

Hiking in Salento

An 8 day self-guided walking vacation

Code tour: ITPUG04W



Salento is a province of Apulia, the easternmost region of Italy, also called the "heel of the Italian boot". Situated in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, it keeps the memory of the different civilizations who have lived in these areas, from the Messapis to the Greeks, from the Romans to the Normans. It was an important area subject for a long time to maritime attacks by the Saracens. Witnesses of this period are the coastal watchtowers. Normans may have built the first towers, but the remaining historic towers are mostly from the 15th and 16th centuries. This area is famous all over the world for its cuisine, the blue sea and beaches and for the rhythm of its folk music: the Pizzica.

Your hiking tour starts in Lecce, a Baroque city with important Roman ruins. Take your time to wander through the narrow streets of golden sandstone, for finding hidden piazzas and to enjoy a delicious lunch in one of the wine bars or cozy restaurants, where tasty dishes like the cecamariti pancakes prepared with zucchini, tomatoes, onion and chopped chili and Pucce sandwiches stuffed with meats, cheeses, cold cuts, vegetables in oil and olives. Another town worth visiting is Otranto, an important commercial harbor in Roman times. Today it is a popular holiday stop with an imposing castle, a Romanesque cathedral and some yummy fish restaurants. The routes will reveal you not only the important sights, but also unknown treasures of the territory, like byzantine crypts or prehistorically sights. For the internal transfers you will use a small local train, which will allow you to conquer more of this wonderful land reaching places that are hardly known but always full of history.



Level 1,5:

Easy, tour for all. Some walking experience needed but particular training are not requested for this tour. Not too many differences of level, almost all walking on very easy terrain. The area is mostly flat, so you will encounter very few ascents. You will walk along secondary roads and walking paths: 50% asphalted and 50% on gravel.

Walks between 3 to 5 hours

The daily distances are min 9 km / 5,6 mi - 17 km / 10,5 mi

Total: 69 km / 42,8 mi

Dates: every Friday and Saturday from 15/03 until 05/07 (last departure) and from 30/08 till 27/12/2024 (last departure). Start on other days possible paying a supplement (€ 100 p.p.)

Participants: minimum 2 (solo travellers upon request)

Programm in short:

- Day 1 Arrivo in Lecce
- Day 2 Lecce - Otranto (14 km / 8,7 mi)
- Day 3 Ringwalk to Punta Palascia (16 km/9,9 mi)
- Day 4 Otranto - Gagliano del Capo (13 km/9,9 mi)
- Day 5 Gagliano del Capo - Gallipoli (9 km / 8 mi)
- Day 6 Nardò and Porto Selvaggio (17 km)
- Day 7 Gallipoli - Lecce
- Day 8 End of the tour

Programm day by day

Day 1 Individual arrival in Lecce

Arrival in Bari/Brindisi and you go by bus, train or with booked transfer to Lecce. In the late afternoon, briefing about your trip (English). Then you have time to do a short walking tour in the old town of Lecce, the Florence of the South. You will fall in love with its Spanish baroque style and its Roman remains.

Overnight with breakfast in Lecce

Day 2 Otranto (surroundings) - Valle dell'Idro

Transfer by train from Lecce to Giurdignano. You walk through fields, beautiful olive groves and reach Giurdignano, where you will visit the megalithic garden with its dolmen and menhirs of the Bronze Age. Then you will head to Casamassella where you will admire the ancient looms brought back into production by the "Le Costantine" Foundation. Walking through the Idro Valley, you will discover an ancient Byzantine crypt. At the end of today's stretch, you will reach Otranto, the pearl of the Adriatic, with its Cathedral and its medieval "tree of life" mosaic floor.

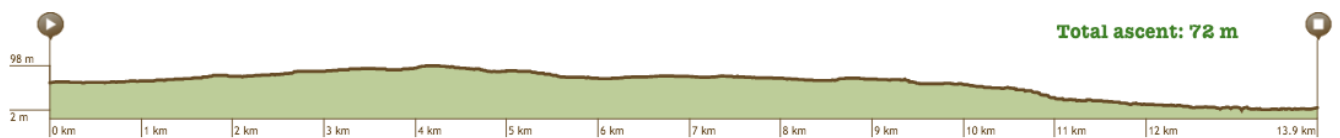
Overnight with breakfast in Otranto.

Distance: 14 km / 8,7 miles

Walking times: 3,5 hours

Total Ascent: + 72m

Terrain: 70% asphalted & 30% gravel



Day 3 Punta Palascia, the easternmost point of Italy

Today you will explore the natural wonders of the surroundings of Otranto, like the Bay of Orte, then the lighthouse of Punta Palascia and the Bauxite Quarry. Today you will start from the castle of Otranto and go through the Porta a Mare. Once you have reached the main pier, you walk further along the coast towards the Snake Tower, which can be easily reached following easy trails.

You will see imposing cliffs and caves with stalactites and stalagmites. Finally, you will reach the Lighthouse of Punta Palascia and then a bauxite quarry, whose intense colours create a unique landscape. From the cave, you go back to Otranto where you will have your overnight stay.

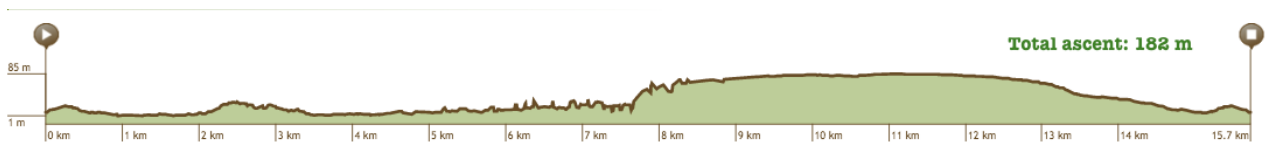
Overnight with breakfast in Otranto.

Distance: 16 km / 9,9 miles

Walking times: 4,5 hours

Total ascent: 182m

Terrain: 10% asphalted & 90% gravel



Day 4 The Ciolo and the foothpath of the Cipolliane

In the morning, you take the train from Otranto to Gagliano del Capo (travel time 1 hour and 10 minutes).

You will reach your accommodation and then get ready to walk along the trail called Ciolo, which goes down towards a canal. The foothpath will offer amazing views. Once you have reached the Ciolo bridge, take the foothpath of the Cipolliane, which starts right there. The vegetation is particularly interesting (agaves, capers, prickly pears etc.). You will visit the caves of the Cipolliane (with stalactites and columns, galleries and fossils and bird colonies). Back on the trail, you continue to Novaglie, where you can take a break) or go back to the Ciolo Bridge if you like to swim. After passing a reproduction of the Madonna di Leuca, you continue to Gagliano.

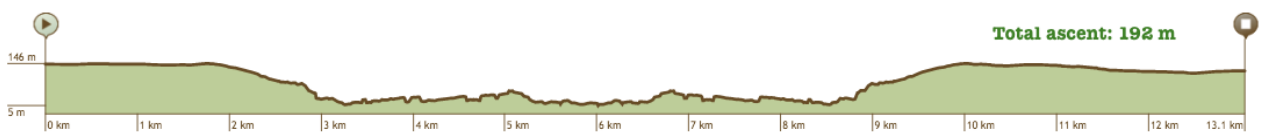
Overnight with breakfast in Gagliano del Capo.

Distance: 13 km / 8 miles

Walking times: 4 hours

Total ascent: 182m

Terrain: 20% asphalted & 80% gravel



Day 5 Capo Leuca and Gallipoli

This day is dedicated to the discovery of the Cape of Leuca, the southernmost point of Apulia, and of the beautiful town of Gallipoli. First, you will cross ancient paths that connect small villages: the first stop is Patù with its Centopietre, an enigmatic monument created with a funerary function and coming from Vereto, an ancient pre-romanic city situated in the vicinity. In Giuliano you will visit the Church of San Pietro and the castle; in Barbarano you will visit the Sanctuary of Leuca Piccola and its hypogea, an ancient destination for pilgrims and a stop for the faithful people of Leuca. From the station of

Ruggiano-Salve, you take the train to Gallipoli (travelling time 1,5 hour) You have time to visit the old city of Gallipoli. From here you take the train to Gallipoli. You will visit the historic centre, surrounded by the sea and you will get a chance to taste a drink on a terrace with stunning views. Situated on an island, this little fishermen village is surprising for its light, its alleys and its fish market.

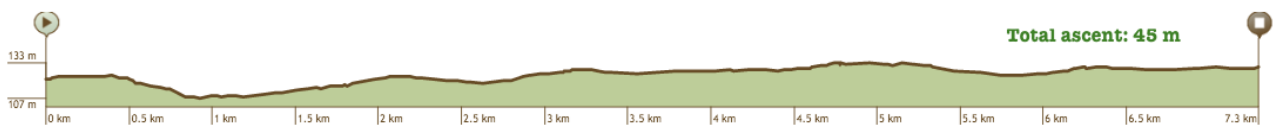
Overnight with breakfast in Gallipoli

Distance: 9 km / 5,6 miles

Walking times: 3 hours

Total Ascent: + 42m

Terrain: 80% asphalted & 20% gravel



Day 6 Porto Selvaggio

After breakfast, a short train transfer (30 min.) to reach Nardò.

From Nardò you walk along the ancient dry stonewalls and amongst olive groves. You will arrive at the bottom of the slope of the Alto promontory where, on the upper plateau, you will find the Tower of Santa Maria dell'Alto, whose construction dates back to 1568. Then you will move down to Porto Selvaggio, which became a regional natural park in 2006: in the area, there are numerous karstic caves with the remains of communities dating back to the Palaeolithic era. Then you will reach the tower of Uluzzo. The itinerary ends in Santa Caterina where its numerous ice cream shops await you. From here, a private transfer will take you back to Gallipoli.

Transfer from Santa Caterina to Gallipoli

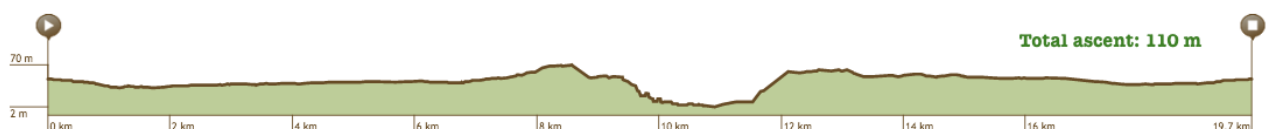
Overnight with breakfast in Gallipoli

Distance: 17 km / 10,5 miles

Walking times: 5 hours

Total ascent: 110m

Terrain: 50% asphalted & 50% gravel



Day 7 Galatina and Lecce

From Gallipoli you will go to Galatina by train and visit the historic centre with the magnificent basilica of St. Catherine of Alexandria. Then, still by train, you will reach Lecce. Here you will have time enough to visit the city, also called "the Florence of the South". You will see Baroque palaces, courts but also a Roman theatre and amphitheater, Santa Maria della Croce, the Cathedral etc.

Overnight with breakfast in Lecce.

Day 8 Departure

Breakfast and end of our services. On request, it will be possible to book a transfer to Bari or Brindisi airports.

Hotels:

Agriturismo (farmhouse B&B), *** hotels and B&B

Price per person 2024

In double room:

From 15/03 to 13/06 and from 15/09 to 24/12: € 650

From 14/06 to 05/07 and from 30/08 to 14/09: € 800

Supplement single room: € 190

Upgrade on 4**** hotel: € 150

Upgrade on 4**** and 5***** hotel € 520

Gastronomic option (5 dinners + 5 tastings): € 375

Supplement starting day different from friday or saturday: € 100

Extra night in double room: € 60

Extra night in single room: € 85

Extra night in Lecce 4**** hotel in double room: € 80

Extra night in Lecce 4**** hotel in single room: € 105

Transfer from/to Brindisi:

1 pax € 60- 2/3 pax € 35 - > 4 pax € 30

Transfer from/to Bari:

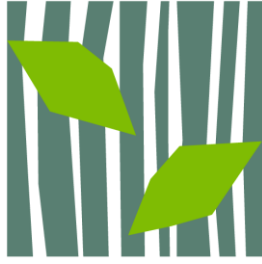
1 pax € 180- 2 pax € 90- 3/4 pax € 75 - > 5 pax € 60

Included in the tour:

- 7 nights in double room in Agriturismo, 3*** Hotel or B&B
- 7 breakfast
- Luggage transportation
- Route tracks, navigation app, phone holder (1 for each booking)
- Description of itineraries and cultural information
- Local assistance 24 hours
- Tickets for local trains
- Guided Tour of Lecce
- Transfer on day 6

Not included in the tour:

- Local tourist taxes, which have to be paid in the hotel
- Lunches, dinners and drinks
- All not included in 'Included in the tour' section



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