

# Taste of Puglia

Our longest running food and wine experience, this is where it all started!

Natalina started visiting Puglia in 2013 with the idea of curating unique, 10 day culinary and cultural experiences for small groups. Now 10 years later, it is our most popular 10 day experience and Natalina and her husband winter in the region of Puglia!

Natalina knows and LOVES Puglia. Ask her for pre or post travel suggestions when you book. She will help make your Puglia holiday be the best ever!

Puglia or “Apulia” is the Heel of Italy’s boot. It is known for it’s stunning seashores, centuries old “Masserias” or farm houses, whitewashed hill towns, the trulli of the Itria Valley and the vibrant, baroque city of Lecce or the “Florence of the South”.

Bari, the capital and most populated city of Puglia is a port town with style. Shopping, dining, and cultural activities abound — why not catch a soccer game before or after your tour? We start and end our 10 day experience near Bari and the airport.

## **Sample Itinerary\***

*(B) Breakfast (L) Lunch (D) Dinner (A) Aperitivo*

### **Day 1 Arrival day (you must depart the day before if arriving from North America)**

#### **Welcome to Puglia! (D)**

Fly into Bari Palese airport and meet your driver and transfer vehicle. Only a 20 minute group transfer to our first host city of Giovinazzo. If you arrive early in the day or the day before, walk around this gem of a seaside town. Even if you have never been to Italy before, this town is the perfect starting point. Natalina provides a list of recommended local establishments for all our host cities. Meet at the hotel meeting point at a predetermined time for introductions and a short walk to our Welcome Dinner restaurant.

**S. Martin Hotel\*\* 3 nights**

[www.s.martinhotel.it](http://www.s.martinhotel.it)

## **Day 2 Hands on cooking experience, walking tour giovinazzo, aperitivo experience (B) (L) (A)**

We meet in the morning, after breakfast, to board the coach to our first “Hands on cooking experience”. Natalina believes that at the heart of all cuisine is the home cook. Rita and her staff are home cooks extraordinaire! Rita, a retired journalist, hosts us in her ancestral farm house to cook a mutli course Pranzo, or formal lunch. From homemade focaccia , hand made pasta, seasonal protein and side dishes to dessert and espresso this is a fully immersive , cultural experience!

We head back to Giovinazzo in the afternoon to meet Anna, our local Giovinazzo guide. We will walk away all the calories we consumed in the morning as Anna shares her passion for her home town and it’s rich history on a walking tour of Giovinazzo. Her enthusiasm is infectious as Anna joins us for a “light” aperitivo experience at a favorite local eatery.

That is all you will have room for today after the multi course feast we enjoyed at the cooking school earlier.

Evening on your own.

## **Day 3 Castel del Monte, buratta cheese, Bari visit (B) (L)**

When the Emperor Frederick II built this castle near Bari in the 13th century, he imbued it with symbolic significance, as reflected in the location, the mathematical and astronomical precision of the layout and the perfectly regular shape. A unique piece of medieval military architecture, Castel del Monte, a UNESCO sight, is a successful blend of elements from classical antiquity, the Islamic Orient and north European Cistercian Gothic.

Perhaps just as important with a visit to Castel del Monte in Andria - is the fact that this town is the capital of Burrata cheese. What is Burrata cheese? Well it’s a hybrid of mozzarella and cream in simple terms - a little piece of heaven. The outer shell is solid mozzarella, while the inside contains stracciatella and cream, giving it a soft texture. And it’s delicious!

We will be visiting a family run production facility in this area to see how this cheese is made and also enjoy a light lunch here.

Bari is a city located on the south eastern coast of Italy facing the Adriatic see and opposite Dubrovnik in Croatia. With a population of 320,400 it serves as the second largest economic centre of the southern region of Italy, behind Naples. The old town centre of Bari is nestled around the harbour and the wider residential and business area spreads out from this point into the mainland. In early years, Bari was part of the Roman Empire and served as a major gateway to the Adriatic Sea, as time progressed its importance continued and the cities ownership changed hands many times during.

Enjoy a tour of the Old Town and the most important sights!

Evening on your own with recommendations.

## **Day 4 (B) (L) (D)Altamura, Matera, arrive Alberobello**

First off we need to visit one of the oldest Altamura bread bakeries in the town!

The main characteristic of Altamura bread is its shelf life. It can last one or even two weeks and the average loaf is a kilo in weight. This was to guarantee sustenance for the workers in the sparse fields. Such was the filling nature of the bread, their weekly diet consisted of little more than bread, olive oil and water.

Today we will experience the love and technique that goes into making this delicious bread that has been a staple in families for centuries and is now considered the “Best in all of Italy”! It is so good it has a D.O.P. designation!

Next stop, Matera, in the nearby region of Basilicata. This UNESCO sight can be described in many words such as interesting, unusual, memorable and unique. This gem of Basilicata boasts a number of cave dwelling districts known as the sassi. Rich in history, this tour will require sturdy, closed toe walking shoes and an ability to climb many stairs but it is well worth it! Our lunch will be served antipasto style in a local establishment where everything is made on site!

Welcome to Alberobello , in the Itria Valley , between history, charm and emotion. Far from the most touristic streets of the country, inside the authentic identity and culture of the place, you can discover a dreamlike atmosphere.

We dine among the Trulli tonight!

**Trulli holiday Albergo Diffuso\*\*\***

[www.trulliholiday.com](http://www.trulliholiday.com)

## **Day 5 (B) (L) Monopoli, Polignano a Mare, tour Alberobello**

This morning we'll depart for Polignano a Mare. Perched atop a 20 metre-high limestone cliff above the crystal clear waters of the Adriatic. Polignano a Mare truly lives up to its name with breathtaking views. It is also known for being the birthplace of singer, Domenico Modugno, the vocalist famous for the song...Nel Blu Dipinto Di Blu (we know it as “Volare”)! But let's not forget about its most well known food item - Gelato! We will be sampling the best Gelato in all of Italy as well as lunch here!

This afternoon we'll drive to the tiny seaside town of Monopoli - not to be confused with the game, which boasts 19 medieval churches and countless cobblestone alleys in the old town centre alone. Another beautiful harbour with plenty of history. Your dinner and evening is on own.

## **Day 6 (B) (L) (D) Martina Franca, Cisternino,**

An exploration of the lovely Valle d'Itria (trulli country!) would not be complete without a visit to Martina Franca, the largest town in the area. More buzzing than its three illustrious neighbours, Alberobello, Locorotondo and Cisternino, it has long been the commercial centre of the area, ever since Philip of Anjou granted it tax free status and various other privileges in 1310. With Franca now appended to its name, old Martina was soon attracting new residents, including noble families and businessmen. Elegant palaces (at least 20 of note) and churches (over 15) began springing up throughout the old centre, testimony to the new-found wealth that was flowing into the town.

Lunch will be enjoyed in the nearby town of Cisternino where barbecue is king. You don't need to go to a restaurant to eat in Cisternino, however, as the town is famous for its barbecuing butchers! All you have to do is choose your meat - maybe the local speciality, bombette, little meat parcels filled with mince, ham and cheese - and take a seat outside with a carafe of local wine. The butcher will then barbecue your chosen goodies and bring them out to you when ready. It's truly local and delicious eating experience. We dine at a local restaurant that embraces this local concept.

After lunch we'll head back to Alberobello for a tour and visit with a local artisan food shop for tastings and an opportunity to buy local products that you can take home or have shipped. Dinner is on own this evening.

## **Day 7 (B) (L) (D) Ostuni, extra virgin olive oil experience, arrive Lecce**

Ostuni is immersed in monumental olive trees and it is a few kilometers from the sea. The "Old Town" is Ostuni's citadel built on top of a hill and still fortified by the ancient walls. It is commonly referred to as "the White Town" (La Città Bianca in Italian) for its white walls and its typically white-painted architecture. Monuments in their own right, the town's largest buildings are the Ostuni Cathedral and the Bishop's Palace, together with a number of palazzi of local aristocratic families. We tour this town and then head to an extra ancient olive grove and extra virgin olive oil producer in the area. Guests are led in an informative EVOO tasting and delicious lunch!

Later today we head to our next host city located in the area called Il Salento, or the southern most region of Puglia. Lecce, known as the "most beautiful city of the south" will be our home for the next three nights. After arrival, we enjoy a typical Lecce dinner at a local restaurant.

**Le Club Boutique Hotel**

[www.leclublecce.com](http://www.leclublecce.com)

## **Day 8 (B) (L) Tour Lecce, free time in Lecce**

This morning we'll enjoy a familiarization tour of Lecce.

Rich in history and architecture, there are many sites to see including ruins, fountains, museum and churches. Well known for its Baroque style, Lecce is also famous for its papier-mâché art. This art form has been popular here since the 17th Century - with it being closely connected with its citizen's veneration of the catholic church. You'll see masterpieces displayed in numerous churches across Puglia but be sure to visit the Church of Santa Chiara here in Lecce to see the papier-mâché decorations that adorn its ceiling.

You'll have an opportunity to visit one of the local artisan shops as well as the museum dedicated to this art if you wish on your own time.

Optional; Faggiano Museum:

"Faggiano Museum" is a private building open to the public in April 2008.

It collects inside historical-archaeological evidences that contain a time span of more than 2000 years, from Messapi (V sec. B.C.) to Romans, from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, in a tangible, visible and visitable historical route.

The discovery of this place is quite incredible. Everything started almost by chance: in 2001 Mr. Luciano Faggiano, the property owner, was forced to break the floor of the house in order to change the sewer pipes that were causing continuous problems of humidity.

It was precisely during such work that unexpectedly began to re-emerge the first archaeological evidences. It then continued with a long excavation work, lasted 7 years, made by Luciano and his three sons (Marco, Andrea and Davide) and financed entirely by Faggiano's family, under the supervision of the Archaeological Superintendence of Taranto.

Next a lovely lunch in Lecce!

This family restaurant, located in the heart of Lecce, a short walk to the historic centre, provides a pleasant warm and welcoming atmosphere. This restaurant has become a fixed stop for lovers of good cooking and for the finest gourmet. Here you can entertain yourself in a convivial atmosphere, among the pleasures of good eating and good drinking. Tiziana and Piero, the owners, use raw materials of good quality, coming from local producers. This restaurant is regularly listed on the Michelin List.

Afternoon and evening on your own with recommendations.

## **Day 9 (B) (L) Winery Tour and annotated lunch**

At the beginning of the XX century, Masseria Li Veli was a cellar built on the ruins of a late Medieval structure, traces of which can still be seen in the present building.

The estate is situated just outside Cellino San Marco, half way between Brindisi and Lecce, a land with a long and fascinating history which started more than 2500 years ago.

Brothers Edoardo and Alfredo Falvo, along with their cousin, Alessandro, have been running the

newly established winery since 2008 using the knowledge their family acquired running a successful winery in Tuscany. You will witness the Tuscan influence in the property, but the wines are purely of Il Salento (southern Puglia area). They import their wines to North America so we can find some of them once back in our home countries.

We return to Lecce for your final evening on your own on, in this magical city!

### **Day 10 (B)(L) depart Lecce, final “hands on cooking experience”, arrive airport hotel**

After many years in the Hospitality Industry, Roberto opened this gorgeous Masseria and blended the original fortified property with modern hospitality. His mother, Chef extraordinaire, runs the kitchen and the cooking school. Here guests will learn a more refined Pugliese cuisine using seasonal produce and local delicacies. Enjoy our Farewell Pranzo along with wine pairings that Roberto, a sommelier, will lead us through.

We start back to the airport hotel this afternoon where guests that have an early night can retire early or they can mingle with the other guests over a final, casual pizza dinner with drinks! (optional) This final evening is a great opportunity to exchange contact information with your new found friends!

**Parco dei Principi Hotel Congress & spa**  
[www.parcodeiprincipibari.it](http://www.parcodeiprincipibari.it)

### **Day 11 Departure Day(B)**

Hotel breakfast and transfer to the nearby Bari Palese airport or the next leg of your journey.

#### **Please note**

**\*All items on the itinerary and hotels are subject to availability from one departure to the next. When you request to register for a departure your exact itinerary, including hotels will be confirmed.**

**\*\* limited single rooms available**

**\*\*\* each room category has it's own Trullo so singles will have their own individual trullo, please ensure you have a working cell phone for emergencies/communication**