

## Puglia – Mystical Land

<b>Trip Length</b>	<b>10 days, 9 nights</b>
<b>Difficulty</b>	<b>Easy to Moderate</b>
<b>Starting Point</b>	<b>Trani</b>
<b>Finishing Point</b>	<b>Lecce</b>



### **Day 1, 2 ■ Arrival - Alta Murgia**

Trani is a most precious gem sparkling on the Adriatic coastline between Bari and Brindisi. From far away, the town, whose many houses and streets are built with the bright local stone, beckons the visitor with its splendour. In the early morning and late afternoon, fisherman returning from their journey out at sea, bring the old port to life as they call out and sell their fresh catch. We explore the beautiful historical centre and discover the wealth of testimonies describing the rich past of the town, once a very important commercial port. Its “Ordinamenta Maris”, dating to 1063, are some of the oldest maritime codes known to date. The Cathedral is considered the “queen” of the Cathedrals in Puglia. The spectacular Alta Murgia (high plateau) is one of the most extensive National Parks in Italy. Instituted in 2004, the park is of extraordinary geological, archaeological, historical and cultural interest. A superb natural environment of rocky ridges, sinkholes, gentle hills, steep cliffs, endless natural pastures, oaks and conifer forests cohabit with thousands of years of human history, testified by burial sites, fortified stone farmhouses, corrals, churches, and endless rows of stonewalls. With a short hike we reach Castel Del Monte, UNESCO World Heritage Site, and a unique piece of medieval military architecture, built by Frederick II, emperor of the Sacred Roman Empire and leader of modern humanism. It is a blend of elements from classical antiquity, the Islamic Orient and North European Cistercian Gothic.

**Accommodations** – Marè Resort, Trani. <http://www.mareresort.it/en/il-palazzo>

### **Day 3, 4 ■ Gravina in Puglia – Itria Valley**

While there is no certainty on the exact date of its foundation, archaeological findings have determined that Gravina existed already in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C.E. Churches and caves, carved out on the sides of the cliffs testify that people continued to live in the area even after the fall of the Roman Empire and the Barbarian invasions. Under the guidance of a local tour guide we explore the fascinating small town and access sites otherwise precluded to people. We visit one of the most important and the largest rupestrian (carved in the rock) church in the territory. It was the first Cathedral of Gravina and, today, it still holds services. In the Arab and the medieval neighbourhoods, we discover enchanting details, and enjoy panoramas over the cliff dwellings, which we will explore along with a burial site from the fifth century B.C.E. The Itria Valley is an obligatory stop for those visiting Puglia. A very pleasant hike takes us through a countryside characterized by olive and almond groves, and miles of dry-stone walls. The main protagonists are the “trulli”, small, white houses with a conical roof for which Alberobello is famous. In 1996, the town and its historical centre, with more than 1400 “trulli”, became a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

**Accommodations** – Masseria Cervarolo, Ostuni. [www.masseriacervarolo.com](http://www.masseriacervarolo.com)

### **Day 5, 6 ■ Egnazia – Gallipoli**

A guided tour of the archaeological site of Egnazia and its museum is a journey back to the time of the Messapii, a population that occupied a territory spanning from the Salento to the central area of Apulia. The first settlement of Egnazia dates back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., while the Messapii arrive in the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. Several burial grounds, located along the coast and throughout the site, chamber tombs, with valuable paintings and rich objects, testify to the wealth of the local ruling class. We walk through century-old olive groves and visit Ostuni, the “white town” or “white lady”. We cannot leave the Itria Valley without witnessing the production of olive oil. Puglia produces 60% of Italian extra virgin olive oil, a third of which is produced in the Itria Valley. The producer we visit still uses a stone press to make their highest quality, extra virgin olive oil. Through a tasting, we learn the difference between one olive oil and another, and how to judge the quality. The Greek called the splendid town of Gallipoli “Kalè Polis”, the beautiful town. And with reason. The historical centre, an island connected later in time by a thin strip of land to the new town, has maintained a captivating atmosphere.

**Total walking/sightseeing** – 3 hours.

**Accommodations** – Masseria Cervarolo, Ostuni. [www.masseriacervarolo.com/rooms](http://www.masseriacervarolo.com/rooms)  
Palazzo Presta, Gallipoli. [www.palazzopresta.it](http://www.palazzopresta.it)

### **Day 7, 8 ■ Salento**

We are in Salento! Ranging from endless sandy beaches to vertical cliffs and very sharp eroded terrain, this is one of the most spectacular areas of Puglia with an uncontaminated natural environment. Here, one can really imagine how daily life may have been before civilization. Salento was home to the Messapii, a hardy people who took their stand against the Greeks, and several small archaeological sites still provide testimony of their presence. This area is still quite unexplored at an international level. Our hikes take us into the unspoiled beauty of a Regional Natural Park, on the Ionian Sea, and along the south-eastern coastline. We have the opportunity to swim in the clear waters of the Mediterranean Sea. The coastline stretching between Santa Maria di Leuca, the southernmost point in Puglia, known as “finibus mundi” (at the end of the world) and Cape of Otranto is a truly

spectacular, undeveloped area. It is a playground for geologists, archaeologists, naturalists and palaeontologists. Our hike takes us through a rich environment. We pass defensive towers and fascinating examples of defensive farmhouses. Cape of Otranto, the easternmost point in Puglia, is the official boundary between the Adriatic and the Ionian Sea. Otranto is often called “the door to the Orient”. In fact, only 80 km/49 miles separate Cape of Otranto from Albania and, on a very clear day, it is possible to see the mountains of Albania. We visit Otranto, in ancient times one of the most important places on the Adriatic Sea.

**Accommodations** – Palazzo Presta, Gallipoli. [www.palazzopresta.it](http://www.palazzopresta.it)  
Masseria Montelauro, Otranto. [www.masseriamontelauro.it](http://www.masseriamontelauro.it)

### **Day 9 ▪ Lecce**

Capital of Baroque style in southern Italy, Lecce was most likely inhabited before the arrival of the Romans. However, the only ancient testimonies still visible are from the Roman period, such as the amphitheatre and the theatre. For a long time, Otranto remained the most important town of the region until the arrival of the Angioins, with Charles V. Getting ready to fight the Turks and the Saracens, Charles V understood the strategic importance of the town. Lecce’s economic growth found its most beautiful expression in the local Baroque style of the 17th and 18th centuries. In the company of a licensed guide, we enjoy a tour of the town and its main monuments.

**Accommodations** – Patria Palace Hotel, Lecce. [www.patriapalace.com](http://www.patriapalace.com)

### **Day 10 ▪ Departure**

The trip ends in Lecce, after breakfast. Depart on your own for your next destination.

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### **COST OF 10-DAY TOUR**

Euro 3990 p/p (10-12 participants)

Euro 4390 p/p (7-9 participants)

Euro 4890 p/p (4-6 participants)

Prices are in Euro and based on double occupancy.

Euro 650 Single Supplement

### **WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THE TRIP**

Private vehicle with driver for the duration of the tour • luggage transfers • accommodations as per itinerary • tourist taxes • gratuity for drivers and porters • meals as per itinerary • water, coffee/tea with included lunches and dinners • English-speaking guide for the duration of the trip • guide’s expenses while with clients • entrance fees to museums and other points of interest as mentioned in the itinerary • licensed tour guides for specific visits, as per itinerary.

### **WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF THE TRIP**

Any insurance (trip cancellation, baggage loss, rescue/evacuation, medical, etc.) • airport transfers • meals not mentioned in the itinerary • personal expenses (sodas/alcoholic beverages, telephone calls, etc.) • additional expenses due to unexpected changes to the itinerary or added activities • anything else not mentioned in “What is Included in the Price of the Trip”.

### **TRIP DIFFICULTY**

This is an easy to moderate trip, with up to 3-4 hours of walking/hiking on any given day, and we cover a variety of terrain. On our hiking days, we will be on a combination of small paved roads, gravel paths and trails. There are no relevant uphill and/or downhill. The hikes are very pleasant and takes us through beautiful environments. **Keep in mind that some of the trails along the coastline go over eroded rocks, a condition that makes them extremely sharp. Good hiking shoes with thick and sturdy lug soles are very important.** You need a daypack that can accommodate water and your equipment. While sightseeing, we will walk on flagstone pavements that can be slippery.

### **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

PLEASE NOTE: due to the COVID-19, currently our Terms and Conditions are very flexible. You can safely book the tour with us. In the event of imposed governmental travel restrictions during the tour dates, you will not lose your non-refundable deposit or any cancellation fees, if applicable.

**For more details on itinerary and Terms & Conditions, please contact us at**  
**[tours@alpsandbeyond.com](mailto:tours@alpsandbeyond.com)**