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 you can find 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 01/01/2027 until 03/07/2027 (last departure) and from 27/08/2027 till 31/12/2027 (last departure). Start on other days possible paying a supplement (€ 100 p.p.)

In July and August only on request. It can be very hot in those two months.

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 di Leuca: the Ciole and Cipolliane path (13 km/9,9 mi)
Day 5 Gagliano di Leuca - Gallipoli (9 km / 8 mi)
Day 6 The surroundings of Porto Selvaggio (17 km) or optional sailing tour
Day 7 Gallipoli – Lecce: a visiting Galatina and Lecce or optional a cooking class

Day 8 End of the tour

Program 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, you will meet the local agent and will have a briefing in English, German, French or Italian. Then you have time to make a stroll through 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
After a scenic train transfer from **Lecce to Giurdignano**, your walking adventure through the heart of **Salento** begins. Follow peaceful trails across open countryside, passing centuries-old **olive groves**, dry-stone walls, and cultivated fields before arriving in **Giurdignano**, often called the "Megalithic Garden of Italy." Here you can discover one of the largest concentrations of **Bronze Age dolmens and menhirs** in the region.

Your day ends in **Otranto**, one of the most beautiful seaside towns in **Puglia** and known as the "Pearl of the Adriatic." Explore its charming historic centre, visit the magnificent **Cathedral of Santa Maria Annunziata**, and admire its extraordinary 12th-century **Tree of Life mosaic floor**, one of the finest medieval mosaics in Europe.

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's walk takes you through some of the most spectacular natural landscapes surrounding **Otranto**, combining breathtaking coastal scenery with fascinating geological and historical landmarks. Starting at the impressive **Castle of Otranto**, you'll pass through the ancient **Porta a Mare** and follow the Adriatic coastline towards the historic **Torre del Serpe (Snake Tower)**.

The trail continues along dramatic limestone cliffs, where panoramic sea views alternate with hidden caves adorned with impressive **stalactites and stalagmites**. One of the highlights of the day is the **Bay of Orte**, a peaceful natural oasis with crystal-clear waters, followed by the **Lighthouse of Punta Palascia**, the easternmost point of Italy. On clear days, you may even catch a glimpse of the Albanian mountains across the Adriatic Sea.

Your walk continues to the spectacular **Bauxite Quarry**. Our guests tell us that this Bauxite Quarry is one of the highlights of the tour. The vivid contrast between the deep red earth and the emerald-green lake makes it one of those places where everyone stops to take photos. The striking

contrast between the deep red earth, the emerald-green lake, and the surrounding Mediterranean vegetation creates an unforgettable landscape unlike anywhere else in Puglia.

After enjoying these extraordinary natural wonders, you return to **Otranto** for another relaxing evening and overnight stay in this charming Adriatic town.

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
This morning, you'll travel by train from **Otranto** to **Gagliano del Capo**, a charming village in the southernmost part of **Salento**. After checking into your accommodation, it's time to explore one of the most spectacular coastal walks in **Puglia**.

Your route follows the famous **Sentiero del Ciolo**, a panoramic trail offering breathtaking views over dramatic limestone cliffs and the crystal-clear waters of the Adriatic Sea. The path descends to the impressive **Ciolo Bridge**, where adventurous swimmers often take a refreshing dip in the deep natural inlet below.

From here, continue along the renowned **Sentiero delle Cipolliane**, one of the most beautiful hiking trails in southern Italy. Along the way you'll encounter typical Mediterranean vegetation, including agaves, prickly pears, wild capers and fragrant shrubs. The trail also leads to the fascinating **Cipolliane Caves**, an important archaeological site featuring stalactites, rock formations, fossils and colonies of nesting seabirds.

The walk continues towards the small fishing village of **Novaglie**, the perfect place to pause and enjoy the peaceful coastal atmosphere. On your return, you'll pass a replica of the **Madonna di Leuca**, overlooking the sea, before following quiet country lanes back to **Gagliano del Capo** for your overnight stay.

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 From Santa Maria di Leuca to Gallipoli – History, Pilgrimage & the Ionian Sea
Discovering two of **Salento's** most iconic destinations: **Santa Maria di Leuca**, the southernmost tip of **Puglia**, and the charming seaside town of **Gallipoli,** will be one of the **highlights of this tour**. Your walk follows ancient country paths connecting picturesque villages rich in history and tradition. The first stop is **Patù**, home to the mysterious **Centopietre**, an early medieval monument built with stones from the ancient Messapian city of **Vereto** and believed to have served as a funerary chapel.

Continue to **Giuliano**, where you can admire the beautiful **Church of San Pietro** and its historic castle, before reaching **Barbarano del Capo**. Here you'll visit the fascinating **Sanctuary of Leuca Piccola** and its remarkable underground hypogeum, once an important resting place for pilgrims travelling to **Santa Maria di Leuca**.

From **Ruggiano–Salve** railway station, you'll board the train to **Gallipoli** (approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes). Built on a limestone island connected to the mainland by a 17th-century bridge, **Gallipoli** captivates visitors with its maze of narrow whitewashed streets, elegant Baroque churches, lively harbour and picturesque fish market.

Take your time to wander through the atmospheric historic centre, surrounded by the sparkling Ionian Sea, and relax on one of the many terraces overlooking the water.
Before ending the day, don't miss the opportunity to sample some of Gallipoli's culinary specialties, such as the famous **Scapece Gallipolina**—fried fish marinated with vinegar, saffron and breadcrumbs—or the delicious **Puccia Salentina**, a traditional bread roll filled with fresh local ingredients.

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 – Clifftop Trails and the Untouched Nature of the Ionian Coast
After breakfast, you have a short train transfer (30 min.) to reach Nardò, famous for its piazza Salandra and the cathedral of Maria SS.Assunta, an 11th century church with medieval frescoes. The walk takes you through one of the most beautiful protected landscapes in **Salento**: the **Porto Selvaggio Regional Natural Park**. Starting from **Nardò**, you'll follow peaceful country paths bordered by centuries-old **dry-stone walls**, ancient **olive groves**, and typical Mediterranean vegetation.

Your route gradually climbs to the **Alto Promontory**, where the historic Tower of **Santa Maria dell'Alto**, built in 1568, overlooks the Ionian coastline. From this spectacular viewpoint, enjoy breathtaking panoramic views stretching across the turquoise sea and the rugged cliffs below.
The trail then descends into the heart of **Porto Selvaggio Regional Natural Park**, a pristine coastal reserve renowned for its fragrant pine forests, crystal-clear coves and rich biodiversity. This

protected area is also home to numerous **karst caves**, where archaeologists have discovered traces of human settlements dating back to the **Paleolithic era**, making Porto Selvaggio one of the most important prehistoric sites in southern Italy.
Continuing along the scenic coastal paths, you'll reach the historic Uluzzo Tower, another of the region's iconic sixteenth-century watchtowers, before arriving in the charming seaside village of **Santa Caterina**.

Here you can relax with a refreshing drink or treat yourself to one of the delicious artisanal ice creams for which the town is famous. At the end of the walk, a private transfer will take you back to **Gallipoli** for your overnight stay.

Transfer from Santa Caterina to Gallipoli

Sailing Excursion – Discover the Salento Coast from the Sea
Alternative to Day 6
After several days of walking, enjoy a relaxing day on the crystal-clear waters of the **Ionian Sea** and experience the spectacular coastline of **Salento** from a completely different perspective.
A delicious lunch is served on board, including local specialties, a main course, fresh fruit or dessert and regional wine, making this an unforgettable day at sea.

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, a late-Romanesque and Gothic masterpiece built in 1390. The entire interior is covered in a spectacular cycle of 15th-century frescoes that rival the Basilica of San Francesco in Assisi. 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.

Cooking Class – Discover the Authentic Flavours of Salento
Alternative to this last day
Experience the true taste of Salento during this enjoyable excursion through the peaceful countryside surrounding Gallipoli. Combining a scenic easy bike ride with a hands-on cooking experience, this day offers the perfect opportunity to discover the region's culinary traditions and warm hospitality.

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

A.Standard Hotels prices per person 2027
In double room

- From April to October: € 640
- From November to March: € 544

In single room:

- From April to October: € 870
- From November to March: € 775

Supplements
High season:
From 05/05 till 24/09 (incl) € 155

Extra night in Lecce hotels:
In double room € 65 p.p.
In single room € 90

B. ** hotels prices per person 2027**
In double room

- From April to October: € 860
- From November to March: € 765

In single room:

- From April to October: € 1.090
- From November to March: € 995

Supplements
High season:
From 05/05 till 24/09 (incl) € 155

Extra night in Lecce hotels:
In double room € 87
In single room € 120

C. ** / ***** hotels prices per person 2027**:
In double room

- From April to October: € 1400
- From November to March: € 1.305

In single room:

- From April to October: € 1.650

- From November to March: € 1.555

Supplements
High season:
From 05/05 till 24/09 (incl) € 155

Extra night in Lecce hotels:
In double room € 145
In single room € 210

Extra Services
Supplement Cooking class on day 6: € 75 (to be paid locally)
Sailing boat tour half day with lunch included: € 100

Transfers
Transfer from Brindisi airport to Lecce hotel: 80€ (1pax), 40€ (2pax), 35€ (3pax), 30€ (4pax)
Transfer from Bari airport to Lecce hotel: 200€ (1pax), 100€ (2pax), 75€ (3/4pax), 60€ (>5pax)

Included in the tour:
- 7 nights in double room in the booked hotel category
- 7 x breakfast
- Luggage transportation
- Route tracks and free access to the navigation app (1 for each booking)
- Road book with cultural information and tips for your route
- Briefing at the start point
- Local assistance 24 hours
- Tickets for local trains during your walks
- Transfer from Santa Caterina to Gallipolli 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

Cancellation policy:
- Up to 60 days before the starting date: € 100,00 administration costs
- 59-30 days before starting date: 30% of the total tour costs
- 29-14 days before starting date: 50% of the total tour costs
- 13-6 days before starting date: 75% of the total tour costs
- 5 days-start of tour: 100% of the total tour costs

How to reach:
Start / End: Lecce/Lecce

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