

WOMEN OF THE MIDWEST

Travel Solo Together

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ITALY - PUGLIA SOUL THERAPY

Walking the Heel of the Boot!

With Women of the Midwest!

April 4-14, 2022



Dear Women of the Midwest,

If you are looking for a destination and a time to just slow down life, then Puglia and our first walking tour is for you! Our pace will allow you to really experience the colors, sights and smells of all that Italy has to offer. It won't take long before a calm and quiet enters your being. This part of Italy offers a balm for your soul and spirit.

We begin on a very historic note, by flying into Naples. On day one our guide directs us in the shadow of Mt. Vesuvius, and then on to the city of Pompeii. This is a place where life abruptly ended some 2,200 years ago, and we will explore the remnants of this ancient civilization.

Puglia, also known as Apulia, is one of Italy's less well-known holiday destinations. With its olive groves, white-washed towns, and crystal-clear waters, it can seem more Greek than Italian ...but don't let that fool you!

The area (southern tip of the heel) has much to offer in terms of beautiful Baroque monuments and endless beaches. You will enjoy warm welcomes, great food, good local wine, and that Old World appeal that Italy is so famous for.

We begin and end in Lecce, also known as the "Florence of the South" and you will quickly find out why! 17th-century structures display elegant caryatids, ornamental garland, and lyrical scrolls. Stand in the heart of Piazza Sant'Oronzo where the ancient Roman Column marks the end of the Appian Way, view the Roman amphitheater that once held 20,000 spectators, and see the intricate facade, rose window, and ornately-carved capitals of Basilica di Santa Croce. Lecce is love at first sight!

We head into the countryside and into a past where rural life once centered around the "massaria"; the fortified farming estates operated as small villages. Many of them are now converted into guesthouses and bed-and-breakfasts.

Spend your evenings at the local piazzas (squares) to experience the greatest "passeggiata" of all times, the nightly stroll almost all Italians take. Take part in the "pizzica", the most traditional dance, enjoy the best ice cream (gelato) in the world, the coffee (Lecce coffee!), the sweets. Sicily has cannoli, Venice has tiramisu, and Naples has sfogliatelle. The iconic pastry of Puglia is the pasticcotto and certainly number one of all of them! Best described as a covered tart, the oval shape comes from the molds in which they are made. The crust is called pasta frolla (a shortbread crust), and inside is the most delicious pastry cream. With our daily treks, no need to watch the calories, I guarantee you will go home lighter than you came!

The latest James Bond 007 film, "No Time to Die", with Daniel Craig, was partially filmed in this area. So much will seem familiar to you by the time we arrive. Sophia Loren's latest was filmed in Puglia, "Edoardo Ponti's the Life Ahead," a star still at 85! This radiant star must have done a lot of walking vacations in her day.

Puglia is a place you will want to come back to, to reconnect with some of the deepest traditions and warmest people in Italy. You will make new friends, enjoy the hospitality of the Italian people, and wonder why you have never walked this path before. So pack your walking sticks and join me, solo or two-by-two on this first Women of the Midwest walking tour!

Sincerely,

Lora Black, Women of the Midwest Ambassador



Call Executive Travel's Group Department today at 402-435-8888. Space is limited.



Pompeii



Lecce



Gallipoli

April 4, 2022 (Monday)

Traveling to Lecce, Italy

Our wonderful adventure begins as we take an overnight flight to Napoli, Italy. Enjoy inflight entertainment and meal service as you start the journey of your dreams.

April 5, 2022 (Tuesday)

Pompeii - Lecce

Welcome to Italy! Upon arrival, we meet our private tour guide and in the shadow of Mt. Vesuvius we take a short drive to stop and recall a moment in history at Pompeii; an ancient community buried in volcanic ash and mud. Brought to an abrupt halt 2,200 years ago, when the volcano erupted, daily life just stopped in the middle of everyday activities. Following the ancient roads of the city, we will explore the well-preserved ruins of homes, stores, temples, and public spaces visually narrating what Roman life was like in this 1st-century city.

Lunch is served and since we are next to the birthplace of pizza (and Sophia Loren's home for many years), what is more natural than a pizza-feast as our welcome meal? We continue through the beautiful landscape of Campania and Basilicata to the Puglia region with its luscious nature, inspiring history stirring unexpected delights and the delicate Apulian cuisine. All this makes for a unique soul therapy! Check in to our local accommodation with time to unwind and relax. B (onboard your flight) | L

April 6, 2022 (Wednesday) Lecce

After a laidback breakfast, we are ready to take in Lecce, also known as "Florence of the South". You will fall in love with its indescribable Baroque style with cloisters, palaces, the beauty of Santa Croce Basilica, Piazza Duomo ...an unexpected world of treasures is right in front of us, most of it built in the famous Lecce stone, a local limestone used as a structural and also as a decorative material. The city dates back to Roman times. In Lecce you will discover an infinite mix of people since Salento, the region, is surrounded by the sea and everyone would

land here. You will see people who are blond with blue eyes, darker-skinned people with frizzled hair but all with the same calm, peaceful, and tranquil attitude ...that's what Lecce does to you. During our tour today, we will also be introduced a very special local craft; the art of papier-mâché. Visiting one of the oldest workshops is definitely one of the highlights of our tour and you would want to save some pocket money for your own special favorite figurine. The papier-mâché phenomenon is unique to Puglia and dates back to a period between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when the development of arts was linked to the increasing number of churches and monuments. Lunch is served at a local trattoria today and the afternoon and evening are yours to continue strolling and enjoying Lecce. Remember the passeggiata; the nightly stroll most Italians take; in Lecce it is almost an obsession with everyone coming out, young and old. B | D

April 7, 2022 (Thursday)

Giurdignano - Valle dell'Idro - Otranto (8 miles)

After a hearty breakfast, we are eager to begin our journey into the countryside! We wave farewell to our luggage which - on a daily basis - will be transferred by private minivan to our next location and we grab our lunch boxes. We transfer by the charming local train from Lecce to Giurdignano, a land of olive groves, and fruit- and nut orchards. We will walk through the old meadows in the middle of the beautiful olive groves. Giurdignano is characterized by the greatest presence of menhir and dolmen in Italy, the total exceeding 25, dated back to the Bronze Age. We will visit the megalithic garden to take a look at this phenomenon and learn the story behind it. Our trail today ends in Otranto, a true pearl of the Adriatic. We will enjoy the Byzantine frescoes at the church of San Pietro, walk the ramparts overlooking the sea, and visit the cathedral with its medieval "tree of life" mosaic floor. A wine tasting is prepared for us before dinner is served ...life is good! The following two nights are spent in Otranto. B | PL | T | D

April 8, 2022 (Friday)

Punta Palascia (11 miles)

After a filling breakfast, we head out to explore the natural wonders around Otranto including the bay of Orte, the lighthouse of Punta Palascia, and a bauxite quarry. We start from the Otranto Castle and walk down to the port through the Porta a Mare (the "Gate leading to the Sea"). Once we reach the main pier, we continue our walk to the Snake Tower. Along the way, imposing cliffs framed by the presence of caverns are decorated with stalactites and stalagmites. Reaching the lighthouse, you have also reached the easternmost point of Italy and the place where the Ionian Sea meets the Adriatic. We continue along the coast then we will take a pleasant trail leading us to the bauxite quarry from which aluminum was once extracted. It is now a beautiful lake whose decisive colors present a very unique landscape. A local cheese producer welcomes us and we will savor some of the best cheeses in the region. Back in Otranto, the evening is yours to enjoy. B | PL | T | D

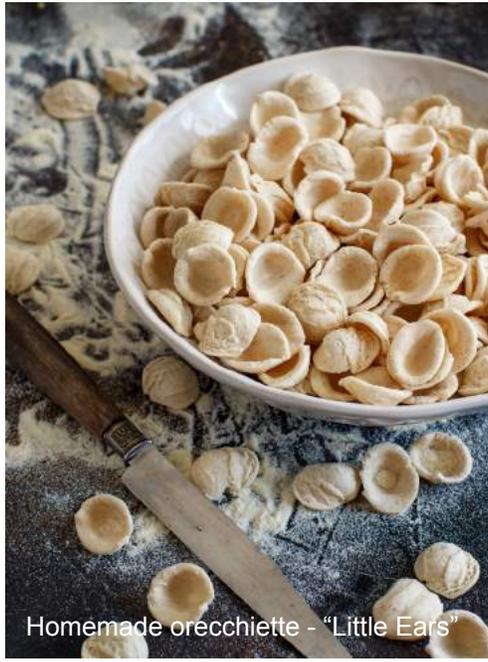
April 9, 2022 (Saturday)

Ciolo and Cipolliane - Patù (8 miles)

Breakfast is served before we transfer to Gagliano del Capo by train (1 hour 10 min.). Today's route takes us along the Ciolo Path with stunning views of the sea and a varied flora including bushes of the very special euphorbia arborea, also known as tree spurge. Near the Italian boot's heel, the Adriatic Sea makes a small and beautiful fjord named after a bird. In Italian Ciolo means magpie and these small birds are common inhabitants of the area. We will see the fjord from the Ciolo bridge, it is deep and a steep canyon is created by the water erosion on its path to the sea. From the bridge, we will follow the Cipolliane path and wind our way through exciting sea views and vegetation rich in "fichi d'india" (prickly pears, the flower of the cactus often used for jam), imposing agaves, and capers. Reaching Capolliane,



Walking the olive tree orchards



Homemade orecchiette - "Little Ears"



Otranto

we will visit the caves where you can admire stalactites and columns, tunnels and fossils, and bird colonies. A local bottega (shop) welcomes us and we will taste some unique local products. Dinner is served and the evening is yours to wander the narrow streets and enjoy the atmosphere of honey-colored stone and white-washed buildings. B | PL | T | D

April 10, 2022 (Sunday)

Gallipoli - Nardò (6 miles)

Today is dedicated to the discovery of the small treasures of the Leuca area and the beautiful city of Gallipoli. Firstly, we cross the ancient paths that connect the small villages. The first stop is the Centopietre in Patù, an enigmatic monument created with a funerary function and then used as a religious chapel. Byzantine frescoes are still visible! Then on to Giuliano where we will visit the ancient San Pietro Church (12th century) and its amazing castle. In Barbarano we will visit the Sanctuary of Leuca Piccola and its hypogeum, an ancient destination for pilgrims and a stop for the faithful people of Leuca. We jump on the train to Gallipoli (1 hour and 30 min.). Upon arrival, we will discover the old city, a beautiful island off the mainland. Gallipoli may be best known for its wartime history but Puglia's island-like fortress has an Italian charm all its own. Colorful fishing boats dart around the old city walls, while resilient stone churches peer across a medieval bridge to the mainland port. Do not miss St. Agatha's Cathedral, with its ornate facade. Our final destination and accommodation for our next two nights is Nardò, where you will find simplicity at its finest. Unbothered by tourists is has the cleanest water and most delicious food with people who are unconditionally warm and welcoming. Dinner is served and a good night's rest is ahead of us. B | PL | D

April 11, 2022 (Monday)

Porto Selvaggio (12 miles)

Porto Selvaggio is up next! After a filling breakfast, we head out to explore one of the

most striking coastal areas and a regional natural park since 2006. Within the area, there are numerous karstic caves with the remains of communities dating back to the Palaeolithic era.

Our walk takes us through ancient cuttings between stone walls and olive groves to the Tower of Santa Maria dell'Alto whose construction dates back to 1568. After having enjoyed the wonderful view, we move down to the bay of Porto Selvaggio and will follow the beautiful path between the cliff and the famous Mediterranean "Macchia" (scrub) with beautiful Aleppo pines. We will admire "Grotta del Cavallo", an archaeological site (can be viewed from outside) known to be a Neanderthal settlement. Yet another scenic trail takes us back to the Uluzzo Tower, an old watchtower from 1575 built on a rocky promontory. Smaller paths will take us back to Nardò where a special wine tasting is arranged for us. We will learn all about the Alberello vineyards, an old Puglian training system - so hard as precious - used since ancient times. Dinner is among the locals in Nardò. B | PL | T | D

April 12, 2022 (Tuesday)

Galatone - Galatina - Lecce (5 miles)

We enjoy our breakfast and then say goodbye to Nardò. We will walk to the village of Galatone, sitting amidst vast olive groves and former feudal estates. At Mamma Anna's local family-run farm we will enjoy a hands-on cooking lesson. The products are harvested directly from the family garden before we begin our class. We will be preparing the local "Pitta di Patate", handmade pasta, and the delicious "pasticciotto" cake, followed by a great family lunch. Our driver is ready to pick us up and transfer us to Lecce for our two last nights in Italy. Dinner is served among the locals before we call it a night! B | L | D

April 13, 2022 (Wednesday)

Lecce - optional Alberobello

Enjoy a day in Lecce in your own pace, people-watch, sip on Lecce Coffee all day

long (delicious iced espresso with almond milk), shop for your last souvenirs (don't forget that favorite little papier-mâché figurine), or ...join our optional tour to Alberobello (Alberobello meaning the "beautiful tree"), a UNESCO World Heritage site due to its trulli houses (there are about 1,500 of them). A trullo is a unique dry stone hat with a conical roof, built without mortar. They have survived quite intact and function in the modern world. On this tour, we will discover their history, architecture, the mystery and symbolism of their finials, and enjoy the fairy tale atmosphere of this amazing hamlet. This tour is offered in the morning hours and we will be back in Lecce in the early afternoon to enjoy a farewell dinner at a local trattoria. B | D

April 14, 2022 (Thursday)

Traveling home

All too soon, your vacation has ended. Transfer to Naples airport in plenty of time to check in for our flight and to clear security (depending on our flight schedule, this could be a very early departure from Lecce). You may do some last-minute shopping at the duty-free stores before boarding and flying west across the Atlantic Ocean back to the United States. B | Meals during flights

Itinerary is subject to change

Luggage transfers are arranged daily. The van can accommodate up to max. 2 persons should you wish to skip walking on a certain day. Riding with the van must be coordinated with the local tour guides and will be provided on a rotation basis if necessary.

Depending on the local trains' schedules these may be substituted with transfer by private taxi/vans.

B = Breakfast L = Lunch
PL = Packed Lunch T = Tasting
D = Dinner



To register contact:



1212 O Street • Lincoln, NE 68508

Phone: 402-435-8888 (ask for Group Department)

Fax: 402-435-2735

GroupDepartment@executivetravel.com

www.executivetravel.com

ONLINE REGISTRATION LINK:

<https://fs28.formsite.com/vLu8mE/ahddxtpvy0/index.html>

Package Price:

Per person in a shared double room: \$3,595
 Per person in a single room: \$3,995

*A limited number of single rooms available.
 Triple rooms are not available on this trip.*

We offer "Pair & Share"-service for our solo travelers. Ask us to assist in finding your roommate!

A non-refundable deposit of \$500 per person is required upon signing up. Deposit can be paid by cash, check, or credit card. Balance is due on December 6, 2021, and is non-refundable. Balance can be paid by cash or check. Credit card payment(s) (any payment applied to the tour after the deposit) will access a 3.5% fee.

Registering for this tour signifies that you agree with our terms and conditions found at executivetravel.com/eti-home/vacation/escorted-tours.

The tour will be materialized with a minimum of 15 travelers and a maximum of 20 travelers. A valid passport is necessary to travel to Italy. No visa is required by October 2020 for American citizens. It is the traveler's responsibility to verify all passport and visa requirements. We recommend you check <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.html>

Group airfare:

We offer group airfare. Pricing and specific itinerary will be available by the end of May 2021. All registered travelers will be notified. Estimate \$1,500 for your roundtrip ticket, economy class, including taxes and fees.

Tour Activity Level: LEVEL 1 2 3 4

This tour is a walking tour and involves a considerable amount of walking, stairs, longer periods of standing, outdoor activities, and steep areas within the places visited. This trip is not recommended for guests with walking difficulties. Comfortable, sturdy shoes/boots are recommended.

Travel Insurance:

We recommend travel insurance to help protect you and your trip investment against the unexpected. For your convenience, we offer a plan provided by Travelex Insurance Services. For rates and plan highlights, please ask us. *Travelex Insurance Services, Inc CA Agency License #0D10209. Travel Insurance is underwritten by Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance Company, NAIC #22276.*

The price quoted within this brochure is based on a USD/EURO exchange rate of 1.20. We reserve the right to adjust the price at final payment if the exchange rate increases.

Included:

- 9 nights during the tour in Italy at local 3-star hotels (Bed/Breakfast type in some cities)
- 9 x breakfast
- 7 x lunch (day 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9)
- 4 x tastings of local products (wine, cheeses, sweets)
- 8 x dinner (day 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10)
- Airport transfers as per tour program
- Luggage transfer by private van
- Admissions to sites mentioned in the tour program
- Two full-time English-speaking professional walking guides during walking days
- Women of the Midwest Ambassador, April 4-14, 2022
- Detailed travel documents, handed out three weeks prior to departure (hard-copy and electronic)
- All local taxes and fees as per October 5, 2022

Hotel Accommodation:

Final accommodations are confirmed with the delivery of your travel documents, 30 days prior to departure.

Not Included:

- Airfare, estimate \$1,500 per person, economy class
- Airline baggage fees for your second checked bag. Your first checked piece up to 50 lbs is free
- Travel insurance
- Personal expenses
- Meals & beverages other than mentioned in the tour program
- Optional tour to Alberobello, estimate \$80 per person (private van and guide)
- Entrances to monuments and/or museums other than mentioned
- Gratuities to walking guides (estimate \$5 per guide per day)
- Professional fee, \$75 per person, due at time of registration
- Anything not mentioned in the inclusions



WOMEN OF THE MIDWEST

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Forwarding registration and deposit signifies that you agree to the terms and conditions of this tour found at executivetravel.com/eti-home/vacation/escorted-tours

Call Executive Travel's Group Department today at 402-435-8888. Space is limited.

3/26/2021