

ITALY WITH FRIENDS "Southern Italy Coast to Coast Tour"
Puglia, Basilicata and Campania
October 6 – 15, 2019

(Itinerary is subject to change and variations with and/or without notice.)

Day 0 - Depart USA – Saturday, October 5, 2019

Depart USA – Saturday, October 5, 2019 - You will fly into Bari Karol Wojtyla airport. (Remember you will arrive in Europe the day after you depart the USA.)

Day 1 - Arrival Day - Benvenuto! - Welcome to Italy – Sunday, October 6, 2019

Welcome to **Puglia**, the sunny and windy "heel of the Italian boot"! Arrive into Bari Airport for pickup and transfer by 2PM to the town of Lecce. The region of Puglia (or Apulia) has been tempting travelers since the ancient Greeks first glimpsed its rugged coastal beauty centuries ago. We will begin our discovery of this region in the town of **Lecce**, known as "The Florence of the South". There will be time to wander around a bit before we enjoy our first meal together to taste the local cuisine. (D) Light

Day 2 – Jewels of the Salento Peninsula, Lecce and Otranto - Monday, October 7, 2019

Today we start with a walking tour of **Lecce** to discover its amazing history and traditions. From its Roman heritage, you find the Amphitheatre and Theater set in the center of town. Lecce also has an abundance of baroque architecture in its churches and palaces that is unlike any found elsewhere in Italy.

Then we travel along some stunning panoramic roads with breathtaking views along the rugged coastline to the city of **Otranto**. Here we will visit the historic center and its castle, the ancient walls and gate, the cathedral with its astonishing mosaics with hundreds of hidden meanings, and its picturesque port.

Today will be a full day exploring these two amazing cities founded in pre-Roman times. There will be time for lunch along the way, as well as shopping in local artisan workshops with their traditional and contemporary style ceramics, stone and papier-mache' products. (B) (L) Moderate

Day 3 – The Fairytale Village of Alberobello - Tuesday, October 8, 2019

Alberobello is a UNESCO World Heritage site because of its **trulli**, a unique kind of dry stone house with a distinctive conical roof built about 300-400 years ago. We will explore the town together focusing on the two old UNESCO districts of trulli: Aia Piccola and Monte. Many are still used today as homes, shops and restaurants. As we walk along the narrow streets, you will be fascinated by the magical and fairytale atmosphere of this place.

Then we will head to the nearby coast to explore some of the lovely villages that cling to the limestone cliffs molded by the Adriatic. Many are vibrant fishing villages with cobbled streets. We will settle in for the night near Torre Canne in our own little hideaway by the sea. We will enjoy dinner together once again in our beautiful setting. (B) (D) Moderate

Day 4 – Tasty and Epicurean Puglia - Wednesday, October 9, 2019

Today we will focus on the delicious side of Puglia. The Puglian wine and olive oil tradition dates back from pre-roman times. Wines are made with indigenous grapes such as Negromaro, Primitivo and Nero di Troia, just to name a few. The olive oil is made from some of the oldest trees in Italy. There will be time to taste and learn all about these local treasures.

We will visit a local market in the picturesque medieval village of **Locorotondo**, whose name means "round place". Here gleaming white buildings swirl down the contours of a hilltop setting. This village was voted as one of the "Borghi piu belli d'Italia" or one of the most beautiful villages of Italy.

Then we head to the "white town" of **Ostuni**. Here you find a cluster of whitewashed buildings perched on a hilltop overlooking the coast and an expanse of enormous olive trees. After time to explore the village you will then discover the secrets of Puglian cuisine in a special cooking class. You will follow a local chef and learn how to prepare a traditional meal.

After a wonderful day of "food, glorious food", we will find time to toast our adventures with a glass of local wine at our lovely hotel setting. Salute! (B) (D) Moderate

Day 5 – The Symbol and Pearl of Puglia - Thursday, October 10, 2019

Today we travel to **Castel del Monte**, another UNESCO World Heritage site and the symbol of the region of Puglia. It was built in the 13th century by the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II. It is built in an octagonal pattern, with octagonal towers on each corner. It was precisely planned, but its purpose remains a mystery to this day. After our tour, we will visit a nearby winery set in one of the impressive "Masseria" of the area. A Masseria is a historic farm center, originally with all the estate's workers living among the fortified buildings. This will be followed by a delicious lunch with a view over the castle.

Then we will continue to the "Pearl of Puglia", the port town of **Trani**. During the middle ages this small, lively whitewashed port of Jewish origin bustled with mercantile activity. Today it is renowned for sweet Moscato di Trani wine and some of Puglia's finest architecture including the majestic Duomo built in the 12th century.

After our full day of sightseeing we will leave the region of Puglia. Our destination will be the nearby region of **Basilicata** and the town of **Matera**. We will settle in for the night and rest up for our step back in time as we explore the UNESCO World Heritage site of Matera tomorrow. (B) (L) Moderate

Day 6 – Matera, a 2019 European Capital of Culture - Friday, October 11, 2019

We will spend the entire day exploring this amazing city. The town consists of houses called "Sassi". These prehistoric caverns, and more than 100 rock-hewn churches, are carved into the soft rock straddling both sides of a steep ravine. The honeycombed dwellings were continuously inhabited until 1952 when the government relocated the population. We will learn all about Matera, both its history and its current popularity. Matera has been used in several films like "*The Passion of the Christ*" and "*Wonder Woman*". It is easy to see how this city can be the perfect film location when you imagine it completely removed from the modern age for centuries. We will also enjoy the specialties of this region's cuisine at dinner. (B) (D) Moderate

Day 7 - Greek Temples and the Sorrentine Peninsula – Saturday, October 12, 2019

Today we will head west to the region of **Campania**. Our first stop of the day will be a visit to the UNESCO World Heritage site of **Paestum**. After being abandoned in the 9th century, this Greco-Roman city was overtaken by forest and forgotten until the 18th century. We will visit the standing remains of three major Greek temples, dating from the first half of the 6th century BC, a huge testimony of the Greek colonies in this area. The Temple of Hera and Athena are some of the best-preserved examples of Greek architecture in the world. The area near here is known for one of Italy's most delicious delicacies, Buffalo Mozzarella. Surely, we can find a spot to for a tasting.

The Divine Western Coast of southern Italy is truly memorable. Here mountains erupt from the Mediterranean and pastel-hued villages cling to their sides. This area is filled with dazzling antiquities like Pompeii and breathtaking natural wonders. **Sorrento**, known as the city of orange and lemon groves, which you will see everywhere, will be our home for the next three nights. The perfume of the citrus trees is a reminder to sample the local liqueur, Lemoncello. You will find panoramic sea views

from many points along this peninsula, including from your balcony at Hotel Il Nido. We will explore chic Sorrento, then sit down and enjoy another delicious dinner. (B) (D) Moderate

Day 8 - La Dolce Vita in Paradise – Sunday, October 13, 2019

You will have time today to enjoy this heavenly location just as you like. You can spend time exploring more of Sorrento. You could take a train or bus to Naples or other areas along the coast. Drive the famous Amalfi Coast and visit Positano or Amalfi. Take a cooking class. You could hop a ferry to the magical Isle of Capri. Hire a private boat for fun in the Mediterranean. It is your day to spend as you like, enjoying "the good life." (B)

Day 9 – The Wonders of Ancient Pompeii – Monday, October 14, 2019

When Mount Vesuvius erupted in AD 79, the lively port city of Pompeii was perfectly preserved by the volcano's ashes. Pompeii has amazed visitors since its discovery in the 18th century. Exquisite mosaics and wall paintings among the ruins of theaters, shops, homes and temples offer total immersion into the ancient Roman world. We will visit the site with a local guide and enjoy a tour throughout the excavations.

We will return to Sorrento and enjoy our farewell dinner at our hotel's fine restaurant. (B) (D) Strenuous

Day 10 - Arrivederci Italia! – Tuesday, October 15, 2019

It is time to say "arrivederci". You will transfer to the Naples Airport to catch your flight home. Parting will be such sweet sorrow, but I know you will take along wonderful memories of time spent enjoying all the wonders of "Southern Italy" with new friends. (B)

(Included meals are designated each day with (B) for breakfast, (L) for lunch, and (D) for dinner.)

THE FOLLOWING IS INCLUDED IN YOUR ITALY WITH FRIENDS TOUR:

- 9 nights' accommodation in 3-4 star, centrally located hotels with private bath or shower.
- Many meals included: 9 breakfasts (B), 3 lunches (L), 5 dinners (D).
- All ground transportation in Italy during tour. (Does not include airfare.)
- Does include pickup from Bari airport and transfer to Lecce during specified hours. Does include transfer during specific hours to Naples Airport on departure day. If you choose to arrive early or stay a few days, all transfers to and from airport or train stations will be at your own cost.
- Guided sightseeing and entrance fees to select sights, wineries and museums as described in itinerary.
- Local VAT taxes and government fees, gas, highway tolls and parking fees.
- Pre-tour visit with helpful travel information.
- Plenty of memories to last a lifetime.
- Surprises along the way.

NOT INCLUDED IN TOUR:

- Does not include airfare.
- Does not include remaining meals, alcoholic or non-alcoholic drinks at included meals.
- Does not include personal expenses such as internet use, laundry, mini-bar, or extra transportation in tour towns.
- Does not include travel insurance.
- Does not include city tax required in each hotel. Can range from 1 – 6 Euro per person per night.

ITALY WITH FRIENDS 2019 - LAND ONLY TOUR PRICES:

Tour begins in Bari and ends in Naples.

Tour is for 10days/9nights.

The total cost per person is **\$3499.00** with double occupancy.

(Includes Euro exchange rate adjustment. Does not include local city hotel tax)

Traveling solo? Sadly, most hotels only have a few single rooms, so many times they provide what they term "double for single use". They do however, charge a premium for the luxury of staying alone. I am faced with this all the time. If you cannot find a partner, I will be glad to match up single travelers if at all possible. Otherwise, the single supplement for this tour is **\$700.00** extra per person.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS:

Prepare for a physically demanding tour. Age is not a concern so long as you are physically fit, a very good walker at an energetic pace, and able to stand for extended periods of time and climb lots of hills and stairs. All of the above could be done in all sorts of weather and temperatures. You are required to load and unload your bags into the van, and to carry your bag to your room. This sometimes could be a short distance from the hotel. Most days our sightseeing will cover anywhere from 2-8 miles of walking, sometimes over uneven surfaces. Plan to get in shape before you head to Italy.