

THE MAGICAL
LAND OF

Puglia

with Victorija

A Food & Wine Tour in Southern Italy

April 6 - 13, 2025

ONWARD TRAVEL ✈️

EST 2014



OLIVE TREES HAVE BEEN GROWING IN PUGLIA FOR OVER THREE THOUSAND YEARS

Puglia, the subject of Viktorija Todorovska's first book, is home to some of the most memorable foods and wines in all of Italy.

The centuries-old olive trees, ancient white villages full of *trullo* houses, the hundreds of miles of coastline and the generous-spirited people of Puglia made Viktorija fall in love with this place on her very first visit, when the region was still largely undiscovered by most travelers.

You are invited to join Viktorija as she re-visits Puglia to taste some of her favorite foods and wines and meet some of the people who make this region so heart-warming. In addition to Viktorija's culinary knowledge, we will have local historical guides, chefs and musicians enriching our experience throughout the tour.

Our small group will discover two distinct parts of Puglia: the Salento, the southernmost part, with the Baroque city of Lecce as your base, and the Valle d'Itria in the center of the region, where we will stay in a charming property in the midst of olive groves. From the bread of Altamura, burrata cheese, extra virgin olive oil and the delicious primitivo and negroamaro wines, you will taste the best of the best products that have made this region a favorite of those who value exceptional gourmet experiences.



IMAGINE YOURSELF...

Admiring seaside cliffs from a catamaran, glass of bubbly in hand

Sampling the world's best burrata cheese

Strolling through ancient white cities and iconic *trullo* buildings

Arrival in Puglia

DAY 1: SUNDAY APRIL 6

- Enjoy wine education with an introduction to common Puglian grapes
- Check in to an elegant hotel in the heart of Baroque Lecce

Midday today our group will be collected in Bari, with airport and hotel pickups arranged based on travelers' arrival logistics. A light lunch will be arranged today, the shape of which will be dependent on arrival times. Then we're headed in our private minibus to Salento, Puglia's southern region, to begin a week of adventures. Along the way let's stop for a visit and tasting at one of the region's fantastic wineries where we can officially begin our close acquaintance with the lively primitivos, complex negroamaros and rich white verdecas we'll be spending our time here enjoying.

Later in the afternoon we arrive in the Baroque jewel box of a city known as Lecce. We'll spend the next three nights in the heart of the city at Pollicastro Boutique Hotel, a thoughtfully and beautifully designed property in a renovated 16th century palace, the center of many ancient myths which we'll surely be told.

Lecce is undoubtedly the most elegant city of Puglia and one of its main cultural hubs as the capital of Salento. This evening we'll head out into the dazzling limestone lanes of town, which are full of lively piazzas, boutiques, wine bars and plenty of other delights. As a group, we will sit down together for a casual but lovely welcome dinner, where Vik can begin to introduce us to some of the regional specialties that make Apulian food so special, and of course we'll raise a glass to the week that awaits in this magical place!

Meals Lunch, Dinner

The City & the Countryside

DAY 2: MONDAY APRIL 7

- Explore the fascinating highlights of lovely Lecce with our guide
- Relax over a bountiful and delicious lunch of regional specialties

Good morning! Enjoy a delightful breakfast at the hotel this morning, as you will each day of the trip. Then it's time to get out and see Lecce with our charming guide, Michele, a born and raised Puglian who remains quite devoted to his captivating home region. Michele will prove a great source of knowledge and local insight and he'll easily become your new friend, too, as we see him throughout the week! Today he will show you some of the ancient history of the city which is sometimes called "the Florence of the South" or rather "the Florence of Baroque Art." With its aristocratic old town characterized by impressive Roman ruins, atmospheric squares, magnificent Baroque churches and palaces, Lecce is a place you will enjoy exploring.

As lunchtime approaches we're headed out of town to the most picturesque farmhouse restaurant for the sort of Italian lunch that takes up the better part of the day. The farmhouse dates back to the early 1500's and the kitchen turns out ancient Salento recipes, prepared lovingly and with great attention to the ingredients. Course after course will surely delight you, accompanied by the fantastic wines of Puglia, in an atmosphere reminiscent of the dream you might have of the Southern Italian countryside. After lunch, wander around the gardens surrounding the house, and see if any farm animals wish to say hello, or if you can find the herbs and vegetables that were used to prepare your meal.

Once you've returned to Lecce in the later afternoon you can enjoy the rest of the evening in this vibrant town however you like.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch



THE ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE & PIAZZA ORONZO IN LECCE

A Gourmet Day in Lecce

DAY 3: TUESDAY APRIL 8

- [Dance to traditional regional music after preparing lunch together](#)
- [Experience a fine dining restaurant in an ancient cloisters structure](#)

Today will be full of learning, fun and excellent food and drink as our group experiences a market tour and hands on cooking class. Our Puglian chef will guide us through the local market, where the group will decide together what to make and purchase the ingredients. After a stop at a highly regarded cafe for a pick me up coffee, you're headed to the kitchen to cook and laugh and enjoy time preparing your meal together as a group. Lunch will be a multi-course affair of the Puglian specialties you have prepared together, paired with excellent regional wines. After lunch, we'll have some special visitors: pizzica musicians who will introduce the group to this very important regional folk music and accompanying dance which dates all the way back to the 1400's.

Tonight is our last night in Lecce and we have a special gastronomic experience in store. We're headed to a fine dining restaurant in the gorgeous setting of a 15h century Domican cloister for a tasting menu with wine pairings. And what makes it even better is that the chef is a longtime friend of Onward Travel who has now returned from the Michelin-starred restaurant in the Prosecco region where we got to know him to his native Puglia to bring his creative and delicious ideas to this new restaurant, Gimmi, where a special evening is most certainly in store.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

The Treasures of Apulia

DAY 4: WEDNESDAY APRIL 9

- [Visit one of Viktorija's favorite Puglian wide producers](#)
- [Check in at the rural estate where you'll spend the next three nights](#)

Late this morning, we will bid Lecce arrivederci and journey north to the heart of Puglia, Valle d'Itria. Along our way we will be visiting Cantele, one of Viktorija's favorite wine producers in the region whose wines are also readily available for purchase around the USA so you can easily enjoy them again in the future. We'll tour the cellar and then taste the wines over a delicious gourmet lunch.

After lunch we are headed to our accommodations for the next three nights: Borgo Canonica. Here you'll find a complex of conical trulli

OnwardTravel.co Based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and the Hudson Valley, New York

buildings, lovingly restored, with a pool and a bar and a delightful gourmet restaurant. In the late afternoon we'll convene for a little guided tour of the grounds. Then Viktorija will lead those who are interested in an informal wine tasting before it's time to enjoy a delightful dinner from the masseria's kitchen which is helmed by an accomplished and creative chef who uses seasonal ingredients to pay homage to traditional local recipes.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Ancient Towns, Ancient Olives

DAY 5: THURSDAY APRIL 10

- [Taste olive oil from an olive grove dating back to the Ancient Romans](#)
- [Get an overview of the region with visits to three enchanting towns](#)

Start your day with a delicious breakfast at Borgo Canonica, featuring house baked cakes and a gorgeous spread of "zero kilometer" (aka super locally sourced) products. After a relaxing morning we set off at midday to explore one of Viktorija's favorite of Puglia's many wonderful little villages: Ostuni. Known as "the white town," captivating Ostuni is one of the most iconic whitewashed hilltop towns in the region... replete with Eastern Mediterranean charm, the origins of this settlement date back to the dawn of mankind and Neanderthal civilizations. First, we're having lunch together at a restaurant that Vik loves, and then our guide Michele will arrive to lead us through Ostuni's narrow and enchanting alleys, telling us everything about the history and the most interesting sites of this marvelous town.

From Ostuni, we'll venture into the countryside to visit an ancient fortified masseria surrounded by a magnificent olive grove dating back to Roman times. At the end of an educational tour of the estate, you'll have a professional EVO oil tasting. From Ostuni we're going to visit one of the most famous places in Puglia: Alberobello. Lucky for us, Michele will lead us on an "off the beaten path" visit to this UNESCO site like no other, the birthplace of the unique trulli houses, and we'll encounter the ancient rural civilization that has somehow managed not to disappear from this enchanting place. Last, Michele will bring us to Cisternino, home to a beautifully preserved old town featuring narrow lanes, whitewashed houses and the sort of lively piazzas that give you a glimpse into traditional Italian life. After we've gotten the lay of the land it will be time for you to head out to explore and have dinner on your own. Cisternino is famous for grilled meats served at butcher shop restaurants around the old town, and before parting ways Michele will provide guidance on where to go and how to order. Later in the evening we'll return together to Borgo Canonica.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

Oh, the Joy of Cheese & Bread

DAY 6: FRIDAY APRIL 11

- Taste iconic Altamura bread right out of the oven
- Visit a hip, artisanal cheese bar tucked away in a forest

Bread from the small city of Altamura is famous the world over, and this morning we're headed there to visit a bakery with an ancient oven and learn about the process of making this famous bread. Of course, nothing beats bread fresh from the oven and we'll have plenty of opportunity to sample. Did you know that another wonder of the culinary world, burrata cheese, is also a Puglian export? After we've spent time with the bakers its time to visit the cheesemakers and learn about the process of making burrata and other types of locally beloved cheeses. Then we're headed to their cheese bar in the heart of a nearby forest for a special lunch unlike any other... Incredible local cheeses and typical traditional dishes accompanied by plenty of local wine in a magical atmosphere you won't soon forget.

Tonight, back at Borgo Canonica, we'll enjoy a casual dinner together.

Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



IN POLIGNANO A MARE, TRY THE FAMOUS OCTOPUS SANDWICH!



MAKING THE LOCAL PASTA SHAPE ORECCHIETTE OR "LITTLE EARS"

To the Sea and Back to Bari

DAY 7: SATURDAY APRIL 12

- Admire the cliffs of Polignano a Mare from a catamaran on the sea
- Toast your travel companions over a gourmet farewell dinner

It's our last day in Puglia! We're off to Polignano a Mare, one of the most iconic and thrilling towns of the Adriatic coast, perched as it is above the sea atop vertical limestone cliffs complete with little caves and grottoes and pocket-like beaches which pop up along the shoreline. This morning we're headed out to see Polignano and the stunning surrounding landscape from the water, on board a private 39-foot Catamaran. We'll pop some bubbles and those are up for it can even take a swim in the lovely blue water of the Adriatic sea.

After the morning on the water, let's visit the town for some free time for lunch. Enjoy an artisanal gelato as you stroll the sunny streets and if you're up for it you should definitely try an octopus sandwich - a famous culinary treat of Polignano a Mare!

From Polignano it's not too much farther on back to Bari where we'll check in at Grande Albergo delle Nazioni, a chic five-star hotel on the waterfront near the port and a stroll away from the famous old town of the city. Take a walk and explore Bari, or just relax in the classy digs. This evening we're headed out for a fine dining experience to round out our week of indulgence in unforgettable Puglia. Raise a glass (or two) to your traveling companions as you tell your favorite stories from the week exploring this magical part of Italy together. *Cin cin!*

Meals Breakfast, Dinner

Arrivederci!

DAY 8: SUNDAY APRIL 13

Transfers will be arranged today based on traveler's departure times and continued travel plans. *Buon viaggio!*

Meals Breakfast

Trip Essentials

BEGINS	<p>Bari, Italy, on Sunday, April 6, 2025</p> <p>Please plan to arrive in Bari before 13:00 local time</p> <p>Pickups from the airport and city center will be arranged</p>
ENDS	<p>Bari, Italy, on Sunday, April 13, 2025</p> <p>No activities are scheduled today.</p> <p>Airport transfer organized per your departing flight.</p>
SUITABILITY & MOBILITY	<p><u>This tour includes walking for 15-30 minutes at a time, plus stairs and cobblestones.</u> Travelers may always opt out of activities they deem too physically challenging but refunds will not be provided. Many of the ancient settlements we will be visiting were built into the existing landscape, so please be prepared for uneven terrain.</p>
TOUR DATES & PRICE	<p>April 6–13, 2025</p> <p><u>Tour Price</u> \$4,750 per traveler, based on double occupancy</p> <p>Additional \$925 single supplement</p> <p><i>Contact Onward if you are interested in arriving early or extending your stay. Note that air travel is not included and a current passport is required for travel to Italy.</i></p> <p><i>You are welcome to pay by credit card, please add a 3% surcharge.</i></p>
AIR TRAVEL	<p>The tour will start and end with transfers to/from Bari Airport (BRI) or talk to Onward to make a different plan.</p> <p>Please confirm flight plans with Onward Travel before booking and don't hesitate to contact us if you'd like any assistance finding the right itinerary.</p>

PERFECT BURRATA CHEESE FROM CASEIFICIO DICECCA



Trip price includes the following:

- Airport transfers and ground transportation to/from all scheduled activities.
- Three nights accommodations at [Borgo Canonica](#) (Cisternino), three nights at [Pollicastro Boutique Hotel](#) (Lecce) and one night at [Grande Albergo delle Nazioni](#) (Bari).
- Most meals: daily breakfasts, six lunches, and five dinners. We've planned fantastic gourmet experiences with wine and cocktails included unless noted otherwise.
- Local experts and guides and an Onward Travel host at your service.
- Activities, tastings, cooking classes, and tours as detailed in the itinerary.

Register now!

This tour is limited to 11 travelers.

Visit onwardtravel.co/trip/puglia2 to complete the registration form and submit payment.

\$1250 deposit due upon booking, balance due by January 15, 2025.



**The Onward
Travel Tour
Director
for this
trip is**
Viktorija

Viktorija Todorovska is a cooking teacher, sommelière & cookbook author passionate about the foods and wines of the Mediterranean. She's been leading Onward Travel tours to Provence and Tuscany since moving to Nice in 2016.

In 2025, Viktorija is excited to host a food and wine tour to Puglia, one of her favorite places and the topic of her first cookbook, *The Puglian Cookbook: Bringing the Flavors of Puglia Home*.

TRAVELER INFORMATION The Magical Land of Puglia

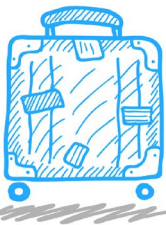
Please take note of the following useful information, and view more at www.onwardtravel.co/letsgo



Once Onward Travel receives your registration form, we will send you an **invoice** with instructions to pay the **deposit**.



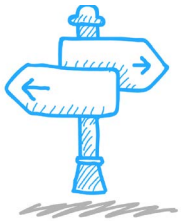
If you'd like to purchase **trip insurance**, we suggest Travelex. For more info, call them at 800-228-9792 or visit www.travelex.com and refer to location number 32-0704.



Four to six weeks before the tour **we will mail you a packet** with a packing list, traveler directory and other useful info.



Make sure you know where your **passport** is now! For travel to Mexico, it only needs to be valid until your return date.



Onward Travel's cancellation policy in a nutshell:

- \$250 of your initial deposit is nonrefundable
- Cancel within 90 days and the full deposit is nonrefundable
- Cancel within 60 days and 50% of total trip fee is nonrefundable
- Cancel within 30 days and the full trip fee is nonrefundable

See the full [Terms & Conditions](http://www.onwardtravel.co/terms) at www.onwardtravel.co/terms

Get in Touch!

Contact Onward Travel with questions or special requests:
letsgo@onwardtravel.co
845-293-2729



AN AERIAL VIEW OF POLIGNANO A MARE