

PUGLIA

WALKS



[ENG]

PUGLIA

Walks

Puglia has an ancient vocation and tradition as a land of transit, representing a meeting point between East and West. Over the course of its history, dating back thousands of years, this Italian region has borne witness to countless travellers, merchants and pilgrims passing through, all of whom brought different languages, cultures and stories, creating a kaleidoscopic identity which today characterises the area.

History, culture, spirituality and nature lie at the heart of these Walks around Puglia. By following the Via Francigena to the south, travellers, whether on foot, by bike or on horseback, can follow in the footsteps of the ancient pilgrims headed for Jerusalem, or they can follow the Cammino Materano and immerse themselves in the deep-rooted traditions of this land.

Heading down country roads and ancient “tratturi” (sheep tracks), passing through small villages and cities of art, following the coast that looks out towards the East, experiencing the colours of the landscape and the stories told by local architecture, all at a blissfully slow pace, travellers can truly discover the most authentic side to this region. A land that's full of surprises, and one which, step after step, reveals itself and tells its own story, in all its glory.

THE VIA FRANCIGENA

The Via Francigena is a Cultural Route recognised by the Council of Europe, with its last, southernmost leg starting from Rome and reaching Santa Maria di Leuca, Italy's *Finibus Terrae*. During the Middle Ages, pilgrims from all over Europe followed this route, to reach the ports from where they would set sail for the Holy Land. It retraces some historic roads from Roman times, winding its way across more than 900 km, through the regions of Lazio, Molise, Campania, Basilicata and Puglia. Walkers here can enjoy an extraordinary variety of landscapes and a vast cultural heritage.

In Puglia, the route was rebuilt thanks to the contribution of some historical "*itineraria*" (this Latin term referred to a path, devised by a traveller to reach a location, no matter how far away, and was created by combining different stretches of several roads or "*viae*"). These included the ***Itinearium Burdigalense*** dating back to 333 AD and those of Nikulas Munkathvera in 1151-1154, Philip Augustus of France in 1191, an anonymous Englishman in 1344-1345, Mariano di Nanni da Siena in 1431, Anselmo and, lastly, Giovanni Adorno in 1470-1471.

The Via Francigena currently enters our region in Celle San Vito/Faeto and reaches Troia. From here, it splits into two different paths: the ancient **Via Traiana** and the charming **Via Michaelica**. They are reunited in Bari, thanks to the connection provided by the **Via Litoranea**. Following the Adriatic coast, you then first reach Brindisi and then follow the **Via Traiana Calabra**, down to Otranto. Just a few more legs and the journey is complete: from Leuca, on a clear day, western Europe can look out towards the East.



www.viefrancigene.org
www.viefrancigenedelsud.it

A group of four hikers is seen from behind, walking along a reddish-brown dirt path that winds through a lush green field. The hikers are wearing backpacks and hats, suggesting a long walk. In the background, a dense forest of green trees covers a hillside under a clear blue sky.

THE CAMMINO MATERANO

The Cammino Materano is a slow-paced itinerary that follows historical trails and ancient “tratturi” (sheep tracks). Walkers can start from the Basilica of St. Nicholas in Bari, from the cathedral of St. Nicholas the Pilgrim in Trani, from the Via Appia column in Brindisi or from the cathedral of St. Mary in Termoli, eventually reaching the “Madonna della Bruna” Cathedral in Matera: a journey between Puglia and Basilicata, both with an ancient vocation and tradition as lands of transit. Over the course of their history, dating back thousands of years, these regions have seen countless pilgrims pass through, coming from all over the Mediterranean and beyond. Four walks (plus a fifth, the Via Lucana, which connects Matera to Paestum) along which you can discover the rich cultural heritage of Puglia and Basilicata, made up of cathedrals, medieval villages, cave churches and Greek and Roman remains, not to mention the farms, “trulli” (dry stone huts), small dry stone walls and the extraordinary cuisine, boasting genuine flavours based on true countryside traditions.



www.camminomaterano.it

"Walking implies that, with every step we take, a certain aspect of the world changes, and also that something changes inside us."

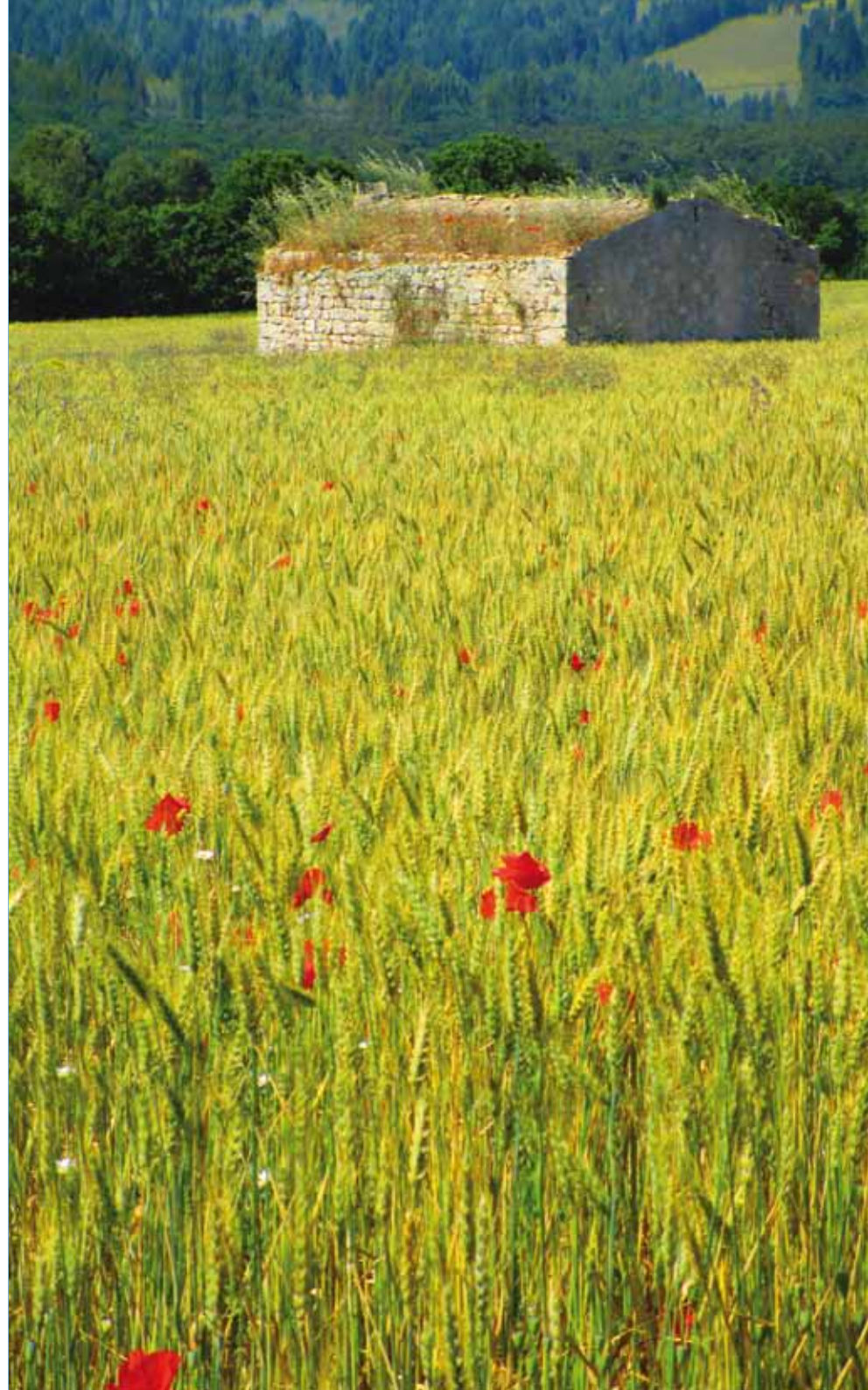
Italo Calvino



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Inside this guide you can discover all the itineraries. Check the cartography and download your routes in GPX on: viafrancigenadelsud.it and camminomaterano.it



The Via Francigena
Itinerary 1 - Via Michaelica



VIA MICHAELICA

“In every walk with nature one receives far more than he seeks.”

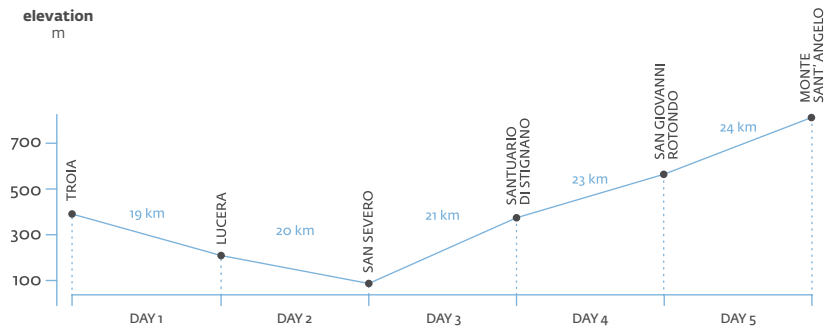
John Muir

From Troia to Monte Sant'Angelo



Total length: 107 km

Itinerary difficulty ★★★★★



Bus stop

Sita Sud

Ferrovie del Gargano





Itinerary 1

VIA MICHAELICA

From Troia to Monte Sant'Angelo

The Via Michaelica is a pilgrimage route dating back to the Middle Ages which crossed the whole of Europe, from north to south, linking Mont Saint-Michel in Normandy to the most ancient sanctuary of Gargano, dedicated to the Archangel Michael since the Byzantine era (5th century AD). After arriving in Rome, pilgrims would cross the Apennines using different routes, including the Via Appia and the Via Prenestina, to reach Puglia from the north, passing important places of worship such as the Sanctuary of St. Matthew the Apostle. For centuries, this pilgrimage route was a meeting point for different cultures: Germanic culture from northern Europe (some runic inscriptions date back to the 7th century) and Latin culture from the Mediterranean. Wayfarers from all over the world still come here to experience elements from a shared European culture blending together.

The southern Via Francigena included the Puglia stretch as part of its route, which in many respects has its own autonomy and very distinctive characteristics, simply because, as can be seen in the aforementioned *itineraria*, pilgrims heading to or returning from the Holy Land would often make a detour along the Via Traiana, in order to honour the ancient Sanctuary of St. Michael.

Along the stretch where the Via Francigena runs alongside the Via Michaelica, after reaching Troia, today's pilgrims can head north towards Lucera, a town that was home to a Muslim settlement after the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II deported 20,000 Sicilian Muslims: in fact, the site where today's cathedral stands was actually home to a mosque for approximately 70 years. From here, passing San Severo, you reach the Sanctuary of Santa Maria di Stignano, where it is possible ask to stay overnight. The next day, the route gradually climbs, taking wayfarers into the heart of Gargano, home to the Sanctuary of St. Matthew the Apostle in San Marco in Lamis, on the slopes of Mount Celano, set among the hornbeams and ash trees. The penultimate leg is San Giovanni Rotondo, home to the modern sanctuary of Saint Pio. As you arrive to Monte Sant'Angelo, you'll be met by breathtaking landscapes, with forests and views stretching out to sea: the entrance to the "Sacro Speco" ("Holy Cave") dates back centuries and provides visitors with an atavistic sense of discovery and purpose, as it is where, according to the *Apparitio sancti Michaelis*, the archangel Michael once appeared.



VIA MICHAELICA
L'ANTICA VIA DELL'ANGELO



Day 1



Length: 19 km

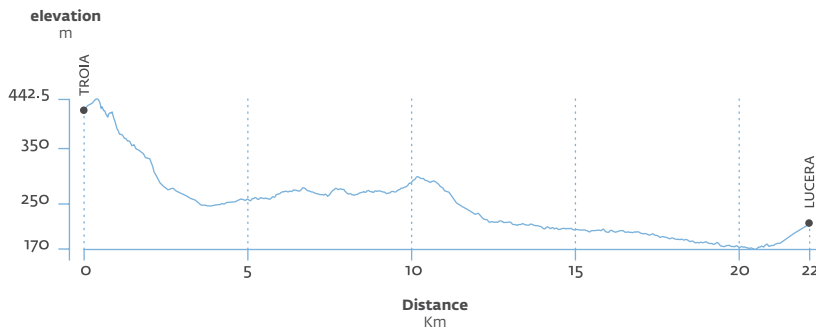


Terrain: mainly unpaved



Duration: 5.30 h

Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆



Starting from **Troia**, from the small square in front of the cathedral, in the alleyway opposite, begin to walk down the small tarmac road (*Via Sant'Antonio*) that passes in front of the little abandoned church of St. Anthony. At the end of the descent, you arrive to the external municipal road. Follow the road towards the right and, after about 200 m, you'll find a narrow deviation to the left. Continuing along the same tarmac road, after another 700 m, take the left-hand turning down the dirt road that winds its way around the small hill until you get to the bridge across the Celone river. By crossing the bridge, you'll get to provincial road SP125. Turn left and, after 300 m, leave the tarmac road to the right. Carry straight on, with Masseria Montaratro to your right. Continue along a farm track that leads to a white gravel path, after which you turn right. Once you've gone past the SP132, you'll follow a long stretch of ups and downs among the wind towers until you get to the Vulgano stream, which you can quite easily wade through at most times during the year. From here, the path takes you among cultivated fields; once you get to the Mezzanabu Grande district, cross SP18 and take the underpass that leads to the beautiful town of **Lucera**.

📍 Troia +39 0881 970020

Day 2



Length: 20 km

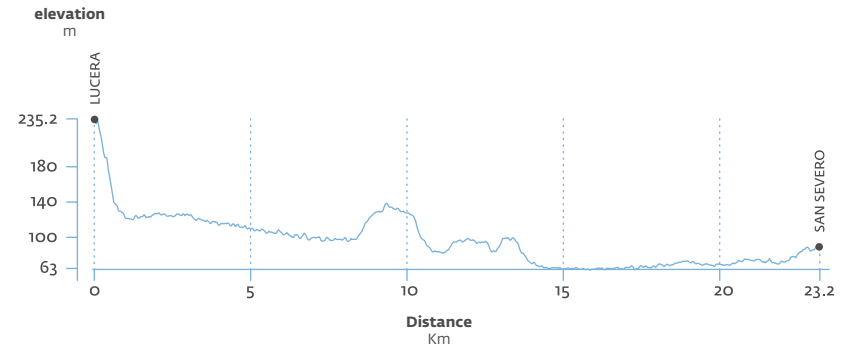


Terrain: mainly unpaved



Duration: 6.00 h

Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆



Walk down the path in front of the main entrance to **Lucera's** castle and go through the pine forest, for a steep descent of 300 m. At the end, you'll come to a dirt road. Turn right and, after 400 m, go under the SS692 along a small cement bridge. Continue along the wide, white gravel path until you get to a large oak with a small house to the right; turn at a right angle to the right and carry on along the same path that leads to the SS160/109 (Lucera-San Severus). After following the SS160/109 for about 2 km, take the trail to the left which goes past a small bridge and climbs the small hill in the middle of large wheat fields. At the top of the hillock, cross another tarmac small road, the SP18, and then follow the downhill path until you reach the SP14 tarmac road. Immediately to your right, after 300 m, you need to go left on a tarmacked, but very ruined, road that runs between the farms. Carry straight on until you reach the provincial road SP13 again. From here, go right until you reach the SS160/109. Carry on along the SS160/109 for 4 km and, to the left, you'll reach **San Severo**.





Day 3



Length: 21 km

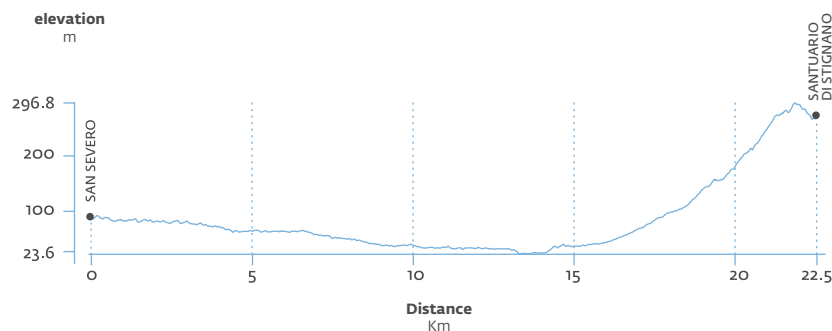


Terrain: mainly unpaved



Duration: 6.00 h

Difficulty: ★★★★★



Leaving **San Severo** in the direction of **San Marco in Lamis**, 100 m before reaching the cemetery, turn right and follow the directions for B&B Biagio. After this, carry on for 1 km and go under the E55 motorway bridge. After about 100 m, a "tratturello" (small sheep track) starts on the left, leading through vineyards and olive groves. After a couple of kilometres, you'll cross some tracks and follow the old railway that is no longer in use: follow the railway ballast until you get to the SS272, where you'll find the official signs (leading to **Monte Sant'Angelo**). After the crossing between the tracks and the SS272 (San Severo - San Marco in Lamis), continuing in the same direction, you reach the small railway station of "Scalo San Marco" (visible also from the crossing). Continuing along the tarmac road, after 1.5 km, you'll come across a cart track on your left. Follow this track and you'll see a small farm on your left. After 500 m, you'll walk past the Colantuono farm. Carry on until you get to the Sanctuary of **Stignano**.

Day 4



Length: 23 km

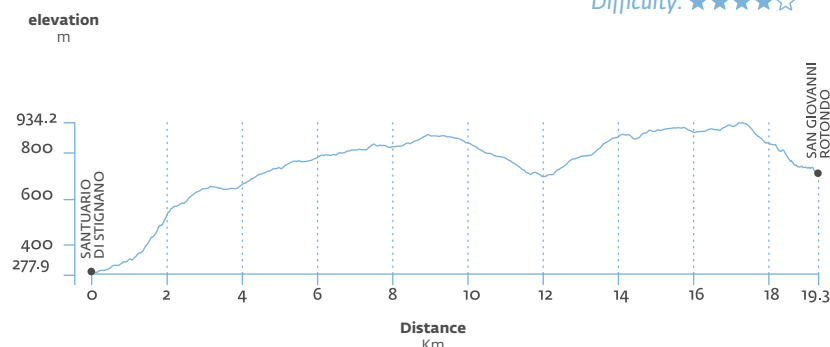


Terrain: mainly unpaved



Duration: 6.30 h

Difficulty: ★★★★★



Leave the sanctuary of **Stignano** behind you as you go back along the path from the previous day for around 500 m. At the first junction, turn right to go uphill. Going past a cave, carry on climbing until you get to a mule track (after 700 m), which is dug into the rock on the right. This zig-zags its way up, reaching the first plateau characterised by a rural house that is half in ruins. Keeping to the left of the plateau (heading in the same direction as you arrived), you'll come across a hollowed out "tratturello" (small sheep track) which leads to a cart track above. Continue along this to the right until you reach a number of small farms (passing through illegal wooden fences) and, immediately after, you'll climb up on a small tarmac road leading to the "San Marco-Sannicandro" provincial road (SP48). Cross the road and take the long cart track. When you get to a small wooden gate, turn right and start along a mule track that follows the ridge set above the Stignano valley (below, to the right). You'll get to a wide "tratturo" (sheep track) which runs through the middle of a pine forest that is being replanted. Once you get to the Treppiedi pool (a drinking trough for animals), turn right along the path that descends from the *Fajarama* and leads to the convent of St. *Matthew*. With the convent behind you, climb up to the left towards the large gravel car park where, at the end, there is a green gate that's always open. Once you've gone through the gate, carry on along the path for 700 m until you get to the San Marco-Cagnano tarmac road (SP22), which you have to cross at the point where there is a large picnic area. Just before entering the picnic area, immediately to the left, almost on the road that you've just crossed, an uphill mule track starts. After 1.5 km, this reaches a wide, uphill cart track that leads to a large group of TV repeaters. At the bottom, there is a downhill stretch that leads to a path with boulders along the edges, which takes you to Coppa L'Arena (939 m). From here, follow the downhill trail until you first reach the Clarissine Monastery, followed by the town centre of **San Giovanni Rotondo**, in line with the complex dedicated to Padre Pio.

Day 5



Length: 24 km

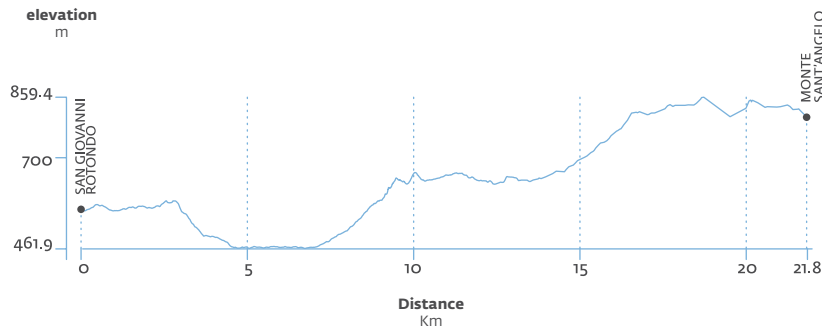


Terrain: mainly unpaved



Duration: 7.00 h

Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆



Leave from **San Giovanni Rotondo**, taking the SS272 in the direction of **Monte Sant'Angelo**. Pass the SP43 that leads to Cagnano and, after 500m, there is a tarmac road that leads off to the left. After 700 m, the tarmac runs out and it turns into a stunning "tratturo" (sheep track), marked with a small dry stone wall. This track passes by the ruins of the church of Sant'Egidio before making its way down the plain of the same name, where the tarmac road begins again. Here, you'll find a sign for the *Via Francigena*, with the possibility of reaching a fountain. With a large hotel that is now closed behind you, take the last small road to the left - also a tarmac road - and follow it for 700 m, until you reach the ruins of "San Nicola al Pantano". Continue along the same cart track, which leads inside a forest and heads uphill for approximately 600 m; turn right down into a gorge (and climb up the other side) and then follow the path with a fence either side that runs along the upper right side of the canal (almost completely dried up) until you reach a vast plateau. After you cross the plateau, you'll find a wide cart track that passes by some sand quarries (to the right) and reaches the SS272. Cross this main road and follow the slightly uphill trail, a stretch of which is cemented, until you reach a large gate to the left (with barbed wire and wooden stakes). Take the path after the gate and climb up Monte dell'Angelo. After a long ridge overlooking the Gulf of **Manfredonia**, you'll reach "Our Lady of the Angels" (a stunning little church dating back to the year 1000 that overlooks the Carbonara Valley, the fault that cuts the Gargano in two). After 700 m, you'll enter **Monte Sant'Angelo**.

Monte Sant'Angelo +39 0884 562062

IN THE PILGRIM'S BAG

You'll come across more than just wayfarers as you walk in the Gargano area: you'll also see tame Podolica cattle. Free and continuously moving around, these animals try to get the most they can from the pastures here, which don't have much water or feed, but are full of nutrients and the fragrances of biodiversity. During a short period each year, mainly between March and May, these cows produce valuable and "noble" milk, which is curdled, stretched, salted and matured to create "**Caciocavallo Podolico del Gargano**" cheese.

This cheese has a characteristic "round-bellied bottle" shape, crowned by a little dome that is tied off with small strings that can be used to hang them in pairs. The rind features streaks of precious mould, with the quantity depending on how long the cheese has matured for (anything from a few months up to ten years). Underneath the rind, the flesh of this cheese bursts with the fragrance of wild herbs and the Mediterranean maquis. This cheese goes perfectly with a fantastic wine that's made using a local grape variety, Nero di Troia, which is so red that it almost appears black. The wine of the same name makes the perfect pairing for cheese with such a structured flavour.

It is said that the history of **Nero di Troia doc** is intertwined with that of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II, as well as the story of the Achaean hero Diomedes and the D'Avalos marquis. Perhaps this is the reason why this wine has such strong organoleptic properties, which start from hints of spices and liquorice before moving on to the aroma of wood, despite not being cask-aged, before ending with a bitter-sweet touch of blackberry. The Via Michaelica leads to Monte Sant'Angelo, where you can restore your blood sugar levels at the end of a long walk, enjoying an "**ostia ripiena**" (stuffed wafers). Nougat made with toasted almonds that are then caramelised with sugar and honey, dusted with a pinch of cinnamon and enclosed between two white, oval wafers. Invented by mistake, the story goes that this dessert was created in the kitchens at the convent of the Holy Trinity Church, when the nuns of the Order of Saint Clare had nothing else to hand so had to use wafers to collect some warm nougat mixture that had fallen onto a work surface, leading them to discover how well these two flavours went together, creating a harmonious and delicious combination.

The Via Francigena Itinerary 2 - Via Traiana



VIA TRAIANA

"Man's real home is not a house, but the Road, and that life itself is a journey to be walked on foot."

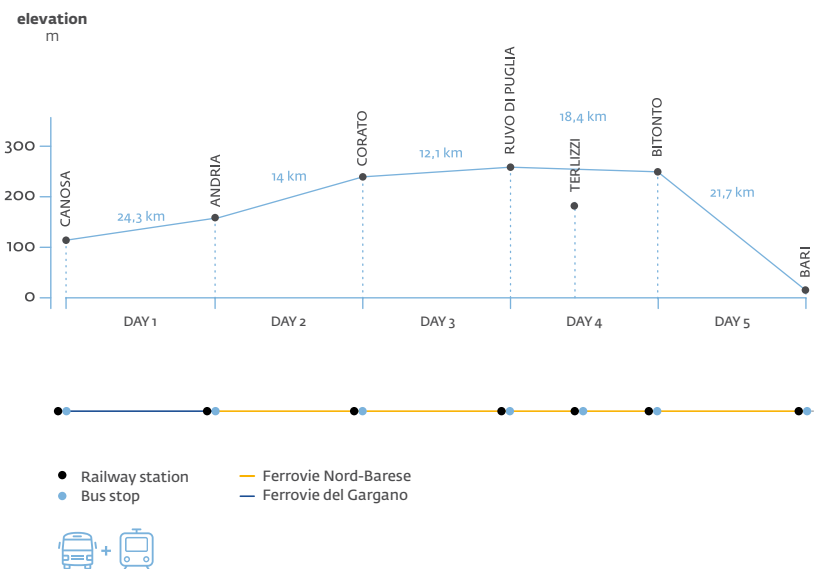
Bruce Chatwin

From Canosa to Bari



Total length: 90,5 km

Itinerary difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆



Itinerary 2

VIA TRAIANA

From Canosa to Bari

The Via Traiana was built between 108 and 110 AD by the emperor Trajan, in order to enhance the coastal road system and make it easier to communicate with the East. Compared with the much older Via Appia, this new route made it a lot easier for travellers to reach Brindisi, as it avoided the highland, making the most of the plains.

Our itinerary starts in **Canosa di Puglia**, the opulent *Canusium*, which still boasts some real gems, such as the *cathedral of St. Sabino* with the adjoining *Boemondo mausoleum*, the *church of St. John* with its baptistery, the *St. Leucio complex* and the *Christian catacombs*. The road continues among olive groves and almond trees towards **Ruvo di Puglia (Rubi)**, a pre-Roman town where visits to the **Jatta National Archaeological Museum** and the cathedral dedicated to *Santa Maria Assunta* are a must, another of Puglia's Romanesque architectural gems. You'll then pass the ancient medieval village of *Santa Maria di Sovereto*, in the Terlizzi countryside, whose history is closely linked to pilgrimages to the Holy Land. The next day, you'll reach Bitonto (*Butuntum*), boasting a historical centre that will take your breath away for the sheer number of monuments from so many different eras: there are the medieval churches of *St. Valentine* and *St. Francis of Assisi*, the *Vulpano Sylos* and *Sylos Calò* palaces dating back to the 15th and 16th centuries and the *Traetta theatre*, opened in 1838. You'll then reach the sea and the city of Bari.





Day 1



Length: 24,3 km

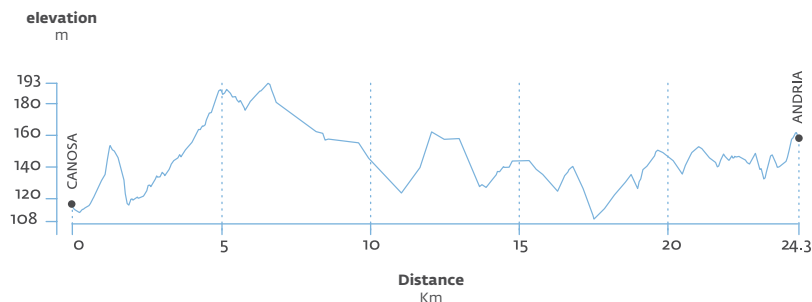


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 6.00 h

Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆



Starting from the St. Sabino Cathedral in **Canosa**, you'll soon come to a local road that takes you out of the city and guides you among the olive groves and vineyards that characterise the countryside here; this is the kind of landscape that will accompany wayfarers all the way to **Andria**. Follow this gradually uphill road for about 4 km and then cross the overpass before turning left along a small road that runs between the olive trees; at the end of this road, turn left and then take the "*contrada Santa Brigida*" road to the right. For several kilometres, this road, initially a dirt track, runs straight inside a real olive tree forest, lined with typical, small dry stone walls. Once you go over a crossroads, you'll come across another straight "*contrada*" road that, after 8 km, leads you to **Andria**. This leg ends in *Piazza Duomo*, which is home to the cathedral.

📍 **Canosa** +39 0883 612423 • **Andria** +39 0883 290231 - +39 0883 290229

Day 2



Length: 14 km

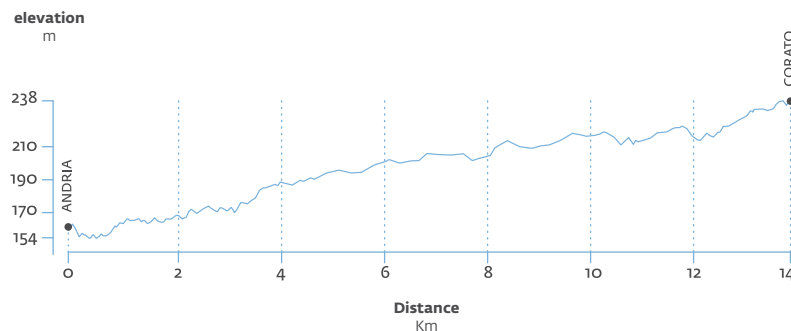


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 4.00 h

Difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆



Starting from the Cathedral of **Andria**, you'll soon reach a "*contrada*" road (*Macchia di Rosa*) which immediately becomes a dirt track that winds its way through olive groves, vineyards and small dry stone walls. After a series of bends, this track becomes straight and stays this way for the next 8 km, going slightly uphill. The landscape does not change: wayfarers are immersed in silent countryside covered in olive trees, representing one of this area's main sources of income for centuries. Coratina olives are especially common here, a local and particularly valuable variety that is grown throughout the area north of Bari. At the end of this straight track, turn left and then take the second right; cross the overpass and you'll reach the centre of **Corato**. This leg ends at the Mother Church of "Santa Maria Maggiore".

📍 **Corato** +39 080 8720861





Day 3



Length: 12,1 km

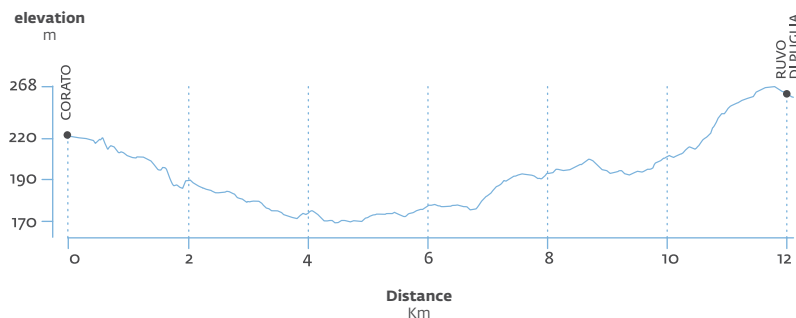


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 3.00 h

Difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆



This leg starts from **Corato's** Mother Church, but before leaving then town, you must absolutely visit the "City and Territorial Museum" which is home to three milestones from the ancient Via Traiana. From *via Mercalli*, go over the railway crossing and turn left onto *via Fondo Griffi*, which will lead you into the countryside, once again dominated by olive trees. After a curve to the left, you'll go over a small waterway. From here, continue straight for around 2 km and, once you go past an ancient stone cistern, follow the curve and then take the first road to the left. At the end, you'll reach a crossroads where you need to head right (if you make a small detour, you can reach the "Chianca of the Paladins" dolmen). Carry straight on for 4 km and then turn left and take the first right; after a short while, you'll arrive to the outskirts of **Ruvo di Puglia**. Follow via Nazario Sauro until you reach the historic centre and the Cathedral, which represents the end of this leg.

📍 **Ruvo di Puglia** +39 080 3628428

Day 4



Length: 18,4 km

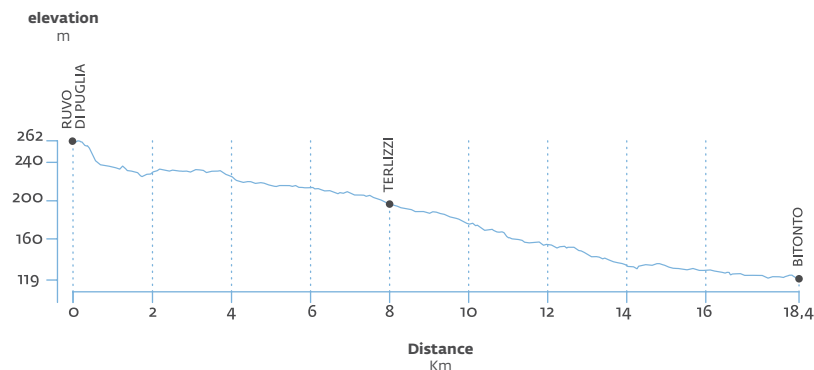


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 5.00 h

Difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆



Starting from the beautiful Romanesque Cathedral in **Ruvo di Puglia**, walk along the narrow streets in the historic centre to arrive to *Piazza Bovio*; from here, take *Via Madonna delle Grazie* that leads you out of the town. Once you've crossed the overpass, turn down the first road on the left, which will lead you to a junction where you need to take the road on the right, called *Via Appia Traiana*: from here, wayfarers pick up the ancient traces of the Via Traiana (the reference to "Appia" is incorrect). This marks the start of a long, straight path, mostly unpaved, framed by small dry stone walls and olive groves; after approximately 1.5 km, you'll reach a crossroads with a stone arch: turn left and you can go on a detour to reach the town of **Terlizzi**. The path, on the other hand, continues straight along a dirt road dotted with rural structures and an extremely important archaeological site: a stretch of the original paved road of the Via Traiana. After about 4.5 km, you can make another detour to the left to reach the village of **Sovereto**. Head straight, among the olive groves, for another 8 km until you reach a crossroads where you need to be particularly careful: you need to cross the provincial road and take the *Via Traiana* that leads to the historic centre of **Bitonto** and the magnificent St. Valentine's Cathedral, which is where this leg comes to an end.

For those who wish to break up this leg of the journey, or who would simply like to visit two of the places with the closest links to medieval pilgrimages in the area around Bari, it is possible to take an alternative route heading north and arrive to the town of Terlizzi, where you'll find the "Santa Maria di Cesano" complex and the church of Sovereto. From here, you can nonetheless reach the city of Bitonto by simply picking up the main route heading south.

Day 5



Length: 21,7 km

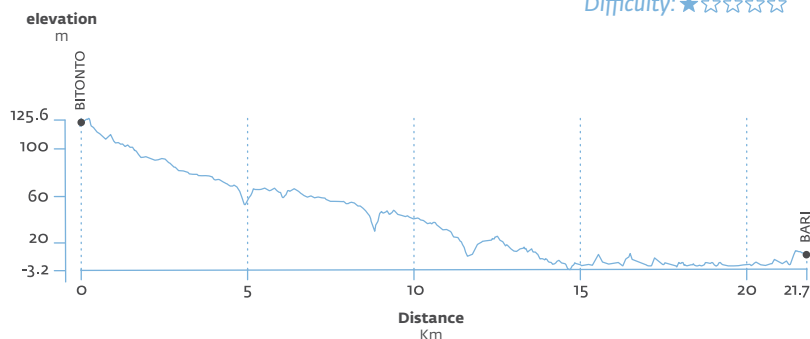


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 6.00 h

Difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆



Starting from the Cathedral of **Bitonto**, walk along the narrow streets of the historic centre and take *Via Crocifisso*; you'll walk past the church of the same name and then carry on straight down *via Nenni* until you get to a crossroads, where you need to continue straight along the "*Balice*" local road. After a short amount of time, you'll come across the rural small church of "*Santa Maria di Costantinopoli*". Walk among the olive groves and, after about 2 km, you'll cross an overpass and then carry straight on for 1.5 km until you reach an industrial estate. Continue straight on for 1 km and then turn left to take a country road that runs alongside the *Lama Balice Natural Park*; at the end of the road, turn right and continue straight on until you come to a roundabout, where you need to take *Viale Europa*. After about 2 km, you'll reach another roundabout where you need to head left; at the next roundabout, turn left again and then right to pick up a rural road (" *rurale del Torrente*") that leads to a railway underpass. Once you've gone through the underpass, carry on straight and cross another three bridges; at the end of this straight stretch, turn right onto Bari's promenade, which you'll follow for about 5 km until you get to the *Norman-Swabian Castle*. Turn right and you'll arrive at the *Cathedral of St. Sabino* from where, heading to the left, you can pick up the "*road of Carmine*" and then "*via delle Crociate*": once you go past the Angevin arch, you'll reach the magnificent Basilica of St. Nicholas in **Bari**, representing the end of this leg of the journey.

📍 **Bari** +39 080 5242244

IN THE PILGRIM'S BAG

A good reason for walking thirty kilometres under the hot sun? Here you are: an object of desire for anyone who has passed through Puglia, even only once, to try this speciality. Pearly, snow-white, soft, and with a wonderful fragrance of *fior di latte*: the majestic **burrata of Andria**. A work of Apulian cheese-making art, a unique experience for the taste buds. A layer of stretched-curd which encloses flakes of top-quality cheese and cream. To protect the tenderness of the outer layer, this cheese was traditionally wrapped in asphodel leaves and held together with raffia strands. It seems almost superfluous to add anything to this cheese's perfect balance of sapid and sweet flavours, but those looking for an extra bit of luxury tend to add a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil. Speaking of top-quality products, one of the best in the area to the north of Bari is undoubtedly the **Coratina olive**. The cold-pressed nectar of these olives, especially if grown organically, offer unique nutritional properties. Intense green with shades of gold, these olives are rich in polyphenols with a very low level of acidity. Coratina olive trees also provide plentiful harvests, thanks to the fertile terrain of the hills surrounding the Via Francigena, where they spread their roots. Every corner of Puglia boasts its own wine speciality. In this case, it's the Rosso Canosa DOC, the typical wine of these areas which is a must in your backpack, alongside your water bottle - ideal for sharing during a nice break in the shade of some lush foliage dating back hundreds of years. **Rosso Canosa Doc** has an almost intense and lasting bouquet that's vinous and fruity. It is dry, warm and quite smooth to the taste and has a pleasantly tannic, sapid and full-bodied flavour. The red wine has a minimum alcohol content of 12%, with the "**riserva**" variety having a minimum of 13%.

A glass of Canosa Doc goes perfectly with **meat sauces** and pork, red meat and **mature Pecorino cheese**.



The Via Francigena Itinerary 3 - Via Traiana



VIA TRAIANA

"A journey of a thousand miles
begins with a single step."

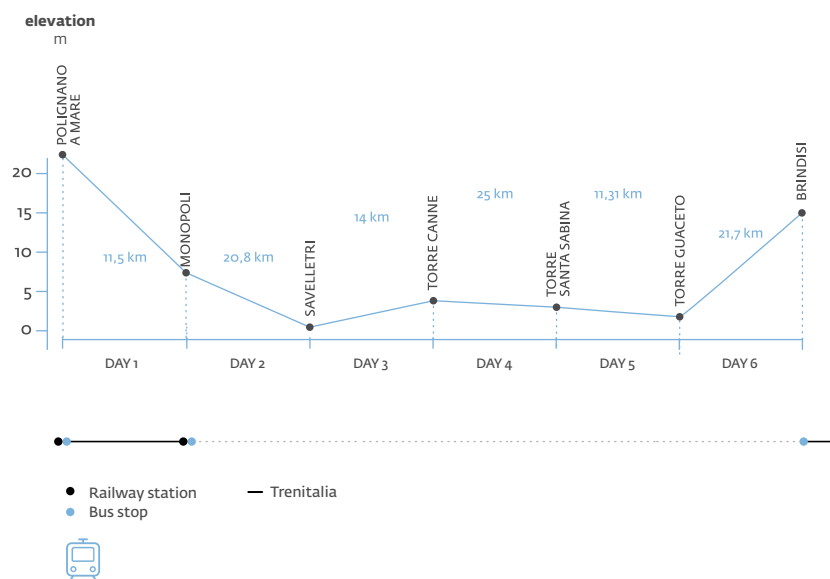
Lao Tzu

From Polignano to Brindisi



Total length: 99,9 km

Itinerary difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆





Itinerary 3

VIA TRAIANA

From Polignano to Brindisi

From Bari, the Via Traiana starts to follow the coast. In the capital, must-see visits include *the historical centre*, the *Basilica of St. Nicholas*, a destination for many international pilgrimages since the Middle Ages, the *Cathedral of St. Sabino* and the crypt, the *Svevo Castle*, *Palazzo Simi* and the *Santa Maria del Buon Consiglio* church. The smells and sounds you'll experience around this city's narrow streets will bring to mind aspects of Jerusalem. After enjoying some typical Bari-style octopus, wayfarers can arrive to **Mola di Bari**, **Polignano** and **Monopoli**: very lively towns, where history is closely linked to Mediterranean trade of both past and present. Here, travellers can admire the **Abbey of St. Vito** and the "*Madonna della Madia*" Co-Cathedral, built on a pagan temple and linked to an oriental icon. Afterwards, modern day pilgrims find themselves walking along the coast, where the paths behind the sand dunes make way for protected natural areas of incredible beauty, such as the Torre Guaceto reserve, bearing witness to a defence system built in response to the Turkish threat during the early modern age.

Brindisi, with its Roman column placed at the top of the staircase overlooking the harbour, shows wayfarers that they may set off for Acri, although not without first visiting the stunning historical centre, which still has a lot of reminders of the Chivalrous Orders that used to defend their interests here. In the churches of *Santa Maria del Casale*, *San Giovanni al Sepolcro* and *Santa Lucia* and the *St. Benedict monastery*, you can still sense the atmosphere of the Crusades.



Day 1



Length: 11,5 km

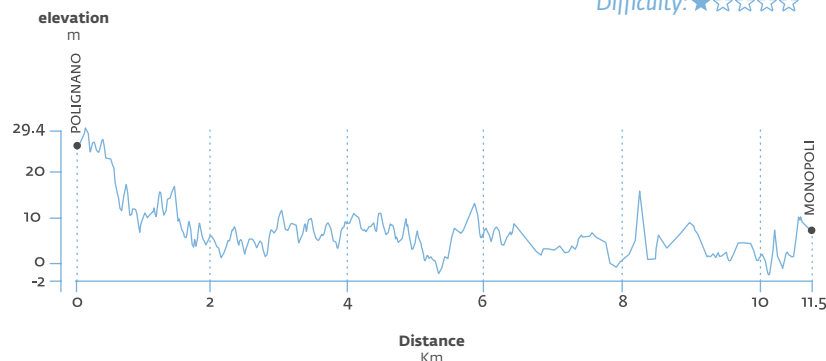


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 3.00 h

Difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆



Starting from the church of Santa Maria Assunta in the heart of the historical centre of **Polignano** and walking along *via San Benedetto*, you'll come out on *via Tritone*. Follow this road until the corner with *via Garofalo* and go along *via Giuliani* where you'll be able to enjoy a stunning view over the ancient village, overlooking the viewpoint of *Largo Ardito*. Heading south, you'll follow the rocky coastline, passing *Cala Incine* and *Cala Corvino*. Along this path, walkers will be able to admire wonderful rocky bays, which are some of the most popular bathing areas and, to the right, huge ploughed fields or fallow land, dotted with olive, fig and prickly pear trees and surrounded by centuries-old, small dry stone walls. The path continues until you get to *via Marina del Mondo* and then turns into *via Giuseppe Ungaretti*, already on the outskirts of the town centre. You can arrive into the centre of **Monopoli** near the port, in *Via Cala Curatori* and by taking *via Macello Vecchio*, *Cala Batteria* and *via Cristoforo Colombo*.

📍 **Polignano** +39 080 4252336 • **Monopoli** +39 080 4140264

Day 2



Length: 20,8 km

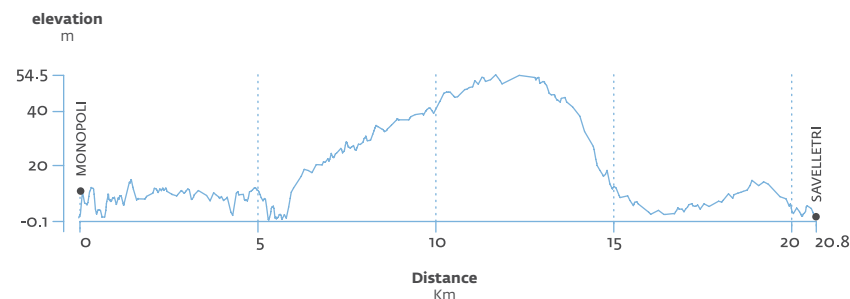


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 6.00 h

Difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆



Starting from the Castle of Charles V in **Monopoli**, follow the city wall, called the "*Lungomare Santa Maria*" and its extension, *via San Vito*. Then turn left for *via Papacenero*, heading downhill to the left towards the Portavecchia alley and the promenade of the same name.

Follow the coast until you reach a cycle path that turns to the left. Stay parallel with *via Tommaso Moro* and then with *via Procaccia*, leaving the town centre of Monopoli. Carry on along *via Procaccia* for around 3 km until you reach the intersection with *Contrada Santo Stefano*, where you'll first need to turn left to take said road and then right to take *Contrada Porto Marzano*, going past the Abbey-Castle of St. Stephen, the ancient stronghold of the Knights of Malta and a defence against invasions by Turkish pirates, and the stunning beaches of Santo Stefano and Ghiaccio.

Follow the *Contrada Porto Marzano* for 300 m, then turn right onto a dirt road which, after about one kilometre, leads to the sea; once you've reached the coast, carry on along the unpaved path that runs alongside the blue of the sea and the wonderful scents of the Mediterranean maquis.

Leaving the unpaved trail and the coast behind, turn right onto a tarmac road, at the end of which you'll turn right again onto the SP 90. Follow this road for 500 m and then go left at the first crossroads.

Carrying on along this road, you'll come to a dirt track that you'll need to follow all the way to the end, keeping left and then right. Once you reach the tarmac road (*Contrada Lamandia*), turn left and carry on for 400 m until you get to a right-hand turn in order to cross the railway tracks.

Once you've crossed the railway line, immediately turn left and continue along the dirt road that leads past orchards and olive groves for 700 m. Then turn right onto *Contrada Procopio* and, 500 m later, turn left onto the tarmac road called *via Putta*. Continue along this road for approximately 2.5 km.

Turn left for *Contrada Fascianello* and then take a right at the crossroads, continuing along the same road. Cross the tracks, carrying straight on along the *Lamapecora municipal road* until the next crossroads, and then turn right along the unpaved *Lamapecora dirt track*, passing the Carbonelli B&B until the intersection with the SP 163. Here, turn left and then immediately right, taking the *Contrada Egnazia*. Stay on *Contrada Egnazia* for 1.6 km and turn right for the *Egnatia municipal road*. Keep left at the next junction to take *via degli Scavi* and then carry straight on along the *Egnatia municipal road* for 1.8 km, passing the famous *Borgo Egnatia* resort, until the left-hand turn for *Contrada Masciola*. After 800 m, you'll enter the town centre of *Savellettri via Pisani* and will then turn right onto *via della Scogliera* until you can see the small harbour, passing *via Nazario Sauro* and its extension, *via del Porto*, which also represents the end of this leg of the journey.



Day 3



Length: 10,03 km

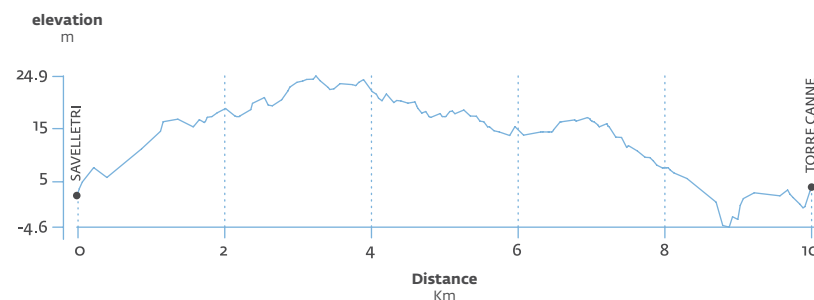


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 3.00 h

Difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆



From the starting point in *via del Porto* in **Savellettri**, you need to take *via Baracca* on the left, walking all the way to the end until turning right onto *via Accademia Navale*, keeping left for approximately 200 m before taking *Contrada Masciola* to the left. Continue along *Contrada Masciola* for 700 m and then take a left onto the *Egnatia municipal road* and carry on along its extension (the San Domenico municipal road). Continue along this road for 5 km until you reach the junction, where you'll leave the San Domenico municipal road and turn right onto a narrower road.

Along this stretch of road, you can enjoy the characteristic views of the area: vast expanses of centuries-old olive trees (sometimes even thousands of years old), which are the fruit of years of hard work by generations of farmers who have expertly left behind a mark of all their tireless efforts. Continue for approximately 900 m and turn left. Go straight for another 700 m and then turn left onto *via del Procaccio*. After 300 m, turn right and then continue until you reach the intersection with the SP 90. Turn right onto SP 90 and then follow this road until the junction where you need to take *via Eroi del Mare* to the left. This will take you along the coastal road of **Torre Canne** up until the small harbour, which is also the end point for this leg of the journey.



Day 4



Length: 25 km

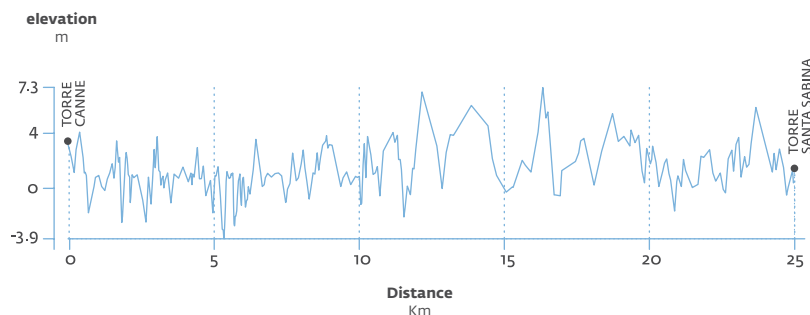


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 7.00 h

Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆



Starting from the centre of **Torre Canne**, take *via Eroi del Mare* and you'll immediately descend towards the beaches along the coast. Follow them for about 1.5 km and then take a small road that runs parallel to the coast. After 300 m, you'll come back to the beach and then continue in this direction for the next 3 km.

Once you get to *Lido Macchia Mediterranea*, turn right onto a dirt track that runs parallel to the coast for approximately 1 km, then head back down towards the beach to *Lido Morelli*, Villaggio Pilone and Rosamarina. Continue in this direction for 4.5 km.

After this, the trail goes through the centre of *Monticelli*, and leaves the town again after 200 m on an unpaved road that runs along the coast. From here, you'll enter *Diana Marina*. Turn right onto *via dei Bouganville* and, after 200 m, at the roundabout, turn left for *Contrada Villanova*, in the direction of Marina di Ostuni and Villanova.

When you get to the next harbour, continue for *via Tancredi Conte* and then turn right for *via Petrarolo*, leading onto *via Consolato Veneziano*. The walk continues for just over 1.5 km and leads to an unpaved road that runs along the stunning *Costa Merlata* for the subsequent kilometres, taking you to the entry point at the St. Sabina Tower.

You enter the town by following *via Socrate* and then a dirt road that provides a shortcut from Mezzaluna beach. Staying along the coast, take *via Scoglio del Cavallo*, turning left and heading towards the tip of the headland and the **St. Sabina Tower**, representing the end of this leg of the journey.

Day 5



Length: 11.31 km

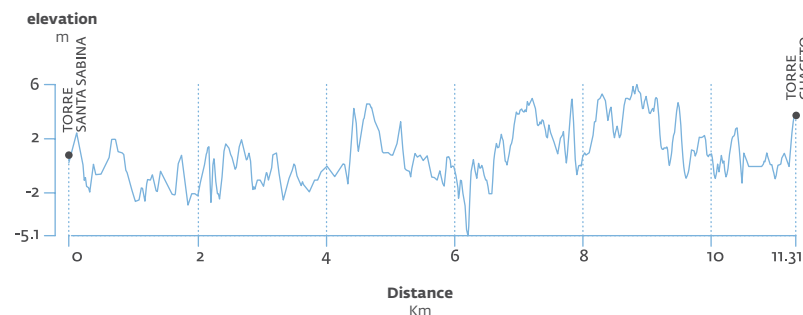


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 3.1/2 h

Difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆



With **St. Sabina Tower** behind you, walk along *via della Torre* for 100 m and then turn left into *Piazza dei Ciclamini*. Continue along the road until you get close to Camerini Beach, where you can take the road that then follows the beach for around 100 m, leading to *via Lago d'Iseo*, which you need to follow for another 600 m.

At the end of this road, you'll come to a dirt track that leads directly to a beach near to Hotel Club Santa Sabina and then you'll take a semi-paved road that, after 400 m and a double turning to the left and to the right, leads onto *via Ottaviano Augusto*.

After 400 m, you'll enter the Lido Pantanagianni and, once you've crossed this, you'll temporarily leave the beach to walk through a short stretch of Mediterranean maquis, passing close by the Lido Le Dune and Lido Sabbia d'Oro. Take a left-hand turn onto *via Tamerici*.

Stay on *via Tamerici* for around 1.5 km and, once you reach the "il Chiosco" bar, turn left in the direction of Lido Laguna Blu. Carry straight on for 1 km and carry straight over the crossroads to take the unpaved road in an east/south-east direction for around 2 km.

When you get close to Punta Penna Grossa beach, turn right to take *Contrada Pennagrossa* and then take the first street on the left and continue for 600 m. Turn right along the dirt road and walk through the *Torre Guaceto Nature Reserve* for 2.5 km, turning left at the first crossroads and right at the second. When you get to the seashore, continue along the series of bays until you reach the **Guaceto Tower**, representing the end of this leg of the journey.

Day 6



Length: 21,3 km

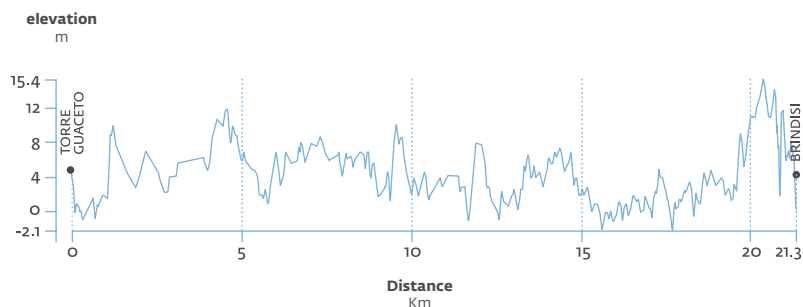


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 5.00 h

Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆



Starting from the **Guaceto Tower**, the final destination of the previous leg, take the trail in a westerly direction for 250 m, then turn left at the junction and continue for 800 meters until you can see the SS 379.

Turn left and continue along the path of Torre Guaceto Natural Reserve for 1.5 km; at this point, follow the path turning right to cross the underpass of the SS 379 and then turn left onto *via Adriatica* in the direction of Bari, continuing straight for another 1 km.

Keep right and then turn all the way to the right to take a parallel dirt road that will allow you to turn right again to cross the SS 379 underpass and return to the other side.

Once you've passed the viaduct, turn right and continue for 500 m, pass the SS 379 entry junction and keep left to then be able to turn left onto the SP 39.

Continue along the SP 39 for 400 m and then turn right and then left to take *via di Torre Testa*. Follow this coastal road for the next 10 km until you reach the intersection with *via Gerusalemme*, where it becomes the SP 41. Continue on the SP 41 and its subsequent extension called *via Mater Domini* for 4 km, keeping Brindisi Airport to your right.

Cross the underpass and continue on *via Mater Domini*, going over the roundabout and carrying straight on *Viale Umberto Maddalena* for 150 m. Turn left onto *Medaglie d'Oro*, continue straight for 500 m until you can see the Monument to Italian Sailors, an ideal place to get a view of the Roman columns that marked the end of the *Via Appia*, on the opposite shore.

Turn right and take *via Ammiraglio Millo*, a small road that runs along the shore. Continue for 500 m until you reach the arrival point for this leg in **Brindisi**.

📍 **Brindisi** +39 0831 229784

IN THE PILGRIM'S BAG

A wonderful walk, with the sea as a travel companion and two typical products to fill up your bag again. When walking from Polignano a Mare to Brindisi along the newly certified Via Francigena of the South, close to the Via Traiana, you simply have to get hold of some "**dolcetti di pasta reale**" (sweet treats made of marzipan) and **Polignano carrots**: both delicacies are easy to carry with you to provide a quick and healthy energy boost. There are just over 100 calories in each small marzipan cake, and they provide plenty of protein and minerals in a single portion full of genuine flavour. They're made from almond flour from Puglia, sugar and hen eggs, decorated with coffee beans and candied fruit. Crisp and golden on the outside, soft and fragrant on the inside. You'll instead find thousands of different variants of the carrots that typically grow in this area, where the Italian singer-songwriter Domenico Modugno was born: from pale yellow to orange to different shades of purple. These carrots are protected by the "Slow Food" movement and, in terms of their nutritional properties, they have a lower glycaemic index than normal carrots, despite being just as sweet if not sweeter. This variety is also unique in terms of its high antioxidant content. Eating these fresh, crunchy and juicy carrots as you walk along the "tratturi" (sheep tracks), surrounded by centuries-old olive groves, enjoying the colours and the fragrances of the sea on the horizon as you wash them down with a sip of Rosso Brindisi Doc, an intense wine with ruby red reflections: an experience not to be missed.



The Via Francigena Itinerary 4 - Via Traiana Calabria



VIA TRAIANA CALABRA

"Declining from the public ways,
walk in unfrequented paths."

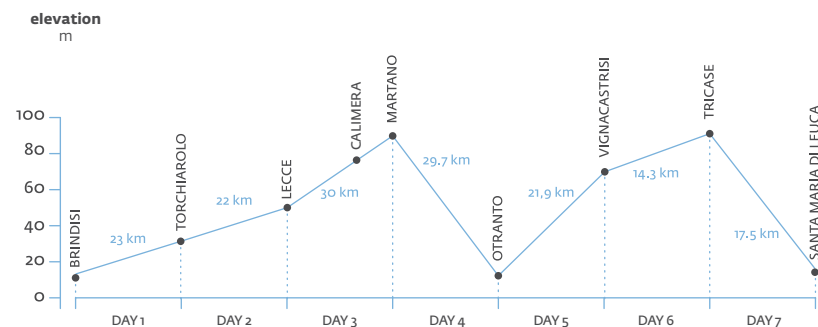
Pythagoras

From Brindisi to Santa Maria di Leuca



Total length: 158,4 km

Itinerary difficulty: ★★☆☆☆



● Railway station
● Bus stop

— Bus: COTRAP (STP Brindisi - STP Lecce - STP Terra d'Otranto),
Ferrovie del Sud-Est

— Bus + Train





Itinerary 4

VIA TRAIANA CALABRA

From Brindisi to Santa Maria di Leuca

The Via Traiana Calabra is the extension that linked *Brundisium* to *Hydruntum*. The road began to take on greater importance from the late-ancient age, when, following the political upheavals after the gradual downfall of the Roman Empire and the Byzantines subsequently taking control of the area, the city of Otranto played an increasingly important role.

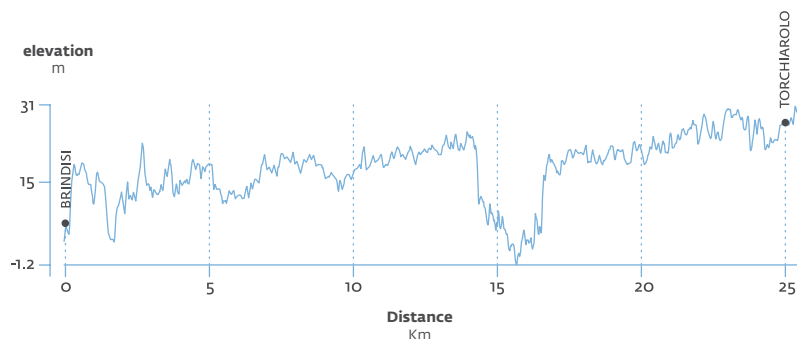
The route retraces this path and, following in the footsteps of the *Bordeaux* pilgrim who walked it in the opposite direction in 333 AD, it passes from the ruins of the ancient *Valesium* and arrives to the welcoming centre of Torchiarolo (one of the first municipalities to offer hospitality to modern pilgrims), before finally arriving into *Lupiae*, today's Lecce, queen of the baroque, whose historical centre is home to one piece of beautiful architecture after another. Must-sees include the *Cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta*, the *Basilica of Santa Croce*, the church of *Santi Niccolò e Cataldo*, the *Palazzo dei Celestini*, the *Castle of Charles V*, the *Porta Napoli* arch, the *Roman amphitheatre* and the *column of Sant'Oronzo*. After taking in all this beauty, today's travellers can pass through Carpignano Salentino and visit the cathedral of Otranto, characterised by its wonderful medieval mosaic, one of the most famous in the Mediterranean area. Walkers can recharge their batteries by enjoying the Byzantine church of *St. Peter*, the *castle* and the *catacombs of St. John*, together with a seascape reminiscent of Greece. At this point, the only place left to go is Italy's land's end: *de finibus terrae* to be precise. Passing through **Marittima** and *Tricase*, skirting the *Castro* cliffs, walkers complete their journey by reaching the *Basilica of Santa Maria*, where there is a column indicating that, to go any further, you have to cross the sea and begin the long journey to Jerusalem.



Day 1

Length: 23 km Terrain: unpaved, tarmac Duration: 6.00 h

Difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆



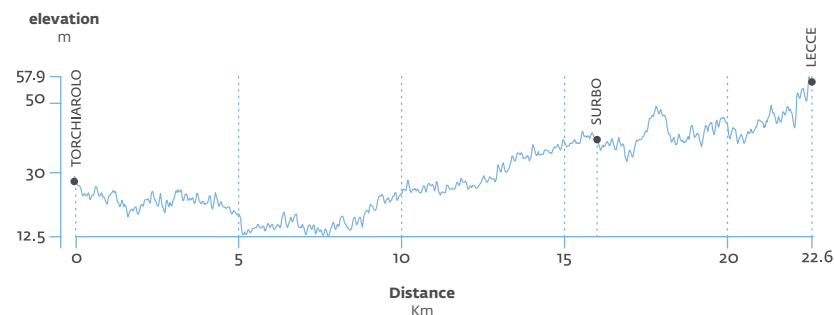
Starting from the promenade in **Brindisi**, you'll first reach the cathedral, followed by the small temple dedicated to San Giovanni al Sepolcro: a stop at this monument is recommended, as it represents one of the most significant medieval relics, telling the story of the knights who passed through here on their way to the Holy Land. Passing through the Gate of Lecce, you leave the historical centre and reach the provincial road; after a few turns, you eventually arrive to open countryside. Continuing south, you come across an olive grove and two farms (Baraccone and Campoperso), entering the beautiful *Bosco Tramazzone - Cerano* nature reserve. Once you've gone through an area characterised by Mediterranean maquis, you'll reach the *Masseria Maime* farm followed by *Valesio*, an important archaeological site that preserves Messapian walls and Roman baths. Following the typical Salento olive groves, you'll reach the town of **Torchiarolo**, the end point for this leg of the journey.

📍 **Brindisi** +39 0831 229784

Day 2

Length: 22 km Terrain: unpaved, tarmac Duration: 6.00 h

Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆



Leaving **Torchiarolo** and heading south along the cemetery, you'll go past the Squinzano-Casalabate provincial road and, passing the Masseria Patricelli farm on a dirt road, you'll reach the Masseria Alcaini farm. From here, after passing through an olive grove, you can admire the extraordinary Abbey of Santa Maria delle Cerrate, a medieval monument that is home to a series of frescoes with references to the pilgrimage. From here, you reach a wind farm followed by the town of **Surbo**, which you leave along the cycle path. You'll then go past a shopping centre. You enter **Lecce** in the area of the Olivetan Monastery, where you'll find the 11th century church of Santi Niccolò e Cataldo. This leg of the journey ends in Piazza Sant'Oronzo, characterised by a column featuring the statue of the Saint and a Roman amphitheatre.

📍 **Lecce** +39 0832 246517 - +39 0832 242099





Day 3



Length: 30 km

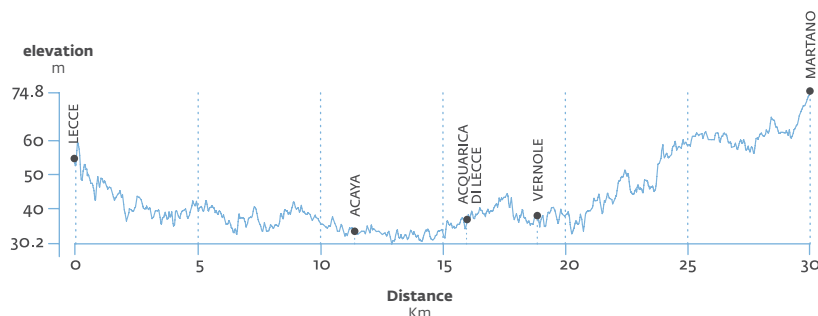


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 8.30 h

Difficulty: ★★★★★



Starting from Piazza Sant'Oronzo in **Lecce**, head in the direction of the Castle of Charles V and then arrive to *via Merine*, the town centre that can be reached after crossing the bridge over the ring road. From Piazza Santa Maria Assunta, walk towards the Giardini di Athena and, from here, carry straight on towards **Acaya**, a stunning fortified village dating back to the late Middle Ages, where the original castle still stands. When leaving the centre, passing the church of St. Paul, the walk is characterised by paths dotted with dry stone walls and buildings that lead to **Acquarica di Lecce**, a town that this route just passes by. From here, you can follow a cycle path to reach the town square of **Vernole**, in the centre of which stands the column of Sant'Anna. The path continues in a southerly direction along a road that runs between **Calimera** and **Melendugno**, surrounded by centuries-old olive trees and Mediterranean maquis, until you reach Masseria San Biagio. The walk continues amid this landscape until you reach the Monastery of the Cistercian Order, where you can admire the church of Santa Maria della Consolazione. After this, you'll come to the Church of the Madonnella followed by the **Martano** gates, an important centre of Grecia Salentina (Salentinian Greece).

Day 4



Length: 29,7 km

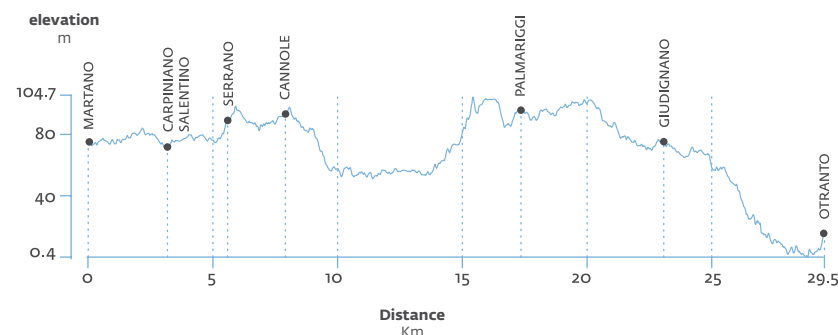


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 8.30 h

Difficulty: ★★★★★



From **Martano**, to reach the centre of **Carpignano Salentino**, you must return to the Church of the Madonnella and, from here, take a route made up of ancient cart tracks that run alongside the ruins of the church of San Cosma and lead to the town. Here, be sure not to miss a visit to the crypt of Santa Cristina. From here, you walk along a cycle path to reach **Serrano** and then **Cannole**, which you leave by taking the "Scoppelle" local road. This will lead you to Masseria Torcito, immersed in a pine forest. Crossing more cart tracks, you'll leave the forest and continue on a pretty much straight route to the Montevergine Sanctuary, an important place for pilgrimages, from where you can descend to reach the centre of **Palmariggi**. Taking a cycle path, turn left along via Vecchia in the direction of Giurdignano and, as you approach Masseria Quattro Macine, you'll come across an abandoned medieval hamlet. From here, you can reach an area where you can admire dolmens and menhirs. After reaching **Giurdignano** and visiting the Mother Church of St. Rocco, the holy pilgrim, you can leave the centre by walking towards the church of SS. Rosario. From here, the Via Francigena passes through beautiful olive groves and a holm oak wood before reaching the Valle dell'Idro gorge, the Sant'Angelo grotto and then the centre of **Otranto**, with its stunning Cathedral and Byzantine church dedicated to St. Peter.

📍 **Otranto** +39 0836 801436



Day 5



Length: 21,9 km

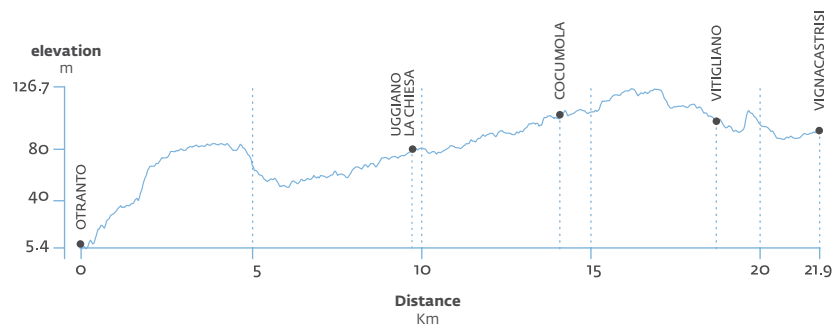


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 6.00 h

Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆



Starting from the harbour of **Otranto**, you'll reach the Madonna dei Martiri; after a short climb, you'll pass the provincial road and reach one of the most breathtaking places along the walk: the former bauxite quarry, with its moon-like colours. Following an unpaved road, you'll reach the ruins of the San Nicola di Càsole monastery, founded by Boemondo d'Altavilla and linked to the history of the Crusades. The "tratturo" (sheep track) then continues, with the pastures making way for olive trees until you arrive to the centre of **Uggiano la Chiesa** and its mother church dedicated to Mary Magdalene. After leaving the centre, you'll come to the church of Santa Maria della Serra and, from here, you need to go straight until you reach the centre of **Cocumola**, where St. Nicholas is particularly worshipped. After admiring the menhir of the Cross, head straight among the olive trees and pines and you'll reach **Vitigliano**, where you can visit the church of St. Michael the Archangel. Walk along the provincial road for a few metres and then turn left onto a rural road that runs past a stone quarry. Carry straight on and you'll reach the centre of **Vignacastri**, the end of this leg of the journey.

Day 6



Length: 14,3 km

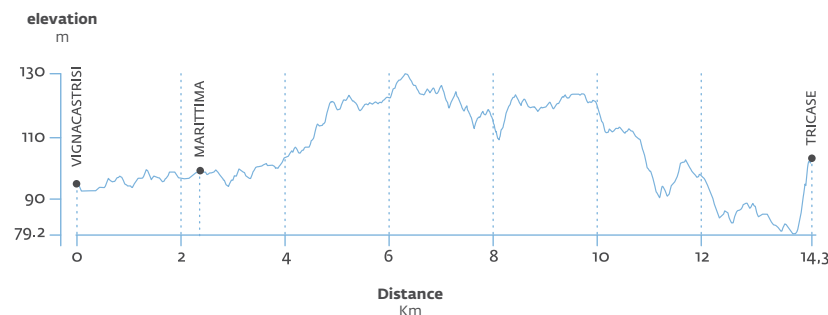


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 4.00 h

Difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆



Once you've left the town centre of **Vignacastri** and gone past the Chapel of the Madonna of Constantinople, continue straight until you get to a rest area, after which you'll enter the centre of **Marittima**. After a series of junctions, where you need to take care, cross the provincial road and head towards the church of the Madonna dell'Attarico. Carry straight on and pick up the unpaved road that will take you near to the ruins of the Sasso Tower, looking out to sea. Moving on, you'll come across a forest of eucalyptus trees, pines and Vallonia oak trees, typical of this area. Lastly, you'll come to a crossroads indicating the port of Tricase, but the Via Francigena heads towards the town centre, located in the hinterland. This leg of the journey ends in Piazza Pisanelli in **Tricase**, which can be recognised thanks to the Gallone Princes' castle.

① [Tricase +39 0833 777237](tel:+390833777237)





Day 7



Length: 17,5 km

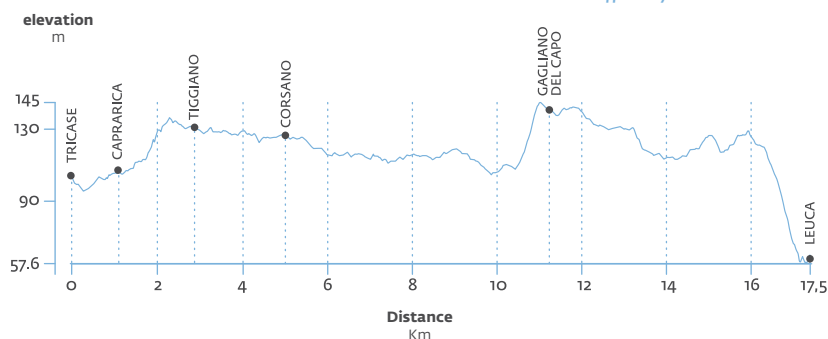


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 5.00 h

Difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆



Once you pass the Castle of **Caprarica** in Tricase, take the dirt track that allows you to cross the provincial road and reach the centre of **Tiggiano** with its splendid Palazzo Baronale (Baronial Palace). In this area, the towns are very close together and they follow one another almost seamlessly, meaning that you'll soon find yourself in Corsano, where it is worthwhile visiting the churches of San Biagio and Santa Sofia. After this, you'll finally return to open countryside, which is dominated by traditional dry stone walls. Pass the provincial road and, after a series of junctions and a rest area, you'll enter **Gagliano del Capo**, with the unmissable church of St. Rocco and the San Francesco di Paola monastery. From here, take the municipal road, which is basically straight except for a few crossroads, and you'll then cross the countryside to reach the Sanctuary of **Leuca**, the last point of the Italian peninsula on the Adriatic, known in ancient times as *Finibus Terrae*. The monument leading onto the square features two angels who watch over pilgrims, representing a journey that is not yet over, but rather has only just begun... the journey to Jerusalem.

📍 **Tiggiano** +39 0833 531651

Castrignano del Capo – Santa Maria di Leuca +39 0833 758111

IN THE PILGRIM'S BAG

Designed to be long-lasting and easy to carry, "**frise**" (a kind of double-baked snack bread) have accompanied sailors and wayfarers for the centuries. Doughnut-shaped toasted bread made by half-baking the dough, removing it from the oven and cutting it horizontally using a wire cutter. The "frise" shapes are then put back in the oven and allowed to dry out. Just as the crusaders and sailors before them would store these in their pantries, today's travellers can also keep them in their bags after stocking up from one of the many bakeries with a genuine wood-burning oven along the way. This is a traditional and practical snack, but you have to be careful about the amount of water you use to soak them, rather than worrying about what filling to go for: you may well cause an argument if you give a frise to someone that is less crunchy or softer than they would like. It's best for each person to "sponzi" ("soak") their own in a drinking fountain, or for the more rough and ready, directly in the sea. They are traditionally dressed with the best olive oil, tomatoes and salt and, for those who like it, a touch of oregano. However, all kinds of toppings can be used: in fact, frise are nothing more than a great type of bread whose fragrance is locked within its crunchiness. If you're in the area around Salento, the best way to start your day is with "**pasticciotti**", although these sweet pastries are undoubtedly more difficult to keep in your pocket in the hope they remain intact. These are sweet tarts made with crumbly, shortcrust pastry and filled with custard. The trick is to find the patisserie or bar that makes the most fragrant ones, or that can win you over with brand new fillings... pistachio cream or chocolate, lemon, with a drop of jam or a couple of black cherries. Tourists can become obsessed with these pastries, not just because they are typical of the local area, but also, and above all, because they provide the right energy boost for those who have to get up early in the morning to embark on a long day of walking.



The Cammino Materano Itinerary 5 - Via Peuceta



VIA PEUCETA

"I needed to be alone,
because it's only when I'm alone,
lost, mute, on foot,
that I am able to recognise things."

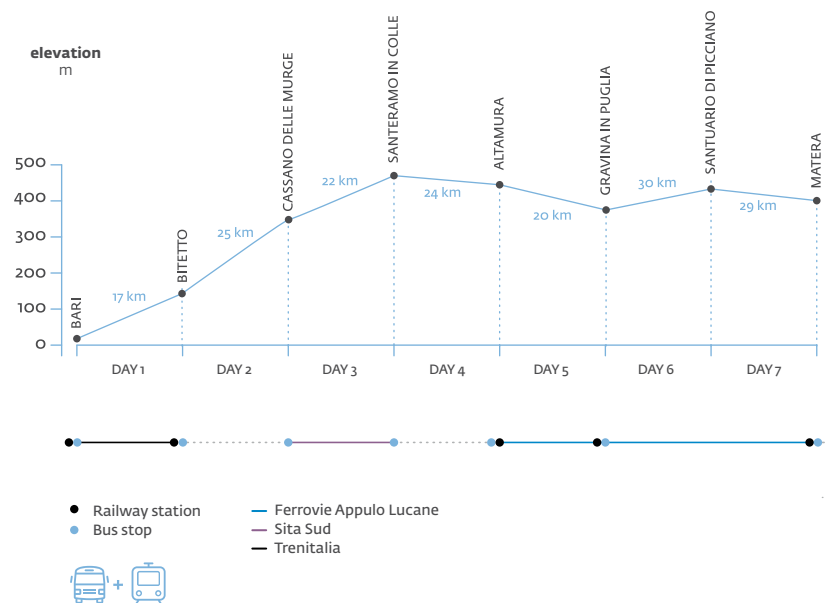
Pier Paolo Pasolini


From Bari to Matera



Total length: 167 km

Itinerary difficulty: ★★☆☆☆





Itinerary 5

VIA PEUCETA

From Bari to Matera

A walk from the Basilica of St. Nicholas in Bari, a symbolic place for pilgrimages in Puglia, and through the ancient region of *Peucetia*: from the lush olive tree forest that characterises the coastal plains, to the steppes of the Murgian plateau and forests of conifers and oaks, right through to the karstic depressions (grottos and ravines) that make up the enchanting, rugged scenery that is home to Gravina in Puglia and Matera. A 170 km route, along which you'll be able to discover the incredibly rich cultural heritage of Puglia and Basilicata, made up of not only cathedrals, medieval villages, cave churches and Greek and Roman remains, but also farmhouses, "trulli" (dry stone huts), dry stone walls and extraordinary food and wine bursting with genuine flavours linked to authentic country tradition.

After leaving the sea and the Basilica of St. Nicholas behind you, you'll reach the wonderful medieval town of Bitetto. The town's main square is home to a cathedral dedicated to St. Michael, whose gate is guarded by two magnificent lions. When leaving this town, it's worthwhile visiting the church of *Santa Maria la Veterana*, whose late-medieval frescoes are sure to astound you.

Walking through the countryside, you'll gradually start to climb, reaching Cassano Delle Murge, a hospitable place characterised by a small historical centre surrounded by lush vegetation. The downy oak forests here will accompany you until you reach Santeramo in Colle, the town of St. Erasmus that is famous for breeding Murgesi horses. You have now reached the Murgia area: the next leg crosses the pseudo-Murgian steppe of the Alta Murgia National Park and then follows a medieval cart track to reach the town of Frederick II - Altamura. It's easy to lose yourself in the beauty of this town's historical centre, which is home to the Santa Maria Assunta cathedral. Gravina in Puglia is the last Apulian town to welcome walkers: the maze of small streets here, whose unpredictable architecture is truly charming, will first lead you to the majestic Roman aqueduct and then onto the hill of Botromagno. You'll then enter Basilicata: the Sanctuary of Picciano and the San Giuliano dam are there to welcome you to the town of Sassi.



Day 1



Length: 17 km

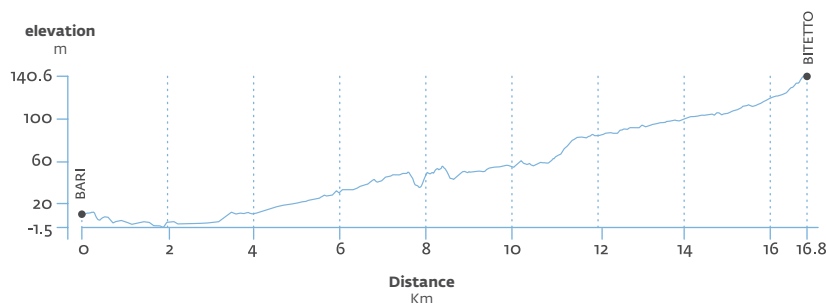


Terreno: tarmac



Duration: 5.00 h

Difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆



The Via Peuceta starts from the Basilica of St. Nicholas in **Bari**, a symbolic place for pilgrimages in Puglia: it was built between 1087, the year when the relics of the Myra saint were transferred, and 1197. In just over a century, the Basilica became one of the most important Christian sanctuaries and one of the main destinations for pilgrims between Rome and Jerusalem. When you walk through the Angevin arch that stands in the square in front of the Basilica, you'll find yourself in what Italo Calvino described as a "buzzing anthill of vitality": the old town. The narrow alleys here are home to the hustle and bustle of the local people, whose faces, language and traditions reflect the variety of cultural contributions coming from their history and from the many different people, from both East and West, who have passed through here over the centuries. Once you've gone past the Cathedral of San Sabino and the Norman-Swabian Castle, take Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, which acts as a divide between the old town and the elegant Murat neighbourhood which you can walk through by following the main shopping road, via Sparano. A few kilometres later, you'll leave the city centre and take the road that linked Bari to Bitetto in ancient times. In fact, you'll find two medieval gems of rare beauty along the way: the fortified hamlet of **Balsignano** and the enchanting church of San Felice. You enter the village of **Bitetto** through Porta Barese, the only medieval town gate to still survive.

📍 **Bari** +39 080 5242244

Day 2



Length: 25 km

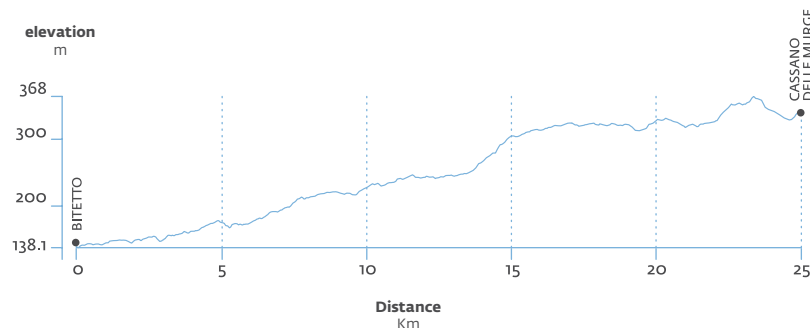


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 7.00 h

Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆



This leg of the journey starts from the charming Romanesque cathedral dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel in **Bitetto**, built between the end of the 11th century and the beginning of the 12th century and modelled on the Basilica of St. Nicholas in Bari. After about 1 km, you'll come to a lush forest made up of the olive trees that characterise the area around Bari, representing a symbol of the Puglia region: these living monuments to the Mediterranean civilisation (with some dating back thousands of years), represent a priceless cultural heritage and an incredibly important economic resource. Olive groves, almond groves and vineyards cover the vast expanses of the flatlands here, which are also home to old-fashioned farms, "trulli" (traditional dry stone huts) and small, dry stone walls that bear witness to the ancient tradition of farming in this area. This is the landscape that will accompany walkers for the next 20 km, during which time you'll gradually start to climb up towards the Murge plateau, whose rocky "step" clearly stands out on the horizon as you approach the final kilometres of this leg of the journey, which comes to an end in the historical centre of **Cassano delle Murge** (before entering the town, it's recommended that you visit the Sanctuary of Santa Maria degli Angeli).

📍 **Cassano delle Murge** +39 080 321606 - +39 080 321607





Day 3



Length: 22 km

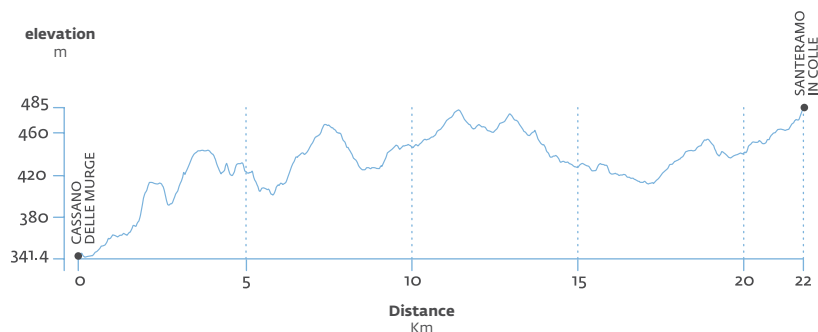


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 6.00 h

Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆



This leg of the journey starts from the historical centre of **Cassano delle Murge** and then mainly leads through the Mesola Forest, which is highly valuable in terms of its plant life, boasting specimens of famous trees such as the downy oak, the Macedonian oak, the holm oak and Aleppo Pine groves, as well as shrubs typical of the Mediterranean maquis, such as the pistacia lentiscus, broom, Montpellier cistus, kermes oak, strawberry tree, myrtle, hawthorn and blackthorn. Along this walk, you'll see all of the typical scenery of the Murgia landscape: rocky ridges, karstic cavities, gentle slopes, dolines and grottos, wheat fields and barren pastures. A place where nature blends with and lives alongside human life, which has been present here for thousands of years, forging and altering the shape of the land. You'll arrive to **Santeramo in Colle** through the Galietti pine forest, which takes its name from the 18th century farmstead located inside.

Day 4



Length: 24 km

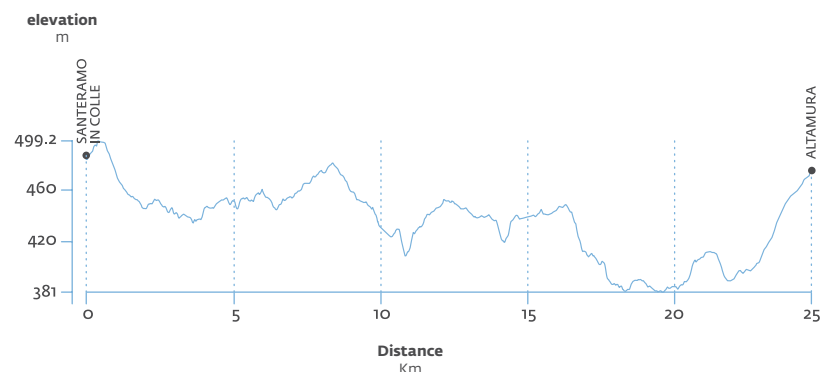


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 7.00 h

Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆



Leaving the historical centre of **Santeramo in Colle**, you'll pass through a series of districts and slowly reach the heart of Alta Murgia, one of Italy's most important steppes in terms of its number of endemic flower varieties, home also to one of the largest populations of bird life. The steppes here feature a particularly widespread type of grassland commonly known as "fairy flax", which is enriched by the presence of lichens, moss and wild orchids, giving the landscape an almost moon-like appearance. Along this walk, about 6 km from Santeramo, you'll come across the **Cave of Sant'Angelo** (currently undergoing renovation), one of ancient Puglia's most important places of worship dedicated to St. Michael, second only to the large pilgrimage centre in Gargano. After a short stretch following the waterway of a small ravine, you'll climb up to the plateau again which, starting from the rocky site of **Fornello** (near to which you walk along a medieval cart track), gently descends towards the city of Frederick II, **Altamura**, where this leg of the journey comes to an end.





Day 5



Length: 20 km

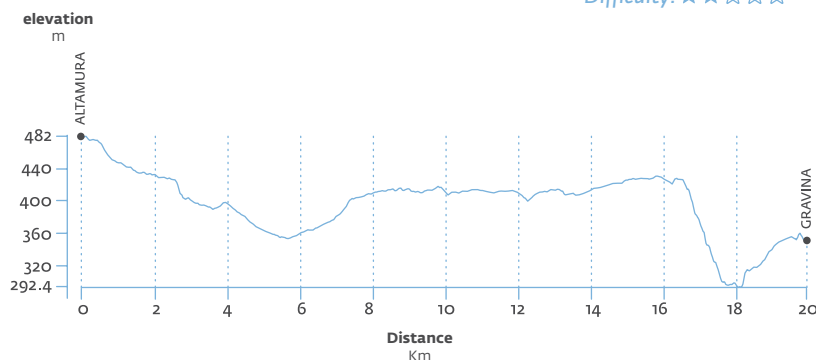


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 6.00 h

Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆



This leg starts from the majestic cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta, which Frederick II, Duke of Swabia, had built in 1232, in the Romanesque architectural style of the time and which has undergone significant modifications over the centuries. Walk through the enchanting historical centre of Altamura, a maze of narrow alleys and small squares, called “claustrì”, where you’ll constantly be able to smell the pleasant aroma of bread being baked in ancient stone ovens: this is the renowned bread of **Altamura** that has been famous since the Middle Ages, made with durum-wheat semolina from Alta Murgia. Once you’ve walked through the town, between the Murgia and the Fossa Bradanica (“Bradana Trench”), the landscape opens up as far as the eye can see, covering vast expanses where wheat and arable crops are grown (lupin, Indian pea, oats). You’ll eventually go through a small patch of woodland and follow a paved road that leads to the city gates of **Gravina in Puglia**.

Day 6



Length: 30 km

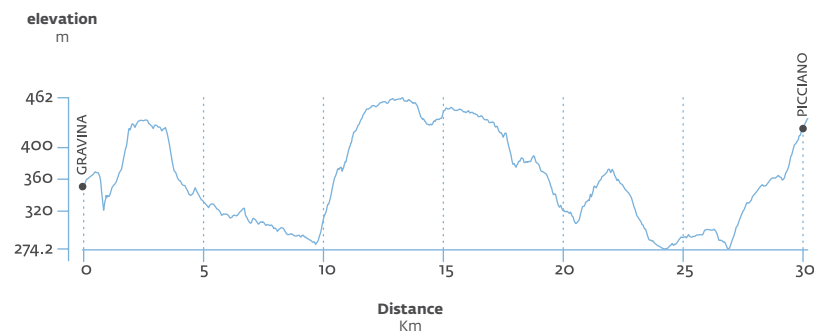


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 8.30 h

Difficulty: ★★★★★



This leg starts from the cathedral of Santa Maria Assunta, built in 1095 by the Normans, right next to the gorge. Leave the town behind you and cross the charming stone aqueduct bridge, dating back to the 18th century, which stunningly connects the two banks of the ravine and leads you to the plateau of Madonna della Stella. From here, you can enjoy the amazing view of the town of **Gravina** and his rocky habitat. A cobblestone path will lead you to the hill of **Botromagno**, the site of the first human settlement in the area of Gravina, dating back to the Neolithic age; further along on this hill stands Sidion, one of the most important towns of Peucezia, which is still home to numerous archaeological remains. As you walk down the hill of **Botromagno**, you’ll be able to enjoy some of the most stunning views in Alta Murgia; after a few kilometres, you’ll start another gentle climb up the hill that is home to the “Difesa Grande” forest (“Large Defence”), representing one of the largest and richest forest areas in the whole of Puglia. The walk passes all the way through the forest, where around 10 km of paths will eventually lead you to Fossa Bradanica, a vast landscape of rolling hills characterised by their deep and clay-rich alluvial soil. Walk across the large and intensively farmed expanses, which are bright yellow in colour between the months of May and June, and then start heading uphill towards the hill of **Picciano**. At the top, you’ll find the Benedictine Sanctuary, which is the end point of this leg of the journey.



Day 7



Length: 29 km

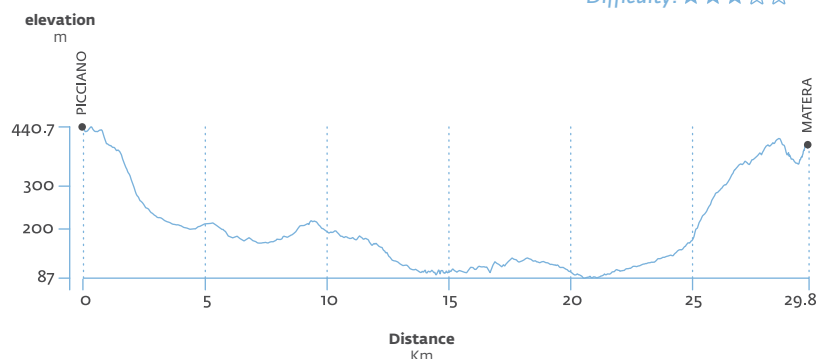


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 8.00 h

Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆



Starting from the Benedictine Sanctuary of **Picciano**, you'll start to gently descend towards the extensive, tufaceous plain, which is home to **Matera**. Walkers will gradually start to grasp the extraordinary beauty and uniqueness of the rocky habitats here: you'll slowly discover the cliffs and caves where humans left their traces on the walls, telling the story of their continuous presence from the prehistoric age to modern times. The route goes past the **San Giuliano** Nature Reserve, one of Basilicata's most important wetlands. You'll enter **Matera** from Rione Casalnuovo, from where you can directly reach the enchanting area of the "Sassi" (cave homes). The walk ends at the Cathedral of Madonna della Bruna.

IN THE PILGRIM'S BAG

What else would you ask for at the end of a long walk through wheat fields and vineyards, other than some tasty bread and a glass of grape nectar? There are three main types of bread in Alta Murgia: **Altamura**, **Laterza** and **Santeramo**. They all use the same kind of live yeast, which was once shared among the families living in the town: a vital source of life. Normally cooked using oak wood, but also olive branches, these types of bread are very characteristic in terms of their flavour and consistency. They are made using the same ingredients, with the only difference being whether they use durum wheat or soft wheat and the relative mixes: water is added, together with the fragrant air of Murgia, willpower and plenty of dedication. You can tell the difference by looking at their shape: the PDO (protected designation of origin) bread from Altamura is "crossed" (or "*U skuanète*" in the local dialect) or in the shape of a priest's cap; the one from Laterza, on the other hand, is traditionally more like a large loaf; the one from Santeramo is like a knotted braid or a single bread roll. This kind of bread was designed to last for a long time at home, kept under a dish towel or in the saddlebags of transhumance farmers, and goes perfectly with the local cheeses, although its original pairing was with wine, especially the **Gioia del Colle Primitivo** DOC. Primitivo wine, originating on the **Murgia plateau** in Central Puglia, was introduced here in the year 1,000 by some monks who called it *Primitivus*, given that it matured early. This grape variety grows well in the soil and climate conditions here, at average altitudes of 200 m above sea level where there are cool temperatures and dry flows of air from north to south, giving the wine less residual sugar. Moreover, the karstic land, covered by white stone emerging from the Murgia, reflect the rays of the sun, amplifying exposure, at the same time as maintaining the roots of the vines cool. In your glass, you'll see the most purplish shades of red. This smooth and velvety wine will ease the fatigue from your walk, as well as offering an enchanting and fruity flavour.... soothing any aches and pains after your trek. For those stopping off in **Santeramo**, you absolutely must try the "**Fornello meat**" coming from the numerous local farms and cooked directly in the typical butcher shops, which offer a space for tasting and a cooking stove.



The Cammino Materano Itinerary 6 - Via Ellenica



VIA ELLENICA

"You'll find more in the woods than in books.
The trees and rocks can teach you things
that no teacher ever will."

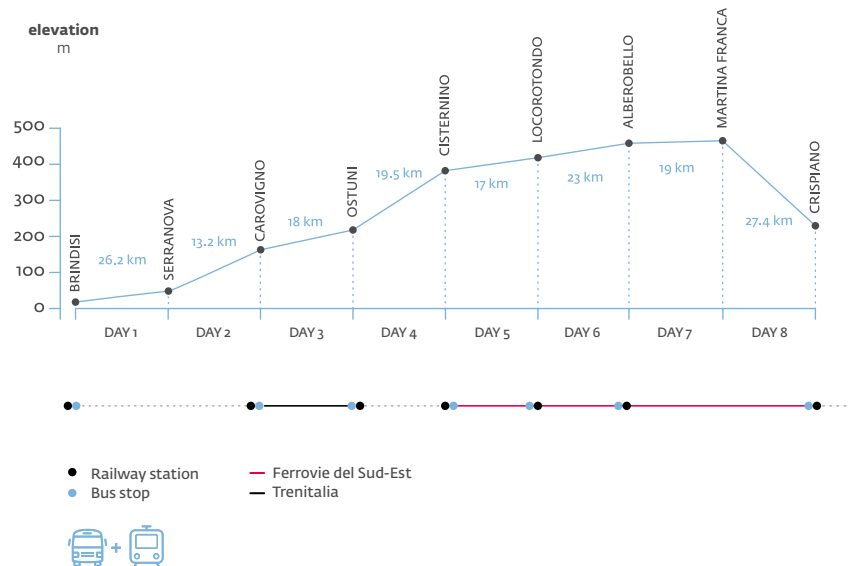
Bernard of Clairvaux

From Brindisi to Crispiano



Total length: 163,3 km

Itinerary difficulty: ★★☆☆☆



Itinerary 6

VIA ELLENICA

From Brindisi to Crispiano

"Apulia, cujus metropolis Brundiston est, for istam navigatur in terram sanctam" reads the caption of Hyggeden's globe dating back to 1360, bearing witness to the important role that this city has played for thousands of years, as the main port to set off towards the East and the Holy Land. Pilgrims would arrive to the "Porta d'Oriente" ("Gate to the East") along the Via Appia-Traiana, which came to an end in Brindisi. The *Regina Viarum* end column marks the start of an enchanting walk that connects these two **UNESCO heritage sites** (the *Sassi of Matera* and the *Trulli of Alberobello*): charming villages in the *Itria Valley* and the natural paradise of the *Parco delle Gravine* ("park of the ravines"), an extraordinary open-air museum telling the story of the cave civilisation.

Also for this walk, you need to leave the sea behind you and head inland, towards the southern part of Italy. **Serranova**, **Carovigno** and **Ostuni**, the white city that also also overlooks the Via Traiana, will introduce you to the well-known **Itria Valley**, whose orderly countryside, dotted with "trulli" (traditional dry stone huts), farms and vegetable gardens will make you feel like you're in a fairy tale. **Cisternino**, **Locorotondo** and **Alberobello**, with their characteristic historical centres of rural origin, will ensure that you enjoy some peaceful rest and unforgettable experiences. The majestic **Martina Franca**, with its elegant buildings from the modern era, will reassure you that your dream isn't yet over, but is merely starting to change: the kilometres of the Pianelle Forest, with its many varieties of plant life, will accompany you to **Crispiano**, the real gate to the "Land of the Ravines". Here, pilgrims who have already walked 100 km will be able to pick up their "Xenium", the "chartula" for having reached the halfway point of their journey.



Day 1



Length: 26,2 km

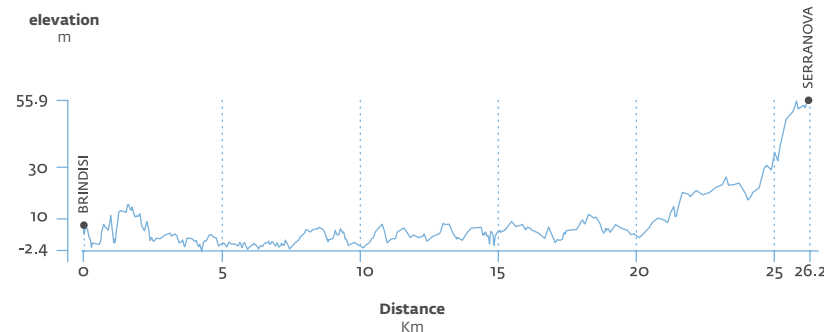


Terreno: tarmac



Duration: 7.30 h

Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆



The Via Ellenica on the Cammino Materano starts from **Brindisi**, the place where pilgrims would historically board their ships for the Holy Land. From the column that marked the end of the Via Appia, walkers can reach the other side of the Gulf on an attractive small boat that moors up in the Casale district. From here, your journey on foot begins: starting from the medieval church of Santa Maria (where a famous trial of the Templars was held in 1310), you'll follow the Adriatic Coast for around ten kilometres in a northern direction, along a stretch that coincides with the Via Traiana-Francigena. Before reaching the **Torre Guaceto** nature reserve, the Via Ellenica takes a detour and, after crossing the SS16bis on an overpass, you need to head in a south-west direction, along a white road characterised by olive trees and prickly pears. You'll then reach **Serranova**, a small rural village created during the land reform: don't miss a stop off at the Tonino market, the *genius loci* of this first leg of the journey.

📍 [Brindisi +39 0831 229784](tel:+390831229784)

Day 2



Length: 13,2 km

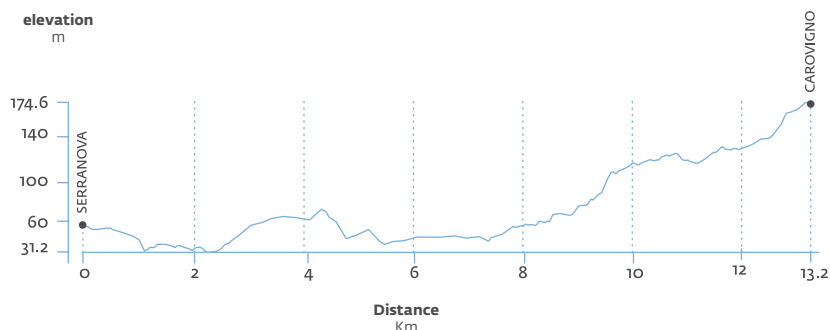


Terreno: tarmac



Duration: 4.00 h

Difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆



Once you've gone past the castle of **Serranova** (private), turn left and you'll immediately find yourself on a cycle path surrounded by Puglia's traditional, small dry stone walls. You'll be surrounded by an expanse of thousand-year-old olive trees with knotted trunks, prickly pair trees and the odd small villa stood on its own. Walkers can lose themselves in the silence of this countryside and, on the days when the Mistral blows, they can also enjoy the freshness coming off the Adriatic, just a few kilometres away. After only around ten kilometres of following the path of eucalyptus trees and low flowering Mediterranean maquis, pilgrims will already begin to see the town of **Carovigno**, with its characteristic historical centre dominated by the Dentice di Frasso Castle.



Day 3



Length: 18 km

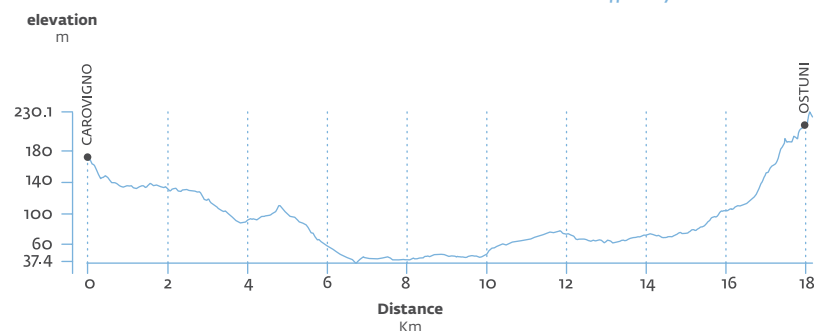


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 5.00 h

Difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆



This leg will allow you to cross the plain with its centuries-old olive trees, where you will also find Puglia's oldest specimens: these huge and majestic trees act as colossal witnesses to the origins of this sacred place for the Mediterranean civilisation. These living monuments will accompany walkers for the entire duration of this leg of the journey, until they reach the "white city" of **Ostuni**, stunningly perched on top of a high hill, from where you can admire a stunning view across the vast landscape and all the way out to sea. In the heart of the historical centre, there are two people who travellers must absolutely meet: the "Woman of Ostuni", the remains of a Palaeolithic mother, and Tonino Zurlo, a craftsman of olive wood and storyteller who takes and extracts his enchanting items, verses and melodies from the local area and from nature.

📍 **Ostuni** +39 0831 339627

Day 4



Length: 19,5 km

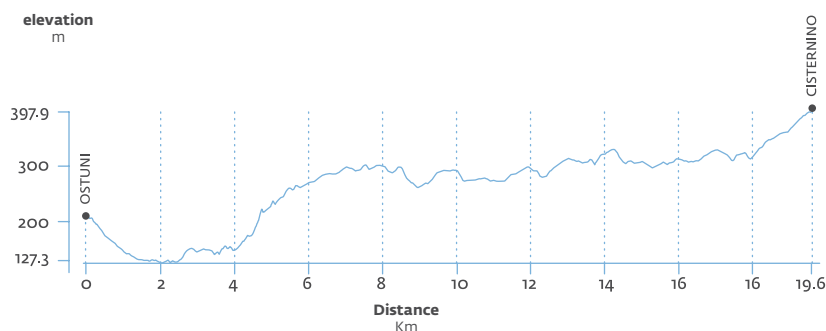


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 5.30 h

Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆



Leave the “white city” by passing the **Santa Maria di Agnano** archaeological site, where the “Woman of Ostuni” was found; after a series of paths, you’ll gradually leave the olive tree forest that characterises the coastal plain and, after climbing Murgia’s rocky “step”, you’ll find yourself in the typical landscape of the Itria Valley, with its most distinctive features being the surviving “tratturelli” (small sheep tracks), patches of woodland and the extensive spread of small plots of cultivated land, divided up by characteristic dry stone walls, which **UNESCO** has declared a **World Heritage Site**. These plots of land are home to the famous “trulli”, typical rural, cone-shaped buildings made from dry limestone, representing an admirable expression of Puglia’s farming soul. Quiet roads will lead walkers up to **Cisternino**.

📍 [Cisternino +39 080 4446751](tel:+390804446751)



Day 5



Length: 17 km

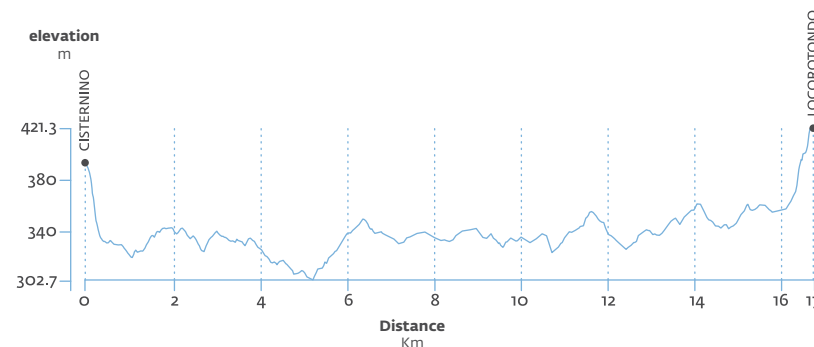


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 5.00 h

Difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆



This leg of the journey starts from **Cisternino**, defined by Jinnai Hidenobu as being “a great architectural masterpiece without architects”; an architectural ensemble of small streets, openings and huts that have risen up over the centuries and that preserve this town’s rural and ancient charm. Follow the country roads and paths that wind their way between the small dry stone walls and trulli (traditional dry stone huts); roughly half way along the route, you’ll find yourself on the unpaved road of the Puglia Aqueduct: Europe’s greatest example of hydraulic engineering, which offers service roads that can be followed for long stretches. Along this path, you’ll also find the incredibly unique spiritual oasis of **Bhole Baba Ashram**, which you simply must stop off and see. After a few kilometres, you’ll arrive to the foot of the village of **Locorotondo**, a magnificent gem perched on a hill covered in local vines.

Day 6



Length: 23 km

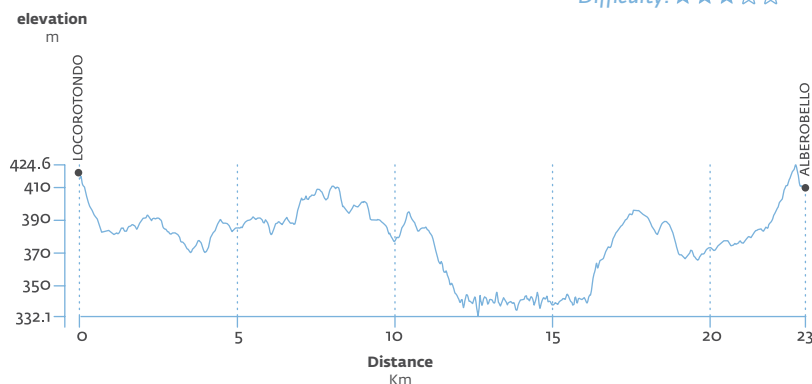


Terreno: tarmac



Duration: 6.30 h

Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆



This leg of the journey starts from **Locorotondo** (*Locus rotundus*), a place of circular beauty, whose historical centre is home to characteristic *cummerse* buildings, with sloping roofs covered with “chiancarelle” (limestone slabs similar to those used for the trulli). During the first half of this leg, you’ll walk along roads and paths dotted with trulli (traditional dry stone huts), which are authentic architectural masterpieces that turn this landscape into an archaic and enchanted place that is unique in the world. Once you take the road known as the *Canale di Pirro*, the landscape changes significantly: this long “Puglia Aqueduct trail” follows the edge of an impressive and spectacular doline, running through a natural haven of green where the remains of ancient buildings still survive. Once you’ve gone past the hamlet of **Coreggia**, you’ll finally reach **Alberobello**, known as “the city of the trulli” (**UNESCO World Heritage Site**), as it is completely made up of these magnificent buildings.



Day 7



Length: 19 km

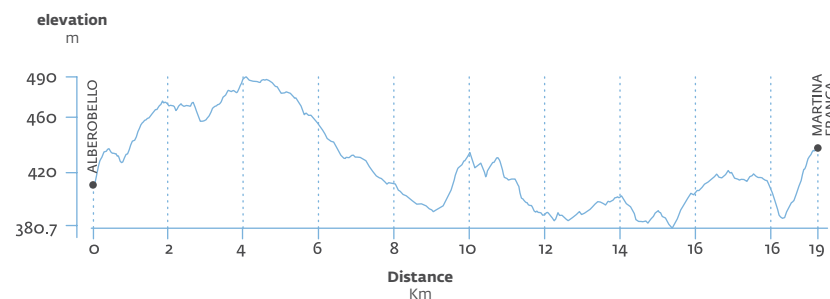


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 5.30 h

Difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆



Leaving **Alberobello**, walk along the paths of the Selva Forest, which is all that remains of the larger oak forest that used to cover a large part of this territory in ancient times. The woodland here is mainly made up of Macedonian oak, holm oak and downy oak trees (typical of Puglia’s countryside), although many other types of tree also grow here, including strawberry trees, the pistacia lentiscus and the European spindle. Once you’ve gone through the wood, the route winds its way between paths and small roads framed by dry stone walls and immersed in the area’s typical agricultural landscape, made up of wheat fields, olive groves and vineyards, holiday farms and farmsteads. This leg of the journey ends in **Martina Franca**, the Baroque gem of the Itria Valley.

📍 [Martina Franca +39 080 416554](tel:+39080416554)

Day 8



Length: 27,4 km

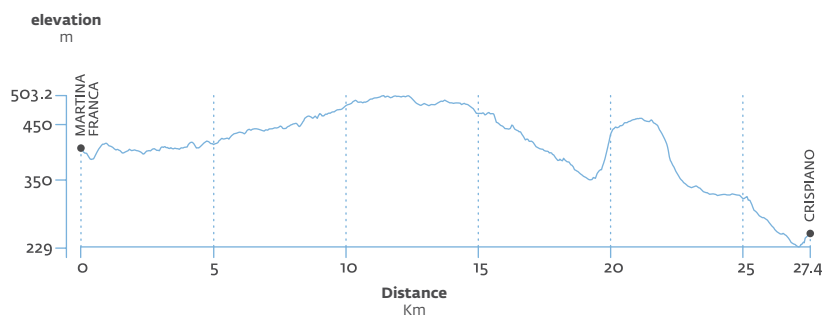


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 8.00 h

Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆



Most of this leg of the journey will take you along paths through woodland areas. The first is the *Murge Orientali* Nature Reserve; the path runs alongside the Masseria Galleon, a riding school of the CFS (Italian State Forest Department) and a breeding centre for Murgesse horses, as well as being home to a museum dedicated to this wonderful local breed. The second is the *Pianelle Forest*, one of Puglia's most important and extensive green areas. This forest is positioned inside a large karstic doline (called "Gravina del Vuolo") and its dominant flora consists of a holm oak grove with some extraordinarily large specimens that are so famous that the great botanist Valerio Giacomini defined them as being "some of the most beautiful in Italy". This leg of the journey ends in **Crispiano**, the town of the hundred farms, which divides the Itria Valley and the "Land of the Ravines".

📍 **Crispiano** +39 335 8202970



IN THE PILGRIM'S BAG

Reddish in colour, with a fleshy pulp under a fine peel. Full of seeds with a naturally salty flavour and an unmistakable oval shape with tip: this is the **Fiaschetto tomato**, and nothing goes better with a nice slice of homemade bread after a long day walking among the trulli and flourishing olive groves. An ecotype, a cultivar, characteristic of the land between Carovigno and Brindisi. Forgotten in the years since the San Marzano variety invaded (easier to harvest and more profitable for the production of sauces), Fiaschetto tomatoes have now made a comeback and are now being actively protected and promoted. The Slow Food movement has introduced measures to preserve its sweetness and juiciness, promoted in particular by the organic food community in the Torre Guaceto reserve. It is said that the best remedy for tired legs, after walking a cultural trail all day, is to have a sip, or preferably two or three, of some good wine (or perhaps this is just an excuse!). If you find yourself in the Itria Valley, it's difficult not to be enticed by a nice glass of **Locorotondo DOC wine**. This wine comes from the town of the same name, as well as from the area around Cisternino and Fasano, and is made using Verdeca, a white grape variety from Alessano, as well as the Minutolo and Malvasia varieties to add some extra organoleptic properties. These vines are mainly grown with a low espalier structure, between 300 and 400 metres above sea level, with their roots in calcareous and clay-rich soil. Dry to the taste yet with a smooth and fruity flavour and bright, pale green colour. In the area around the Via Ellenica, there's another fragrance that's sure to enter walkers' souls. With your glass of white wine resting on the table, some delicious bread and tomato in your hand, the best way to complete your snack and make it more substantial is to also try a slice of **Capocollo di Martina Franca IGP** (pork meat taken from the neck). This is an expression of how Martina Franca has turned butchery into an art: not much salt is added and the meat is smoked and left to mature, giving its harmonious marbling a sweet flavour of vincotto and cured meat, wood and smoke. Produced using pigs bred in the wild, in areas full of oak forests and Mediterranean maquis and a speciality during the 18th century, this simply had to be awarded PGI status (protected geographic indication), and is also protected by the Slow Food movement (as is the Fiaschetto tomato) and is endorsed by a dedicated consortium. If this is the reward waiting for you after your long trek along Puglia's tratturi, then you'd better start walking fast!

The Cammino Materano
Itinerary 7 - Via Ellenica



VIA ELLENICA

“Traveller, there is no road
you make your own path as you walk.”

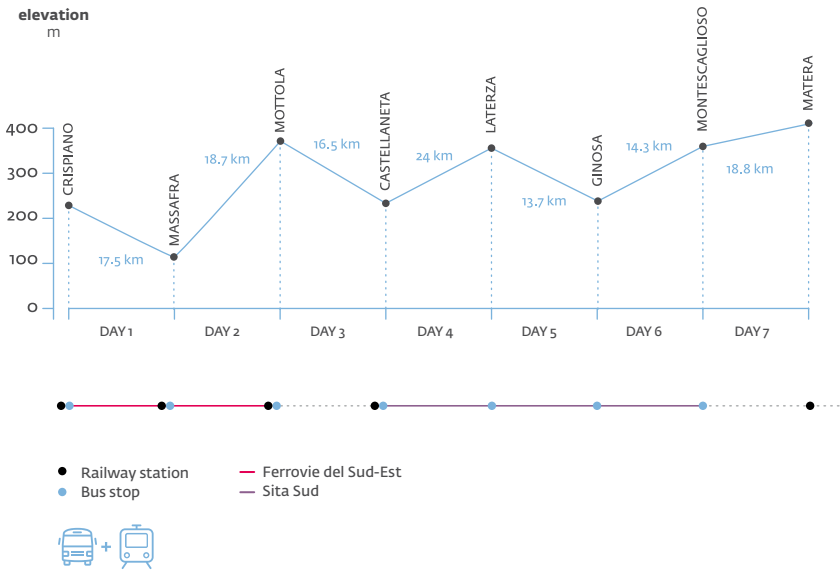
Antonio Machado Ruiz

From Crispiano to Matera



Total length: 123,5 km

Itinerary difficulty: ★★☆☆☆



Itinerary 7

VIA ELLENICA

From Crispiano to Matera

This route starts from Crispiano, the real gate to the the "Land of the Ravines". Rocky habitats will be playing the starring role from now on: **Massafra, Mottola, Palagianello, Castellaneta, Laterza** and **Ginosa** will remind pilgrims of the forgotten Middle Ages, made up of houses and underground churches, of dirt roads and bridges overlooking canyons, boasting landscapes of enchanting natural beauty. Once you cross the Apulian border, you'll reach **Montescaglioso**: from here, **Matera**, up high, is only a day's walk away.



Day 1



Length: 17,5 km

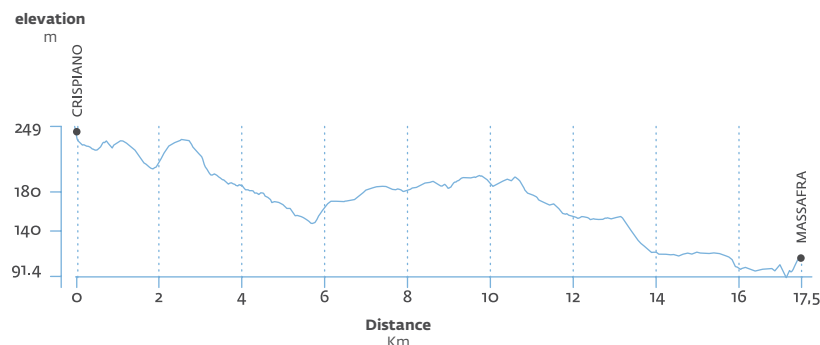


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 5.00 h

Difficulty: ★★★★★



From **Crispiano**, head slowly towards the "Land of the Ravines", one of Europe's most important nature areas, made up of magnificent karstic canyons arranged in a fan-like layout around the Ionian arch of the Gulf of Taranto. As you leave Crispiano, walk for a few kilometres just inside a small ravine (also called the "Triglie" or "Mullet" ravine), following a path that runs along the riverbed, surrounded by the typical, lush vegetation of the Mediterranean maquis and passing the traces of rock settlements (a village made up of numerous cave-houses and the two churches of San Cipriano and San Michele). The walk continues towards Masseria Amastuola, an ancient farm dating back to 1400 surrounded by an enchanting vineyard-garden designed by the famous architect, landscape gardener and philosopher Fernando Caruncho; this leg of the journey ends in **Massafra**.

📞 **Massafra** +39 099 8804695

Day 2



Length: 18,7 km

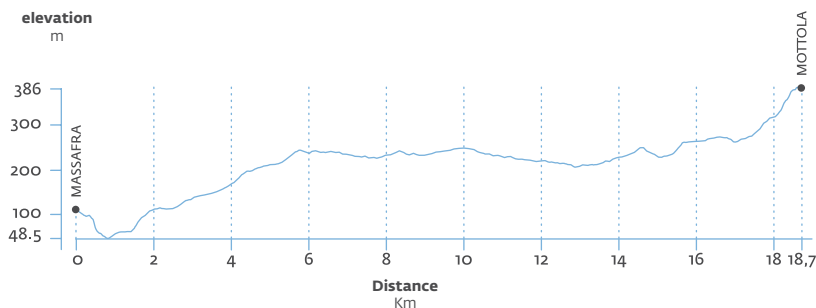


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 8.30 h

Difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆



This leg of the journey starts from **Massafra**, one of Italy's "rock" capitals, so much so that it has been nicknamed "Italy's Thebaïd"; in fact, the city stands between two ravines (the *San Marco* and *Madonna della Scala* ravines), both dotted with caves and underground environments that hold extraordinary testimonies of the life that humans have led here for thousands of years. A long path that winds its way among centuries-old olive trees guides you out of the city and takes you into the silent countryside, where you'll see cultivated fields alternating with Mediterranean maquis. This leg of the journey ends in **Mottola**, also known as the "Spy of the Ionian Sea": from the top of the hill here, you can see from the Gulf of Taranto all the way to Sila. On the slopes of this hill, you'll come across the cave church of St. Gregory which is home to a number of frescoes, including the impressive Christ Pantocrator.



Day 3



Length: 16,5 km

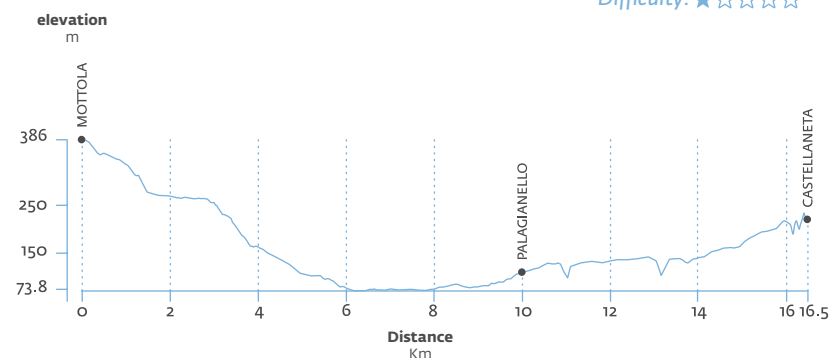


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 5.00 h

Difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆



Walk down the hill where **Mottola** stands, following an ancient sheep track that leads towards an area full of rock settlements, including the village of **Casalrotto** (made up of a hundred or so caves dug along the two sides of ravine with the same name) and the *Church of Saint Angel*, Italy's only two-storey cave church. After a few kilometres, you'll come across another cave church, this time dedicated to St. Nicholas, with an incredible gallery of popular sacred art from Puglia dating back to the Middle Ages. Continue in the direction of **Palagianello** and finally arrive in **Castellaneta**: both towns are located just before magnificent ravines; the Castellaneta ravine, measuring 145 m at its deepest point and approximately 300 m wide, is one of the largest and most spectacular in the entire Puglia region.

① [Castellaneta +39 099 8497278](tel:+390998497278)

Day 4



Length: 24 km

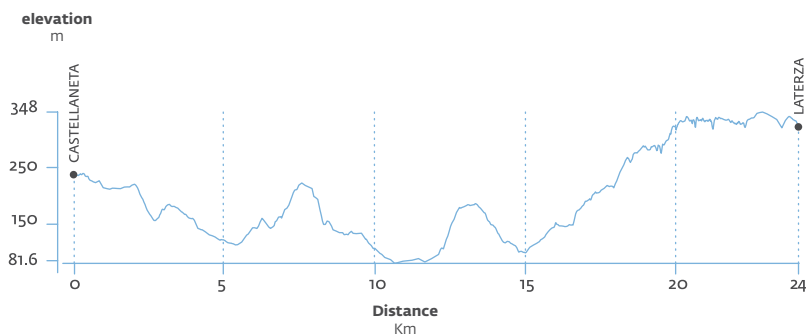


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 7.00 h

Difficulty: ★☆☆☆☆



The longest leg of the walk begins from **Castellaneta**. A series of small roads and trails will lead you towards the Montecamplo Nature Reserve, dominated by Macedonian oak, downy oak, kermes oak, holm oak and Aleppo pine trees; the dense scrub and numerous farms here acted as refuge for bandits during the 19th century. The walk will take you through unspoilt areas, covered in olive trees and Mediterranean maquis, followed by an extraordinary path that runs along the edge of the **Laterza** ravine for a number of kilometres: this is one of Europe's largest canyons, with 200 m-high walls; a real natural paradise revealing breathtaking landscapes and views with every step you take. Once you've gone past the Lipu Oasis, you'll soon reach **Laterza**, a town famous for its maiolica and bread.

📍 **Laterza** +39 099 8296793 - +39 333 5726138



Day 5



Length: 13,7 km

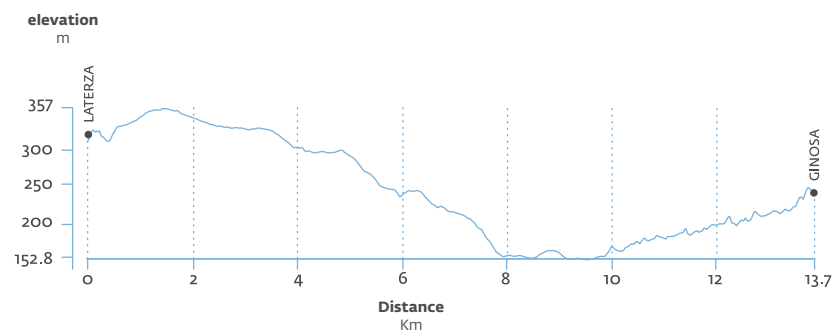


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 4.00 h

Difficulty: ★★★★★



Setting off from **Laterza**, the walk continues between expanses of olive trees towards **Murgia San Pellegrino**, an area which shepherds have walked for thousands of years, as part of their transhumance, stretching from Basilicata through to the Taranto lowlands. The walk continues along the bed of the ravine, in wild and timeless surroundings where nature and humankind have been living in harmony since prehistoric times. **Ginosa** will welcome you with its extraordinary series of cave villages, known as "il Casale" and "Rivolta", characterised by a large number of cave-houses arranged on several levels and connected by stairs and paths. These two villages were inhabited until the first half of the 20th century and still preserve traces of both ancient and modern life.

📍 **Ginosa** +39 099 8290332

Day 6



Length: 14,3 km

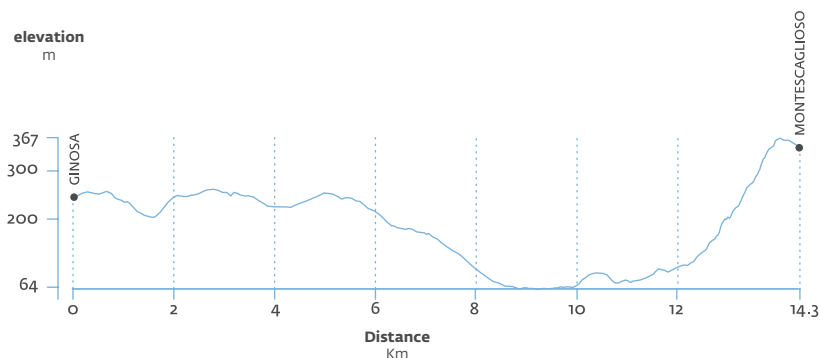


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 4.00 h

Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆



This leg of the journey leaves behind the rugged ravine territory and takes you to a more gentle landscape that is equally as surprising, characterised by vast hills where wheat is grown, broken up by small pine and oak forests and Mediterranean maquis. Small paths wind their way into the heart of this landscape: after wading through a small waterway, you'll walk among lush vegetation and then reach the foot of the high hill (350 m) that is home to **Montescaglioso**, one of Basilicata's gems, so much so that it was named a "jewel of Italy" in 2012. Following a panoramic path immersed in a forest, you'll climb the hill and end up at the town gates and the stunning Abbey dedicated to St. Michael the Archangel.



Day 7



Length: 18,8 km

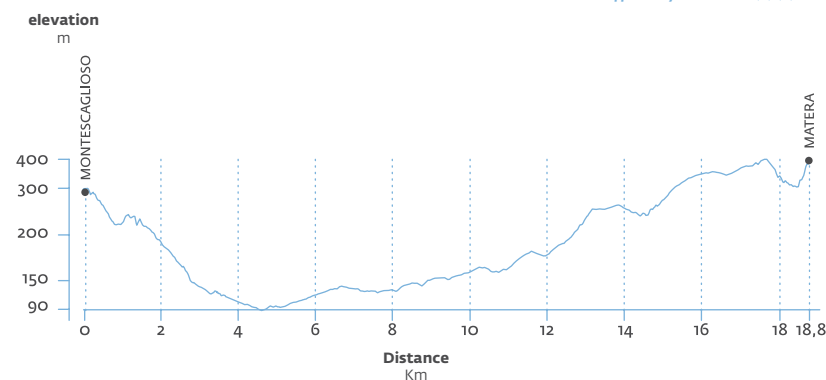


Terrain: unpaved, tarmac



Duration: 5.00 h

Difficulty: ★★☆☆☆



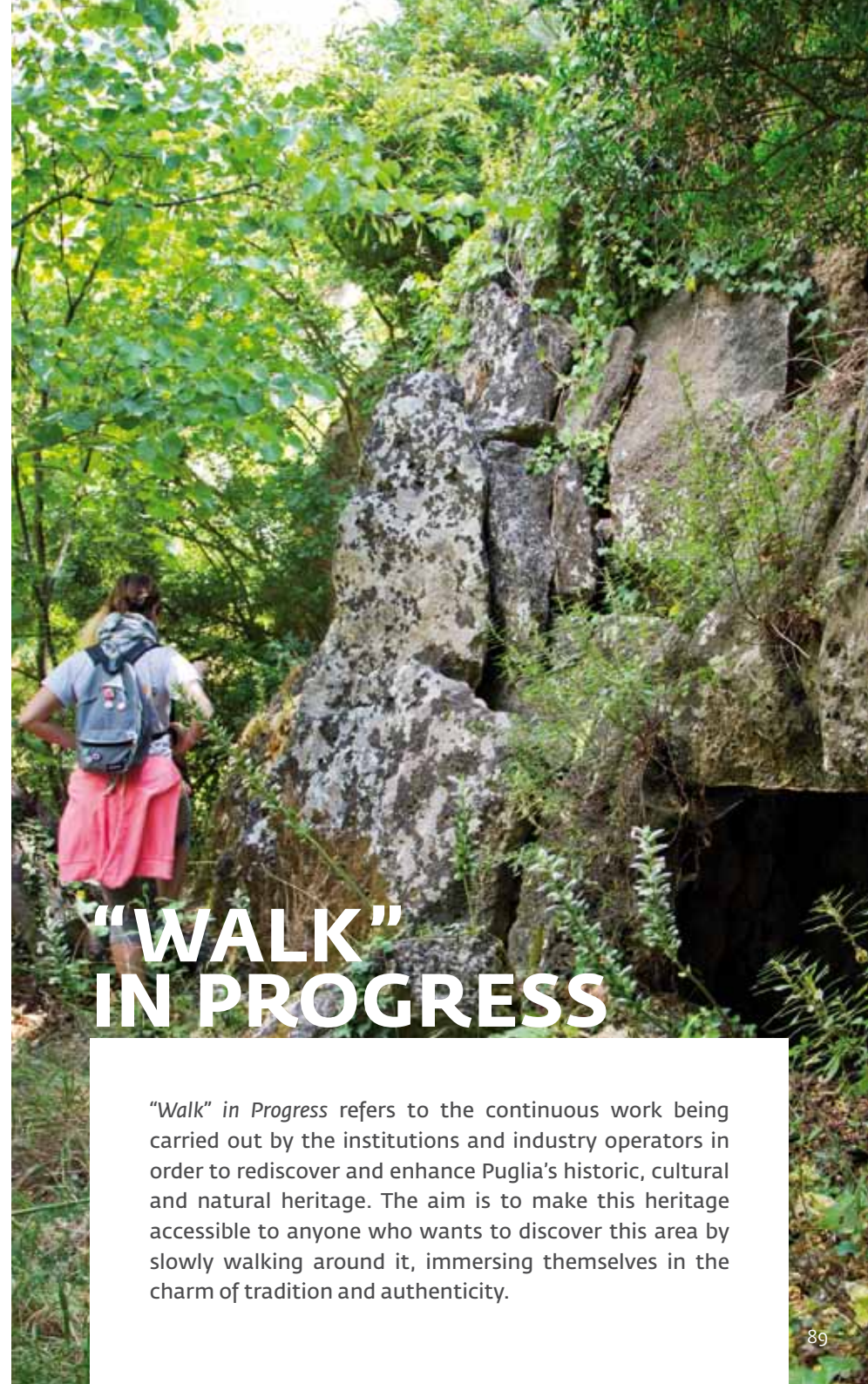
A path will lead you away from **Montescaglioso** and down into the valley below. From here, the walk will take you across the plains, planted with arable crops and olive groves; for much of this leg of the journey, you'll see vast expanses of wheat fields and majestic birds of prey circling in the sky. For a number of kilometres, you'll walk along an enchanting trail that runs behind the Matera Ravine: you'll be able to see a deep canyon dotted with cave-houses and cave churches. You'll arrive into **Matera** from the Casalnuovo district: a narrow walkway dug into the rock will lead you to the view of the extraordinary and ancestral beauty of the **Sassi**, representing the end point for this walk.

IN THE PILGRIM'S BAG

Crispiano is known as the “city of the hundred farms”, some of which date back to 1400, maintaining a priceless heritage of typical cultivar, including the **Giallorosso tomato** (literally: “yellow-red”). This fruit begins to be harvested around the end of July. Its golden skin conceals a full-bodied flesh that’s full of herbaceous scents and boasts well-balanced acidity. These tomatoes go perfectly with anything and are just as great to eat on their own, freshly picked. Alternatively, you can spread them on a *frisa*, make sauce out of them or stuff them ready for the winter. They are harvested in iconic hanging bunches (“*penole*”) and are recognised by the Slow Food movement as representing biodiversity heritage.

In this area, boasting some of Europe’s most stunning ravines, you can also enjoy the **Bread of Laterza** or the succulent **citrus fruits**: oranges and clementines with their characteristic red shades.

On the border between Puglia and Basilicata, traditionally around Christmas time, it’s also easy to find “**strazzate**” (typical local biscuits). Almonds, eggs and sugar are the main ingredients, enhanced by flour and bicarbonate, plus other aromas which you can choose depending on your taste. All of these ingredients are mixed together to form a dough which is then torn (in Italian: “*strappato*”, hence the name in local dialect, “*strazzato*”), into small portions and baked at a high temperature for as long as necessary to make them crumbly and golden. These delicious sweet treats smell of tradition and are convenient to carry around in your bag as you walk along the paths and trails that guide you through the Puglia region.



“WALK” IN PROGRESS

“Walk” in Progress refers to the continuous work being carried out by the institutions and industry operators in order to rediscover and enhance Puglia’s historic, cultural and natural heritage. The aim is to make this heritage accessible to anyone who wants to discover this area by slowly walking around it, immersing themselves in the charm of tradition and authenticity.

VIA LITORANEA

The Via Litoranea is an ancient route that connects **Manfredonia** with **Bari**, covering all of northern Puglia. It connects a number of cities that began to play a leading role between the late-ancient age and the Middle Ages. Out of these, we simply have to mention Siponto, whose excavations are now open to the public, together with the church of Santa Maria. **Barletta**, **Trani**, **Bisceglie**, **Molfetta** and **Giovinazzo** all have stunning historical centres dating back to the Middle Ages, all characterised by the typical white stone that reflects the Mediterranean sun. **Barletta**, a port of embarkation for the Holy Land and a trade centre, preserves traces of the Chivalrous Orders: the architectural style of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Cathedral are reminiscent of northern Europe. In **Trani**, in addition to the Romanesque church of St. Nicholas the Pilgrim overlooking the sea, you can also explore the city's Jewish past by visiting the Sclanova synagogue. In **Bisceglie**, you simply have to visit the church of Santa Margherita, where the tablets portraying the virtues of Saint Margaret of Antioch (13th century) and the miracles of St. Nicholas of Bari come from, which are today housed in the capital's provincial art gallery. **Molfetta** is linked to the history of San Corrado Bavaro: the cathedral, also overlooking the sea, was built in his honour half way through the 13th century and features two stunning bell towers. Last but not least, there's the lesser known but just as beautiful town of Giovinazzo, which is located on a peninsula surrounded by a wall; the historical centre here helps you to imagine what life was like in southern Italy in medieval times.

www.viefrancigenedelsud.it    

VIA SVEVA: from Trani to Matera

A 210 km-long journey following in the footsteps of Frederick II, Duke of Swabia and his castles, starting from the one built on the seafront of **Trani**, just a short distance from the charming Romanesque Cathedral. In **Andria**, a city faithful to Swabian rule (*Andria Fidelis*), the Cathedral preserves the remains of two of Frederick's wives. From here, you reach **Castel del Monte**, a wonderful gem of medieval architecture: the majestic building with an octagonal layout is an expression of this enlightened sovereign's multifaceted personality, described as *Stupor Mundi*. Continuing along the paths of the Alta Murgia National Park, you'll reach **Minervino**, an ancient city connected to the timeless transhumance paths that are characterised by "jazzi" (traditional sheep pens) with their typical "wolf-protection" walls; passing by the dam of Locone, you'll also come to the centre of **Spinazzola**, whose position on important connecting roads is reflected in several documents dating back to the Middle Ages and in the buildings belonging to the Chivalrous Orders. From here, passing by the castle of Garagnone, built in the Norman era overlooking the Via Appia, which passes through the valley a little more to the south, you'll reach **Poggiorsini**, today a rural centre whose population is the result of the various land reforms. The next leg of the journey reaches **Gravina in Puglia** and connects to the Via Peuceta.

www.camminomaterano.it    

VIA DAUNA: from Termoli to Matera

A walk between Molise, Campania and Puglia, following ancient trails trodden for centuries by shepherds as part of their transhumance, and by pilgrims from all over Europe. The walk starts from **Termoli**, on the Adriatic coast, and crosses the enchanting "towns of stone" embedded in the setting of the Daunian Mountains: stunning villages that are rich in history and perched on rocky spurs, broken up by lush oak and beech forests, valleys and breathtaking landscapes that are unique in Puglia. After **Melfi**, a Norman stronghold and capital, and Venosa, a *statio* of the Via Appia and home to the majestic "church of the incomplete", you'll rejoin the Via Sveva in **Spinazzola**, where pilgrims are only four days away from reaching their goal.

www.camminomaterano.it    

CAMMINO DI LEUCA

A walk from **Lecce** to the white land of **Leuca**, which already in Roman times was home to a temple dedicated to Minerva and, today, is a destination for pilgrims headed for the Basilica-Sanctuary of Santa Maria di Finibus Terrae; 4 legs, 90 km between places and villages that seem suspended in time, steeped in Mediterranean culture and memories. The whole of this journey takes place in the hinterland surrounding Salento, through the so-called "greenhouses": an arid and barren karstic plateau which humans have transformed into a unique and picturesque rural landscape, characterised by terraces, small walls and buildings made from dry stone ("pajare"). Churches, monasteries and hospices, dating back to the period between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, will fill your journey with fascinating cultural influences. **Galatina**, a stop-off during the first leg of the journey, is a wonderful town typical of the Salento area. The monuments here include the church of St. Catherine of Alexandria, built by Raimondello Orsini del Balzo between 1369 and 1391: the quality of its frescoes makes this one of the highest quality expressions of late-medieval painting in the south of Italy. The other towns along the route also offer extremely interesting attractions: **Cutrofiano**, with its thousand-year-old tradition of nativity scenes; **Specchia** with its Byzantine church of Sant'Eufemia; **Patù** with its remarkable late-medieval church "delle Cento Pietre" ("of the hundred stones"); last but not least, there's, **Leuca**, which has already been mentioned.



VIA SALLENTINA

A walk that retraces the ancient, pre-Roman route that crossed the side of Salento nearest to the Ionian sea; 160 km through the territory of the Messapians, with numerous reminders of this ancient civilisation still being present today: Megalithic walls, cart tracks, cemeteries and towns. The route begins in **Taranto**, with its thousand-year-old history, the beacon of Magna Grecia. In its historical centre, where the Doric columns of Poseidon's temple still stand and the majestic cathedral dedicated to the Irish monk Cataldo really stands out, classicism and the Middle Ages mingle and merge. To guard the two seas, there is the Aragonese Castle, which can now be visited thanks to the work of the Italian Navy. Another central leg of primary importance is Manduria, whose local area is now renowned for its famous wine: the historical centre, made up of a grid of narrow streets, is home to modern architectural gems that fascinate visitors. You enter the province of Lecce and stop off at Nardò (the ancient Neretum), with its countless 16th-17th century churches and just as many farms; Alezio, with its very particular church of Santa Maria della Lizza, and Ugento complete the route, before reaching the stunning viewpoint of Leuca.

VIA APPIA

The Via Appia was a Roman road that connected Rome to *Brundisium* (Brindisi), the strategic port for trade routes with Greece and the East, won over in the last centuries of the Republican age. The Appia, considered by the Romans to be the **regina viarum** ("queen of roads"), is universally believed to be one of the greatest feats of engineering of the ancient world (it was built between the end of the fourth century and the third century BC), considering the economic, military and cultural impact that it had on Roman society. After Benevento, passing Capua, the road turned towards *Aeclanum* (today's Mirabella Eclano): from here, it went in the direction of *Venusia* (Venosa) and then *Silvium* (today's Gravina in Puglia). Recent archaeological research has demonstrated that it passed near the southern countryside of Altamura, at Masseria Jesce: from here, it headed to the areas of Laterza, Mottola and Massafra, to finally reach the Ionian port of Taranto. The connection between the two seas was guaranteed by the stretches of *Mesochorum* (today's Grottaglie), *Uria* (Oria), Mesagne and, finally, Brindisi, whose coastline is still home to the column marking the end of the route.

Today, also following the fundamental stimulus provided by Paolo Rumiz's writing and the daily newspaper "Repubblica", the Via Appia is now the subject of a solid ministerial enhancement project, the aim of which is to transform Italy's oldest road into a modern walking route. The final route will be the result of a compromise between archaeological research and the needs of contemporary travellers, who clearly require services to be provided.

http://www.programmazionestrategica.beniculturali.it/?page_id=421

VIA JONICA

The aim of this walk is to embrace the places of Magna Grecia, from Puglia to the foothills of Calabria. In Puglia, it winds its way along 215 km of Ionian coastline, which are some of the region's most enchanting given the extraordinary concentration of natural beauties and stunning landscapes, incredible historical attractions and archaeological sites of interest. A walk from **Taranto**, the city of the two seas, to **Leuca**, Italy's *finis terrae*, a sacred place for the European and Mediterranean civilisation, acting as a meeting point for populations and cultures and for pilgrims headed for Rome or the Holy Land. Most of the walk follows the crystal-clear waters of the Ionian Sea, within an incredible environmental patchwork made up of paths behind the dunes, immersed in Mediterranean maquis, long rocky and sandy beaches, dotted with 16th century lookout towers and numerous unspoilt natural oases, such as the Torre Colimena and Porto Selvaggio Reserves, the *Conte* and *Capitano* marshes and the Punta Pizzo and Ugento coastlines. Along this walk, you'll also visit important cities (Taranto, Manduria, Nardò, Gallipoli) and small yet incredibly charming villages, where the narrow alleyways of the historical centres and the stories of the inhabitants, together with the museums and archaeological sites, provide precious evidence that can help us to understand this area's history, dating back thousands of years, just waiting to be discovered one step at a time.

www.camminomaterano.it



CAMMINO DI DON TONINO BELLO

This route is promoted by the diocese of Molfetta-Ruvo-Giovinazzo-Terlizzi and is called "**The Walk of Don Tonino Bello**". It was created based on the desire to promote and raise awareness about this bishop from Salento, by retracing the most important stages of his history throughout Puglia.

This physical and spiritual walk embodies both Christian and civic principles, combining the knowledge of this figure with the teachings of his beloved land and connecting the city of **Molfetta** to **Alessano**, along a path covering over 400 km. Passing places of great cultural, religious and natural value as they follow the internal backbone of the region, pilgrims will reach the tomb of Don Tonino, before carrying on towards the peninsula's physical end, with the Sanctuary of Santa Maria de *Finibus Terrae*.

The Romanesque cathedrals, the trulli of the Itria Valley, the centuries-old olive groves, the rock settlements and Lecce Baroque, are the main themes that will provide the backdrop to a walk that is full of inspiration and sources of reflection, accompanied by the texts and words of this unforgettable bishop.

www.camminodidontonino.it

Il Cammino di don Tonino

Getting around in Puglia

Rail links

Trenitalia
trenitalia.com

Ferrovie Appulo Lucane
ferrovieappulolucane.it

Ferrovie del Gargano
ferroviedelgargano.com

Ferrovie del Nord Barese
ferrovienordbarese.it

Ferrovie del Sud Est
fseonline.it

Bus connections

COTRAP
cotrap.it (Sita Sud, STP Brindisi
- STP Lecce - STP Terra d'Otranto)

Airports

Aeroporti di Puglia
aeroportidipuglia.it

Ports

**Autorità di sistema portuale
del Mare Adriatico Meridionale**
adspmam.it

Autorità di sistema portuale del Mar Ionio
port.taranto.it

This list of transport companies is not exhaustive and may be subject to variations.

Travellers are invited to contact the relative transport companies in order to check travel news before starting out.

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