

Hidden Treasures of Puglia & Matera

Tour Style: European centre based

Destination: Italy

Trip code: PULCL

2 & 3



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

A wonderful mix of guided walking and sightseeing to explore Puglia – a charming and relatively undiscovered part of Italy which has been home to multiple empires and cultures who have all left their architectural mark. Traditional Trulli houses with their appealing stone walls and cone-shaped roofs dot the landscape while the partially abandoned town of Matera is famed for its 'Sassi' cave dwellings, hewn out of the soft tufa cliffs. We'll visit the unusual octagonal-shaped Castel del Monte and set foot in Alta Murgia National Park - Italy's last example of Mediterranean steppe, rich in flora and fauna.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- A full programme of guided walks with two options every walking day
- All transport to and from walks
- The services of experienced HF Holidays' leaders
- "With flight" holidays include return flights from the UK and hotel transfers
- 7 nights' accommodation in en-suite rooms
- Half Board – continental breakfast and evening meal

HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Discover an area of Italy that is still relatively undiscovered and fringed by mountains and turquoise seas
- Walk through the rolling landscapes of the Alta Murgia National Park, dotted with ancient towns steeped in history
- Uncover rural charm and rich culinary heritage by its quaint trattorias and great food
- Visit the Sassi at Matera, UNESCO listed cave dwellings lived in until the 1960s
- Socialise in the evenings when the town comes alive, Italian-style

TRIP SUITABILITY

This is a level 2 and level 3 graded Activity, Easier walks: 5 to 8 miles (8-13km) on a mixture of good paths and tracks. Up to 1,200 feet (360m) of ascent in a day. Harder walks: 5 to 11 miles (8-17.5km) on a mixture of paths and tracks with some rocky sections. Up to 1,400 feet (420m) of ascent in a day.



ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival Day

Welcome to Hotel San Nicola. Unpack and settle in.

Day 2: Altamura And The Pulo

Today both groups will visit the nearby national park of Alta Murgia to see one of its most spectacular features. Before the walks we visit the Altamura Man exhibition. During both walks we will visit the 'Pulo' of Altamura, one of the largest dolines (sink holes) in Italy. The caves in this cliff-lined depression were once home to prehistoric man and we may have a chance to descend into one of the caves to view the doline from the cliffs. The area is a haven for wildlife and flowers, and you may see species of butterfly, orchid, crocus and cyclamen.

Option 1 - Altamura & The Pulo

Distance: 7 miles (11km)

Total ascent: 500 feet (150m)

In summary: We'll start close to the Pulo and, after exploring the northern rim of the depression, will visit a cave dwelling. We will then descend out of the National Park, first more steeply across the limestone, then on gravel paths, through fields of grain, almond and olive groves, towards Altamura.

Highlight: The spectacular Pulo, the largest dolinbe in southern Italy.

Option 2 - Altamura & The Pulo Extended

Distance: 10 miles (16km)

Total ascent: 500 feet (150m)

In summary: The harder walk starts a little further north of the Pulo. We'll take a longer walk among typical Murgia scenery towards the Pulo, visiting the depression and the caves. We return to our hotel by the same route as the easier walk.

Highlight: Visit the 'Altamura Man' exhibition about the preserved Genus Homo remains found in a cave near Altamura.

Day 3: Matera And The Sassi

Both groups will travel to the World Heritage Site of Matera, about 11 miles from our hotel. We start from the Jazzo Gattini Visitor Centre outside the town and walk through the limestone scenery on the north of the deep Matera ravine. We visit a number of ancient rock churches and other antiquities and enjoy spectacular views across the ravine to the city. Our picnic lunch is then taken at the Jazzo, where welcome shade, drinks & toilets are available, together with the opportunity to browse local historical exhibits (payable locally).

We then travel to the town at the south side of the ravine, where there is an opportunity to visit more troglodyte houses and churches in Matera. Alternatively, enjoy a drink in a local bar, or explore the town independently.

Matera was selected as European City of Culture for 2019. The whole group will follow the same route accompanied by an experienced and knowledgeable local guide.

Day 4: Alta Murgia And Castel Del Monte

Today we visit our second World Heritage Site of the week. Castel del Monte stands as a beacon to beckon us forwards.

Option 1 - Castel Del Monte

Distance: 5 miles (8km)

Total ascent: 600 feet (180m)

In summary: This walk starts to the east of the castle and wanders on good tracks through olive groves and past many whitewashed 'Trulli' houses. Hopefully there will be an opportunity for lunch and drinks to be enjoyed at a remote farmhouse, before ascending to the castle itself, where there will be some time to visit the inside of the castle (payable locally) to speculate on the many oddities of its construction.

Highlight: View Castel del Monte - a World Heritage Site that was completed in 1250

Option 2 - Alta Murgia And Castel Del Monte

Distance: 9 miles (14½km)

Total distance: 800 feet (240m)

In summary: The Harder walk begins near the small hamlet of San Magno, southeast of the castle and takes a longer route on good tracks throughout to reach Castel del Monte. This route crosses the heart of the park and offers a chance to see the characteristic vegetation and agriculture of the limestone soils, before joining the route of the easier group. After lunch there may be time for an early afternoon drink at a farm. We can enjoy the panoramic views from the castle, before descending to our end point where we can enjoy a drink with the Easier group.

Highlight: Our route to the castle takes us through beautiful scenery - enhanced in the spring by wonderful wildflowers.

Day 5: Free Day

Each week there is a free day when no guided walks are offered. This is an ideal opportunity to relax around the hotel, walk independently or visit local places of interest. Some options for your free day may include:

Altamura: You may like to explore the historic town of Altamura, with its spectacular cathedral, archaeological museum, market, shops and ancient walls.

Alberobello: Alternatively, you may like to join an organised visit to the pretty World Heritage town and tourist hotspot of Alberobello, with its whitewashed 'Trulli' houses.

Bari: Easily reached by public transport, this old town and port contains many buildings of historical interest. Puglia's capital contains many churches but the most well known is the 11th century Romanesque Basilica de San Nicola, dedicated to St Nicholas, also known as Santa Claus. There are also many art galleries and, more recently, the futuristic football stadium was a venue for the 1990 World Cup.

Day 6: Gravina In Puglia

Today both groups will enjoy a circular walk from the town of Gravina in Puglia. We walk through archaeological areas occupied from the 5th century BC, amongst olive groves and pastures used by grazing goats. We can also enjoy far reaching views across the town and beyond. On our return we visit archaeological complexes accompanied by a guide.

Option 1 - Gravina In Puglia & Botromagno Hill

Distance: 7 miles (11km)

Total ascent: 800 feet (240m)

In summary: From the centre of Gravina we make our way across an ancient aqueduct to the far side of the ravine. We ascend Botromagno Hill, site of an Iron Age hill fort, to a plateau where we can explore several archaeological sites. Our walk takes us along tracks and paths with lovely views. On our return to Gravina, we visit the amazing Sotteranea archaeological complex before exploring the town and perhaps enjoying refreshments.

Highlight: We'll use an English-speaking guide to tour the Sotteranea - a fascinating underground complex.

Option 2 - Gravina In Puglia, Serra Pendino And Botromagno Hill

Distance: 7½ miles (12km)

Total ascent: 1,100 feet (330m)

In summary: The harder walk starts to the south of Gravina and follows tracks and quiet lanes, traversing the flanks of the Serra Pendino and walking gently uphill to reach the plateau of Botromagno, where it joins part of the route of the easier walk. There are opportunities to visit some of the archaeological remains on the plateau before descending to Gravina and joining the easier party to visit the Sottoranea complex and maybe have refreshments.

Highlight: The summit of Botromagno Hill features the remains of an Iron Age fort.

Day 7: Mercadante Forest

Today's walks in the Mercadante Forest provide a contrast to the open landscape of the limestone plateau.

Option 1 - Jazzo And Masseria

Distance: 6 miles (9½km)

Total ascent: 400 feet (120m)

In summary: Our route starts in the forest taking us through the northern edge of this woodland and out to open heathland. We continue to a deserted 'jazzo' before our route heads back into the woods and returns us to the taverna.

Highlight: This 'artificial' forest is home to many species of birds

Option 2 - Mercadante Forest Exploration

Distance: 9 miles (14½km)

Total ascent: 400 feet (120m)

In summary: We follow the same route as the easier walk to the deserted 'jazzo'. From here we will continue south of the forest before heading back into the woodland to join the easier party for refreshments.

Highlight: We find a peaceful and sun-dappled spot perfect for a picnic lunch.

Day 8: Departure Day

We hope to see you again soon.

ACCOMMODATION

Hotel San Nicola - Puglia

The 4-star Hotel San Nicola is located in the heart of the old town of Altamura just 150 metres from Federico's Cathedral. A former palace built in 1741 as the residence of the Cagnazzi family, the hotel has 24 comfortable bedrooms, 24 hour reception, bar and restaurant and free Wi-Fi throughout. Take the opportunity to sample the local Focaccia de Altamura from a nearby bakery which has been producing bread since 1421.

Rooms

There are 24 modern en-suite bedrooms.

All bedrooms are equipped with a:

- Phone
- Air conditioning

- Flat screen
- TV
- Minibar
- Complimentary toiletries
- Hairdryer

About Your Stay

The hotel has:

- 24-hour reception
- Room service
- Laundry
- Ironing and dry cleaning service (extra charge)

Food & Drink

Holidays at Altamura are Half Board with continental breakfast and evening meals at two of Altamura's restaurants.

Breakfast

Continental buffet breakfast: this is served from 7am in the courtyard dining room. This will include cereals, fruit juices, yoghurt, fresh fruit, cheeses/meats, selection of breads and croissants, jams, tea and coffee.

Lunch (Payable Locally)

Packed lunches can be bought from the local shops a few minutes from the hotel and can also be purchased from the hotel.

Evening Meal

One of the highlights of this holiday is that our guests dine out in Altamura at a local restaurant that serves local dishes and specialities. A 3-course dinner will be served at the Tre Archi Restaurant every evening except on Saturdays and Wednesdays when we will be dining at the newly refurbished restaurant at Hotel San Nicola.

This restaurant is within easy walking distance of our hotel and guests can experience the "passiagata", an Italian tradition where the locals with their families and friends walk out in the evening socialising, and take in this unique atmosphere.

Your Evenings

The friendly atmosphere of our holidays continues into the evening.

Most of our socialising at Altamura is over a relaxed meal, opportunity to talk about your day with your fellow guests and sample some local wines and dishes. See the town come alive in the evening with all the local families walking out, treating their children to ice creams and just sitting over a coffee.

TRAVEL DETAILS

THE HASSLE FREE OPTION

Book your holiday 'with flight' from Gatwick to Bari airport. For flight times and prices please see the Dates & Prices tab.

If you choose this option we automatically include return transfers between the airport and the hotel. The coach transfer takes approx 1 hour to the Hotel San Nicola.

Our hotel is based within the historic walled old town of Altamura, as buses are unable to access this area you will be dropped off just outside in the Piazza Unita and enter the town on foot via the archway, Porta Bari. Here you will get your first glimpse of this fascinating town on the short walk to the hotel San Nicola.

THE FLEXIBLE TRAVEL OPTION

Alternatively, tailor your journey to suit you by booking your holiday 'without flight' allowing you the freedom to book your own flights from your local airport.

If you choose this option, transfers are not included in the price. However, below are some suggestions to help you reach your destination:

- We can book you a seat on the **HF Holidays' transfer coach** from Bari airport. This is timed to meet the HF Holidays' flights* (provisional flight times can be found on the dates and prices tab or you can call us on 020 8732 1220 for more information). Cost per single journey is £21.50
- Why not let us book you a **private taxi transfer** at a cost of £110 per single taxi journey?

Transfers must be pre-booked. Please call 020 8732 1220 for more details

* Please note that HF Holidays is not responsible for your onward travel if you fail to meet the transfer coach

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

Essential Information

Passport Requirements

You may need to renew your British passport if you're travelling from 1 January 2021.

On the day you travel, you'll need your passport to both:

- have at least 6 months left
- be less than 10 years old (even if it has 6 months or more left)

Use the [government website](#) to see if your passport is valid for this holiday

EHIC Cards

The UK government has officially launched the Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC), which will replace the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). UK residents can now apply for one of the GHIC cards, which will gradually replace the EHIC cards as they reach their expiry dates. Every family member travelling requires a GHIC. You can make an application for yourself and on behalf of your partner and any dependent children under the age of 16. Both cards will offer equivalent protection for emergency and medically necessary healthcare needs when in the EU on a temporary stay, which includes holiday, study and business travel. Necessary healthcare includes things like

- emergency treatment and visits to A&E
- treatment for long-term or pre-existing medical conditions
- routine medical care for pre-existing conditions that need monitoring
- oxygen and kidney dialysis

The public only need to apply for their free GHIC cards when their current EHIC expires. The process is likely to

take two weeks. For more information visit <https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/apply-for-a-free-uk-global-health-insurance-card-ghic/>.

The GHIC is not an alternative to travel insurance. We advise all holidaymakers to also invest in travel insurance that covers healthcare, so they are covered for other issues that may arise, as well as cancellations and lost luggage.

Essential Equipment

To enjoy walking/hiking comfortably and safely, footwear, clothing and equipment needs to be suitable for the conditions. Safety and comfort are our priorities, so our advice is to come prepared for all eventualities.

- Footwear with a good grip on the sole (e.g. Vibram sole) is the key to avoiding accidents.
- Walking/hiking boots providing ankle support and good grip are recommended (ideally worn in), and specialist walking socks to avoid blisters.
- Several layers of clothing, which can be added or removed, are better than a single layer (include spares).
- Fabrics (lightweight and fast drying) designed for the outdoors are recommended.
- Waterproof jacket and waterproof over trousers.
- Warm hat and gloves.
- Denim jeans and capes are not suitable on any walks.
- Rucksack with a waterproof liner.
- Thermos flask for hot drink.
- Water bottle (at least 2 litre).
- Spare high-energy food such as a chocolate bar.
- Small torch.
- First aid kit – your leader's first aid kit doesn't contain any medication or blister kits (such as Compeed).
- Sun hat and sunglasses
- Sun cream.

Optional Equipment

- Walking poles are useful, particularly for descents.
- Insect repellent.
- Camera.
- Gaiters.

Useful Information

The language of Puglia and Sorrento Peninsula is Italian.

Tap water is considered safe to drink, but if you prefer, bottled mineral water can be purchased from the hotel or local supermarkets.

If the international number you wish to call starts with a 0, you must drop the starting digit when dialling the number.

To dial a UK number 0044

To dial an Italian number 0039

Local Currency

The currency of both Puglia and Sorrento Peninsula is the Euro.

Electricity

220 Volt AC with round two pin plugs; you will need an adaptor for any appliances brought from the UK.

ATM Availability

There are several ATM machines in Altamura and several ATM machines in Sorrento where you can obtain money.

HOW TO BOOK

When you're ready to book, you can choose to **book online** or book **over the phone**. Our website offers secure online booking for our holidays, is available 24/7, and offers more in-depth information about all our holidays. If you prefer to call us, our experienced and knowledgeable team are available to answer any specific questions you have and can offer guidance as to which holiday is best suited to your needs.

Our office is open: Monday to Friday: 9am – 5.30pm, Saturday: 9am – 1pm, Sunday & Bank Holiday Monday: closed

PAYING YOUR DEPOSIT

To secure the holiday of your choice, you will need to pay a deposit: UK & European Holidays: £150 per person and Worldwide Holidays: £250 per person. You can pay your deposit by debit or credit card with no additional card fees charged or make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account, please see details under BACS payments. You can also pay your deposit by cheque within seven days of booking. Cheques should be made payable to 'HF Holidays Ltd' with your booking reference / Order ID on the back.

NON-MEMBER FEE

Non-members can join our holidays by paying a Non-Member's fee of £30 per person per holiday. Alternatively, full membership is available from £100 – visit hfholidays.co.uk/membership for details.

BACS PAYMENTS

Please quote your booking reference / Order ID when you make your payment online: Bank Name: National Westminster Bank, Account Name: HF Holidays Limited, Account Number: 48904805, Sort Code: 60-00-01, IBAN: GB90NWBK60000148904805

Once we have received your booking and deposit, we will send a confirmation invoice to the lead name. Please check this carefully. For bookings 'with flights' it is essential that the names on your booking confirmation invoice match those on your passport for bookings overseas. Please advise us immediately of any errors. Any name changes after the balance of your holiday has been paid will be subject to a fee levied by the airline.

MANAGE MY BOOKINGS

Payments can also be made through the Manage My Booking function on our website. Click on the link at the top of our homepage. This is available to all customers who provide an email address at the time of booking.

YOUR FINAL BALANCE

The balance is due 10 weeks before departure. As with paying your deposit, you can pay your final balance by debit or credit card, make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account or pay by cheque.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is an important part of any booking and essential for one of our holidays. HF Holidays works with specialist. Insurance Brokers Campbell Irvine Direct. For more information or to obtain a quote call them on 01702 427 236 or visit hfholidays.co.uk/insurance

PEACE OF MIND

ATOL:

The air holidays and flights in this brochure are ATOL-protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 710. In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid us for advance bookings. For further information visit the ATOL website atol.org.uk

MEMBER OF ABTOT:

HF Holidays is a member of ABTOT (The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited) which provides financial protection under the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 for HF Holidays Ltd and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for the following: 1. non-flight packages commencing in and returning to the UK; 2. non-flight packages commencing and returning to a country other than the UK; 3. flight inclusive packages that commence outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland, which are sold to customers outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland. 1, 2 and 3 provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled. 1 and 3 provides for repatriation. Please note that bookings made outside the UK and Republic of Ireland are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with HF Holidays Ltd.

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

PRICE GUARANTEE

We promise that our earliest published prices will always be the best and if we reduce our holiday price after your booking has been confirmed, we will pass this reduction on to you. Our price promise applies if any subsequent offer price is for an identical holiday, duration, location and date and does not cover any optional extras, flights or additional services.

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