

SOUTHERN ITALY
A DIVERSE CIVILIZATION AND GREAT EMPIRE

April 08 - April 14, 2026
Led by Local Guides

Southern Italy captivates visitors with its **rich history, diverse landscapes, vibrant culture, and mouthwatering cuisine**. Among its shining jewels is **Bari**, a historic port city nestled on the shimmering shores of the Adriatic Sea. Known as the “**Pearl of the Adriatic**,” Bari perfectly blends ancient heritage, seaside charm, and warm southern hospitality.

Further south lies **Lecce**, often called the “**Florence of the South**” for its extraordinary artistic legacy and breathtaking Baroque architecture. Every corner of this city is a masterpiece, where ornate churches and elegant palazzi tell stories of centuries past. On the Ionian coast, **Gallipoli** dazzles as the **gem of Salento**, one of Puglia’s most captivating destinations. Its name means “**Beautiful City**” in Greek, and Gallipoli truly lives up to this promise with its sparkling turquoise waters, historic old town, and vibrant waterfront life. **Explore Southern Italy and immerse yourself in a world where history, culture, and natural beauty intertwine seamlessly.**

Ihab Zaki
Managing Director

Wednesday, April 08
Arrive in Bari (ITALY)



Upon arrival **Bari airport**, meet and transfer to the *Oriente Hotel* or similar for check-in, and overnight.

Thursday, April 09
Bari (Matera)



After breakfast, depart for **Matera**, famed worldwide for its ‘**Sassi**’, ancient cave dwellings carved directly into the limestone rock. These prehistoric troglodyte settlements are believed to be among Italy’s first human habitations, offering a unique glimpse into early civilization. Wander through narrow, winding streets where houses are hewn from stone, and pathways pass over neighboring homes’ roofs in fascinating sections, creating a labyrinthine cityscape that seems frozen in time. Matera’s distinctive appearance resembles the ancient cities surrounding Jerusalem, a quality that has captivated filmmakers and made it a favorite location for international cinema. Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Matera is a testament to human resilience and creativity across millennia. Enjoy some free time to savor a local snack, explore the atmospheric alleys, or soak in the ambiance before returning to Bari and the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B)**

Friday, April 10
Bari (Castel del Monte, Trani, & Molfetta)



After breakfast, depart for a visit to the iconic **Castel del Monte**, a stunning fortress built around 1240 during the reign of **Emperor Frederick II**, one of the most intriguing and enigmatic rulers of the medieval world. Frederick's vision brought about this extraordinary structure known as ‘**Stupor Mundi** (the Wonder of the World)’ for his exceptional intellect and far-reaching cultural knowledge. Castel del Monte, with its **distinct octagonal shape** and sophisticated design, reflects the emperor’s love for mathematics and architecture, making it a true **masterpiece of medieval engineering**.

Continue the journey to the charming coastal town of **Trani**, renowned for its **Cathedral by the Sea**. Perched on the edge of the Adriatic, this **Romanesque gem** is a striking symbol of the city’s historical significance and maritime heritage. As you walk around the Cathedral, enjoy panoramic views of the glistening Sea and the ancient harbor, offering a perfect blend of spirituality and seafaring history. Enjoy lunch at leisure, perhaps sampling some of Trani’s famous seafood dishes, then in the afternoon, stop in the charming and lesser-known town of **Molfetta**. With its picturesque old historic city, scenic **seafront**, and deep-rooted **maritime traditions**, Molfetta offers an authentic glimpse into traditional southern Italian life. Wander through its winding streets, relax by the harbor, or explore the **medieval Cathedral** overlooking the Sea. Return to **Bari** in the late afternoon for a leisurely evening to enjoy this vibrant coastal city and overnight at the *Hotel*. **(B)**

Saturday, April 11

Bari - Polignano a Mare - Alberobello - Lecce



After breakfast, depart for the captivating town of **Polignano a Mare**, one of Puglia's most stunning coastal gems. Set dramatically atop limestone cliffs overlooking the sparkling Adriatic Sea, Polignano a Mare is famous for its crystal-clear waters, scenic coves, and picturesque streets. Wander through the charming old town, where whitewashed buildings cling to the cliffs, and enjoy sweeping coastline views from every angle. The town’s natural beauty and historic charm make it a true Mediterranean paradise.

Continue the journey to **Alberobello**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site known for its unique trulli, small, whitewashed stone huts with conical roofs. These quaint structures, dating back centuries, were initially built using the dry-stone technique to avoid the heavy taxes imposed by the Kingdom of Naples. As we stroll through the trulli-lined streets, we will feel transported to a fairy-

tale landscape, where history and tradition come alive. After exploring Alberobello's magic, continue the drive to **Lecce**, often referred to as the "Florence of the South" for its stunning Baroque architecture and artistic heritage. Upon arrival, transfer to *Delle Palme Hotel* or similar, for check-in and overnight. **(B)**

Sunday, April 12

Lecce - Gallipoli - Lecce



After breakfast, embark on a guided exploration of **Lecce**, often dubbed the "**Florence of the South**" for its exquisite Baroque art and architecture. This historic city, ornate facades and intricate stonework, blossomed in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, creating a unique and harmonious blend of style and grace. The tour begins with a visit to the **Church of San Oronzo**, dedicated to Lecce's patron saint, where we will admire the elegant design and rich history. Next, discover the **Basilica of Santa Croce**, a masterpiece of Baroque architecture renowned for its stunning facade adorned with intricate carvings, and the magnificent **Palazzo Celestini**, a grand building that showcases the beauty of Lecce's noble heritage.

At the **corner of Piazza San Oronzo**, pause to admire the **Roman amphitheater**, a remarkable relic from the 2nd century AD that once hosted gladiatorial contests and public spectacles. Nearby, also see the **Column of San Oronzo**, a towering 95 feet high monument crowned by a statue that offers historical significance and a commanding view of the city. After a morning immersed in Lecce's Baroque splendor, continue the journey with a drive to **Gallipoli**, often referred to as the "**Pearl of the Ionian Sea**". This stunning coastal town is famous for its historic old town, nestled on a small island connected to the mainland by a bridge. Walk through the narrow, cobbled streets of the old city, surrounded by ancient walls that overlook the shimmering Ionian Sea, and experience the timeless charm of its fishing harbors and medieval architecture. In the late afternoon, drive back to **Lecce** and back to the hotel for a free afternoon at leisure and overnight. **(B)**

Monday, April 13

Lecce - Ostuni - Bari



After breakfast, depart for a visit to **Ostuni**, famously known as "**La Città Bianca**" (The White City). Perched gracefully on a hilltop, Ostuni is one of the most picturesque towns in **Puglia**, offering a captivating blend of history, culture, and breathtaking landscapes. The town is celebrated for its **whitewashed houses**, which gleam in the sunlight, creating a stunning contrast against

the surrounding lush greenery and the deep blue Adriatic Sea in the distance. Wander through the narrow, winding medieval streets, where each corner reveals charming pizzas, hidden courtyards, and views that seem to stretch endlessly over the hills. The historic old town exudes an air of timeless elegance, and the **Cathedral of Ostuni** stands proudly as a testament to the town's rich architectural heritage. Continue the journey to **Bari**, the vibrant capital of the Apulia region and upon arrival transfer to *Oriente Hotel* or a similar for check-in. The rest of the day is yours to explore at leisure, whether you would like to stroll along the **Bari Vecchia** (Old Town), relax by the **seafront promenade**, or simply enjoy the city's lively atmosphere. Overnight at the *Hotel*. **(B)**

Tuesday, April 14

Bari - USA

OR Continue to CYPRUS



After breakfast transfer to the airport for your flight back to the US. **(B)**

"We reserve the right to change the order of activities/visits or sites due to unexpected events beyond our control. We will do our best to ensure that any necessary changes are made when/if needed to meet the needs of our clients".



Tour Cost (Land Only): \$4,495.00

Per person sharing in double occupancy

Single Supplement: \$995.00

*Price based on minimum of 4 participants
and maximum of 8 participants*

Trip Grade: I Lodge Level: ****



Tour Includes:

- Airport/Hotel/Airport transfers with assistance.
- Accommodation at hotels as per the itinerary (based on 3-4-star categories or best available).
- Meals as per the itinerary (B: Breakfast, L: Lunch and D: Dinner).
- Sightseeing in each city as per the itinerary.
- Bottled water on the bus during touring days.
- Luxury air-conditioned vehicle on tour.
- Qualified and licensed English-speaking guide.
- Entrance fees to all mentioned sites and museums.

Tour does not include:

- International air USA - Bari / Bari - USA.
- Italian Visa (currently gratis for US citizens).
- Beverages, with or without meals and meals not mentioned.
- Items of a personal nature (camera fees, laundry, excess luggage, etc.).
- Transfers if not arriving/departing on scheduled tour dates.
- Dayroom/overnights necessitated by changes in airline schedules or misconnections.
- City taxes payable by guests to the hotels at check-in time €1.50 to €4.00 pp/night (subject to change).
- Any fluctuations in the exchange rate to the Euro.
- Trip surcharge to operate below required minimum participants.
- Gratuities to drivers, guides, restaurant staff, etc.
- Travel protection insurance. (Recommended)

Trip Grade:

I Easy – Reasonably paced sightseeing, easy walking, and leisurely days. No physical challenges.

Lodging Level:

******-*****Luxury:** Regular style - usually large hotels, typical western standard with ample venues and full amenities (4 or 5 stars).

