

Italy – Down to the Heel – The South

19th June – 9th July 2020



We take it leisurely & discover Italy's South

Puglia the southern Italy region forming the heel of Italy's 'boot' is known for its whitewashed hill towns, centuries-old farmlands and hundreds of miles of Mediterranean coastline. Lecce known as the 'Florence of the South' has the baroque architecture and Alberobello is where the grey-roofed conical trulli houses are clustered together.

Cuisine plays an important role throughout Apulia and we will take the opportunity to taste the locally produced products including the olive oils, pastas, cheeses and the local wines.

Whilst in the region we visit Matera, a rocky outcrop in the vicinity of Basilicata. It includes the Sassi area, a complex of cave dwellings carved into the mountainside. Evacuated in 1952 due to poor living conditions, the Sassi now houses museums, restaurants and shops. Nearby rock churches include St. Lucia alle Malve with its 13th-century frescoes.

This tour commences in Pompeii and will take you all the way to the 'Heel'. To enjoy a leisurely trip to Pompeii our 'Italy – Down to the Heel – The North' tour starts on Lake Maggiore and runs down to Rome to link up with the start of this trip.

Campsites throughout the south of Italy are variable so this southern tour will be best enjoyed by those with an open mind to camping.

21 Nights

Day One – Friday 19th June

We meet at Pompeii and this evening the Tour Directors will host a welcome drinks reception.

Day Two – Saturday 20th June

Pompeii is one of the most significant proofs of Roman civilization and, like an open book, provides outstanding information on the art, customs, trades and everyday life of the past. The city has re-emerged from the darkness of centuries, precisely as it would have been when it was unexpectedly buried in a thick layer of ash and lava pouring down from the eruption of Vesuvius. It was the year 79 A.D. You will today have time to discover this fascinating site at your leisure with audio headsets.

Day Three – Sunday 21st June

Travel to Matera in the province of Basilicata. Our campsite is rustic but ideally located within easy reach of the cave area. **140 miles**

Day Four – Monday 22nd June

We have a Guided tour of MATERA, a city of caves perched on the edge of the ravine. It sounds almost unbelievable but Matera is one of the oldest living cities in the world. People have been living in caves here since Palaeolithic times. There are over 3,500 caves in the Sassi, the old part of the city, and it was made a world heritage site in 1993 when UNESCO described it as 'one of the most evocative landscapes in the Mediterranean'. This maze of ancient troglodyte cave-dwellings were inhabited up to just 40 years ago.



Day Five – Tuesday 23rd June

Opportunity to revisit the cave streets of Matera and visit the Stone Church in your own time.

Day Six – Wednesday 24th June

Today we move on and this evening we will be parking overnight at a Wine Cellar in Manduria; with limited facilities it's a chance to use your motorhomes own. We enjoy a guided tour of the Museum of Primitivo Wine Culture, tasting of 4 different wines together with traditional food of the local rural gastronomy. **75 miles**

Day Seven – Thursday 25th June

Travel to Gallipoli for a three night stay. **45 miles**

Day Eight – Friday 26th June

Gallipoli is known as 'The Pearl of the Ionian Coast' and the old part of the town is on a small walled island

connected to the mainland by its 6th century bridge. Aside of the bridge lies the 13th century Aragonese Castle which is almost unique in being washed by the sea. Today we have a guided tour of Gallipoli's main attractions.

Day Nine – Saturday 27th June

A Free Day and opportunity to further explore Gallipoli in your own time by making use of the campsite shuttle service. In the evening we have a group dinner in the campsite restaurant with local wine and drinks.

Day Ten – Sunday 28th June

Travel to our next campsite, north of Lecce for five nights. **37 miles**

Day Eleven – Monday 29th June

Excursion to Otranto which is one of Puglia's most charming towns. The imposing castle, thick perimeter walls and robust towers (built after the town was liberated from the Turks in the late 15th century) dominate much of the centre, giving way to a small port and a series of sea-front promenades with excellent fish restaurants. The town boasts its very own beautiful white sandy beach and turquoise waters leading towards Punto Palascia, which is Italy's easternmost point. Here we see rocky shores, cliffs, stunning sea views, the lighthouse and unspoilt landscape. Lunch is included.



Day Twelve – Tuesday 30th June

Free Day to take to the beach or relax around the campsite. This evening we get together for a group dinner in the campsite restaurant.

Day Thirteen – Wednesday 1st July

Excursion to the Baroque gem of Lecce – the 'Florence of the South'. Explore the old town, which surrounds the ruins of its Roman amphitheatre. Originally a historic trading centre, today the elegant buildings, ornate churches and marbled courtyards all reflect the town's past importance. Lunch is included

Day Fourteen – Thursday 2nd July

Free Day to catch up with some chores or enjoy a swim in the campsite pool.

Day Fifteen – Friday 3rd July

Travel a little further along the coast to Le Dune. **52 miles**

Day Sixteen – Saturday 4th July

Excursion to the area of Castellana Caves. The Grotte di Castellana is located at the entrance of the Itria Valley and is one of the most popular attractions in Puglia.

Day Seventeen – Sunday 5th July

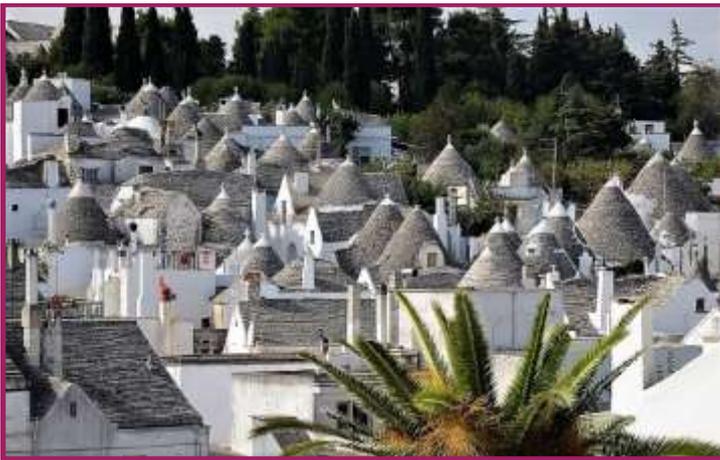
Excursion to the stunning hill-town of Ostuni, with its white houses and cobbled streets set on three hills offering spectacular views. We also visit the whitewashed village of Cisternino where we have included a visit to the local cheese factory for tastings with wine.

Day Eighteen – Monday 6th July

Free Day and time to take advantage of the campsite beach and pool area.

Day Nineteen – Tuesday 7th July

Excursion to Alberobello where hundreds of the grey-roofed conical *trulli* houses cluster together to create one of southern Italy's icon sights. Throughout the day we also visit the circular hill-town of Locorotondo with its surrounding vineyards famed for producing the south's crisp white wines. At Masseria we have the opportunity to sample some of the local wines accompanied with typical dishes.

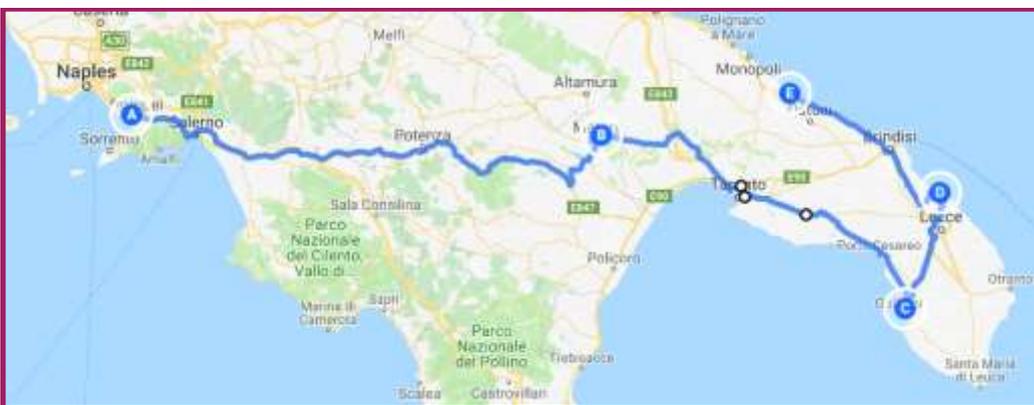


Day Twenty – Wednesday 8th July

Martina Franca is our destination for today. The town's jewel is its lovely historic centre, a memorable maze of winding alleys, where whitewashed simplicity sits side by side with baroque extravagance. The town is built on a hill of the green Valle d'Itria, with the main old town entrance being the grand historic gateway of Porto Santo Stefano. On Wednesdays throughout the morning Martina Franca has its Open-Air Market, following a visit we move to the Old Mill for Olive Oil Tasting and Lunch.

Day Twenty-One – Thursday 9th July

Free Day to relax and enjoy the weather. This evening we have our 'Farewell Dinner' in the campsite's own restaurant with local foods and wine.



Day Twenty-Two – Friday 10th July

Our tour comes to an end. You may make your own way home or if the Tour Directors are returning to the UK make your way back with them (campsites from this point onwards are not included).

PRICE

Motorhome with 2 people = **£1775 per person**

Motorhome with 1 person = **£2199**

DEPOSIT **£350**

INCLUDED IN PRICE

- 20 Campsite nights with electric hook-ups
- 1 overnight parking at winery
- All transfers for the excursions as listed in the itinerary
- Entry fees as listed in the itinerary
- Tour information pack with suggested routes & GPS Coordinates
- Services of Tour Directors travelling in their own motorhomes
- Michelin National Map of Puglia
- DK Guidebook for Puglia

Excursion, Events & Meals

- Welcome Drinks Reception
- Entry to Pompeii + Audio Headsets
- Guided Excursion to Matrea with Lunch
- Manduria Wine Museum + Buffet
- Transfer to Gallipoli with guided tour
- Dinner in the campsite restaurant including drinks
- Excursion to Otranto + Capo d'Otranto with Lunch
- Dinner in the campsite restaurant including drinks
- Excursion to Lecce with Lunch
- Excursion & Entry to the Castellana Caves
- Excursion to Ostuni and Cisternino
- Entry to Cheese Factory, Tasting with Wine
- Excursion to Alberobello and Locorotondo
- Tasting of Typical Dishes with Wine
- Excursion to Open Air Market
- Tasting of Olive Oil including Lunch with Wine
- Farewell Dinner including drinks