



THE TRAVEL CLUB

Pre-Departure Itinerary

Puglia

Italy's land of Mysteries

Wednesday, July 14 – Thursday, July 22, 2010

Perhaps Italy's most intriguing and unexplored area, **Puglia** is a fascinating combination of history, unique architectural styles and unspoiled sandy beaches. From its enviable location on the heel of the boot, facing the **Ionian** and **Adriatic seas**, Puglia is unlike many of the places you've already seen in Italy. Over the centuries this coastal province was invaded, conquered and colonized by the Greeks, Saracens, Normans and Spanish—each leaving its' indelible and delightful mark in the form of opulent Norman cathedrals, fortified castles, Baroque splendor and kasbah-like living areas. You'll stay in **Conversano**, a charming historical town and a "citta d'arte" and enjoy excursions designed to introduce you to this unique and beautiful region including the hill town of **Ostuni** with its dazzling white-washed buildings, the picturesque cone-shaped houses called the **Trulli of Alberobello** and **Castel del Monte**, a medieval manor, both of which are listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. From **Trani**, on the Adriatic coast, to **Locorotondo** (reminiscent of Jerusalem) and baroque **Lecce**, known as the "Florence of the south," to **Matera** with its cut-in-rock architecture that provided the backdrop to Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, Puglia hidden secrets are yours to discover.

Includes

- Round-trip regularly scheduled Alitalia Airlines flights from Boston to Bari, via Rome
- Seven night's four-star accommodations: Grand Hotel D'Aragona, Conversano
- Fourteen meals: seven buffet breakfasts, seven dinners
- One cooking demonstration, one wine tasting
- Round-trip, private airport/hotel transfers with assistance
- Services of professional local Tour Manager

Rates

\$1,999 per person double occupancy

\$2,309 for single reservations

Triple accommodations may be available upon request. Add \$365 for current air taxes, fees, charges and surcharges. Passport required.

Accommodations

Grand Hotel D'Aragona

Via San Donato 5
70014 Conversano, Italy
+39 080 495 2344

The "Grand Hotel d'Aragona" is a four star property, surrounded by a beautiful park, situated in Conversano, a historical town in the south of Bari and a traditional center of culture and art.

FEATURES:

Full-day excursion to Locorotondo and Ostuni, half-day excursion to Alberobello including cooking demonstration and light lunch in a traditional trullo, half-day excursion to Castel del Monte and Trani with wine-tasting at Rivera winery, excursion to Matera, excursion to Lecce.

DAILY ITINERARY

Day 1: July 14 Departure from Boston

Departure from Boston this evening for you overnight flight to Rome.

Day 2: July 15 Arrive Rome connect to Bari – transfer to Conversano

Upon arrival in Rome transfer to your domestic flight to Bari. Once at the Bari airport you will be met and, transferred by motor coach, to the **Hotel D'Aragona in Conversano**. In the afternoon, there will be an orientation meeting to acquaint you with the program's itinerary. Dinner at the hotel this evening with beverages included. **(D)**

Day 3: July 16 Locorotondo

Depart this morning for **Locorotondo**, a hill town with concentric streets lined with whitewashed buildings. Locorotondo's nickname is the balcony of the Valle D'Itria because of its stunning valley views. Next visit the town

of **Ostuni**, resting on three hills it presents the visitor with the completely unique fairytale vision of shining whitewashed buildings standing out against the clear blue sky. Return to the hotel, dinner and overnight **(B,D)**

Day 4: July 17 Alberobello

This morning depart for an excursion to Alberobello. Here you will see a fairy-tale landscape, populated by tens of thousands of "trulli", cone-shaped dwellings unique to this region, and unique in the world. These coneshaped houses take you back in time to a traditional simple country life style. Alberobello is listed in the UNESCO as a world heritage site. You will partake in a cooking demonstration in a trullo followed by a light lunch with wine and home made limoncello. Return to hotel for dinner and overnight. **(B,L,D)**

Day 5: July 18 Castel del Monte

Depart this morning for an excursion to Castel del Monte, an UNESCO world heritage site. **Castel del Monte** is a 13th century octagonal castle situated in the Apulia region. It was built by the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II some time between 1240 and 1250; it has been despoiled of its interior marbles and furnishings in subsequent centuries. It has neither a moat or a drawbridge and might in fact never have been intended as a defensive fortress. Next transfer to the Rivera winery for a wine tasting along with local specialties. In the afternoon proceed on to Trani a picturesque town on the Adriatic sea. Return to the hotel for dinner and overnight. **(B,D)**

Day 6: July 19 Matera

Your excursion today takes you to Matera; one of the most extraordinary spots on earth for its outstanding example of a troglodyte settlement (cave dwellings) in the Mediterranean region. For its resemblance to the Jerusalem of 2000 years ago, Matera is a perfect venue for film producers to shot their works; among the most recent Mel Gibson with his "Passion of the Christ." Return to the hotel for dinner and overnight. **(B,D)**

Day 7: July 20 Lecce

Depart this morning to Lecce, Puglia's Baroque Pearl. Due to the richness of it's setting, Lecce can be defined as an elegant, sumptuous, open-air exhibition of baroque art. It has countless monuments, one of Italy's most beautiful squares, the Piazza del Duomo and a Roman amphitheatre. before returning to the hotel for dinner and overnight. **(B,D)**

Day 8: July 21 Conversano- Day of Leisure

Today is yours to do whatever you wish. You might try a swim in the hotel's Olympic size pool or enjoy one of the beautiful beaches along the Adriatic Sea or continue exploring the charming town of Conversano at your own pace. **(B,D)**

Day 9: July 22 Depart for Home

Transfer by motorcoach to the Bari airport for our flight back to Boston via Rome. **(B)**

Proof of Citizenship: *US citizens require a passport with at least six months' validity for entry into Italy. Passports are the responsibility of the traveler.*

PLEASE NOTE: *This pre-departure itinerary is designed to give you an idea of how this itinerary is structured. We reserve the right to make any changes to your final itinerary if deemed necessary, at any time prior to departure.*

PLEASE NOTE: *This is not your final itinerary. You will receive final documents (itinerary, tickets (if applicable), etc.) approximately 2–3 weeks prior to departure. Although we try our best to ensure that information is accurate at the time of publication, we are not responsible for any error, omission, misprint or liability that results from the use (or misuse) of this information.*