaps it was a hunting casino or ambassadorial residence, given the richness of its decorations, which are now lost. Everything revolves around the **number eight**, from the layout to the internal courtyard, from the towers to the eight rooms on the ground floor and the piano *nobile* and then to the leaves and flowers that are sculpted on the doorways and volutes in groups of eight. In the **Kabbalah**, the number **eight** signifies resurrection and new life. And the **octagon**, a mixture of square and circle, symbolizes the conjunction between earth and sky. *Info +39 0883 569997 - casteldelmonte.beniculturali.it*

MINERVINO MURGE

Take a trip back in time in this pretty village. See its old boutiques, like the **master basket maker's**, and taste its delicious recipes, like the giant **fried panzerotto** filled with tomato and mozzarella or the dishes made with **cardoncello mushrooms**. In autumn, the On the Road festival is dedicated to this mushroom, and also involves other local towns, like **Spinazzola**. Leave your car in Piazza del Faro and take a walk in the picturesque village of **Scosciola**, a real labyrinth of streets that offer attractive views, then take an urban trek along the old **Lama Matitani**, which leads to the **Cave of St. Michael the Archangel**, a large karstic cave and religious site for more than a millennium (grottasanmichele.it). For those who like walking in nature, go up **Monte Guardianello**, which offers beautiful scenery from **Vulture** to **Gargano**.

BARI AND THE COAST

24 hours in BARI

Itinerary ①

Medieval villages by the sea

Molfetta - Giovinazzo
Mola di Bari - Polignano a Mare
Monopoli - Capotondo

Itinerary ②

Authentic flavors and traditional craftsmanship

Terlizzi - Bitonto - Modugno - Palo del Colle - Grumo Appula - Toritto
Bitetto - Bitritto - Adelfia
Casamassima - Rutigliano
Conversano - Turi
Sammichele di Bari



24 hours in Bari

BARI OLD TOWN

For anyone arriving by sea, the 16th century **Bastione di Santa Scolastica** is the entry point to the **Old Town** and presents you with panoramic views on the waterfront, before losing yourself in the **former Santa Scolastica convent**, home of the fascinating **Archaeological Museum** with the remains of a Byzantine church, a Bronze Age village, a Roman domus and fortifications. From here a unique path lets you discover the village, including courtyards dating back to the 12th-13th centuries and to popular legend. From the area of **Santa Maria del Buonconsiglio** (with remains of an ancient church and mosaic floor) continue to **Vico del Forno Santa Scolastica**, from **Largo Annunziata** to the streets named Corte and Arco dello **Spirito Santo** to **Corte Middorosso**, famous for the story of the emir Muffarag, who attempted to overthrow the malevolent Befanì who decapitated everyone who got in his way and instead it was his head that rolled until it became embedded in the architrave at **Strada Quercia**, where the head of an old statue still exists. *Info Point Bari +39 080 5242244*

TRADITIONAL FLAVORS

From the **Basilica of St. Nicholas** to the **Cathedral of St. Sabinus**, this area is a succession of cloisters, convents, churches ...and ovens. It's impossible to resist **Barese focaccia** and **fried panzerotto** filled with tomatoes and mozzarella, not forgetting a sip or two of craft beer that's been produced in Bari since the early 1900s. In the doorways you can see the town's women kneading the famous *orecchiette* pasta, which they then leave to dry on trays. The streets are filled with the strong scent of beef involtini sauce or *ciambotto*, a mixed fish soup. For centuries **Bari** has passed down its seafaring tradition from one generation to the next. This is brought to life in the folklore of **N'derra La'Lanz**, on **St. Nicholas' Wharf**, where the locals gather on a Sunday morning to eat raw seafood.



Focaccia



Basilica - Bari

BASILICA OF ST. NICHOLAS

According to legend, **62 Barese sailors** smuggled the remains of **St. Nicholas** from **Myra** in **1087** and brought them to **Bari**, where the Basilica was built in Pugliese Romanesque style in honor of the miracle-working patron saint of sailors and children, who the Barese people celebrate twice a year. From **May 7 to 9** the celebration of the translation of the relics features more than 500 people dressed in clothing of the era and the ritual of the **manna**, collected from the saint's tomb. **December 6** sees the **pilgrimage of the young** in search of a husband. They must do at least 7 laps around the miraculous column which is kept along with the relics in the **Crypt**. Passing through the **Pilgrim's Arch**, you find yourself in the heart of the **Cittadella Nicolaiana**. The gabled façade between the **Tower of the Militias** and the **Catapano Tower** is decorated with a central rose window and three entrances, with the central entrance enclosed by columns supported by bulls. Along the lateral façade there's a row of arches built on richly decorated doorways, such as the **Lion Door**. Within the three naves, punctuated by granite columns and pilasters, you are struck by the gold wooden ceiling, the altarpiece by **Bartolomeo Vivarini** with the Madonna and the Saints, the **Ciborium** dating from 1100, which is sited on the altar and the **Throne of Elia** behind it, supported by two grotesques, which are placed on a Byzantine-Islamic mosaic floor.

Info +39 080 5737111 - basilicasannicola.it

NICOLAIAN MUSEUM

Dive into the **Basilica's** secular history, through finds connected with St. Nicholas and **Bari's** artistic and historical events from the Byzantine and Norman era to the time of the Bourbons and post-unification years, with parchments, valuable illuminated manuscripts and inscriptions sitting alongside reliquaries, chalices, silver, enamels, coats of arms, paintings and religious vestments in the exhibition room. [Info +39 080 5231429](#)

DIOCESAN MUSEUM

This is a precious trove of sculptural finds, **16th-18th century** paintings, like the Adoration of the Magi by **Giaquinto**, illuminated parchments from the 10th-11th centuries (the **Exultet rolls**), icons, religious vestments and pieces of the Cathedral Treasury, which can be seen in the five sections on the first floor of the Palazzo dell'Episcopio. [Info +39 080 5210064](#)

BARI CULTURE

Italy's longest seafront has a diverse collection of architecture: from Umbertine-style buildings to Fascist-era architecture, from the Liberty style of the Cinema-Theater **Kursaal Santa Lucia** – a multi-functional space brought back to life after accurate restoration with the beautiful Sala Giuseppina filled with frescoes, decorations and Arcadian panels – to the eclectic **Palazzo della Provincia**, where the **Pinacoteca Metropolitana Corrado Giaquinto** can be found on the fourth floor. A fascinating exhibition, with examples of Pugliese art and much more, from the 11th to the 19th centuries: sculptures, icons, ceramics, Nativity scenes and historical clothing. There are also important paintings by Giaquinto, De Nittis, Gioacchino Toma, Venetian works by Vivanni and Tintoretto; Neapolitan or from the Neapolitan school of Paolo Finoglio and Luca Giordano, De Chirico and Macchiaoli painters Fattori and Morandi.

[Info +39 080 5412420](#)



Palazzo della Provincia - Bari



Underground Bari

CATHEDRAL OF ST. SABINUS

Every year on the **summer solstice**, June 21st at 5.10 p.m., the sun's rays shine through the eighteen petals of the **rose window** of the central façade and fall upon the rose-patterned mosaic floor. The magic of light is repeated in this splendid example of **Pugliese Romanesque** architecture, built on a Byzantine church. Outside, the rose window, decorated with grotesques, softens the façade together with the monoforas and a bifora; whilst along the elegant sidewall, there's a gallery of arches and the **grand Trulla** baptistry, now a sacristy, and the majestic bell tower. The austere interior has three naves which is dominated, on the high altar, by the splendid ambo with the false matroneum and the 12th century canopied ciborium. The Baroque crypt contains the reliquaries of **St. Sabinus** and the icon of the **Virgin Hodegetria**.

UNDERGROUND BARI

You can discover the city beneath the city starting from the **Norman-Swabian Castle**, built on a 10th century Byzantine settlement. Beneath the north area lies the religious quarter, with traces of a church and a cemetery; the southern wing contains remains of houses and stores. From there continue into the **Succorpo (Underbody)** of the **Cathedral of St. Sabinus** with layered remains from the Roman age to the Middle Ages, including tombs, ceramic finds, Roman and early Christian mosaics, like the one by Timoteo. Beneath **Piazzetta Bisanzio** and **Rainaldo** there's a 10th century church, with a monolithic altar, walls and floor in limestone mosaic tiles; whilst beneath the **Palazzo Simi**, Bari's **Archaeological Operations Center**, there are multicolored frescoes among the remains of a small Byzantine church with an altar and central apse and others found in a Roman residence. [Info +39 080 5275451](#)

NORMAN-SWABIAN CASTLE

A Bari landmark, protected by an impressive surrounding wall and a large moat, this castle was built by the Norman king **Roger II**, on a pre-existing defensive stronghold with a trapezoid layout, a central courtyard and 4 corner towers. It was partially destroyed in 1156 by **William I of Sicily**, then between 1233 and 1240 it was rebuilt by **Frederick II** with a new guise: open windows in the towers, covering the vestibule with high cross vaults supported by columns with different volutes, some with Islamic figures, other bear the signature of the sculptor, on has a series of warrior heads. The 16th century was the castle's golden age, when with **Isabella of Aragon** and her daughter **Bona Sforza**, it became a cultured and lively court. The Renaissance courtyard has a double-wing monumental staircase. Transformed into a military barracks in the 1800s, today it houses the Gipsoteca with casts of Puglia's most famous monuments, created for the Rome Regional Exhibition of 1911, and an interesting exhibition with archaeological material in terracotta, lapidary and precious stones. [Info +39 080 5213704](tel:+390805213704)



Norman-Swabian Castle - Bari



Petruzzelli theater - Bari

IT'S SHOWTIME!

On **Corso Vittorio Emanuele II** you'll find the historic Piccinni Theater, the city's oldest, built in neo-classical style and opened in 1854 (teatropubblicopugliese.it); whilst the **Petruzzelli** theater, on Corso Cavour and opened in 1903, is Europe's largest private theater, famous for its extraordinary capacity, the variety of its programming and the importance of its guest artists, like Rudolf Nureyev, Ray Charles and Frank Sinatra. In 1991 a terrible fire devastated the building and it only reopened in 2009 and brought its antique splendor back to life with beautiful interiors designed by **Raffaele Armenise** and decorated in gold ([+39 080 9752810](tel:+390809752810) - fondazionepetruzzelli.it). In the **Stadio della Vittoria**, the **Casa di Pulcinella** theater is a magical place for children and has relaunched internationally its popular heritage of puppets and marionettes, through shows, lectures and workshops (casadipulcinella.it).

CULTURAL REBIRTH

The spaces that have been redeveloped and transformed into cultural spaces include the **Cittadella della Cultura** in the former victuallers which fell into disuse in the early 1900s, which houses the **National Library** and the **State Archive**; the **St. Teresa of the Maschi de Gemmis** Metropolitan Library, in a former 17th century convent in the old city, with a lecture room, exhibition spaces and auditorium. In Piazza del Ferrarese, the **Spazio Murat**, a former food market, is today a space for exhibitions, meetings, workshops, and a concept store for Pugliese artisan design. Together with the former **Fish Market** (with commercial, exhibition and workshop spaces and artist's residences), opposite, and the former **Teatro Margherita** (Mediterranean dance, theater and music workshop) it forms the **Contemporary Arts Complex**.

Itinerary 1

Medieval villages by the sea

MOLFETTA

Set off by boat to discover this city of ancient marine tradition, home of shipwrights, a stopover for pilgrims headed for the Holy Land and major fishing boat center in the Lower Adriatic, famous for its colorful **fish auction** in the Fish Market every Thursday night. Heading towards Giovinazzo you can see the high, narrow houses that make up the *palazziata a mare* (sea palazzos), the **Old Cathedral of St. Conrad** with its cupolas decorated in *chiancarelle* (limestone slabs), twin towers and holy water fount from the 1200s, the **Passari Tower** is a contemporary art outpost. Along the coast to Bisceglie, after **St. James' Bay**, is the **Torre Calderina** Natural Oasis, a surprising mix of archaeological sites, ancient villas, *trullo* houses and the **Ripalta Caves**. At St. **Dominic's Factory**, the *Permanent Ethnographic Exhibition* of the Sea tells the story of old trades through nets, drawings, small models. You'll be amazed by the prestigious books held in the **Diocesan Museum's** library. On September 8, the festival of **Our Lady of the Martyrs**, Protector of Seafarers, features a statue carried all the way to the sea from the Basilica by that name adjoining the Crusaders' Hospital. Away from the town, the karstic valley of **Pulo di Molfetta** boasts geological and natural marvels, and the **Civic Archaeological Museum of Pulo**, housed in the rooms of the **Casina Cappelluti**, exhibits the valley's finds dating back to Neolithic times. The **Dinosaur Cave** on the road to **Ruvo di Puglia** is one of the biggest sites of dinosaur footprints.

Info Point Molfetta: +39 080 3340519 - 351 9869433



Cathedral - Molfetta



Giovinazzo

GIOVINAZZO

Sea, sunlight, stone: these three elements lie at the heart of this pretty village perched atop a promontory overlooking **Cala Porto**, with its multicolored fishing boats that take center stage in the **Festival of the Sea** each June. Passing through the **Trajan Arch**, lose yourself in the passageways, the palazzos on Via Gelso, the enchanting **Corte De Ritis**, the **Church of the Holy Spirit** and the Church of St. John the Baptist, with its valuable wooden statues. Along Via Marina, on the Aragon Walls, there are photo opportunities with every step. You'll reach the **Co-Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta**, where the ceremony of the Madonna of Corsignano is celebrated, and the **Palazzo Ducale**, then the Eastern Walkway and the seafront. On the road to Terlizzi, **St. Sylvester's Dolmen** is an important megalithic monument.

MOLA DI BARI

The Medieval center is dominated by the **Angevin Castle**, the **Cathedral of St. Nicholas**, the imposing palazzos filled with frescoes, like the **Palazzo delle Cento Camere** and **Palazzo Pesce**, and the **Niccolò Van Westerhout Theater** dating from 1888. The town's churches include **St. Dominic's Convent** from the late 1500s, the **Monastery of Santa Chiara**, whose summer cloister hosts musical events, and the **Church of Madonna di Loreto**, with its statue of the **Madonna d'Altomare**, which is paraded on fishing boats on the first Sunday in **July**. From there it's just a few steps to **Piazza del Pesce**, and the fish market and port. Not to be missed in July is the historic **Octopus Festival** and in the rural districts of Brenca and San Materno, the **Poggio Ecomuseum** of Ancient Villas and "Small Houses" has examples from the 1700s to the early 1900s.

HIDDEN BAYS

The **South coast of Bari** is a real marvel, a succession of cliffs, caves and hidden bays, like **Cala San Vito** with its impressive Benedictine abbey facing the natural marina, beach and fishing boats, and in nearby **Polignano a Mare**, there is the beautiful white shingle inlet of **Cala Paura**. The surrounding farmland is home to the famous San Vito purple parsnip, grown under Slow Food rules.

POLIGNANO A MARE

Overlooking the sea, this city is the birthplace of the great **Domenico Modugno** and the sculptor, set designer and performer Pino Pascali, who died in 1968, when he was 33, and who has a Foundation in his name housed in the town's old slaughterhouse. This is Puglia's only **museum of contemporary art** (museopinopascali.it). With the famous song *Nel blu dipinto di blu* on your mind, take your camera and discover the cliff's most beautiful views, like the **Lama Monachile** deep canyon in the center, with a beach that turns pink at dusk, where world champion high divers perform high-octane tricks in the **Red Bull Cliff Diving** competition. The whole coastline is studded with ravines and caverns, which you can swim to or catch a boat to, from **St. Catherine's Caves** to the **Rondinelle Caves**, from the **Grotta Azzurra** to the Archbishop's Caves, to the most spectacular of all, the famous 21-meter-high **Palazzese Caves**. Passing through the **Marchesale Arch** and **Piazza dell'Orologio**, take in the beauty of the passageways, which open up onto walkways overlooking the sea. Visit the Mother Church of **Santa Maria Assunta**, dating from 1295, and take a moment to sample the famous ice cream, the special coffee with lemon zest, cream and amaretto or the seafood paninis.

Info Point Polignano a Mare +39 080 4252336



Polignano a Mare



Monopoli

MONOPOLI

The fishing boats at the **Old Port** are mostly red and light blue. These traditional wooden craft are painted in the colors of the cloak of the **Madonna della Madia**, the Byzantine icon that miraculously arrived by sea in 1117, housed in the Cathedral and paraded through the town on August 13 and 14. A few steps further on and you'll reach the **Castle of Charles V** on the promontory at **Punta Pinna**. The castle contains a scale model of Monopoli as it was in the 16th century, created by a shipwright. It also holds exhibitions, and the terrace provides wonderful views of the city. Listen to stories, like the Spanish Dame who banged a drum to call for her husband, who drowned in the sea; then continue along the ancient wall to the beach at **Cala Porta Vecchia** or the spectacular Piazza della **Cattedrale di S. Maria della Madia**, enclosed by a high wall and adorned with elegant decorations outside, whilst inside there are colored marble monuments and Baroque altars (cattedralemonopoli.net). Take a walk among the courtyards, old palazzos and tower houses and stay in the little houses at the *albergo diffuso* – (scattered hotel) or in a farmhouse. Nature lovers will enjoy the Botanical Garden at **Lama degli Ulivi** (lamadegliulivi.it) which has 2,000 species of plants amidst caves and rupestrian churches.

Info Point Monopoli +39 080 4140264

CAPITOLO

The area South of **Monopoli** is studded with little bays, like **Porto Ghiacciolo** at the base of the ancient Benedictine abbey of San Stefano or **Cala Cerasa**, a tiny cove wedged between **Porto Camicia** and **Lido Colonia**. Then you reach Capitulo, one of Monopoli's 99 districts, and on the long beach, fashionable lidos alternate with exclusive restaurants, where you can enjoy seafood dishes, or a DJ set on the seafront.

Itinerary 2

Authentic flavors and traditional craftsmanship

TERLIZZI

Terlizzi is the city of flowers, with a **ceramics tradition** which dates back to the 19th century and an even older food tradition, the Quartcedd, the sandwich with strong ricotta and salted anchovies, which is eaten on November 2 to commemorate the dead. The city has artistic treasures, from the **Clock Tower** to the precious **Anseramo da Trani Doorway** (13th century) of the Romanesque Cathedral that was destroyed, which can be seen on the northern façade of the **Church of the Rosary**. It's also worth stopping to see the **Church of Santa Maria la Nova** for the luxurious Gemmis family chapels, the 17th century wooden pulpit, the altarpiece and the **Pinacoteca Michele de Napoli**, which houses a rich collection of 18th century artworks (pinacoteca.comune.terlizzi.ba.it).

BITONTO

City of art and tasty stopover Surrounded by olive trees, Bitonto produces an excellent **Terra di Bari DOP** extra virgin olive oil, as well as craft beers and typical ricotta "bocconotti" pastries. From the **Porta Baresana** you enter the Medieval heart of the village and find the **Cathedral of St. Valentine**, one of the best expressions of **Pugliese Romanesque** architecture. The façade recalls the **Basilica of St. Nicholas at Bari**, with a large doorway with eastern decoration and a rose window with an upper arch with sphinxes and two lions at the sides. There are also surprises inside: from the rare baptismal font to the lectern from 1229, to the early-Christian church in the Crypt with a 12th century mosaic (cattedralebitonto.com). Behind, the Renaissance **Palazzo Sylos-Calò** houses the **National Gallery of Puglia Girolamo and Rosaria Devanna** with important Italian and European artworks dating from between the 16th and early 20th centuries, from Vaccaro to Giaquinto, from Solimena to Luca Giordano (gallerianazionalepuglia.beniculturali.it).



Cathedral - Bitonto



Palo del Colle

PALO DEL COLLE

The town is famed for its traditional **Palio del Viccio**, an intriguing horse tournament, which takes place on **Shrove Tuesday**. The jockeys, one per neighborhood, challenge each other and try to burst a goatskin (bladder) whilst riding upright on the back of their mounts with a sharpened pole, in order to win a farmyard turkey. Groups of masked revelers and decorated floats mark the historic parade dedicated to Bona Sforza, Queen of Poland and Duchess of Bari. You can also enjoy music and food stalls, where you can sample the exquisite **taralli**, cracker-like snacks invented at the end of the 1700s from remnants of leavened dough, adding oil and white wine.

TORITTO

This attractive village is the **kingdom of almonds** and grows a variety that is protected by Slow Food rules and is considered among the best in Europe. It's small, with a soft shell, intense perfume and balanced taste, with buttery end notes. It's the main ingredient in *torrone* nougat, sugared almonds and royal paste. The varieties grown in the surrounding areas are named for illustrious local people, like **Antonio de Vito** and **Filippo Cea**. But Toritto is also famous for **cervellata**, a special beef and pork sausage, which is prepared in the same way it has been for centuries in the butchers' shops in the village.

BITETTO

A journey into history and flavor. There are numerous signs of the Templars in the center: from the **Triplice Cinta** inscribed on the sill of a window of the Oratory of the **Opera Pia Purgatorio**, to the steps of the *profferlo* (external staircase) of the three-floor tower house of the **Knights of Malta**, to the **Chapel of St. James**, where an octagonal cross is engraved on the threshold. A delicious table olive, the **Termite di Bitetto**, is produced here, a native variety with a fragrant flesh.

ADELFA

The festival of **San Trifone**, protector of the **Montrone** neighborhood, is very popular. This festival takes place every November and attracts thousands of visitors and transforms **Adelfia** into a carnival. There are scintillating light displays, performances by the **best bands**, the **national fireworks festival**, market shows, as well as liturgical rites and the great procession with the cavalcade of children dressed as San Trifone (santrifone.it). Growers in the surrounding countryside produce excellent **table grapes**, including the Vittoria, Imperatore, Italia, Black Magic and Red Globe varieties, that are exported the world over.

CASAMASSIMA

This original village is the only **blue village** in Italy, whose magic is portrayed in the canvases of the painter Vittorio Viviani. Walking through the *chiassi*, the blind passageways of the **Medieval village**, you're catapulted into another dimension: the soft blue of the houses and walls recall Chefchaouen, Morocco. For lovers of nature and cycling, the nature site at Lama San Giorgio, a 40km karstic fracture located between the **Murgian hills** (rising in the area of Gioia del Colle) and the sea (flowing into **Cala San Giorgio**), with rare flora and fauna, rural churches and farms, caves and woodland; it's a wonderful **cycling route**.

RUTIGLIANO

Ancient knowledge and flavors characterize this little center noted for its **terracotta**, its Regina grape and its band, with the *Grand Band Concert of Rutigliano* which began in 1877. A rusticated **Norman tower** is all that remains of its 11th century castle. Its real artistic treasures are its Church with 18th century canvases and the Baroque wooden altars of the Convent of St. Dominic, which also houses the **Civic Terracotta Whistle Museum** (museodelfischietto.it) and the **Church of Santa Maria della Colonna**, dating from the 12th century with the 14th century icon of the Madonna of the Graces and Antonio Vivarini's celebrated Polittico of 1470. Don't miss January 17 of each year: the Festival of San Antonio Abate, the **Terracotta Whistle Fair**. prolocorutigliano.it



Ferrovía cherry

CONVERSANO AND TURI

These towns are home to the **Ferrovía cherry**, voted the best in Italy, with crisp flesh and a ruby red color. This variety was discovered in the 1600s and is celebrated each **June** with four days of festival with guided tours in the center of **Conversano's** rich monuments, beginning with the remains of the megalithic walls that can be seen at the foot of the **Torre Maestra**, the only remaining wall of the **Norman Castle**, which was incorporated into the residence of the **Acquaviva** family, to whom we owe the Torre Cilindrica. The Castle Museum Complex houses the extraordinary cycle of paintings of the *Gerusalemme Liberata* by **Paolo Finoglio**, the **Pinacoteca Francesco Netti** and an Anthropological section. Before leaving, we recommend that you sample *spumone*, a typical ice cream dessert with almonds and sweet spirit. **Turi** also holds a **Festival of the Ferrovía Cherry** at the beginning of June, which includes tasting tables and food & wine tours. (sagraciliegiaferrovía.it). Surrounded by centuries-old farms, take a beautiful walk in the village, among *chianche*-cobble passageways and houses with decorated doorways, like the **Palazzo Marchesale Moles-Venusio** with a Baroque entrance. The **Chapel of the Santi Medici** in the **Cathedral** is well worth a visit and features a mausoleum of the Moles barons.

SAMMICHELE DI BARI

This is a tasty stopover for sampling a plate of traditional *cucina povera*, the famous **Zampina**, a spiral sausage cooked on the grill. It's a really exquisite mix of minced and seasoned meat with tomatoes, cheese, peppers, salt and pepper, wild thyme or parsley and basil, all contained in goat or lamb gut skin. Since 1967, at the end of September, the town has held a Festival of **Zampina, Bocconcino and Good Wine**.

MAGNA GRAECIA, MURCIA AND GRAVINE

24 hours in TARANTO

Itinerary ①

Bridleways and good food

Poggiorsini - Gravina in Puglia - Altamura
Cassano delle Murge - Acquaviva delle Fonti
Gioia del Colle - Santeramo in Colle

Itinerary ②

Puglia Canyons

Ginosa - Laterza - Castellaneta - Palagianello
Palagianello - Mottola - Massafra - Statte
Crispiano - Montemesola - Grottaglie



24 hours in Taranto

L'ISOLA

A city enveloped by two seas, with the oldest part found on **Isola**, the 19th century village beyond the swing bridge and the **Cheradi** islands with a beach. From the **Aragonese Castle**, which can be found among walkways, towers and the Chapel of St. Leonard (castelloaragonesetaranto.com) you reach the columns of the **Doric Temple** (6th century B.C.), the remains of the *Taras* founded by the Spartans, then entering the ancient *pittaggi*, among multicolored passageways, street art and noble doorways. Walking in time to music, maybe the music of **Giovanni Paisiello** who was born here in 1740, you'll find the **underground oil presses** in Via Cava, the early-Christian necropolis in the hypogeum of Palazzo Delli Ponti, the **Diocesan Museum** in the ancient Seminary which houses a very rare byssus tapestry (museodiocesantaranto.it), the **Spartan Museum** in the Bellacicco Hypogeum, the Sanctuary of the Madonna della Salute in Piazza Monteoliveto and San Domenico Maggiore. The 18th century façade of the **Cathedral of St. Catald**, the oldest in Puglia, hides three thousand years of history, a High Medieval crypt and the **Chapel of St. Catald**, a Baroque triumph of stuccoes, marbles and frescoes, like the immense *Gloria di S. Cataldo*. [Info Point Taranto +39 334 2844098](#)

Curiosities

A balance between the past and the future. Enjoy **traditions**, like the Patronal Festival and the **Palio di Taranto**, the regatta of the fishing boats from the historical neighborhoods and original plans for **urban regeneration**. From the birth of the first **Ketos** Euro-Mediterranean Center for the Sea and the Whale, with workshops for children at Palazzo Amati and trips on catamarans to see the **dolphins** (joniandolphin.it) to the enchanting paths in the **Palude La Vela** protected area and along the **Circummarpiccolo** on the shores of the Small Sea. ecomuseomarpiccolo.com



Aragonese Castle - Taranto



MARtA - NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM OF TARANTO

Among the most important in the world, this is a unique collection of exceptional finds originating from excavations of surrounding sites, some of which can be visited, like the ancient athletes' tomb in Via Crispi, the necropolis in Via Marche, the burial chamber in Via Pio XII and the majestic burial chamber in Via Pasubio (*Taranto Sotterranea*). On the two floors of **MARtA**, you can journey from the **pre-historic era** to the **High Middle Ages**, via the **Spartan foundation**, the world of the **Apuli**, the **Roman conquest**, and see the city from **late antiquity** to the **Byzantine age**. An incredible heritage, including ceramic vases with decorative figures in the Greco-Roman necropolis, the Roman empire mosaics, the famous **Ori di Taranto** gold artefacts from the Hellenistic period, very elegant rings, earrings, bracelets and tiaras. Unique examples, like the ancient **Athletes' Tomb** with its grave goods and the Panathenaic amphorae won at the Pentathlon and the **Ugento Zeus**, a bronze from the Archaic Greek period. There are also touch-screen exhibits, 3D films, workshops, concerts and Sunday matinees. museotaranto.beniculturali.it

THE RITUALS OF HOLY WEEK

Immerse yourself in evocative ancient rituals, like the **Passion of the Christ**, which begins at midnight on Good Friday from the **Church of San Domenico Maggiore** in the old city. Brothers from the Confraternity of Santa Maria Addolorata and San Domenico with white hoods move at the rhythm of the *troccola* (a special mechanical instrument made of wood) with the statue of the Addolorata on their shoulders and take 14 hours to reach the new city. On Good Friday, at 5 p.m., the **Procession of the Mysteries** departs from the **Church of the Madonna del Carmine**, with the statues of the passion of Jesus paraded by the **Confraternity of St. Mary of Carmine** (*Perdùne*) barefooted, with white shirts, black belts, rosaries, scapulars, mozzettas and hoods over their faces. It lasts 15 hours, until 8 a.m. on Easter Saturday, when the *troccola* player knocks three times on the church door.

Itinerary 1

Bridleways and good food

POGGIORSINI

From this authentic village perched on a hill, you can take a charming trip to dolines, hollows, caves and sheep pens. This is the rugged and wild landscape of the **Alta Murgia National Park**, with many paths to be explored on foot, by horse or by bicycle, like the one that takes you to **Spinazzola**. Along the way, you'll find historic farms, the **Filieri sheep pen**, the **Grottelline** archaeological area, a Medieval rupestrian site, where the excavations have brought to light remains from the Neolithic era, before arriving at the foot of the ruins of the **Garagnone Castle**, an important defensive stronghold at the borders with the Basilicata, and you may be accompanied by the rare lesser kestrel. It's the kingdom of the **cardoncello mushroom**, which is celebrated with a **festival** at the end of November, and **natural beers** and ales, unpasteurized and micro-filtered, whose ingredients are combined with herbs, spices and wildflowers of the Murgia. parcoaltamurgia.gov.it

GRAVINA IN PUGLIA

Frederick II fell in love with this place, calling it a "garden of delights" and built a castle here, whose ruins remain today. **Pope Benedict XIII** was born here and founded the **Biblioteca Capitolare Finia library** (1686), the oldest in Puglia. Amid natural caves and suspended terraces, with 40 churches, of which at least half are rupestrian, Gravina is an alluring open-air film set. A panoramic view can be enjoyed from the clearing of the **Co-Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta** and then down to the steps in the Fondovico neighborhood to the imposing **Church of St. Michael of the Caves** (8th - 9th century), the largest rupestrian church, with 5 naves. In the Piaggio neighborhood, stop at **San Basilio**, then to the **Ettore Pomarici Santomasi Museum** to admire the frescoes in the San Vito Vecchio crypt, re-built on the ground floor, and its other treasures: the vases from the **Botromagno** area, coins, arms, uniforms, clothing of the era, maiolica pottery and the art gallery (fondazionesantomasi.it). The rupestrian tour brings you to **St. Andrew's Church**, the Church of **St. Mary of the Angels**, and over the Roman aqueduct bridge to the rupestrian Church of the **Madonna of the Star**, with a spectacular view of the village. Then go and discover **underground Gravina** (gravinasotterranea.it) and its traditional flavors, like the famous **pallone di Gravina**, a cheese produced under Slow Food rules. **Info +39 0803269065 - iatgravina.it**



Gravina in Puglia



ALTAMURA

Surrounded by infinite pastures and sheep known for its wool, lentils and especially its **Altamura DOP bread**, produced here since Medieval times with sourdough, baked in a stone oven in different shapes: tall or twisted (*skuanéte*) and short or in a priest's hat style (panealtamuradop.it). This is an **enchanted village** with a Medieval center dominated by hundreds of *claustris*, small, enclosed courtyards, the **Palazzo del Balzo**, and the **Cathedral dell'Assunta**, built in Romanesque-Gothic style, one of the four Palatine Chapels ordered by **Frederick II**, with a majestic façade built between two belltowers, a 14th century rose window, decorated doorway, powerful 29-pipe organ and treasures exhibited in **MUDIMA**, *Altamura Matronea Diocesan Museum*, filled with silver and vestments (museodiocesano.org). Must-see locations for paleontologists and people with a passion for archaeology are the branch of the **National Archaeological Museum**, **Palazzo Baldassarre** and **Centro Lamalunga** (uomodialtamura.it). Here you can discover the entire skeleton of Altamura Man, dating back to Paleolithic times between 180,000 and 130,000 years ago and found in the Lamalunga cave, and thousands of dinosaur footprints in the **Pontrelli** cave. 7km from here is the **Pulo di Altamura**, an impressive karstic valley.

CASSANO DELLE MURGE

Take a trip into nature, amongst olive groves, almond trees, vines and woodland. This is ideal for excursions by bicycle or on horseback along the paths in the **Mercadante Forest** and lovers of cable cars and swinging bridges will enjoy **Brigands Park** in the **Mesola** woods (parcodeibriganti.it). Have a wonderful time walking in the labyrinth of passageways in the center, amidst churches, tower houses and traditional open-air ovens. It's also known for its **black chickpea**, grown under Slow Food rules. The **Sanctuary of St. Mary of the Angels** is well worth a visit. Dating back to the 13th century, it's a little treasure chest of art with a manger scene from the late-1400s.



Altamura DOP bread



Red Onion

ACQUAVIVA DELLE FONTI

This is undoubtedly the home of the **Red Onion**, which is very sweet when roasted. It takes center stage in July's traditional festival and is excellent when used as a filling for calzone, a dish which is celebrated in October. It's one of Italy's **authentic villages**, and its sights include the **Co-Cathedral of St. Eustace**, one of the four Palatine Chapels in Puglia, the Palazzo De Mari with its Baroque façade and grotesques, which houses **AMA – the Acquaviva Archaeological Museum**, the Clock Tower and the **Cassarmonica**, a symbol of the village's musical tradition, which dates back to the 1700s and each year hosts the **Cuore di Banda Festival**, in July and August. Also see the extraordinary **Curtomartino Cave**, with imposing columns of stalactites and stalagmites. [Info Point Acquaviva delle Fonti +39 392 3369394 - prolocoacquaviva.it](mailto:InfoPointAcquaviva@prolocoacquaviva.it)

GIOIA DEL COLLE

This food-lovers paradise is famous for its dairy products, beginning with its **DOP mozzarella** cheese with a delicate taste, which is produced by introducing whey to milk from cows that have grazed for at least 150 days. The town is also known for *burrata* and *caciocavallo* cheeses and *zampina*, a spiral mixed-meat sausage, which goes well with **Gioia del Colle DOC** wine. In the impressive **Norman-Swabian Castle**, today the home of the **National Archaeological Museum** which contains splendid finds from the ancient Peucetians found in the **Monte Sannace Archaeological Park** (parcomontesannace.it). It's said that **Bianca Lancia**, Frederick II's lover, who gave birth to **Manfred** in the **Empress's Tower**, where she was locked up due to his jealousy, cut off her own breasts and sent them to Frederick, together with the newborn. *Info +39 080 3481305 - Info Point Gioia del Colle +39 080 3441478*

SANTERAMO IN COLLE

This town is situated in wonderful scenery, on the highest ridge of the high plain of the **Murge** and is known for its many **open ovens** adjoining the town's butcher's shops offering the local specialty: horse and donkey meat, prepared as cutlets, roulades, carpaccio and meatballs.



Castello Svevo - Gioia del Colle



Casale district - Ginosa

Itinerary 2 Puglia Canyons

GINOSA

From a hang glider, the view here is absolutely amazing! The town is in the shape of an eagle, with cultivated fields alternating with wild nature, and you're just a few kilometers away from the beaches and dense pines of **Marina di Ginosa** on the ravine, with cave houses from the 1500s and churches cut into the rock in the villages of **Casale and Rivolta**. The floods of 2013 have made it difficult to access many sites and only a few of the 15 rupestrian churches can be explored, like **St. Sophia**, dug out in the 1600s with frescoes on the presbytery. A walk in the town center, along Corso **Vittorio Emanuele**, takes you from Piazza IV Novembre to Piazza dell'Orologio, and to the **Norman Castle**, which is connected by bridge to the town, and then from Via Matrice you can reach the 16th century **Mother Church**. The Passion of the Christ is charming at Easter. *Info Point Ginosa +39 099 8290332*

LATERZA

Twelve kilometers of canyons, the deepest in Europe, with 200-meter-high rocky walls, luxurious vegetation and fauna that is so varied that it is an **Italian Bird Protection League (LIPU) Oasis**. There are so many activities here: trekking, photo safari, birdwatching for the rare Egyptian Vulture. At the edge of this area, you'll find the city with its elegant monuments, from the 15th century **Church of St. Lawrence at Palazzo Marchesale**, which houses MuMa - Maiolica Museum, which has a splendid collection (mumalaterza.it). The **Sanctuary of St. Mary Mater Domini** is well worth a visit, with a Byzantine crypt with frescoes of **St. Dominic**, and the rupestrian church of **St. Vitus** from the 16th century. Try the *panedd*, huge loaves of durum wheat flour and sourdough bread cooked in stone ovens fueled with bundles of aromatic wood, and the lamb cutlets cooked in traditional ovens.

Info Point Laterza +39 099 8296793 - visitlaterza.com

CASTELLANETA

Castellaneta is surrounded on three sides by the **Great Ravine**, a deep gorge with almost vertical walls around 150 meters high. Dotted with rupestrian settlements, caves and crypts, you can enjoy a special view from the **Church of St. Mary del Pesco**, on the western edge of the ravine. When trekking in the **Coriglione Ravine**, you can reach the Church of **St. Mary of Constantinople** from the 9th–12th centuries and the **Eternal Father** hypogeum-style crypt, with paintings of Christ and the saints including the Virgin Mary and St. John. From **Via Punto del Capillo** you can enjoy an incredible view, then see the historic center, which has beautiful *palazzos*, like **Palazzo Vescovile** and lavish churches, like the **Cathedral of St. Nicholas** with its exquisite wooden ceiling, but there are also surprises like the **Pinacoteca Rodolfo Valentino** (rudylv Valentino.it), with antiques, photos and films of the icon of 1920s silent cinema. [Info +39 099 8497111](tel:+390998497111)
[Info Point Castellaneta +39. 099 8497278](tel:+390998497278) - castellaneta360.it

MOTTOLA

The beauty here is found in the scenery, rich in caves, ravines and hypogeum-style chapels. The air is filled with the perfume of thyme, rosemary and oregano. Take a walk to the **amazing Caves of God**, a complex of rupestrian churches from the 11th–14th centuries. They will leave you speechless. Discover **St. Margaret's** crypt, the chapel of the **Holy Angel**, excavated over two floors, and the church of **St. Nicholas of Myra**, with three naves, considered to be the Sistine Chapel of rupestrian civilization due to its grand Last Judgement. Then there's **St. Gregory's Church**, with cross-shaped columns and the great Christ Pantocrator. Continue along paths and stairways to the **hypogeum-style village of Petruscio**, in a 4km canyon surrounded by **Sant'Antuono's woodland** and hundreds of caves, once used as sheep pens, refuges, houses and religious sites.

[Info Point Mottola +39 099 8867640](tel:+390998867640) - mottolaturismo.it



Mottola



St. Leonard's Church - Massafra

MASSAFRA

This town rises up on the scenic **St. Mark's ravine**, dotted with hundreds of caves, with a rupestrian village and St. Marina's Church, the house of the Igumeno, the church-crypt of **St. Mark** and the rupestrian church of the Candelora, with 13th century frescoes, including the scene of the Presentation at the Temple. **St. Leonard's Church** is beautiful with the Deësis Christ Pantocrator from the 14th century. The city, known as the Thebes of Italy, is divided into two, with the old and new towns joined by tall viaducts. From Piazza Garibaldi, where the **Palazzo della Cultura** houses the Museum of the Tarantine Chora, following Via La Terra you'll reach the **Castle**, which contains the Library and the Oil and Wine Museum, then the town's Mother Church. Along Via **Vittorio Veneto** you'll come across the crypt of St. Anthony the Great and when you descend the 125 steps, you'll arrive at the grand **Sanctuary of Madonna della Scala** (18th century), in the ravine of the same name, with the nearby rupestrian church of **Buona Nuova** and the underground **Lower Crypt** (8th–9th century). [Info Point Massafra +39 099 8804695](tel:+390998804695)

CRISPIANO

This town is known as "the town of the hundred farms", as it has plenty of splendid rural structures, built from the **15th century** onwards, surrounded by thousand-year-old olive trees or oak woodland. Some are imposing with fortified walls and lookout towers, others have churches with frescoes and underground oil presses. Today, they are production sites, zoo-technological businesses, hospitality sites, the **Museum of Rural Life** in the **Masseria Lupoli** farm, and then there's **Masseria Russoli** farm, which contains the Center for the Conservation of the Genetic Heritage of the **Martina Franca Donkey**. You can take archaeological, historical-natural and gastronomic tours, and you can't leave without sampling the local specialty, Gnummredde, a typical roulade made from lamb offal. [Info Point Crispiano +39 335 8202970](tel:+393358202970)

GROTTAGLIE

This town is world renowned for its ceramics. Here they make pottery with clay from local caves, on a potter's wheel of Greek origin and fired in huge kilns. To find out more about it, it's worth visiting the **Episcopal Castle**, built in the 15th century and housing the main tower, the town wall, the two towers of the curtain wall, the rooms of the *piano nobile* and the former stable contains the **Ceramics Museum**, with products from the 8th century B.C. up to the present day. Nearby there's the *Li Cammenère*, the **old ceramists' quarter**. Along Via Crispi and Via Caravaggio you'll find artisan boutiques, which contain pieces like ochre-colored plates with traditional blue and green roosters, pinecones to decorate chimneys and balconies, bearded dolls, knight-shaped candlesticks, oil vases and other ceramics in innovative shapes and colors. On the outskirts, the **Riggio Ravine** is a little-known oasis just 4km from Grottaglie. In one of the many natural canyons a spectacular 25-meter-deep valley opens out that has many lakes, natural waterfalls and is a testament to the period from the pre-historic age to the 10th century. It boasts a nature trail among the Mediterranean maquis with numerous plants and rare animals, old rupestrian villages and frescoed churches, like the **Crypt of the Savior**. [Info Point Grottaglie +39 099 5620427](#)



VALLE D'ITRIA

24 hours in MARTINA FRANCA

Itinerary ①

Trullo houses, ovens and ravines

Castellana Grotte - Putignano - Noci
Alberobello - Locorotondo - Cisternino

Itinerary ②

White cities and natural reserves

Savelletri - Fasano - Pezze di Greco
Parco Naturale Regionale Dune Costiere - Ostuni
Ceglie Messapica - Villa Castelli - San Michele Salentino
S. Vito dei Normanni - Carovigno - Riserva Torre Guaceto



24 hours in Martina Franca

THE BAROQUE

Authentic and elegant at the same time. It's lovely to lose yourself in the oldest heart of the city, known as *U' curdunnidd*, which takes you from the Baroque **Church of the Carmine** to the center, walking among narrow passageways, courtyards and floral piazzas, looking up in search of a doorway, a balcony or a detail to photograph. Carry on among Baroque and Rococo palazzos, ancient houses that are popular hotels, historical churches and cafes, where you have to stop to sample the *bocconotti* pastries filled with cream and sour cherries. Piazza Plebiscito has the **Civic Tower**, the Palazzo dell'Università and **St. Martin's Basilica**, with its majestic façade, and the grand high relief decoration of the patron saint on a lively horse, at its center. The impressive single-nave interior is filled with many marble altars, including the **Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament** and the high altar in multicolored marble. In Palazzo Stabile, MuBa – the Museum of St. Martin's Basilica – houses the Basilica's treasures like amazing silver, religious vestments and incredible corals (muba-sanmartino.it); the surrounding countryside is home to the 16th century Church of **St. Anthony of the Capuchins** which has a small gallery. In Spring, go and discover the **wild orchids** in the **Pianelle Woodland**, a Regional Controlled Natural Reserve between Martina Franca and Massafra. In this green oasis, filled with **caves** and a refuge for brigands in the 1800s, there are walking or bicycle excursions to take you to the imposing **Pianelle Ravine**, with workshops on wild herbs and yoga sessions. riservaboscopianelle.it



St. Martin's Basilica - Martina Franca



Capocollo

MARTINA FRANCA CAPOCOLLO

Delicious and spicy, this is the most famous of Puglia's cured meats. It was produced in the **Kingdom of Naples** since the 1700s and since 2000 it's been protected under **Slow Food rules**. To make it, choose the best meat from local pigs, marinade it in **mulled wine**, filled with the aroma of **Murgian herbs**, stuff it into a natural gut skin and leave it for around 15 days, then smoke it and let it mature for at least 3 months. The **bombette** are also excellent: these are succulent morsels of thinly sliced mixed pork capocollo with Pugliese *canestrato* cheese, salt and pepper, to be sampled fresh from the many ovens adjoining the local butchers.

THE VALLE D'ITRIA FESTIVAL

This is an unmissable destination for lovers of classical music and opera. In July and August, the splendid Baroque city hosts its cultural **Festival**, which began in 1975 as a workshop of ideas and provided training for new musical talent. There are many rediscovered masterpieces and young musicians have made them successful. Over the years it has become one of the **most important international festivals** of mostly original works, with musical and theatrical performances, art house cinema and sacred music, set in the alluring scenery of the **Palazzo Ducale** and the **farms of Valle d'Itria**. festivaldellavalleditria.it

PALAZZO DUCALE

Now even more resplendent after its restoration: vivid colors, intense brushstrokes, graceful forms. Just go through **St. Anthony's Gate** or **St. Stephen's Arch** to see the majestic **Palazzo Ducale** in Piazza Roma, which is where the Orsini Castle was in the 14th century. The Palazzo Ducale was ordered in the second half of the 1600s by **Petracone V Caracciolo**, as engraved on the architrave of the entrance doorway. It was the magnificent palace of the Dukes of Martina Franca during the century of great Baroque grandeur, an imposing project that included 300 rooms, chapels, stables, courtyards and a theater, only part finished by **Duke Francesco III** in the 1700s. Today it houses the **City Hall** and the **Pianelle Park Museum** (+39 080 4836279). Its façade is divided by pilasters with a wrought iron balcony, and inside there's a wide staircase on the right of the hall, which takes you to the Baroque doorway of the old Festival Hall, today the Municipal Council Chamber. The entrance to the **D'Avalos Wing** is on the left, constructed by Francesco III for his mother; on the right, the incredible Picture Gallery, a real treasure, with many frescoed rooms, including the **Dukes' Room** and **Dukes' Chapel**, and the **Arcadia Room**, **Room of the Myth** and the **Bible Room**, some decorated by Domenico Carella, with superb pictorial narration. The Rococo doors are also little masterpieces, painted in green and gold leaf, in the shape of an ear and decorated with shells, volutes and floral motifs. *Info Point Martina Franca +39 080 4116554*



St. Stephen's Arch - Martina Franca



Speleologist in the Castellana Caves

Itinerary 1

Trullo houses, ovens and ravines

CASTELLANA CAVES

Now go from sunlit Puglia to deepest Puglia, taking an **underground walk** in the impressive **complex of caves** discovered in 1938. A labyrinth of caverns and pits some 70 meters underground, three kilometers long, that can be toured in around two hours. Go down a staircase to the **Grave** with the colossal stalagmite of the Cyclops at its center, moving through the Desert Corridor, which takes you to the **Great Curtain Room**, with red alabaster drapes, and to the **White Cave**, a thousand-year-old forest of calcite sculptures.

Strange shapes appear along the route, which look like animals, including a wolf, an owl, a snake and camels, or monuments, like the **Tower of Pisa Cavern**, with its large leaning stalagmite. The **Hell in the Cave** underground air show, held year-round, is based on the **Divine Comedy**, an amazing mix of verses, multimedia projections and aerial choreography. You can take part in Summer's **Speleonight**, armed with a miner's helmet with an acetylene torch (grottedicastellana.it) and once outside, on the terrace of the **Spinelli Speleological Museum**, you can see the night sky with the telescope at the **Astronomical Observatory**. For kids there's the nearby **Dinosaur Park** with animals from the Paleozoic to the Cenozoic era to natural grandeur (ilparcodeidinosauri.it).

Info Point Castellana Grotte +39 389.0621562

PUTIGNANO

Here, the **Carnival** lasts all year: it starts on December 26 with the **Festival of the Foothills**, when extravagant poets challenge each other to recite satirical verses in the central **Piazza del Plebiscito** and continues, between January and March, with impressive parades of papier-mâché floats, concluding in July with the **Summer Carnival**. It's the longest in Europe and one of the oldest in the world (carnevalediputignano.it). You must go and see the **papier-mâché** masters at work at the **Capannoni** on Via Castellana Grotte, then visit the town, entering through the **Barsento Gate** (16th century) or the Grand Gate, to reach the Mother Church of St. Peter, with works by the Renaissance sculptor **Stefano da Putignano** and the Palazzo dei Cavalieri di Malta which today houses the **Romanazzi Carducci Civic Museum** (museoromanazzicarducci.it) with its roof garden, whilst a labyrinth of passageways, arches and courtyards hides the **Extended Museum of the Carnival** with photographic displays, exhibitions of artisanal products and small boutiques, like the Coriandolaro. The traditional products include **farinella**, a flour obtained from roasted chickpeas and barley, and knotted **taralli**, with a crisp crust, made with flour, extra virgin olive oil and white wine.

Info Point Putignano +39 080 4056555

NOCI

Incredible views, ancient beauty and authentic flavors. Noci is the kingdom of **mozzarella**, **burrata** and **stracciatella** cheeses. Perched on a hill, the city is surrounded by pasture, **Macedonian oak** and downy oak woods, **trullo** houses and farms, and is easy to tour by bicycle. The center is small and exquisite, a succession of narrow streets, sudden clearings and gnostre (typical courtyards), which come to life in November during **Bacco nelle Gnostre**, a grand festival with quality products from Murgia, including chestnuts and **novello** wine (bacconellegnostre.it). The **Mother Church**, dedicated to **St. Mary of the Nativity**, built in Romanesque style with a bell tower that was once a Norman tower, houses a splendid 14th century **multicolored baptismal font**. Opposite, you'll see the **Clock Tower**, or Civic Tower, which has been a town landmark since the 1800s. The Romanesque abbatial church of **St. Mary of Barsento** is just outside of town, with frescoes from the 11th and 12th centuries and the abbey of the **Madonna della Scala**, inhabited by Benedictine monks. The abbey currently has an important workshop to restore ancient books and parchments, and courses in Gregorian chant.

abbazialascala.it



ALBEROBELLO

Like in a fairytale, this town is a wonderland of thousands of **trullo houses**, each with a conical roof, which has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1996. Built from dry stone so their owners could dismantle them and avoid paying taxes set by the Kingdom of Naples, they were “illegal” until May 27, 1797 when **Ferdinand IV of Bourbon** declared it a royal city. Thanks to **Arboris Belli**, each year, at the end of May, there's a reenactment with a parade and characters in costume, tournaments of forgotten games, tables with traditional rural goods and evocative exhibitions (artecalberobello.it). If you want to dive into the past all year round, you can visit **Trullo Sovrano** (trullosovrano.eu) and **Casa Pezzolla** and discover the old trades in the **Museo del Territorio**. This becomes a living museum at weekends with actors and artisanal teaching workshops on lacemaking, music and folk dancing. Discover the nearby **Olive Oil Museum**, with its oil pressing equipment. Don't miss July's **LIFE Alberobello Light Festival**: walking through light and video mapping installations. alberobellolightfestival.com

LOCOROTONDO

Perched atop a hill, the town takes its name from its curious circular layout, and is characterized by *cummerse*, ancient rectangular houses with pitched roofs made of *chianchette* (flat stone tiles). Locorotondo is a member of the **Borghi più Belli d'Italia** association and is a **Bandiera Arancione (Orange Flag)** town. It offers a breathtaking view from the Villa Comunale and unusual treasures in the churches of **St. Nicholas of Myra**, rich in painted decoration, and **Madonna della Greca**, with magnificent sculptures. In the nearby countryside, the dry-stone roof of the old **St. Mark's Church** is striking. It's known for **Locorotondo DOC**, a delicately perfumed white wine, and in August it hosts an avant-garde music event, the **Locus Festival** (locusfestival.it), with large concerts and activities dedicated to art, culture and cinema.

Info Point Locorotondo +39 080 4312788



Alberobello



Old Town - Cisternino

CISTERNINO

Cisternino is a member of the **Borghi più Belli d'Italia** association and is a **Bandiera Arancione (Orange Flag)** and Slow Food city. The **Isola**, the Medieval heart, evokes an eastern Mediterranean village with whitewashed houses, narrow passageways, hidden courtyards, floral balconies and artisan boutiques.

Walk around and find the **Norman-Swabian Tower** and the **Mother Church** opposite, which houses the “*Madonna del Cardellino*” (1517) a sculpture by Stefano da Putignano, and beneath the church is the **Area Museum of Archaeology and Contemporary Art (MAAAC)**, which is set over multiple levels. Enjoy an aperitif in **Piazza Vittorio Emanuele**, which is dominated by the Clock Tower, and have dinner in one of the many barbecuing butchers to take *gnumaridde* (lamb roulades) and *bombette*, legendary slices of rolled-up veal on skewers. A great cyclo-tourism route is found on the **Ciclovía dell'Acqua** created on the towpaths of the Main Canal of the Pugliese Aqueduct, whilst in rural Figazzano, the **Pomona Gardens** are well worth a visit, featuring a botanical conservatory with more than 500 varieties of fig (igiardinidipomona.it). Food lovers will enjoy the first few days in September, when the **Grape Festival** takes place in the Casalini district.

Info Point Cisternino +39 0804446751, +39 3914387131

Itinerary 2

White cities and natural reserves

SAVELLETRI

This fishing village, surrounded by **luxury farms**, is one of the most sought-after tourist locations. A few yards away is the **Egnazia Archaeological Park**, with remains from the **Bronze Age**, the **Messapian civilization**, with frescoed walls and monumental tombs, and the **Roman era**, with the port, the remains of the Civil Basilica with the Hall of the Three Graces, the Sacellum of the Eastern Deities, the Amphitheater, the Forum and the early-Christian Basilicas. There are valuable finds in the adjoining **Museum** (+39 080 4829056). The **Lama d'Antico Rupestrian Park** is also extraordinary. This is an ancient village of houses and tombs in caves surrounded by thousand-year-old olive trees. The **Lama d'Antico** rupestrian church, with two naves and 23 blind arches and filled with 13th century frescoes, is the first example of virtual restoration in Italy. Thanks to video mapping techniques, the old paintings are brought back to their original splendor. The Middle Eastern architecture of **St. John's Church** and the frescoes in **St. Lawrence's Church** are also fantastic. lamadantico.it

FASANO

A starting point for discovering this old village, known as the *U'mbracchie*, is the **Museum of the Fasano-style House** in Palazzo Pezzolla. The scenic road that rises on the Selva offers a magnificent view over the Pirro Canal and the beautiful valley **Zoosafari** is an irresistible corner of savannah in Puglia and is the largest wildlife park in Italy (zoosafari.it). The view from the **Loggia di Pilato** towards the Castellana Caves is a good photo opportunity; whilst looking towards Monopoli, taking a detour to the **Masseria Seppannibale** farm, you can see the Temple from the High Middle Ages. To the South, the fortified farm building of **Sant'Angelo de Graecis** houses a 18th century oil press and has the **Olive Oil Museum** inside. Info Point Fasano +39 080 4394182



Roman road in Egnazia



Ostuni

COASTAL DUNE REGIONAL NATURAL PARK

Between **Torre San Leonardo** and **Torre Canne**, there's an amazing area with numerous habitats, which extends over 1100 hectares along 10km of coastline. From the high dunes with 600-year-old juniper trees to the wetland area of the **Morelli river**, with pools behind the dunes, a system of walkways connects you to the basins of a 19th century fish farming system, where golden mullet and eels are still fished sustainably. From fossil dunes with pseudo steppes to wide agricultural expanses with thousand-year-old olive trees, fig trees, pastures and arable land. And again, from the pre-historic caves to the Montalbano dolmen, from the ancient farms like **Ottava Grande** with its Medieval church to underground oil presses, to grottoes like **Torrebianca**, often used as a film set. The many activities include bicycle tours, starting from **AlbergaBici** in Montalbano, mini sampling courses, tasting workshops and food tastings with *friselle* snacks topped with **Regina di Torre Canne tomatoes**, grown under Slow Food rules, and **Collina di Brindisi DOP** olive oil. parcodunecostiere.org

OSTUNI

Perched upon three hills, from the road "the white city" looks like a mirage of light and whitewash, a balcony over a plain of thousand-year-old olive trees. Entering from **St. Demetrius' Gate**, Ostuni is a succession of arches, courtyards, stairways, roof terraces, little passageways and fortified towers. All of the lanes wind their way up the hill and meet at the **Co-Cathedral of St. Maria of the Assumption** dating from the 15th century, with three rose windows in the façade, including a stupendous central window with 24 rays. Don't miss the **Museum of Pre-Classic Civilizations of the Southern Murgia**, which houses a cast of Delia, a pregnant woman from 28,000 years ago, and the **Cavalcata di S. Oronzo**, a wonderful parade with Murgian horses covered with red drapes and knights dressed up to honor of the patron saint, which is celebrated each year on **August 26**. You should also explore the Ostuni coast: from the soft inlet at **Pilone** to **Rosa Marina**, a kite surfer's paradise, from **Quarto di Monte** to **Monticelli**, for an aperitif at sunset. Info Point Ostuni +39 0831 339627

CEGLIE MESSAPICA

This is one of Puglia's oldest towns, and should be explored slowly, after parking your car in Piazza Plebiscito to continue to the center on foot. Enjoy the town's palazzos, doorways, coats of arms and loggias, then see the **Mother Church** and the **Ducal Castle**, a town landmark, with its ancient Norman tower. The castle contains the **Pinacoteca Emilio Notte**, with works by the Futurist painter of the same name, and the **Pietro Gatti Municipal Library**, whilst **MAAC**, on Via Enrico De Nicola, houses the **Archaeological Museum** and the **Museum of Contemporary Art**. The surrounding countryside is quite beautiful and has remained unchanged since the 1800s: *trullo* houses, farms, olive trees, almond trees, fig trees and **caves**, like the **Montevicoli** caves, with stalactites, stalagmites and columns that create fantasy shapes. Go and see them at night, too! (cegliesistemagustodarte.it). This was once an obligatory stop on the transhumance route, an area filled with hostelries, today a bastion of taste with renowned restaurants and award-winning chefs. The area is also famed for **Biscotto Ceglie**, produced under Slow Food rules, a little cube of almond paste with cherry or grape marmalade, just as it is or with frosted with sugar and cocoa. *Info Point* +39 0831 371003

SAN MICHELE SALENTINO

A delightful place to sample the **Fico Secco Mandorlato**, dried figs, stuffed with toasted almonds, fennel seeds, lemon zest and cooked in the oven. For centuries the "*povero*" dessert eaten by many families, it's recognized as a **Traditional Typical Product**.

SAN VITO DEI NORMANNI

In the Jannuzzo area, towards Brindisi, this 12th century rupestrian town is well worth a visit. It's filled with religious sites and a treasure chest of art. The **Crypt of San Biagio** has a beautiful, frescoed vault with a cycle of five Christian scenes and rich imagery of saints along the walls.



CAROVIGNO

Gourmet food, centuries-old olive groves and small bays between the **Tower of Santa Sabina** and **Guaceto Tower**. Dominated by the imposing Medieval Dentice di Frasso Castle, which in the 16th century was a fortress with three towers, one of which was almond-shaped, then a family mansion. It contains the **Municipal Library**, the **Civic Archaeological Museum** and holds temporary exhibitions in the rooms on the piano *nobile* (castellodicarovigno.it). Cross the **Rione Terra** quarter amongst passageways, courtyards and archways, then along Via Cattedrale you'll find the **Mother Church**, with its sumptuous Baroque interior. The **Brindisi Gate** opens out onto Corso Vittorio Emanuele and the main piazza, where the **Church of the Carmine** is located. Each **Easter Monday** it hosts the **battitura della 'Nzegna**, an ancient ceremony with a procession that's headed by flag-bearers and local brotherhoods, which recalls the discovery of the effigy of the **Madonna Santissima del Belvedere**, to whom the Sanctuary located 4km from the town is dedicated. The Sanctuary is a complex of frescoed crypts and chapels in natural caves.

TORRE GUACETO

It was the Saracens who discovered this 11th century place and called it "*gawsit*" (freshwater place), while the **Tower** was built in the 14th century to defend the coast. It lay forgotten until 1991, when it became a **Marine Protected Area** and **State Natural Reserve**. Now redeveloped, it features an art installation of a Roman ship, whilst inside there are dunes, wetland areas, Mediterranean maquis and centuries-old olive groves. Cross different habitats while listening to ancient stories, starting from the **Visitors' Center** in Serranova and ending up at the beach in **Punta Penna Grossa**. In summer, you can take a mini train to the **public beach**, partly equipped for the disabled, with captivating bays like the **Bay of Shells** in the shade of tamarisk trees. On foot, by bicycle or in fins and snorkel to observe the seabeds, there are many experiences to enjoy, including boat trips with the Reserve's fishermen, night visits, theatrical shows and tasting sessions with products made under Slow Food rules, like olive oil and the **Fiaschetto** tomato.

Info +39 0831 989976 - 347 8408860 - riservaditorreguaceto.it

Border lands embraced by two seas,
With miles of coastline,
Where dream beaches give way
To secret bays and steep cliffs.



SALENTO

24 hours in LECCE

24 hours in BRINDISI

Itinerary ①

In the kingdom of Primitivo wine

Avetrana - Manduria - Sava - San Marzano di San Giuseppe
San Giorgio Jonico - Pulsano - Lizzano
Maruggio - San Pietro in Bevagna - Torre Colimena

Itinerary ②

Good food and Negroamaro in Terra dei Messapi

Francavilla Fontana - Oria - Latiano - Mesagne
Torre Santa Susanna - Cellino San Marco - San Pietro Vernotico
Guagnano - Salice Salentino - Leverano - Novoli

Itinerary ③

Baroque churches and menhirs

Copertino - Nardò - Galatone - Galatina - Casarano - Ugento - Presicce
Acquarica - Specchia - Ruffano - Nociglia - Poggiardo - Muro Leccese
Giuggianello - Minervino di Lecce - Uggiano la Chiesa - Giurdignano

Itinerary ④

Ceremonies and traditions of Grecia Salentina

Cutrofiano - Corigliano d'Otranto - Melpignano
Castrignano dei Greci - Cannole - Carpignano Salentino - Martano
Zollino - Soleto - Sternatia - Martignano - Calimera

Itinerary ⑤

From the Adriatic to the Ionian

Oasi Naturale delle Cesine - San Foca - Roca Vecchia - Torre dell'Orso
Otranto - Porto Badisco - Santa Cesarea Terme - Castro - Tricase Porto
S. Maria di Leuca - Lidi di Ugento - Gallipoli - Porto Selvaggio - Porto Cesareo

24 hours in LECCE

PIAZZA SANT'ORONZO

Each day, at noon, the air is filled with music from Lecce's famous tenor, Tito Schipa. It comes from the Palazzo Carafa, the offices of the Municipality and envelopes the piazza and its monuments from different era. Amid the 1920s *palazzos* and historic cafes, where you can sample a large cream pastry and an iced coffee with almond milk, stands the **Colonna di Sant'Oronzo**, raised in 1660, using part of the Roman column donated by the city of **Brindisi**, on top of which stands a bronze statue of the city's patron saint, St. Oronzium. The **Sedile**, built in 1592, has gothic tapered arches and a Renaissance loggia, whilst the magnificent **Amphitheater** has double tiers of seating supported by archways, and hosts events in Summer and a Nativity at Christmas. The tangle of surrounding streets hides a number of artistic workshops and boutiques, each of which specializes in the city's ancient tradition of crafting masterpieces from **papier-mâché**, a mixture of water, straw, gesso, paste, metal wire and sheets of paper.

PIAZZA DUOMO

The cherubs adorning the church façades, the acanthus branches decorating the ancient wells and the large apotropaic masks on the main doors to the palazzos are all charming. When you arrive in **Piazza Duomo**, "Lecce's living room", you will be speechless. A single access filled with loggias and statues of saints surrounds the **Palazzo del Seminario**, from the late 1600s, with the beautiful well at the **Church of St. Irene** and the **Diocesan Museum of Sacred Art** (museo.diocesilecce.org), the loggia of the Bishporic, the imposing five-floor bell tower and **Lecce Cathedral of St. Mary of the Assumption** with 3 naves, decorated with a wooden coffered ceiling and golden studs, and sumptuous altars. Enormous canvases painted by Oronzo Tiso can be found on the presbytery and in the Crypt of **Santa Maria della Scala**, with its 92 columns, each with a different volute. cattedraledilecce.it



Piazza Duomo - Lecce



Basilica of the Holy Cross - Lecce

SANTA CROCE

Splendid by day, magic when illuminated in the evening. With the adjoining **Palazzo dei Celestini**, it's a symbol of **Baroque Lecce**, a tapestry of stone that, after renovation, was restored to the city more beautiful than before. The façade, designed by the architects **Riccardi, Zimbalo and Penna** from 1549 to 1646, is divided into three parts and decorated with hundreds of symbols, mythological and animal figures, flowers, fruit, fantastic creatures, and dancing cherubs. The rich **balcony** is supported by 13 Telamone figures, and figures of Turkish non-believers alternate with emblems of the powers brought together to defeat them: the dragon for Pope Gregory XIII, the griffin for Genoa and Hercules for the Grand Duke of Tuscany. At the center lies the largest baroque **rose window** in the world; whilst its Greek cross interior is understated. basilicasantacrocelecce.it

BAROQUE TREASURES

They love to amaze and not just because of their richly decorated façades, many baroque churches hold real surprises within. Some can be visited all day thanks to the "**LeccEcclesiae – discovering the Baroque**" project. This doesn't just include the Duomo, the Diocesan Museum and the Basilica of Santa Croce (Holy Cross), but also smaller masterworks, like the **Church of St. Matthew** in via dei Perroni, with a convex lower façade and concave upper façade, it has an elliptical layout with rich altars and a wooden Pietà from the 15th century. Or the **Church of Santa Chiara**, which is octagonal and boasts a rare papier-mâché ceiling inside and magnificent altars in Lecce stone, decorated with spiral columns, angels and garlands (chieselecce.it). Daring spires and floral fascicles, spiral columns, winged horses, angels and saints bring to life the façade of the **Church of the Rosary**.

THE HIDDEN CITY

An innovative “treasure hunt” to discover the medieval city beneath the baroque one, starting from the **Castello Carlo V** [Castle of Charles V], where you can visit the underground areas and the prisons with their graffiti-covered walls, and the **Museo della Cartapesta** [Papier-mâché Museum] with works dating from the 18th century to today (castellocarlo.v.it) and continuing with the **Jewish Museum Lecce** at the Palazzo Taurino, in the old Jewish quarter that was inhabited in the Middle Ages, where the ritual washing places and remains of the former synagogue can be found underground (palazzotaurino.com). More than 2000 years of history are contained beneath the **Museo Faggiano** (museofaggiano.it) near to Porta San Biagio, whilst **Palazzo Vernazza**, open only for exhibitions, holds within its walls a Temple of Isis and a pagan baptistery.

Info Point Lecce +39 0832 246517-242099

A FRESH TAKE ON MUSEUMS

Not classical museums, but workshops where there are experiments and dialog between the arts. The **Castromediano**, the oldest workshops in Puglia (1868) hosts musical matinées, cultural restoration sites, author meetings, yoga sessions and a new display on landscapes: from the Sea, with underwater archaeological exhibits, to the Land, with archaeological sites, from the Sacred to the world of the Living and the Dead. The nearby **Convitto Palmieri**, site of the Bernardini Library and the **Fabbrica delle Parole** [Word Factory], has a permanent exhibition on print art including typographical machines and early computers, whilst in the former Monastery of Santa Chiara, **MUST** [the Historical Museum of the City of Lecce] tells the city's story and puts on workshops, exhibitions and events (mustlecce.it). Outside the city, at Casalabate, you can visit the splendid Abbey of Santa **Maria di Cerrate** (abbaziadicerrate.it) and in the **Archaeological Park at Rudiae**, the ancient Messapian city where the Latin poet Quintus Ennius was born, you can see the excavations, which make Lecce the only city in the world with two Roman Amphitheaters just three kilometers apart: the **Lupiae** in Piazza Sant'Oronzo and the **Rudiae**. parcoarcheologicorudiae.it



A papier-mâché figure



Harbor and Swabian castle - Brindisi

24 hours in BRINDISI

LEVANTINE BEAUTY

This valuable bridge between the West and the East, whose essence is the sea itself, has one of the largest **natural harbors** in the **Mediterranean**. This was a great **Roman** port and an obligatory stop for crusaders heading to the Holy Land. At the end of the 19th century you could set off to catch the legendary *Imperial Indian Mail train* to Bombay, whilst today you can set sail for Greece. The **Regina Margherita** seafront is a lively place to have an aperitif, then look to the top of the imposing Virgil's Staircase to admire the remains of the **Roman columns**, a city landmark and the house where Virgil died in 19 BC. The splendors of ancient *Brundisium* can be seen in the archaeological site at **San Pietro degli Schiavoni**, right under the **New Verdi Theater** (nuovoteatroverdi.com) and further on to Palazzo Granafei Nervegna, near to the **Basilica of St. John the Baptist**, built in 1143, where Frederick II married Isabella II of Jerusalem in 1225, and which was destroyed by an earthquake in 1743. Its wooden core, rich mosaic and chapel dedicated to St. Theodore are amazing. The enchanting **Church of St. John at the Sepulcher** (12th century) is a copy of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher at Jerusalem, it's circular, with internal garden, frescoes and Roman remains. Info Point Brindisi +39 0831 229784

CASTELLO DI MARE AND CASTELLO DI TERRA

The sunset inflames the red *carparo* stone walls of the castle that **Alfonso of Aragon** had built in 1445 on the island of San Andrea, at the entrance to the harbor, which gives the castle its name of **Alfonsino** or **Castello di Mare**. The stronghold, the small harbor inside and the garrison fort have been restored. On the western bay, you'll see the **Swabian Castle** or **Castle of Earth**, ordered by Frederick II in 1227, given 4 cylindrical towers in the 15th century by Ferdinand of Aragon. In the 1800s it became a penitentiary under **Charles V**, and since 1909 it has been a naval base.

PLACES NOT TO BE MISSED

From **Piazza St. Teresa** you can enjoy a magnificent view over the Western Bay and the Villaggio dei Pescatori, and the Baroque St. Teresa's Church houses the **Giovanni Tarantini Diocesan Museum**, with treasures like St. Theodore's silver bow from the 13th century and the *Privilegium* signed by Frederick II. **St. Paul's** is an example of a gothic church (1322), while **St. Benedict's** Romanesque church dates back to 1089, as does the monastery where the Benedictine monks lived, with its medieval cloister. The exterior is a succession of blind arches, small, mullioned windows and richly decorated doorway. Its most beautiful works include the statue of the **Madonna of the Snow** from the 15th century and the Neapolitan nativity from the 18th century. You can see the city center from the top of the **Monumento al Marinaio**, the giant rudder built on the beach in 1932. At its base you'll find the crypt dedicated to Our Lady, Star of the Seas, together with the shrine and small sea museum.

MAPRI

From the ancient archway of the Knights of Malta, in Piazza Duomo, you reach **MAPRI**, the "Francesco Ribezzo" Archaeological Museum, with finds dating from the **pre-historic era** to the **late-Roman era**, exhibited in different sections: from Antiquities to Epigraphy and Statuary to interesting **Underwater Archaeology**, with **Bronzes** from Punta del Serrone, including the statue of Consul Lucio Emilio Paolo from 168 B.C. There are also surprises, like the scale reproduction of a ship's prow with urns inside. cartapulia.it

SANTA MARIA DEL CASALE

This is a hidden jewel, just a short distance from the airport. A magnificent example of Romanesque-Gothic architecture from the 13th century, with an original façade in yellow *carparo* sandstone and white stone. It was amongst these frescoed walls, which contain 14th century masterpieces like the majestic **Final Judgement** by **Rinaldo da Taranto**, the Templars of the Kingdom of Sicily were tried in 1310.



Church of San Benedetto - Brindisi



Fonte Pliniano - Manduria

Itinerary 1 In the kingdom of Primitivo wine

MANDURIA

A multi-millennium history and decadent beauty Walking along the cobbled streets, you'll discover the charming historic center filled with magnificent Baroque houses, like **Palazzo Imperiali** in Piazza Garibaldi, and numerous churches, from the Cathedral of St. Gregory Magno to the **Mother Church of the Holy Trinity**, to the Church of the **Madonna of the Rosary**, and the 17th century Jewish ghetto. The ancient Messapian city contains imposing triple megalithic walls in the **Messapian Wall Archaeological Park**, one of the biggest in Italy. The park contains the **Fonte Pliniano**, a landmark monument mentioned by Pliny the Elder in *Historia Naturalis*. It's an enormous natural cavern with flowing water inside whose level remains constant, thanks to the principle of communicating vessels. The little 13th century **Church of St. Peter Mandurino** is stunning, rising up out of a hypogeum-style crypt featuring 8th century frescoes. parcoarcheologicomanduria.it

LIZZANO

In the center of town, in the former 19th century Palazzo Maiorano, **MUPAU - Civic Museum of Paleontology and Humanity**, tells the story of how life has evolved through fossils, from early forms to *homo sapiens*, and of the culture of peoples, from local to Africa and Oceania. The museum's exhibits include a rare, feathered mask from New Caledonia.

THE DUNES AT CAMPOMARINO DI MARUGGIO

Along the Tarantine Ionian coast, past **Borraco Tower**, there are high sandy hills covered in botanical rarities, like shrub thyme and marine juniper, which are recognized as an **EU Site of Community Importance** and hide unspoiled bays and a crystal-clear sea. The area is surrounded by farms, votive chapels, *trullo* houses and vineyards, which lead you to **Maruggio**, one of Italy's most beautiful towns. It's a labyrinth of alleys, historic *palazzos* and Renaissance balconies surrounding the Mother Church of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, built in the 1400s by the Knights of Malta, and the Castle and coastal Towers. The 16th century Church of **St. Mary of the Graces** is a real masterpiece, and contains the ex-Monastery of the Friars Minor, today the Town Hall, whose cloister is a colonnaded quadrangle with arches, small octagonal pilasters and magnificent frescoes.



SAN PIETRO IN BEVAGNA

According to legend, in the 1st century A.D., **St. Peter** was shipwrecked here. He has a **church** dedicated to him that was built in the early 1900s next to the **16th century tower**. The church's façade is in the shape of a priest's hat. From the apse you can reach a hypogeum with a baptismal font made of volcanic stone, considered an early-Christian sacred place. Take a cold swim in the mouth of the **Chidro**, a river that originates in a deep underground crater, then dive into the sea in an oasis of golden sand and turquoise water. It's an ideal destination for scuba diving. On the seabed you can find shipwrecks from the first half of the 3rd century A.D.

THE OLD MONASTIC SALTWORKS

Close to the majestic **Colimena Tower**, which houses an original collection of ceramics, you'll find a golden beach. Its dunes, covered with thyme, myrtle and mastic trees, separate it from the **Old Monastic Saltworks**, a wetland area of 25 hectares, part of the **Regional Controlled Natural Reserve**. Dating from the pre-historic era, it subsequently came under Roman and Saracen ownership. From 1464 it was owned by Ferdinand of Aragon, then until 1754 it was owned by the Cassinese Monks of San Lorenzo d'Aversa. From Medieval times it was used to collect marine salt, now it's home to egrets, pink flamingoes, common stilts and kingfishers.

PRIMITIVO WINE

This is the most famous of Puglia's red wines. A robust and aromatic wine that goes well with mature cheese, grilled lamb and almond paste desserts. This high-alcohol tour starts from Manduria, which gives its name to **Primitivo di Manduria DOC** and **Primitivo di Manduria Dolce Naturale DOCG** and takes you to around twenty municipalities in the provinces of Taranto and Brindisi, where these native grapes are grown. To find out more, pay a visit to the **Museum of Primitivo Wine**, which has interesting objects from the 19th and 20th centuries set in old hypogeum-style wine tanks. museodelprimitivo.it



San Pietro in Bevagna

Itinerary 2

Good food and Negroamaro in Terra dei Messapi

FRANCAVILLA FONTANA

Known as the "City of the Emperors" in honor of the Princes who governed it, this is the kingdom of the "**mandorla riccia**", a typical dessert made with toasted almonds and frosted. It's delicious! Filled with historic houses, like the **Palazzo Imperiali**, churches, crypts and ancient gates, like the **Carmin Gate**, this town is also worth visiting at **Easter** to take part in the charming Holy Week ceremonies. In particular, the **Mystery Procession**, when the masked *Pappamusi* parade through the city. *Info Point Francavilla Fontana +39 0831 811262*

ORIA

Perched on three hills, this ancient Messapian city has more than three thousand years of history. In Medieval times it had a flourishing Jewish community, as demonstrated in the neighborhood of **Giudea** (Judea), beside the **Taranto Gate**, known as the Gate of the Jews. Everything is dominated by the **Swabian Castle**, with the Torre dello Sperone. Following the earthquake of 1743, the **Cathedral** was rebuilt in Baroque style. Outside, it has a large, colored tile cupola; inside, it's lavishly decorated, and the **Crypt of the Mummies**, with the mummified corpses of 11 brothers of the Confraternity of the Dead. The **Easter ceremonies** are not to be missed and in the second half of August, Oria hosts the **Torneo dei Rioni**, an inter-neighborhood tournament, instituted by Frederick II of Swabia in 1225. This is an engaging theatrical reenactment, with more than one thousand actors in costumes from 4 historic neighborhoods, who challenge each other in battle reenactments and tests of skill. torneodeirionioria.it

LATIANO

Flavors and traditions abound here. It's worth stopping in Latiano to sample the typical orecchiette pasta and horsemeat roulades in the **Sagra ti li Stacchioggi** festival, which the Pro Loco association organizes in the first week of October in the beautiful Piazza Umberto I, dominated by the Palazzo *Info +39 0831721096*

MESAGNE

Ideal for history and archaeology lovers. Having gone through the **Great Gate**, you enter into the historic heart-shaped center, best explored on foot, along characteristic paved alleyways, crossing grand piazzas, like **Piazza Orsini del Balzo**, where you'll find the austere **Palazzo Cavaliere** and the Baroque **St. Anne's Church**; the ancient Piazza dei Nobili, today **Piazza IV Novembre**, where you can see the Mother Church, dedicated to all of the saints; and **Piazza Antonio Criscuolo**, with the votive chapel of the Holy Virgin of Carmel, the city's patron saint.

There are many noble *palazzos*, like **Palazzo Guarini** from the 16th century, which houses an ancient **semi-underground oil press**. The **Norman-Swabian Castle** built by Robert Guiscard in the 11th century became a baronial home in the 17th century. Today it's home to the **Ugo Granafei Area Museum**, with important examples of Messapian culture. *Info Point Mesagne +39 0831 738898 - comune.mesagne.br.it*

TORRE SANTA SUSANNA

The large **underground oil presses** at Largo Moccia are worth visiting. They contain ancient fireplaces, tanks, millstones and presses, and the **Church of St. Peter of the Towers** or the Byzantine Church of St. Mary in Crepacore, with traces of frescoes. *Info Comune +39 0831 741202*

NEGROAMARO

This is one of the most widespread native vineyards in the **Salento**, with the heart of the production stretching from **San Pietro Vernotico** to **Leverano**, taking in **Cellino San Marco**, **San Donaci**, **Guagnano** and **Salice Salentino**. Negroamaro is a dark, vigorous and balanced wine, with a dry, fruity and velvety flavor. It's excellent in its purest red and rosé forms, but its white version is also a surprise. It's perfect with **traditional Salentine** dishes, such as the "*pezzetti*" of horsemeat in sauce, or grilled *turcinieddhi* (lamb or goat roulades). There are many open-air kitchens to visit, that organize tastings and walks among the vines.



Norman-Swabian Castle - Mesagne



St. Anthony and the Fòcara - Novoli

LEVERANO

Breathe in the beautiful atmosphere of this little town, known as the **city of flowers** and wine, surrounded by vineyards and farms. It has a well-preserved historic center, with the soaring Federician Tower and many churches, including the Mother Church of the **Santissima Annunziata** with paintings from the 1600s and 18th century altars, the Convent and Church of **St. Mary of the Graces**, the Church of the **Madonna della Consolazione**, and the small **St. Mary's Church** in Baroque style with papier-mâché statues. Don't miss the **Leverano in Fiore** Spring flower festival and the **Novello in Festa**, the historic wine festival in November.

Info Point Leverano +39 0832 923455 - prolocoleverano.it

NOVOLI

Every year, on January 16, Novoli lights a giant 30-meter-high bonfire, called the Fòcara, in honor of **St. Anthony the Great**. It's the most eagerly awaited event of the Winter, featuring processions, magnificent illuminations, firework shows, conventions, concerts and food events.

Itinerary 3

Baroque churches and menhirs

COPERTINO

Lovers of **castles** will find a great example of fortification here: reworked in 1540, this enormous quadrangle with 4 arrowhead bastions and a large moat, has 90 cannon slots along its entire perimeter. The Renaissance doorway in Catalan-Durrazzesque style is amazing, and the frescoes in the Chapels of **St. Mark** and **St. Mary Magdalene** are equally captivating (+39 0832 931612). To find out more about the life of **St. Joseph of Copertino**, the friar loved by students and aviators, visit the humble stable in which he was born, the church where his heart is kept, and the **Sanctuary of the Grottella**, where he lived for most of his life. The **Collegiate Church of St. Mary of the Snow** in Piazza Umberto is also worth a visit. sangiuseppedacopertino.it

NARDÒ

Baroque art and refined hospitality. Nardò's **Piazza Salandra** accommodates the **Spire of the Immaculate Virgin** from 1769, the 16th century Sedile building, the Palazzo della Prefettura, the Fountain of the Bull, the Church of **St. Tryphon** and the Church of **St. Dominic**, with gnomes and cherubs on the façade. Then there's the **Duomo** with the 13th century Black Crucifix, the **Acquaviva Castle**, the offices of the Municipality, and the eclectic villas, in the areas of **Pagani** and **Cenate**, holiday destinations since the 1700s. The **Salento Aquarium**, with tanks and shipwrecks, are worth a visit (acquariodelsalento.it) at **Santa Maria al Bagno**. The surrounding countryside is brimming with farms, and is home to Puglia's oldest Natural Park, the **Porto Selvaggio** and **Palude del Capitano**, with great Aleppo pine forests and numerous caves, like the **Uluzzo** and **Cavallo** caves, filled with pre-historic finds and fish fossils of worldwide significance. Some are exhibited in the **Prehistoric Museum**. Info Point Nardò +39 0833836928 museodellapreistoria.com



Norman-Swabian Castle - Copertino



Church of St. Paul - Galatina

GALATONE

Galatone is a concentration of marvels. Enter the town from **St. Sebastian's Gate** and be enchanted by palazzos and churches, like the **Collegiate Church of the Assumption**, and the **Holy Cross, a Baroque masterpiece**. The **Palazzo Marchesale** houses the original **Museum of the Machines of Leonardo da Vinci**, with reproductions that tell the great genius's story (turntable bridges, hydrosopes, anemometers, cannons) and many teaching workshops. Info Point Galatone +39 0836 864900

GALATINA

Galatina is ideal for art lovers, it's a collection of noble mansions and churches, like the **Basilica of St. Catherine of Alexandria**, a Romanesque-Gothic building with a finely decorated doorway and grand rose window on the outside, whilst the interior opens out on to five completely frescoed naves with vast cycles of Giottoesque-school paintings (basilicaorsiniana.it). Enjoy palazzo after palazzo of Baroque-Rococo detail until you get to the **Palazzo Tondi-Vignola**, dating back to the 1700s, which houses the **well** and **church of St. Paul**, a source of "Tarantism" phenomena. The **Basilica of St. Peter and St. Paul** contains the stone on which, according to tradition, **St. Peter** sat when heading for Rome. The town isn't just the home of the *pasticciotto* (a tart filled with cream) invented here in 1745, but also the **Africano**, a *zabaglione* biscuit invented in 1793, crispy to the bite, but melting in the mouth.

CASARANO

This town's oldest Christian religious sites include, in Casaranello, the **Church of St. Mary of the Cross**, built between the 5th and 6th centuries with splendid early-Christian mosaics, like the vault dotted with golden tile crosses on the cupola and the multicolored mosaic flooring with zoomorphic and phytomorphic motifs on the barrel vault. There are also Byzantine and Gothic frescoes.



UGENTO

Antique Ozan, an important Messapian center, conceals an artistic walk, which starts from the **Castle of the d'Amore Princes**, with its richly decorated rooms, moving to the **Diocesan Museum** beneath the Cathedral (museodiocesanougento.it), then on to the **Colosso Museum** on Via Messapica, with numerous finds dating from between the 6th century B.C. and the High Middle Ages, and reaching the **New Archaeological Museum**, to see the Tomb of the Athlete, grave goods, ceramics, amphorae and coins. Just out of town, the 13th century **Crypt of the Crucifix**, dug out of volcanic rock, is a treasure chest with frescoed walls and ceiling, including images of gryphons, fantasy figures and vegetal motifs (sistemamusealeugento.it). Exploring the **Ugento Coastal Regional Natural Park** is easy on foot or by bicycle: 1600 hectares of countryside and seafront, from the **Specchia del Corno** to artificial basins, then to the beaches between **St. John's Tower** and the **Marini Lido**. *Info Point Ugento +39 0833 555476*

PRESICCE – ACQUARICA

Presicce is full of churches and palazzos, courtyard houses and **underground oil presses**, hidden beneath **Piazza del Popolo**. The beautiful roof gardens at **Palazzo Ducale** have a view over the Mother Church. Since 2019, Presicce has been merged with **Acquarica del Capo**, famous for its ancient cane weaving tradition, exhibited in a **Museum** in the **Sforzesco Castle**. *Info Point Presicce Acquarica +39 340 6506421*



Crypt of the Crucifix - Ugento



Specchia

SPECCHIA

Specchia is a member of the **Borghi più Belli d'Italia** association, and should be explored slowly, walking amongst the white-plastered courtyard houses, with floral walkways that house the town's **albergo diffuso**, or "scattered hotel". A labyrinth of pure-white alleyways, that wind around the central **Piazza del Popolo**, where you'll find the Mother Church and the imposing **Palazzo Risolo**, which is a theatrical backdrop. You can take guided tours of the rediscovered **underground oil presses** and the **Monastery of the Black Franciscan Friars**, with frescoes and a crypt supported by 36 columns.

Info Point Specchia +39 0833 1831793

RUFFANO

The sacred and the profane come together in the **"Notte delle Ronde"**, on the night of August 15, when the religious ceremony of the **Festival of San Rocco** takes place in the Sanctuary at **Torrepaduli**, a district of Ruffano. After a parade with a statue, before the following morning's Mass, people gather in a circle to dance and bang tambourines while two dancers perform the famous **danza scherma**, a balletic duel to a pizzica folk rhythm.

NOCIGLIA

The **Chapel of the Madonna dell'Idri** will surprise you. Its interior hides the small 12th century Byzantine church of St. Nicholas, with important 13th and 14th century frescoes depicting the Madonna with Child, St. Lucy, St. Nicholas and St. Anthony the Great. This is a really exciting find!

POGGIARDO

This is an ideal stop for archaeology lovers. On Piazza Episcopo, the **Museum of Byzantine Frescoes** houses original frescoes removed from the **Crypt of St. Mary of the Angels**: beautiful frescoes of eastern and western saints and the Madonna between two archangels. On Piazza Dante, in the district of **Vaste**, the **Archaeological Museum of Messapian Civilization** refers to the 4th century B.C.: there are sarcophagus tombs, krater vases, trozzellas and rarities, like the rosette-decorated volute and the "windfall" with 150 brilliant uncirculated silver staters. A short distance away is the **Warriors' Archaeological Park**, where you'll find the ancient **necropolis** (6th century B.C.), the city wall, the early-Christian church at **Fondo Giuliano** (5th century A.D.) and the frescoed rupestrian church of **Santi Stefani**. *Info +39 800 551155, +39 0836 909837*

DOLMENS AND MENHIRS

Take a journey to Europe's largest **Megalithic Garden**, filled with mighty **dolmens** (funeral chambers) and enigmatic menhirs anchored into the rock. At its heart is **Giurdignano**, a short distance from Otranto, with 7 dolmens, like the Stabile dolmen at the border with **Giuggianello** and 18 menhirs, including the imposing **Vicinanze 1** and **2** and **St. Paul's** Menhir, beneath which is a Byzantine chapel with a fresco of the saint, the protector of the Tarantate, next to a spider's web. You should also visit **St. Savior's Crypt**, from the 7th to the 10th centuries (*Pro Loco +39 327 7824711*). At **Minervino di Lecce**, there's the **Li Scusi Dolmen** and the district of Specchia Gallone is the home of the church of St. Anne, with its marvelous frescoes. The **Trice Menhir** is at **Muro Leccese**, as is the **Palazzo del Principe**, in the captivating **Piazza del Popolo**, home of the **Borgo Terra Extended Museum**, with finds from the 8th century B.C., and the **Archaeological Park** in the Cunella district, with ancient Messapian residences.



Dolmen - Giurdignano



Augustinian Monastery - Melpignano

Itinerary 4 Rites and traditions of Grecia Salentina

CORIGLIANO D'OTRANTO

An elegant town, with *palazzos* decorated with incredible embellishments, courtyards and gardens. The splendid **Lucchetti Arch** in Vico Freddo is like a stone lacework with Middle Eastern decoration and religious symbolism. The majestic **De' Monti Castle**, built in the 11th century, which became an important fortress in the 1500s, is square in shape with 4 massive circular towers and wide moat. Today, these places are brought back to life, from the ancient stables to the terraces, with exhibitions, events, concerts and shows. *Info Point Corigliano D'Otranto +39 0836 471008, +39 388 3620751*

MELPIGNANO

The scenic **Piazza San Giorgio**, with its Mother Church and archways, was home to an important market in the 1500s. Few know that the town is full of **Virgilian mottos** inscribed on the ancient doorways, whilst the town is known for its **Notte della Taranta** concert (night of the tarantula), which takes place each year at the end of August in the square in front of the Augustinian Monastery, a jewel of Baroque architecture from the late 1700s (*lanottedellataranta.it*). Visit the **Historic Museum of Tarantism**, the first in the world, opened in 2020 within the **Palazzo Marchesale**, which has a historic garden. The Museum has a hundred works, some of which are very rare, including books, engravings and other objects.

Info Point Melpignano +39 375 6041184

CASTRIGNANO DEI GRECI

Visit the **Palazzo Baronale De' Gualtieris**, originally a Medieval fortress, which became a mansion in the 16th century. The courtyard houses the little **Museum of Hand Embroidery, Lace and Crochet**, which celebrates the antique art in two rooms filled with lace and precious embroidery from the 19th century to the post-WWII era, charcoal irons, embroidery equipment and antique frames.

CARPIGNANO SALENTINO

From Piazza Duca d'Aosta you enter the town's alleyways and discover the old **Jewish quarter** enclosed by Medieval walls with roof gardens, **15th century houses**, 16th century balconies, the Mother Church and the **Palazzo Ducale**. Then go and see the **underground oil presses** and **St. Christina's Crypt** from the 9th-10th centuries, a masterpiece with ancient frescoes and Greek inscriptions. [Info +39 339 44025798](tel:+3933944025798)

MARTANO

Martano has a charming historic center known as **Borgo Terra**, with alleyways, little squares and **courtyard houses**. There are beautiful *palazzos* from the 15th to the 19th centuries, including the **Palazzo Baronale**, which was once a Aragonese Castle, the **Church of St. Mary of the Assumption**, the ex-Dominican Convent, now the town hall offices, and the 17th century Cistercian Monastery of **St. Mary of the Consolation** with an extensive library, gallery and distillery.

STERNATIA

The walk to explore the town starts from the **ex-Dominican Convent**, today the offices of the Municipality, and along the way you'll see a 600-year-old olive tree, the **Mother Church** dedicated to St. George and a 16th century underground oil press, near the **Filia Gate**, with many Calabrian millstones and presses.

CALIMERA

On Easter Monday in **St. Vitus' Church**, there's the ritual of passing through the "fertility stone", a monolith with a hole which people pass through as a sign of rebirth. In the town center, the Baroque **Mother Church of St. Brizio** has an unusual painting of the Madonna of Mercy, in which the Virgin Mary is depicted in pregnancy. A short distance away is the **Museum House of Rural Life and Griko Culture**. Just out of town, hidden in woodland, there's the **Salento Natural History Museum** which is also a recovery center for wild fauna and sea turtles.



Palazzo Baronale - Martano



Poetry Cave - Roca Vecchia

Itinerary 5 From the Adriatic to the Ionian

WWF NATIONAL NATURE RESERVE LE CESINE

This is an important wetland area with varied landscapes: from the ponds at **Salapi** and **Pantano Grande**, that host countless birds, with birdwatching hides, to the dunes that separate it from the sea and coves where you can take a dip.

To the east, there's woodland and grassland, to the west, a **15th century farmhouse** (visitor center), pine forests, Mediterranean maquis and agricultural areas. There are two **nature paths**: the wilder *Sentiero del Tasso*, which is 6km long, and the *Sentiero Imbarcadere*, which is adapted for people with disabilities and people with impaired vision. In Spring, you can hear the tree frogs singing, see thousands of butterflies flying and watch the orchids flowering. riservalecesine.it

SAN FOCA

This is a seafaring **town with** a 16th century tower, a tourist port with lots of facilities and a convenient **Blue Flag** beach on the coast of **Melendugno**. It's known for its fishing trips and feasts of **sea urchins**.

ROCA VECCHIA

The natural saltwater pool, amongst the world's most captivating, is in a karstic cavity dug out of the sea, which has ancient stories to tell. The **Poetry Cave** was a religious site in honor of the Messapic god *Thator Andirahas*, used from the Bronze Age, with thousands of votive inscriptions in different languages, which can be seen especially in the nearby **Little Poetry Cave** (which can't be visited), connected by an underwater tunnel. The surroundings are an important archaeological area with traces from the 2nd millennium B.C. to the Middle Ages.



TORRE DELL'ORSO

The odd-shaped cliffs here are a real spectacle, like the **Two Sisters** and a short distance away the two isolated columns in the turquoise sea that make up **Torre Sant'Andrea**, an ancient fishing village.

OTRANTO

Taking a walk in Italy's most easterly city is wonderful. The old town is enclosed within walls and presents you with a thousand years of history, including the **Cathedral of St. Mary of the Annunciation**, dating from 1163, with its ancient mosaic flooring by the monk Pantaleone, depicting the tree of life, the Byzantine **St. Peter's Basilica** and the **Aragonese Castle**. The sea is everywhere. To the North, there are endless beaches around the **Alimini Lakes**; to the South, rugged bays like **Baia delle Orte**, ideal for scuba diving, and surprising places like the **Bauxite Lake**. The surrounding valleys, like the **Valley of Memories** and the **Idro Valley**, reveal valuable evidence of rupestrian civilization, while the towers, like the **Serpent's Tower** and the **Punta Palascia Lighthouse**, on a rock covered in Mediterranean maquis, will give you memorable views. *Info Point Otranto +39 0836 801436*

PORTO BADISCO

This narrow and deep natural inlet has the perfume of history, immersed in prickly pear and myrtle. It hides the **Cervi Cave**, one of the world's most important sites of rupestrian pictorial art (which, sadly, can't be visited), and opens up on a **small harbor** with a sandy bay and freshwater springs. It's the perfect place to sample delicious **sea urchins**.



Cathedral - Otranto



Porto Miggiano - Santa Cesarea Terme

SANTA CESAREA TERME

Since **1899**, this has been an elegant **thermal spa**. It's located at the base of a verdant hill and will enchant with eclectic villas on the seafront, like **Villa Sticchi**, numerous springs of sulfur water and caves along the coast. The sulfur water glitters turquoise on the sea across from the town and feeds the pool dug into the rock right beneath the **thermal spa**. The cliffs to the South are enchanting, but they have become increasingly fragile due to erosion and human activity, like **Porto Miggiano**, a little bay with emerald water set in the shadow of a tower.

Info Point Santa Cesarea Terme +39 0836 944043

CASTRO

This is a fishing village with very old origins, as demonstrated by the remains of the "**Temple of Minerva**" and the **Romanelli** and **Zinzulusa** caves that were inhabited in pre-historic times. It looks like an overhanging manger scene on the sea with the old city, **Upper Castro**, perched between the 12th century Aragonese Castle, which houses the **Archaeological Museum**, the towers and the Romanesque cathedral. Lower Castro is a balcony over one of Puglia's most beautiful inlets.

Info Point Castro +39 0836 943340



TRICASE PORTO

Old villas, fishermen's houses and the harbor with restored historic **fishing boats**, that provide beginners' courses in lateen sailing and various workshops put on by the **Museum Port**, a unique example of an extended museum. *Info Point Tricase +39 0833 777237 - portomuseotricase.org*

SANTA MARIA DI LEUCA

The **Punta Meliso** belvedere presents you with an extraordinary view. Behind is the 19th century **lighthouse** and the Basilica of **Santa Maria de Finibus Terrae**, facing a 300-step stairway that runs alongside the Monumental Waterfall of the Pugliese Aqueduct and connects to the old port. You can see the whole of **Leuca**, right up to **Punta Ristola**: the seafront comes into view with eclectic villas from the late 1800s, the tourist port, the **Omomorto Tower** and then the rocky coast, with lots of caves that can be visited by boat, including the Devil's Cave, the Dragon's Cave and the Giants' Cave on the Ionian side and the Cazzafri Caves with stalactites and imposing archways on the Adriatic side.

Info Point Santa Maria di Leuca +39 0833758111

THE UGENTO LIDOS

Crystal waters on shallow and sandy seabeds, wide beaches and, immediately after, pine trees, basins, canals, Mediterranean maquis to the marinas at **Ugento**, from **Marini Lido** to **Mozza Tower**, to **St. John's Tower**, which are within the **Coast of Ugento Regional Natural Park**.



Basilica of Santa Maria de Finibus Terrae - Santa Maria di Leuca



The Porto Selvaggio and Captain's Marsh

GALLIPOLI

The old city is absolutely beautiful. It's situated on an island that's connected to the mainland by a stone bridge. The imposing **Angevin Castle**, that hosts large exhibitions, with the Rivellino surrounded by the sea marks the entrance to the **old town**, a labyrinth of alleyways where history flourishes on every corner and noble palazzos are interspersed with churches of the Confraternities, until you arrive at the magnificent **St. Agatha's Basilica Cathedral**, a Baroque triumph. **Purity Beach** is the beach of the Gallipolians, opposite there are the **little Campo** and **St. Andrew's islands**, where a 19th lighthouse illuminates the sailing routes and rare Audouin's gulls build their nests. Don't miss the charming **Holy Week** ceremonies and the awaited **Festival of St. Christina** (July 23-25), with a maypole on the water at Canneto, featuring a procession, a band, illuminations and traditional *scapece* (fried fish marinated in vinegar and saffron). There are lidos for all tastes and a shared bicycle and pedestrian path connected **Baia Verde** to **Punta della Suina**, here sandspits and bays are protected by dunes, then there are forests of Aleppo pines and nature runs wild up to **Pizzo Tower**. This is all within the **St. Andrew's Island and Coast of Punta Pizzo Regional Natural Park**.

Info Point Gallipoli +39 0833 262529

THE PORTO SELVAGGIO AND CAPTAIN'S MARSH REGIONAL NATURAL PARK

This is Puglia's oldest park and presents you with breathtaking views: from the high and rocky coast of **Porto Selvaggio**, covered with Aleppo pines, with a tiny shingle beach that dives into the sea, to the alluring landscape around **Torre Inserraglio**, to the **Captain's Marsh** where you can see botanical rarities amongst the *spunnulate*, depressions of sea water. A bit further on, there are lots of pre-historic caves in **Uluzzo bay**, that has a tower with the same name. *Info Point Nardò +39 0833 836928*

PORTO CESAREO

White beaches protected by majestic dunes alternate with small cliffs facing a crystal sea, which lights up at sunset, along 32 kilometers of coast, from **Punta Prosciutto** to **Torre Inserraglio**. And then there are the imposing coastal towers, the Isola **Grande** or dei Conigli, which can be swum to or reached by boat, and some of the Mediterranean's most beautiful woodland, submerged grottoes and seabeds, rich in coral, seagrass beds, and shipwrecks and archaeological finds, like the Greco-Roman columns in the inlet at **Torre Chianca**. Since 1997, it's been a **Marine Protected Area**, one of the biggest in Italy (16,654 hectares), with more than 40 dive points and various "Sentieri Blu" [Blue Trails] (ampportocesareo.it). You should stop at the **Parenzan Marine Biology Museum**, with 900 exhibits, a malacological collection and an area dedicated to deep-sea fish and marine creatures. *Info: +39 0833 569502*



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