Puglia, Embrace the Wonder

Authentic yet contemporary, Puglia is a mosaic of art, nature and architecture, an ideal blend of cultures and experiences. Its diverse landscapes — from the UNESCO-listed Trulli to its traditional *masserie* (historic farmhouses) — together with a deep connection to the past and a strong sense of identity, offer fiery sunsets, endless vistas, ever-changing colours and a slower pace of life.

Travelling through Puglia along its 900 kilometres of coastline between the Adriatic and Ionian Seas is a journey of continuous discovery: crystal-clear waters, coves of fine sand, countryside dotted with vineyards and olive groves, five UNESCO World Heritage sites, historic villages, castles and cathedrals, caves, museums and archaeological sites.

Visitors seeking amazing experiences in Puglia can explore the lakes of Lesina and Varano and the salt pans of Margherita di Savoia, enjoy excursions in the Umbra Forest or discover the Adriatic coast and its *trabucchi* — traditional fishing huts found along the shores of Rodi Garganico, Peschici and Vieste. Further south, from Barletta, Trani and Bisceglie to the Bari territories, and on towards Brindisi and the whole of Salento, the coastline is dotted with historic lighthouses and watchtowers.

Puglia's International Destination Appeal

With 23 million overnight stays in 2025 and 18 million in the first eight months of 2026, Puglia is one of Italy's most appealing destinations. Its combination of seaside experiences, historic villages, cultural heritage, events, food & wine, and nature attracts a diverse range of travellers. The visitor profile is mainly made up of couples, families and independent wayfarers, alongside a growing number of digital nomads and international tourists seeking authentic, sustainable, high-quality experiences: stays in traditional *masserie*, cultural itineraries, outdoor activities, cycling holidays, trekking, food and wine experiences, and beach tourism. Puglia is positioning itself as an experience-led destination, ideal for slow travel and discovery, where local identity, traditions and widespread hospitality take centre stage.

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Agenzia Regionale del Turismo

The Essence of Puglia in 5 Highlights

- **900 kilometres of coastline**
  Stretching for more than 900 kilometres between the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, Puglia boasts cliffs, coves, lagoons and long sandy beaches: a varied coastal landscape lapped by some of Italy's clearest waters.
- **5 UNESCO World Heritage sites**
  Castel del Monte, the Trulli of Alberobello, the beech forests of the Umbra Forest in the Gargano area, the Sanctuary of Saint Michael the Archangel and the Appian Way are Puglia's UNESCO World Heritage sites, bearing witness to millennia of history, architecture, cultures and traditions.
- **57 protected areas and 2 National Parks**
  With 57 protected natural areas and two National Parks — Alta Murgia National Park and Gargano National Park — Puglia safeguards precious ecosystems. Woodlands, coastlines, lagoons and plateaus offer opportunities for immersive, sustainable experiences.
- **340,000 olive trees over a century old**
  Puglia's olive-growing heritage includes 340,000 trees that are more than a century old. They bear witness to an agricultural tradition spanning thousands of years, contribute to the production of outstanding olive varieties and create captivating rural landscapes — one of the region's greatest assets for experiential tourism.
- **25 native grape varieties**
  Italy's leading region with five PGI varieties of table grapes, Puglia is also home to 25 native wine-grape varieties. Its quality wine production, with DOCG, DOC and IGT designations, showcases unique terroirs through varieties such as Primitivo, Negroamaro, Nero di Troia, Bombino, Susumaniello, Verdeca and Malvasia.

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The Heritage and Flavours of Puglia

Telling the story of Puglia through its food means embarking on a journey through seasonality, biodiversity and outstanding local ingredients, the basis for countless recipes rooted in rural and seafaring traditions. The region is renowned for having the highest consumption of raw fish in Italy, a speciality often reimagined in dishes that bring together Asian influences and Puglian culinary traditions.

Puglian cuisine is a pioneer of the farm-to-table concept: a celebration of freshness, authenticity, colour and flavour that reflects the character of a region which has become one of the favourite food and wine destinations for international visitors. Puglia is also Italy's leading region in the agrifood sector, generating €3.9 billion in added value and employing more than 149,000 people, with agrifood exports exceeding €2.5 billion in 2023. There are 941 registered agritourism businesses, alongside 22 educational masserie — a distinctive feature of Puglia's tourism offer.

A true expression of the principles of the UNESCO-recognised Mediterranean Diet, Puglian recipes are rooted in *"cucina povera"*, the traditional cuisine of humble origins: simple, wholesome dishes prepared with local, seasonal ingredients.

Among the region's specialities are more than one hundred varieties of Puglian bread, baked in wood-fired ovens such as those found in the historic bakeries of Altamura, Laterza, Monte Sant'Angelo, Bovino and Orsara. Then there is pasta, in countless shapes and sizes, starting with the unmistakable *orecchiette*. Completing this journey of flavour are the cheeses: from delicious stretched-curd specialities such as *mozzarella* and *stracciatella* to aged *caciocavallo* and the world-famous *burrata*.

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Puglia's Territories and Traditional Food Specialities

- **Gargano and Daunia**: *Podolico caciocavallo cheese*
- **Puglia Imperiale**: *Andria burrata*
- **Bari and the Coast**: *Orecchiette with turnip tops*
- **Magna Graecia, Murgia and Gravine**: *Mussels from Taranto and Altamura bread*
- **Itria Valley and the Trulli**: *Cisternino bombette (meat rolls)*
- **Salento**: *Pasticciotto, a shortcrust pastry filled with custard*

Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Puglia's Green Gold

Puglia is Italy's leading region for extra virgin olive oil: around 50 million olive trees tell the story of a supply chain that brings together agriculture, craftsmanship and innovation. Taking part in olive oil tastings in Puglia encourages attentive listening, curiosity and a sense of connection through iconic cultivars such as Coratina, Ogliarola, Cellina di Nardò, Leccina and Peranzana, each with its own distinctive profile: balanced fruity, bitter and peppery notes, alongside hints of herbs, almond, artichoke and tomato.

Extra virgin olive oil is known as "Puglia's Gold". It is born from fertile land and crafted in historic underground oil mills, where visitors can discover the sensory art of tasting some of the world's finest "olive juice".

The Significance of the Olive Tree in Puglian Culture

In Puglia, the olive tree is much more than a crop: it is a deeply rooted symbol of identity. The countryside is dotted with twisted, sculptural trunks of centuries-old and even millennia-old olive trees, and some have been standing since the days of the Roman Empire. Puglia produces around 40% of Italy's olive oil; for visitors, this means that every village and town has a story to tell through its own olive mill. The region's volcanic and limestone soils, together with the salty Mediterranean breeze, create an aromatic profile that cannot be replicated elsewhere.

Puglia has the highest number of olive-growing businesses in Italy, with 161,000 active enterprises — 26% of the national total — and 746 olive mills (17.3%). Its excellence also extends to organic olive growing: the region ranks first in Italy for the area devoted to organic cultivation (88,000 hectares, 32.1%) and second for the number of producers (9,859, 17.3%). These figures confirm the central role of olive oil in Puglia's culture and socio-economic fabric.

Main Varieties and Cultivars of Puglian Extra Virgin Olive Oils

- **Olio di Puglia PGI**, olives: Cellina di Nardò, Cima di Bitonto, Ogliarola Barese, Ogliarola Garganica, Cima di Melfi, Frantoio, Ogliarola Salentina, Cima di Mola, Coratina, Favolosa, Leccino and Peranzana
- **Alta Daunia PDO**, Peranzana olives
- **Dauno PDO**, olives: Ogliarola del Gargano, Peranzana Provenzale, Coratina, Ogliarola Garganica, Ogliarola, Coratina and Rotondella
- **Terra di Bari PDO**, olives: Coratina, Cima di Bitonto, Ogliarola Barese and Cima di Mola
- **Collina di Brindisi PDO**, olives: Ogliarola, Cellina di Nardò, Coratina, Frantoio, Leccino, Picholine and other varieties from the province of Brindisi
- **Terre Tarantine PDO**, olives: Leccino, Coratina, Ogliarola and Frantoio
- **Terra d'Otranto PDO**, olives: Cellina di Nardò, Ogliarola and Ogliarola Leccese

Puglian Grapes and Wines

Puglia confirms its status as one of the great wine-producing regions of the Mediterranean and Europe. Blessed with a unique geographical setting, the region combines a winemaking tradition stretching back thousands of years with a strong commitment to innovation and sustainability.

With production of 8.4 million hectolitres (around 19% of Italy's total, according to ISMEA) and 396 active wineries, Puglia is Italy's leading region in terms of the number of wine-processing businesses. Its wine supply chain generates international exports, with Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States among its key markets.

Wine Varieties:

- **Red and Rosé:** Primitivo di Manduria (DOC and DOCG), Salice Salentino (DOC), Castel del Monte (DOC and DOCG — particularly Nero di Troia), Brindisi PDO and Gioia del Colle DOC.
- **White Wines and Traditional-Method Sparkling Wines:** Castel del Monte Bombino Bianco, wines from Daunia and the Tavoliere area, and native white grape varieties from the Itria Valley (Minutolo, Verdeca and Bianco d'Alessano).

Grapes (Main Varieties):

- **Red grape:** Primitivo, Negroamaro, Uva di Troia, Malvasia Nera, Susumaniello and Ottavianello.
- **White grape:** Bombino Bianco, Verdeca, Minutolo, Bianco d'Alessano, Moscato di Trani and Malvasia Bianca.