

PICCOLINA ADVENTURES

WALKING UNDISCOVERED PUGLIA

*Sculpted Hill-Towns, Wineries, Sunny
Beaches, Daily Hiking and Great Food.*

Does it get any better than this?



HIGHLIGHTS

- Daily walks through Puglia's diverse landscape - sparkling Mediterranean, Baroque cities, ancient olive orchards, Neolithic cave towns
- Free afternoons for exploring nearby cities on your own - perfect for culture, dining & museums
- Overnight in beautiful country farmhouses
- Stroll the lovely streets of Baroque Lecce, the "Florence of the South"
- Cheese-making demonstration with Signora Rosa in Uggiano La Chiesa
- Visit Byzantine frescoes & rupestrian cave-churches hidden in the hills outside Matera
- Relax over a glass of wine and lovely sea views on the ramparts of Otranto's castle
- Traditional cooking class - learn to make authentic Pugliese dishes and roll your pasta by hand!
- Chat with our certified Naturalist Tour Guide about anything from geology, to Greeks, to gelato

TOUR DATES:

September 23 – 30, 2014

May 25 - June 1, 2015

September 14 - 21, 2013

LENGTH:

8 days, 7 nights

DIFFICULTY:

Easy - moderate. Half-day hikes along flat to moderately hilly terrain

ARRIVING/DEPARTING:

Bari Airport or Central Station

PRICE:

\$2445

INCLUDES:

Seven nights accommodations, walks with certified Naturalist Tour Guide, private pickup and dropoff at Bari airport, transportation by private van, activities incl. professionally guided city tours, cooking class, wine tasting, daily breakfasts and six dinners (or substantial lunches) of regional specialties

ACCOMMODATIONS:

Double room with private bath in: farm guesthouses (*agriturismo*) and Bed & Breakfasts

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT:

\$345

PICCOLINA ADVENTURES

WALKING UNDISCOVERED PUGLIA

"Puglia has this authentic down-to-earth air that's both contagious and refreshing! I've never been anywhere quite like this!"
- Alex Sheldon, San Francisco

DETAILED ITINERARY

DAY 1: ARRIVAL & MATERA

Shuttle: 75 minutes

Benvenuti in Italia! We'll meet you at the Bari Airport or Bari Central Station and shuttle to Matera, one of Italy's most extraordinary cities. Lively and beautiful, Matera is the oldest continuously-inhabited city in the world! Its *sassi*, cave dwellings dug from the limestone cliffs & bedrock itself, have been inhabited since Neolithic times! They expanded into churches & villages in the Middle Ages, then were further transformed by fugitive Basilian monks who added vivid frescoes of their saints. Today the *sassi* are recognized by [UNESCO](#) for their remarkable cultural heritage. Many have been lovingly modernized by the careful addition of windows & electricity, becoming beautiful hotels and restaurants. This fascinating juxtaposition of the prehistoric, ancient and modern worlds creates a special atmosphere, unlike any in the world.

We'll have a brief orientation over refreshments and a glass of local wine, then set out to explore the city! As the evening sky darkens and the streets begin to glow a golden cream, we'll wander over to a tiny *trattoria* for our welcome dinner. Enjoy southern Italy's acclaimed tradition of farm-fresh, local cooking as plates of artisan cheeses, grilled veggies, handmade pastas, grilled meats and carafes of Matera DOC wines circle the table. *Buon appetito! Accommodations: B&B in Matera*



DAY 2: SASSI & CAVE VILLAGES

Hike: "Matera: Where Past is Present; and Present is Past"

8 miles (4 hrs) • Moderate: some uphill on dirt & rocky paths

Guided Visit: Matera's Historic Center

We start hiking today! We'll begin on a little-traveled path following a steep ravine just outside the city. Enjoy rare views of a Medieval village carved into the cliff-face - you can spot the rock-hewn houses, the sculpted facade of a cave-church and its bell-tower. Pass mysterious shallow holes, thought to be neolithic tombs. Visit a forgotten church whose Byzantine paintings are still visible after 900 years! Mel Gibson discovered this landscape while researching his 2004 film *The Passion of Christ* set in Judea 2000 years ago. He was looking for the right place to film - as soon as he saw Matera he "just went crazy

PICCOLINA ADVENTURES

WALKING UNDISCOVERED PUGLIA

"an amazing and unique experience!"
- Stevanie Wazna Blank- Berkeley

because it was so perfect" a place to shoot.

We'll return to the city at lunchtime, then meet again for a guided visit of the *sassi* dwellings and the historical city center. Visit the impressive *Cattedrale*, monastic complexes, and a plethora of *sassi* houses - including a reconstructed home from the 1950's when entire families and their farm animals lived inside. Mules slept next to their masters; chicken ran loose under the bed; and children slept in open drawers! Choose your own restaurant for dinner tonight, and enjoy the evening air over a glass of wine - you've tread across thousands of years of history today - you've earned it! Accommodations: B&B in Matera



DAY 3: SKY, SEA & STONE

Hike: "Polignano's Rocky Bluff"

5 miles (3 hrs) • Easy: flat, rocky terrain

Afternoon Visit: Alberobello

We head to the coast today! Shuttle to Polignano, a small fishing town with stunning views of the Adriatic. We set out across its rocky bluff, following a trail as beautiful as it is historic. Legends swirl through the subterranean caverns below our feet that hid sailors, pirates & refugees; a miniature fjord offers natural port to the fishermen living clustered in tiny cottages above. We'll pass shallow pools carved for the artisan production of salt, houses perched perilously atop the cliffs, and finish at the foot of a crumbling Spanish watch-tower. Enjoy the fruits of the Adriatic over lunch at a simple

trattoria in town. They serve up fresh fish caught just off the coast, homemade pastas and vegetables grown in the hills nearby.

Alberobello awaits this afternoon! This unique city is a [UNESCO](#) heritage site treasured for the conical *trulli* houses that crowd its streets. These fairy-tale-like structures have peaked rooves built of mortarless gray stone. This fairy-tale like city is a UNESCO heritage site for the conical *trulli* houses that crowd its streets. Each has a peculiar peaked roof built of mortarless gray stone. You'll find *trulli* throughout the valley, but the sheer number in Alberobello is astounding - there's even a *trulli* church! In the evening, we retire to a stately country house surrounded by olive and fruit orchards.

Agriturismo in Castellana Grotte

PICCOLINA ADVENTURES

WALKING UNDISCOVERED PUGLIA

DAY 4: VALLEY OF THE TRULLI

Hike: “Along the Pugliese Aqueduct”

5.6 miles (3 hrs) • Easy: flat dirt road

Afternoon Visit: Locorotondo

After a breakfast of fresh fruit, local bread and jams, we set out! We'll follow the Pugliese Aqueduct today, exploring both the natural & manmade aspects of Puglia's past. The longest in the world upon completion, the aqueduct carries precious water into the arid Pugliese peninsula. We'll cross its tiny stone bridges, hop canal gates, and meander past the network of controls & levies. The scenery changes often, passing from gnarled olive orchards, to terraced vineyards, to sweeping valleys dotted with *trulli*, to a few rare glimpses of ancient forest where a rare wild orchid grows.

We'll enjoy a lunch of fresh cheeses, arugula salads, homegrown fruit and wine at the beautiful Masseria Aprile. We can visit their vineyards and olive press, or just nap under a tree. In the afternoon, we drive to Locorotondo, a circular city on a hilltop full of flowering gardens and tiny staircases. You'll have the afternoon to explore, shop and sample the crisp Locorotondo DOC whites before returning to the farmhouse in the evening. *Accommodations: Agriturismo in Castellana Grotte*



DAY 5: OSTUNI & SAN BIAGIO

Hike: “Ancient Cork Trees & The Rock Sanctuary of San Biagio”

6.8 miles (4 hrs) • Easy-Moderate: modest uphill

Afternoon Visit: Ostuni



Today's walk showcases some of the lesser-visited, but no less enchanting sides of Puglia. We follow an old stone wall past olive and scrub to a frescoed sanctuary hewn from solid rock. The *Santuario Rupestre di San Biagio* stands hidden by craggy walls amid an entire village excavated from the hilltop. Basilian monks escaping persecution by the Byzantine emperor began a settlement here 1,000 years ago. Now remains of an entire village lie carved beneath the hilltop. There's a mystical silence that seems to pervade the area, which unifies various pieces of its past. We'll see a simple chapel in the romantic style, rudimentary monk cells, natural caves, and tunnels, each formed in a different era, each subject to successive rebuilding. We finish our walk near a walled farmhouse, then drive to the elegant downtown Ostuni for lunch.

You'll have the afternoon free to explore the *città bianca*, famous for its bright white houses and the

PICCOLINA ADVENTURES

WALKING UNDISCOVERED PUGLIA

stunning views from its rampart-ringed walls. In the evening we depart for Salento, the southernmost tip of the Pugliese peninsula known for hot weather, warm welcomes and good home cooking. We stay in lovely apartments just outside Otranto. *Accommodations: Agriturismo in Uggiano La Chiesa*

DAY 6: COOKING CLASS

Morning: Cooking Class, Cheese-making

Afternoon Visit: Otranto



We change pace today and indulge in a *culinary exploration*! Visit Rosa the cheese-maker who's been hand-making artisan cheeses 365 days a week for twenty years. We'll watch (and taste!) as she skillfully crafts the morning's batch of primosale and ricotta cheese. Then hop over to Maria's on the other side of town. She's ready to give us an authentic cooking class in her very own kitchen. Roll up your sleeves and have fun as we knead and roll traditional pastas by hand, learn about her famed sauces and then sit down to a delicious and rewarding lunch!

We take a stroll through Otranto in the afternoon. This seaside city sits at the easternmost point in all Italy and, historically, represented the gateway to the Middle East. It boasts one of the largest Byzantine-

Norman floor mosaics in Europe, depicting biblical scenes, warrior kings (including Alexander the Great & King Arthur!), an enormous Tree of Life, mythical beasts, pictorial representations of the Zodiac, and an esoteric series of inscribed medallions. This magnificent 12th-century work sits atop an ancient Roman crypt - and just outside the cathedral doors busy streets overflow with boutiques and restaurants - yet another example of the many layers of history visible throughout Puglia. Otranto is the perfect place to stroll, shop, grab a gelato or savor the views and a glass of wine over the sunset. *Accommodations: Agriturismo in Uggiano La Chiesa*

DAY 7: OTRANTO

Hike: "Otranto: Gateway to the East"

5.6 miles (4 hrs) • Easy - Moderate: mixed terrain

Afternoon: Porto Badisco Beach, Optional Boat tour, Optional visit to Hot Springs

Today we hike the Adriatic coast! After a breakfast of homemade



PICCOLINA ADVENTURES

WALKING UNDISCOVERED PUGLIA

cakes and dark Salento coffee, we'll walk above the sea toward a geological wonder - an emerald lake sunk into deep red Bauxite earth. We pass a crumbling watchtower, climb the Orte hill where, suddenly, the majesty of the bay may open before us. On a clear day, you can see the Albanian mountains shimmering in the distance! Enjoy a swim in these pristine waters - they're prized as some of the cleanest in Italy. Our road back ambles past a network of underground catacombs likely a Messapian sepulchre - now one of the oldest structures in the region.

You have several options for the afternoon: relax on the beach at Porto Badisco, visit the nearby spa town of Santa Cesarea with natural hot springs and healing sulfuric waters, or, weather-permitting, take a motorboat tour of the Adriatic sea caves! We'll all enjoy a farewell dinner together with our friends Gianrinaldo & Casilde at the farmhouse tonight. They skillfully prepare an array of traditional seasonal specialties for us - perhaps their grilled pepper salads, fried zucchini balls, orecchiette with slow-cooked tomato sugo and wild arugula, ribbon-shaped *sagne* pasta with fermented ricotta, grilled sausages and pork ribs, and plenty of good Salentine wine. Add a little pizzica folk music, and you may find yourself dancing long into the night! Accommodations: *Agriturismo in Uggiano La Chiesa*



DAY 8: LECCE

Guided Walk: "Lecce: The Florence of the South"

3 hours • Easy: stroll through the city streets



Our final morning we shuttle to Lecce "the Florence of the South" for a guided tour of its elegant historical center. Developed under Hapsburg rule during a flowering of arts & culture, the city bursts with delicate Baroque facades, creamy limestone *palazzi* and dozens of cafés. We visit fanciful Santa Croce church, Piazza Duomo, the stylishly *under-excavated* Roman amphitheater, learn of the city's love affair with papier-mâché, and stop an almond-milk coffee, a Salentine specialty. Our trip finishes here in Lecce and, depending on your travel plans, we can drop you at the Lecce station or drive you back to the Bari station or airport. As we head out, enjoy a last look at the sun-bleached stones and twisted olive trees of Puglia's countryside. Remember that this region doesn't quickly forget its visitors, and you will be welcomed back at any time!

PICCOLINA ADVENTURES

WALKING UNDISCOVERED PUGLIA

Being modern isn't a badge of honor [here]. Baking golden breads and shaping orecchiette—that's another story.
- Gourmet Magazine

ABOUT YOUR GUIDE

PIERO LATTARULO



Speleologist, Mapmaker, Orienteer, Hiker and Puglia native, Piero's tours are fascinating. As a certified Environmental Tour Guide for the Region of Puglia, he guides trips through its national parks for foreigners and schoolchildren, organizes field trips, instructs speleology, karstology & cartography, conducts seminars in environmental education, and has recently launched his own guiding venture. He knows the caves, ravines and cliffs of Puglia like the back of his hand. He predicts every puddle and natural bridge along Monopoli's coast, can find the only cave with Byzantine frescoes on an entire

hillside near Matera *in the dark*, and will always stop for chocolate ice cream.

WHAT TO EXPECT

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ★ Seven nights accommodation in double room in small Bed & Breakfasts and country guesthouses
- ★ Daily guided walks with a professional Naturalist Tour Guide or city specialist
- ★ Private pickup and dropoff at Bari airport or downtown station
- ★ Transportation by private van throughout tour
- ★ Activities including: cooking class, cheese-making demonstration, wine tasting, etc
- ★ Daily light Italian breakfasts, six dinners (or substantial lunches) of regional specialties and wine
- ★ Support of experienced bilingual guides
- ★ Gratuities for transfers, local guides, hotels and included restaurant meals

NOT INCLUDED

Airfare and travel to/from our starting location; lodging before/after the trip; gratuities for Piccolina Adventures guides; and personal items purchased during the trip are not included. Some meals are not included to give you the opportunity to explore local restaurants on your own. If you wish, we are happy to give you recommendations!

ITINERARY

This itinerary is an approximation of our tour. We strive to offer an extraordinary experience on your

PICCOLINA ADVENTURES

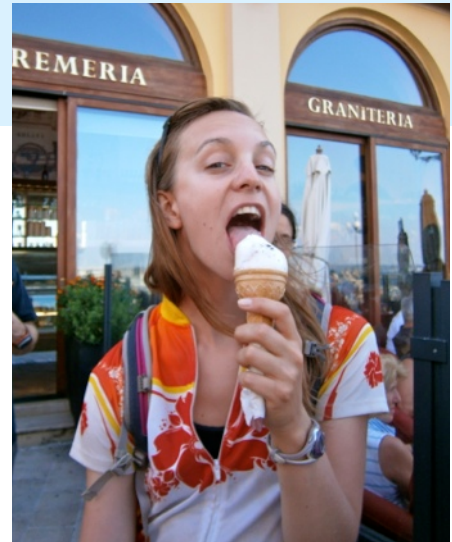
WALKING UNDISCOVERED PUGLIA

trip, and to uphold this commitment to quality, the routes, activities, lodging or other details described here may be subject to change at our discretion.

EXTENDING YOUR TRIP

Your trip finishes in Lecce (or Bari). If you have time, we recommend spending a few extra days in the area to explore on your own. There is so much to see!

- ★ **Lecce** is a luxurious and beautiful city. It is lively in the evening, making it perfect for an overnight. The city frequently hosts events in the main piazza, has great restaurants, small cafés and cozy bars. You visit it completely by foot; and it's a regional train hub with direct lines to Brindisi, Bari, Rome, and cities within the Salentine peninsula. We are happy to help you set up post-tour accommodations in Lecce.
- ★ **Bari/Brindisi** are port cities with frequent ferries to Greece, Croatia and areas of the Adriatic.
- ★ **Gargano Peninsula** is the “spur” of the Italian boot located north of Bari. It's full of stunning nature reserves and beaches. You could rent a car or vespas and explore! (Public transit doesn't run to many beaches.)
- ★ **Rome** deserves a visit if you are flying through the city. Give yourself 2 -3 days to explore as there is much to see. You may also enjoy taking a group or private walking tour.
- ★ **London** is not as far as you think! Bari offers inexpensive, direct flights for London as well as many major cities throughout Europe. See Ryanair and Easyjet websites for flight routes.



ARRIVING & DEPARTING

Suggestions on how to travel to Puglia, and meeting times are detailed in your “Getting There” document. If you need a copy, please contact us for a direct link.