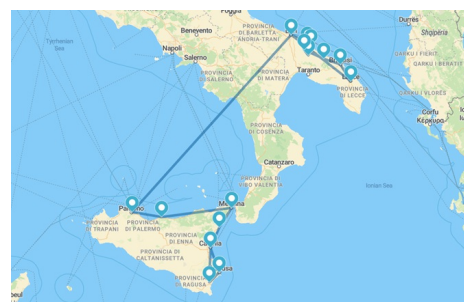




Italy, 11 Days · Tailor-made by car

## Route of the best of Apulia and Sicily, from Palermo to Catania

Italy is best discovered when explored at a leisurely pace, and this itinerary proves it by connecting two of its most fascinating regions: Apulia and Sicily. A journey that combines the serenity of the Adriatic with the cultural richness of the most authentic Mediterranean. Along the route linking Bari with Palermo, connecting Apulia with Sicily via a short flight, you'll find yourself amidst landscapes of centuries-old olive trees, whitewashed villages steeped in history, Baroque cities where time seems to have stood still, and beautiful stretches of Mediterranean coastline perfect for relaxing and enjoying the fine weather. From the iconic trulli of Alberobello and the Baroque elegance of Lecce to the vibrant energy of Palermo, the coastal beauty of Cefalù and the Sicilian coastline, and the spectacular historic towns of Taormina, Catania and the imposing Mount Etna, each stage offers a distinct, enriching, unique and essential experience for discovering the Italian soul. This road trip offers the perfect balance of heritage, nature, coastline, local experiences and excellent cuisine. More than just a tour, this comprehensive road trip is an invitation to discover the most authentic Italy – the one you savour in its streets, admire in its landscapes and experience at your own pace.



NATURE

FOR COUPLES

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

CULTURAL

FAMILIES

**Departure date:** Departures from June 2026 till May 2027

**From:** London

### Travel details

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## ● DAY 1 · CITY OF ORIGIN - BARI

Departure on the flight to Bari. On arrival, collect your hire car at the airport and begin your journey through southern Italy. Depending on your flight schedule, you'll have time to get a first taste of this vibrant city on the Adriatic coast, where tradition and everyday life blend seamlessly.

### BARI, TRADITION AND LOCAL LIFE

You have a few hours to discover the charm of the historic centre of Bari, capital of the Apulia (Puglia) region, where daily life blends with tradition in every corner. Strolling through Bari Vecchia is like stepping into an authentic atmosphere, amongst narrow alleyways and locals hand-making the typical orecchiette pasta on their doorsteps.

The city, which has welcomed significant cultures over the centuries, boasts a major tourist and commercial port on the Adriatic Sea. Your visit could begin at the Basilica of Saint Nicholas, one of the most important churches in southern Italy, and continue to the Cathedral of Saint Sabinus, a magnificent Romanesque building.

Nearby, the imposing castle built by Emperor Frederick II in the 13th century on the foundations of an ancient Byzantine church serves as a reminder of the city's strategic past. After the tour, there is nothing better than taking a break to sample some local specialities such as frittelle or fresh fish from the Adriatic.

Overnight stay in Bari.

## ● DAY 2 · BARI - ADRIATIC COAST ( A MARE - MONOPOLI) - ITRIA VALLEY

Early in the morning, Bari feels particularly authentic, as local life gradually comes to life. Soak up the atmosphere of Bari at your own pace, enjoying a coffee on a terrace before continuing your journey. When you're ready, head towards the Adriatic coast, where one of the most scenic stretches of the trip begins.

### POLIGNANO A MARE, CLIFFS OVERLOOKING THE MEDITERRANEAN

Just a half-hour's drive away lies Polignano a Mare, one of the most spectacular spots in southern Italy. Its houses perched on cliffs and the sea views make this place one of the most iconic sights of the trip. Strolling through its old town or visiting one of its viewpoints is a must to enjoy this unique landscape.

### MONOPOLI, THE ESSENCE OF THE SEA

About 10 minutes away lies Monopoli, where its charming fishing port and walled old town envelop visitors in a relaxed and authentic atmosphere. It is the perfect place for a pleasant break by the sea.

### HEADING TOWARDS THE ITRIA VALLEY

As you head inland, the landscape changes, giving way to one of Apulia's most typical scenes: olive groves, stone walls and small, charming villages with whitewashed architecture. When it comes to spending the night, you can choose the location that best suits your travel style and use it as a base from which to explore this fascinating region.

Overnight stay in a selected hotel along the Adriatic coast or in the Itria Valley (Polignano a Mare, Monopoli, Alberobello, Ostuni or the surrounding area).

## ● DAY 3 · ITRIA VALLEY (ALBEROBELLO - CASTELLANA CAVES - OSTUNI)

Today you'll continue exploring the Itria Valley, organising your day at your own pace depending on where you've chosen to stay. It'll be the perfect day to discover some of the country's most iconic landscapes and villages. Ready for a day of contrasts between unique architecture, underground landscapes and the white light of southern Italy?

### ALBEROBELLO, UNIQUE ARCHITECTURE

Arriving in Alberobello is like stepping into a setting unlike any other in the world. This picturesque village, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is famous for its legendary 'trulli' – cylindrical, white-washed buildings with large conical stone roofs that create an almost surreal landscape.

Strolling through its streets is an experience that goes beyond a mere visit: it is one of those places that stays with you long after the trip is over. To set foot here is to step into a real-life fairy tale, especially in the Rione Monti district, where most of these dwellings are concentrated. Among the must-see sights are the "Trullo Sovrano" – declared a National Monument in 1923 and the only two-storey one of its kind – the Church of San Antonio, and the Casa Pezzolla Museum of the Territory. Be sure to wander through its narrow alleyways, pop into the little craft shops and soak up the unique atmosphere that permeates every corner. An experience that invites you to savour the local cuisine, from cheeses and cured meats to the region's traditional olives.

### GROTTA DI CASTELLANA, A JOURNEY INTO THE EARTH

We got back in the car to head to the Grotte di Castellana, located about 15 kilometres away. This impressive network of underground caves is one of the most significant karst complexes in Europe. Inside, a fascinating tour allows you to discover spectacular formations of stalactites and stalagmites in a setting of great natural beauty, creating a striking contrast with the light outside and adding a completely different dimension to the day.

Among its most notable features is the Grotta Bianca, known for the purity of its crystal formations, considered one of the most impressive in the complex. (Note: Entry to the caves not included. It is recommended to check opening times).

### OSTUNI, THE WHITE CITY

We set off again, this time heading for the town of Ostuni, a 45-minute drive away. Perched on a hill and entirely whitewashed, Ostuni is another of southern Italy's great icons. A leisurely stroll through its historic centre evokes the beautiful landscapes of the eastern Mediterranean and captivates with its luminous atmosphere. As the day draws to a close, the evening light envelops the town, highlighting the white of its façades and creating one of the most memorable scenes of the trip. On your return to your accommodation on the Adriatic coast or in the Itria Valley, you'll feel as though you've experienced one of the most fulfilling stages of the journey, combining history, nature and some of the most iconic landscapes of southern Italy.

(NOTE: If you wish, you can extend your stay in the Itria Valley and discover other villages such as Locorotondo or Martina Franca, ideal for soaking up the local atmosphere. Another option is to visit Matera, some 70 kilometres away, famous for its dwellings carved into the rock, the renowned "Sassi", and designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site).

Overnight stay in a selected hotel along the Adriatic coast or in the Itria Valley (Polignano a Mare, Monopoli, Alberobello, Ostuni or the surrounding area).

## DAY 4 · ITRIA VALLEY - BRINDISI - LECCE

Departure for Brindisi, known as the historic 'Gateway to the East', on a journey of approximately one hour through landscapes of olive groves and rolling hills.

### BRINDISI, BETWEEN HISTORY AND THE ADRIATIC

In Brindisi, a city linked since ancient times to trade routes and expeditions to the Holy Land, travellers will discover a lively seafront and a fascinating historical heritage.

Today, numerous tourist boats connect Greece with this town. Bathed by the Adriatic Sea, the town boasts thermal spas where you can enjoy a few hours of rest and relaxation. Any expert recommendations? During your stay in the city, you can visit the Swabian Castle, Piazza Duomo, home to the Loggia Balsano (14th century), the Portico of the Knights Templar, and the beautiful Romanesque cathedral.

### LECCE, BAROQUE JEWEL OF THE SOUTH

We round off the final leg of the day in the city of Lecce, a half-hour's drive away, considered the Baroque jewel of southern Italy. Its historic centre, built of golden stone, invites you to take a leisurely stroll through monumental squares such as Piazza Sant'Oronzo or Piazza del Duomo. As evening falls, the city is transformed by enchanting lighting that highlights the Baroque details of the historic buildings. Come nightfall, enjoy a relaxed dinner on one of its lively terraces whilst you soak up the unique atmosphere of Salento.

Overnight stay in Lecce.

## DAY 5 · LECCE AND THE SURROUNDING AREA

You can spend today exploring the city of Lecce in depth or discovering its attractive surroundings. Lecce is a city with a particularly rich history. The ancient Roman town of Lupiae flourished under Norman rule and reached the height of its artistic splendour between the 16th and 18th centuries.

A short stroll is all it takes to admire the Renaissance, Baroque and Rococo buildings dating from this golden age. The city is renowned for the decorative richness of its façades and for being the birthplace of important artists such as Giuseppe Zimbalo, whose works can be found throughout the Salento peninsula. We recommend a stroll through the lively Piazza Sant'Oronzo to discover the remains of an ancient Roman amphitheatre dating back to the 2nd century.

Nearby, the Basilica of Santa Croce stands as one of the finest examples of Baroque architecture in the area. It is also well worth visiting the Government Palace, built on the site of an ancient monastery. One of the most striking spots is Piazza del Duomo. Here you can visit magnificent buildings such as the Campanile, the Cathedral, the Bishop's Palace and the Seminary. Strolling along Via Palmeiri and visiting the churches of Sant'Angelo or San Matteo are excellent ways to continue exploring the city.

### SEA BREEZE AND NATURE: SAN CATALDO AND THE ALIMINI LAKES

Beyond the historic centre, the area around Lecce offers interesting alternatives. Just a few kilometres away, the coastline allows you to enjoy quiet beaches and the cool Adriatic breeze.

Meanwhile, nature lovers will find the San Cataldo Nature Reserve and the Alimini Lakes area the perfect setting to unwind and enjoy nature.

(Note. Those wishing to extend their stay in Lecce can follow a beautiful itinerary that will allow them to discover such interesting towns as Gallipoli, Leuca and Otranto. Don't miss unique experiences such as exploring the prehistoric Zinzulusa Cave by boat (near Castro) or strolling through the winding streets of the island town of Gallipoli).

Return to and overnight stay in Lecce.

## ● DAY 6 · LECCE - BARI AIRPORT - PALERMO

Departure for Bari Airport to catch the flight to Palermo. Arrive at the airport in good time to return the hire car and complete check-in formalities.

Flight to Palermo, the gateway to Sicily, an island with a distinct Mediterranean identity where history, culture and tradition intertwine in every corner. Arrival in Palermo and collection of your hire car.

### PALERMO, A MELTING POT OF CULTURES

The time available on this first day in Sicily will depend on your flight schedule. Get ready for your first taste of the Sicilian capital, one of Italy's most fascinating cities thanks to its blend of influences.

Its millennia-old history has left a visible mark in every corner: Punic ruins, Roman monuments, Arab-inspired palaces, Norman churches, exuberant Baroque temples, Neoclassical buildings and Art Nouveau houses coexist within a unique urban landscape.

This extraordinary heritage was recognised by UNESCO with the declaration of Palermo's Arab-Norman complex as a World Heritage Site, which includes gems such as the Palazzo della Zisa and the Palazzo dei Normanni, with its spectacular Cappella Palatina, or the church of San Giovanni degli Eremiti.

### OPTIONAL EXCURSION TO MONREALE

Around 11 kilometres from the city lies Monreale, one of Sicily's great artistic icons. Its Cathedral, considered the pinnacle of Arab-Norman art, houses spectacular Byzantine mosaics.

### BACK TO PALERMO

At dusk, you can soak up the local atmosphere by heading to Piazza Pretoria, one of the liveliest spots in the city, where you'll also find the Palazzo Senatorio and the Church of Santa Caterina, or stroll through its historic streets before dinner and let yourself be enveloped by the city's atmosphere.

Overnight stay in Palermo.

## ● DAY 7 · PALERMO - CEFALÙ - MESSINA - TAORMINA

It's best to set off at a reasonable hour, as one of the most scenic stretches of the journey lies ahead, taking you along Sicily's northern coast towards Taormina.

### CEFALÙ, THE ESSENCE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

The first stop will be the small town of Cefalù, an hour's drive east of Palermo. This charming town, considered one of the most beautiful on the island, captivates visitors with its historical heritage and seaside charm. Despite its small size, this fishing village stands out for its architectural heritage, notably its imposing Norman cathedral, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and its magnificent beaches lapped by the tranquil Tyrrhenian Sea. Its old town, with its narrow, bustling streets, invites you to wander aimlessly amongst small shops and charming corners. Make the most of your visit by taking a stroll along the town's main street, known as Corso Ruggero, where Baroque churches, noble palaces and some of Cefalù's most elegant shops are concentrated.

### MESSINA, GATEWAY TO THE STRAIT

Continue eastwards along the coast until you reach Messina, situated opposite the strait that separates Sicily from mainland Italy. Along the way, the landscape offers continuous views of the sea and the Aeolian Islands, a stunning volcanic archipelago recognised by UNESCO.

In Messina, if you have time, we recommend a visit to the cathedral and its monumental surroundings in Piazza del Duomo, where some of the city's main attractions are concentrated. It's a good time to take a break and enjoy the local cuisine, characterised by excellent seafood and traditional Sicilian recipes.

### TAORMINA, WITH VIEWS OF MOUNT ETNA

The day ends in Taormina, one of Sicily's most iconic destinations. A scenic drive awaits you, dotted with small bays of lush, green Mediterranean vegetation that contrasts with the blue of the sea, creating some truly beautiful landscapes to remember. Perched on a natural terrace overlooking the sea, Taormina offers spectacular views of Mount Etna and the Ionian coast. Its famous Greek Theatre, one of the best-preserved in the world, transforms the landscape into a spectacular sight.

A haven for illustrious figures such as Bartlett and Goethe, a stroll along Corso Umberto reveals elegant shops, charming squares and corners steeped in history. Among its highlights are Piazza del Duomo, with its legendary fountain, and Piazza IX Aprile, one of the city's most impressive viewpoints.

As evening falls, Taormina takes on a particularly magical atmosphere, perfect for rounding off an unforgettable day. There are plenty of options for dinner: from the popular 'Sicilian pizza' to seafood dishes featuring prawns and octopus, prepared either fried or grilled, with sauces made from tomatoes, capers and anchovies. And for dessert, the traditional 'cannoli', fried pastry tubes filled with a cream made from ricotta cheese. Delicious!

Overnight stay in Taormina.

## ● DAY 8 · TAORMINA - CATANIA (OPTIONAL EXCURSION TO MOUNT ETNA)

Today's itinerary combines nature and city life in one of the most interesting stages of the trip. For breakfast in Taormina, we recommend a typical 'granita' (a type of Sicilian slush) made with coffee and cream, although there are other flavours such as lemon or almond, accompanied by a brioche or a ricotta-based cake called 'Cassata'. From Taormina, you'll head to Catania, with the option, weather permitting, of taking an excursion to Mount Etna.

### ETNA, THE GIANT OF SICILY

On the way to Catania, we recommend taking a detour to Mount Etna to get a closer look at this imposing Sicilian icon, the second-highest active volcano in Europe and a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2013. The landscapes surrounding Etna offer a unique natural setting, where the bright colours of the vegetation alternate with the deep blacks of the lava remains. As you ascend, the terrain becomes increasingly volcanic.

Nature lovers will find an unforgettable experience here, whether exploring some of its trails or simply enjoying the surroundings. Please note that this excursion adds approximately an extra hour to the driving time, in addition to the time spent on the visit

### CATANIA, BAROQUE AND MEDITERRANEAN LIFE

We continue on to Catania, situated at the foot of Mount Etna. This vibrant city stands out for its Baroque architecture, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and its lively local atmosphere.

The heart of the city is Piazza del Duomo, home to the Cathedral of Saint Agatha and the iconic Elephant Fountain, the symbol of Catania. From this prime spot, you can continue along the elegant Via Etnea, Catania's main shopping street, which offers a delightful blend of history, shopping and everyday life, with Mount Etna as a backdrop on clear days.

If you're looking for an authentic experience, head to the Pescheria market, one of the liveliest in Sicily, where the hustle and bustle and the aromas reflect the city's truest essence.

And there's no better way to enjoy the evening in Catania than by strolling around the Teatro Massimo, a lively neighbourhood, or along the aforementioned Via Etnea, both brimming with opportunities to indulge in, for example, the traditional 'Pasta alla Norma' with aubergine and ricotta, which takes its name from the opera 'Norma' by Vincenzo Bellini, the city's favourite son.

Overnight stay in Catania.

## DAY 9 · CATANIA - SYRACUSE - NOTO - CATANIA

### CATANIA, FLAVOURS AND TRADITION

To start the day, why not try one of Catania's most traditional sweets, the "Minne di Sant'Agata", a delicious treat named after the city's patron saint. Next, head south to discover two of Sicily's greatest cultural treasures.

### SYRACUSE, A MEDITERRANEAN LEGACY

In Syracuse, one of the cities with the richest historical heritage in the Mediterranean awaits you. Be sure to explore the Neapolis Archaeological Park, home to the famous 'Orecchio di Dioniso' (Dionysius' Ear), where a whisper can be heard in every corner of the cave; and to soak up the Baroque atmosphere of the island of Ortigia, the city's most beautiful heart. Here, amongst charming narrow streets, the cathedral, the church of Santa Lucia alla Badia, the Arethusa Fountain and Maniace Castle stand out, in a setting where history and the sea merge in a unique way.

### NOTO, THE STONE GARDEN

The journey continues to Noto, known as the 'Stone Garden' for the many architectural wonders it holds, and which has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Its elegant historic centre, rebuilt after the 1693 earthquake, dazzles with golden façades that shine particularly brightly at sunset. A stroll along Corso Vittorio Emanuele takes you past churches, palaces and squares, turning the visit into a true architectural spectacle.

### RETURN TO CATANIA

After the visit, return to Catania. To round off the day, we recommend soaking up the lively local atmosphere by strolling through the historic centre or heading to the area around Via Etnea, where terraces and bars invite you to enjoy a drink as the evening falls.

Overnight stay in Catania.

## DAY 10 · CATANIA - CITY OF ORIGIN

The final day of the trip depends on the departure time of your return flight.

Please arrive at the airport in good time to return your hire car and catch your return flight to your city of departure.

Arrival. End of the trip and of our services.

## Your trip includes

### Your trip includes

- ✓ Return flight.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Bari.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Bari.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Alberobello Bari.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Alberobello Bari.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Lecce.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Lecce.
- ✓ Flight from Lecce to Palermo.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Palermo.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Palermo.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Taormina.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Taormina.
- ✓ Stay in selected hotel in Catania.
- ✓ Selected meal plan in Catania.
- ✓ Rent-a-car.
- ✓ Insolvency protection.

### Your trip doesn't include

- ✗ Accommodation taxes in Sicily direct payment in facility.
- ✗ Possible toll charges.

## Destinations Visited

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**Bari**



**Polignano A Mare Bari**



**Monopoli Bari**



**Alberobello Bari**



**Grotte di Castellana**



**Ostuni**



**Brindisi**



**Lecce**



**Palermo**



**Cefalù**



**Messina**



**Taormina**



**Catania**



**Syracuse**



**Noto**



## Important remarks

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- Triple rooms in Europe are generally rooms with twin beds or a double, in which a folding bed is installed to accommodate the third person. Due to the inconvenience this causes, we advise against using this option as far as possible.
- Check-in time at the hotel on the day of arrival depends on each establishment, but in no case will it be before 3:00 p.m., unless otherwise indicated.
- The proposed excursions and tours for each day are purely suggestions, as you can tailor the trip to suit your times, tastes and needs.
- A credit card is considered a guarantee, so sometimes you will need one for check-in at hotels.
- Hotels usually have cots available. Otherwise, babies will have to share a bed with an adult.
- To pick up your rental car, you'll need a credit (not debit) card in the name of the person who made the booking, who must also be the named driver of the vehicle.
- Consult the necessary documentation to enter the destinations visited and for transit in the countries where air stopovers are made.